SCHOLAR OPTIONS, LLC

Grant Writing & Evaluation Services

PEMBERTON SCHOOLS

21st Century Project

Annual Report

2025

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Introduction

Pemberton Township is a vastly populated region located in eastern Burlington County with a total population of approximately 28,000 people spread throughout 61.3 square miles of largely rural and suburban lands. The most densely populated community within Pemberton Township is Browns Mills with an approximate residency of 11,225. Fort Dix, a military installment which is part of the JB MDL (Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst), is partially located within Pemberton Township with a residency of approximately 2,000. The township is one of 56 South Jersey municipalities that are included within the New Jersey Pinelands National Reserve.

Pemberton School District's student enrollment is comprised of approximately 55% White, 24% Black, 15% Hispanic, 3% Multi-Racial, 2% Asian, and less than 1% Pacific Islander and American Indian. 42% of the overall K-12 student population is economically disadvantaged and 16% are students with disabilities. 20% are military-connected students and 2% are classified as homeless. The two schools included in the project, Busansky and Denbo-Crichton (DNCR), are elementary schools serving grade levels three through five. 21st Century participants are recruited from the two site locations and services are facilitated at the respective locations.

Project Description

As an established program with over ten years of successful 21st CCLC implementation, much of the program's popularity comes from word of mouth which typically accounts for the students' enrollment for all three eligible years of the program. At the mid-August juncture, students from the respective schools are provided with enrollment and information forms. Administration emphasizing program benefits by coordinating efforts with the building offices and engaging parents at "Back to School" events. Once the students are enrolled, administration relies upon engaging content as the primary means for retaining student participation. The program accepts student referrals from school professionals in cases where additional academic help is sought to help mitigate academic struggles.

The program is intentionally designed to provide targeted services to students who need intervention and support to improve student academic achievement and other outcomes. Through careful planning and evaluation, the activities provided expand accessibility to high-quality academic programming to students for whom it would otherwise be inaccessible. The use of program and activity SMART goals aides in the intentional design of the program to enhance participants' academic and social progress. Through this process, it is insured that program activities are linked to New Jersey Student Learning Standards as evidenced by the intentional design planner, student schedules and lesson plans. The Program Director works with building principals, district curriculum supervisors and the office of the Superintendent to ensure that the activities implemented during program hours complement the school day. The director communicates frequently with the building administration and teaching staff to foster a relationship that supports the children of the 21st Century Program.

Data is collected at the school and district level and reviewed by the team to help determine the activities offered and the approach to learning for each session. The Project Director keeps documentation of linkage with the school day via electronically-shared communication programs. School day staff is provided access program communication logs for the purpose of communicating homework needs as well as individual student concerns. The Project Director also attends quarterly Lead Teacher meetings to remain current on district approaches to curriculum. Program staff participates in professional development provided by the district as well as professional development topics deemed necessary by analysis of afterschool program data. Communication with the school day staff is enhanced by building administrators in the roll of Site Coordinators, increasing the level of shared intelligence and seamless integration of regular school day and after school methodologies.

Component Offerings

Pemberton utilizes a Career Exploration and Awareness focus for its program and thus infuses concepts related to early development in academic and socio-emotional qualities that are endemic to progressive viability to qualify for future careers of interest. Academic remediation initiatives involve various constituents in the school community and thus employs district-approved strategies for supplementing the curriculum with alternate forms of instruction, tutoring, etc. The remedial format is conducted New Jersey certified teachers who work in district and understand each student's academic challenges, prowess, and potential. These highly qualified, certified teachers provide services to students at a ratio no greater than 1:15. During this course, Tier 2 Response to Intervention is provided in the areas of mathematics and reading comprehension. In conjunction with the district, the program assists in the implementation of tutoring opportunities for 21st Century participants. All students are mandated to have a minimum of 4 hours each week in homework instruction. Grades, PARCC scores, MAP scores and other assessments were reviewed by administration at specific time intervals throughout the year and students are placed in small cooperative groups according to achievement. Small group instruction became a primary means of providing academic remediation.

The academic enrichment component is designed to link students to career fields for which they show early interest. Through integration of inquiry-based learning, small group activities and student-driven learning opportunities, students can make connections between skills and concepts development and career paths. Career Exploration activities provide a direct connection and experience with applying knowledge through exploration of leading career paths in New Jersey. Students explore content areas that support the following Career Clusters: Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, Architecture and Construction, Finance, Government and Public Administration, Health Science, Hospitality and Tourism, Information and Technology and STEM. We are also partnered with Mad Science of West New Jersey to provide hands-on Science activities to program participants in various science content areas.

Positive youth development and character education are facilitated primarily through the advent of services provided by a key partner agency, the Scouts Garden State Council BSA. Students at each site can participate in various youth development/character education activities. The services provided by the Scouts seeks to instill citizenship, character, personal fitness, and leadership to enrich the lives of students. The students can express themselves as they share ideas, goals, and strategies to maintain commitments they have set as a team and individually in Student Council. In Character Counts, participants keep journals for personal growth and self-reflection, and strive to become receptive to implementing strategies that help cope with life's stress with emphasis placed on resiliency and citizenship.

Cultural, artistic, and holistic content is featured through authentic program activities and sponsored via contributions from partnering agencies. The program utilizes best practices in the identified clusters of priority focus for career exploration to also allow for the development of other talents that lead to building confidence, competence, creativity and

collaboration, all skills necessary in the 21st century workplace. Students build these skills through program offerings like fine arts, band, yoga and more. Health, nutrition, fitness, and physical activity. The program supports healthy habits by allowing time for recreation and through the provision of athletic training activities via Sports Training and Breathe for Change. Culinary arts also promotes healthy eating habits as well as contributes to possible future careers in this field.

Parental and family involvement is interwoven into the fabric of the program. Parents are invited to engage in committee discussions with the during quarterly Advisory Board meetings. Parents communicate with the Program Director through e-mail, phone, or personal conferences to address individual concerns or provide feedback on the program design and implementation. In addition, all participating families receive surveys and participate on panel discussions throughout the program year to provide feedback on existing program and to provide input on new programs/activities that would improve their child's experience in the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program.

In conjunction with the following strategic collaborators and partners, the Project Director enhances the component areas with various content offerings. Basic Steps Ballet provides in-kind programming, via Nina Burnett, the owner and dance instructor of the local community dance studio, by offering volunteer services to the school community and helping to build the youths' development simultaneously. Nina, and her dance instructors, bring the students greater exposure to the Arts by teaching and enhancing their knowledge about different dance genres, while they learn various forms of dance including Ballet, Jazz, Lyrical, Hip Hop, Tap, etc., and present a dance recital as a session culmination.

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Burlington County (SNAP-Ed) provides student learning opportunities and workshops for 21st Century students aimed at improving nutrition and increasing physical activity. Participants learn content focused on making healthy food choices, meeting nutritional requirements, and additionally receive opportunities to prepare healthy meals as an extension of the culinary arts program. Officers from the Pemberton Township Police Department visit the sites to engender positive relationships between the Police department and community. An annual kick ball game and post-game discussions help students understand the career of a police officer and the mission to protect the communities that they serve. 4H Youth Development through the Cooperative Extension of Burlington County is a new collaborator for the 2024-2025 school year.

Mad Science of West New Jersey provides support for the program in many ways. In-kind donations of science themed assemblies are offered during program time as well as during parent involvement activities. The activities are hands- on and the students are engaged. This partner works to support the goals of the 21st Century program. Along with program administration, a schedule of events is created based on the needs of the students on various science topics. This partner also supports our program through various STEM related career exploration clubs focusing on creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication.

Through a partnership with the Burlington County Library, students attend monthly trips to the library. In addition to checking out books for pleasure reading, students participate in activities that focus on literacy. Further contributions to the program are provided by the Pinelands Success Center, which provides in-kind donations for the purpose of building stronger families and communities. The participants lives are enriched through relationship focused and culturally responsive activities. This is accomplished by connecting children and families with programs and resources that promote the integration of physical, spiritual, economic, and emotional health. The in-kind services are proactive, community-based, comprehensive, consistent, and meet the needs of the community by empowering children and families to be self-sufficient and charitable to others in need. The Pemberton Township Recreation Department helps to connect the program with support from local entities that include local government support of our program. The Whitesbog Preservation Trust, a local historic landmark, supports student acquisition of knowledge of the Pinelands region in which they reside. The rich history of the community is taught, and the students are encouraged to investigate how the past relates to present and future choices. They also offer field trips and assemblies to program participants to enhance the learning experience.

The summer program, as with the after-school program, is intentionally designed to support student achievement and strategic activity design. 70% of the summer program is intentionally designed for the purpose of meeting student needs as measured by the summer schedule. The summer program intentionally recruits 60% of the participants for the summer program for the purpose of improving achievement as measured by student enrollment forms. The 21st Century Summer Camp operates out of 1 program site (Denbo-Crichton Elementary School) and runs daily from 8:30-1:30. The summer program is in operation four days a week for four weeks, five hours per day. PTS Administration and Program Administration utilize the grant and matching funds to expand the existing summer programs/camps to serve a minimum of 90 students. Students participate in summer enrichment activities that require the application of knowledge gained throughout the school year to prevent the "summer slide." Students also participate in field trips that support the program's thematic vision.

Measures and Outcomes

Evaluation Methodology

The program is evaluated through a process of qualitative and quantitative data collection and interpretation. The evaluation model employed for this project is "Self-Improvement through Multiple Intelligences" (SIMI), which will provide evidence of the program's ability to build self-awareness and career awareness among its participants. The key concept employed throughout this evaluation model is the Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) established by Howard Gardner, the esteemed Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Through Gardner's ground - breaking scientific discoveries established in Frames of Mind (1983), a pluralistic view of the word intelligence was defined through eight different cognitive abilities: *verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic*. Our Western educational philosophy established the measurement of verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical abilities as a determination of a person's overall intelligence, hence the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale or as it is commonly referred to the IQ test; however, Gardner's theory derides the limitations of the IQ test.

The SIMI model will employ a mixed methods design to gauge the impact of the program on students and their families. Qualitative instruments include questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, and interviews. Quantitative data, specifically quarterly academic grades, behavioral reports, attendance records, and PARCC scores will be collected to determine student outcomes. An assessment of findings will be used to describe the impact of the program on students and families, e.g., student attendance and engagement during the school-day and afterschool, parental involvement, and parent participation and skills acquired by parents. The participants' multiple intelligences will be assessed at the beginning and end of the project year as described in the evaluation design. The quality and effectiveness of the "treatment" instruments, specifically as applied to activities that focus on self-awareness, skill enhancement and career preparedness, will be measured regarding whether the participants were able to: identify their skills and abilities, improve in areas not identified as areas of strength, identify/explore careers that fit their intelligence profile. Fulfillment of the objectives will demonstrate the assets specifically identified in the NGO, specifically: critical thinking, problem-solving, perseverance, collaboration, creativity and communication.

Year-to-year growth and development of the program and the satisfactory achievement of goals as defined by project administration will be assessed at the end of each project year. Corrective actions and procedures will be collaboratively produced through the advent of qualitative and quantitative findings as well as contributory input from various stakeholders including, the Project Director, support staff, teachers, activity leaders, students, collaborators, partners, evaluator, etc. Recruitment and retention of staff and students will be a key priority and as such, barriers and the changing landscape of local conditions will produce preemptive actions to be carried out during the summer prior to

September school re-openings. Project staff and the evaluator will administer semi-annual and yearly assessments of activities, lesson plans, staff contributions, and curricular content through a process of analyzing participation rates, attendance, and survey feedback to continually produce engaging activities for the students. Activity offerings are one of the key factors to producing consistent attendance among participating families and thus will be given the ultimate attention and scrutiny.

Goals, Objectives, and Indicators

To demonstrate the project's ability to satisfy its' established indicators in response to the state's mandated goals and objectives and indicators, the evaluator will utilize the following terms: unsatisfactory, emerging, and satisfactory. The terms are meant to isolate the "actions" used to accomplish the indicators' benchmarks and to subsequently identify the effectiveness of the current approach. The terms are defined as follows: **Unsatisfactory -** evidence suggests that the indicator threshold was not reached and there were no identifiable interventions put in place to mitigate the issues preventing the attainment of the goal and objective; **Emerging -** evidence suggests that the indicator threshold was not met, but there were identifiable interventions and a clear understanding of the issues preventing the attainment of the goal and objective; **Satisfactory -** evidence shows that the indicator threshold has been reached.

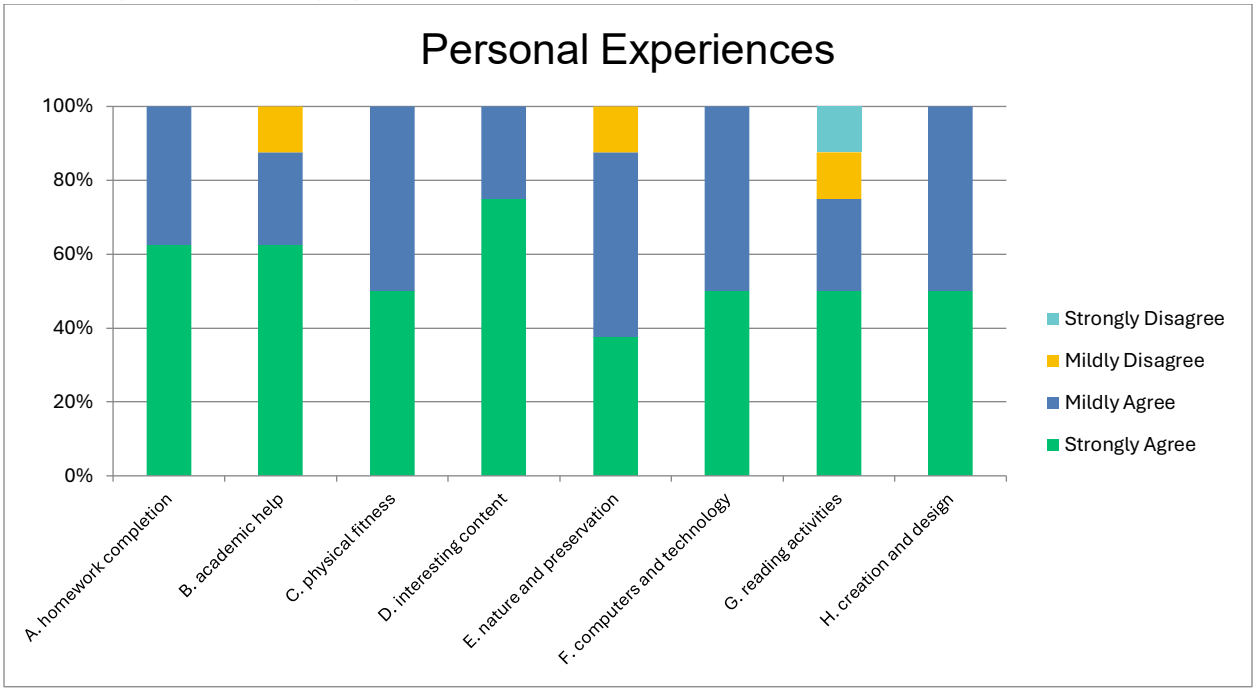
Upon an annual review of indicator findings, the evaluator will perform a post-year consultation with Project Director to discover and help reform the decision-making affecting the project functions identified in the NGO: recruitment and retention of staff and students, program staff instruction and engagement, maintenance of collaborations and partnerships, intentional planning, student attendance, linkage to the school day, breadth of program offerings, and progress towards sustainability. The cyclical process of identifying the problems, gathering data, interpreting data, acting on evidence, and evaluating results inevitably leads to a better project to the benefit of all its stakeholders. Intentional planning initiatives will also be dedicated to canvassing the school’s culture and climate to enhance the overall experience of participants. School staff that have successful track records of producing academic gains or youth development concepts will be encouraged to bring their successful brands to the afterschool program. The continual additions of key personnel boost the ability of the project to further align itself with school priorities, thus establishing a seamless approach to deepening linkages to the school day program. The base of effective teachers will be accentuated by the offerings of carefully aligned and annually reviewed collaborators and partners.

INDICATOR	INDICATOR BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT
Indicator 1.1a	During the entire project period, our programs will maintain a minimum of five community agencies to continue involvement as collaborators/partners to provide after school activities, parent education, activities, and/or in-kind services.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 1.1b	Pemberton Township Schools will work to establish two new partners/collaborators during each grant year, which will be evidenced by contracts and agreements dated for each year.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 1.1c	Pemberton Township Schools will intentionally solicit collaboration from local and independently run businesses to support the Career Awareness and Exploration theme.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 1.2a	During each project year, program staff will provide differentiated instruction based on the students' interest and skill level as evidenced by data collected by the local evaluator.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 1.2b	80% of the program will be intentionally designed through the creation of activity SMART goals for activities.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 1.3a	Prior to the start of the program, all program staff will participate in an orientation/training on the program policies/procedures, schedule and scope of academic remediation, academic enrichment, and other enrichment activities.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 1.3b	All program staff will be required to participate in a minimum of 3 professional development opportunities May of each year.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 1.3c	All staff will participate in professional development supporting students with special needs and project-based learning lesson implementation strategies.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 1.3d	We will train all staff in being trauma informed to be better prepared to support all our students; especially those from active-duty military families.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 1.4a	We will see an increase in the mean score by 4% of all students and an increase in the amount of advanced proficient students by 2%. This will be evidenced by the return in PARCC scores.	EMERGING
Indicator 1.4b	At the end of the 2024-2025 school year, report cards will reflect that 70% of regular attendees will have a 75 average or better in mathematics and language arts.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 1.5a	There will be a 10% reduction of school conflicts and improved attitude/behavior evidenced in a pre/post survey to parents, teachers, and building administration.	EMERGING
Indicator 1.5b	There will be a 10% increase of student's school attendance and program attendance by the participating students. This will be evidenced by school attendance reports and PARS21 data.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 1.5c	There will be a 10% reduction of suspension or behavioral office referrals for students who participate in the program compared to non-participants. This will be evidenced by building administrator records.	EMERGING

INDICATOR	INDICATOR BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT
Indicator 2.1a	Through collaborative relationships with community partners, and Pemberton Township School building/district administration, our program will offer a minimum of 8 on site opportunities for literacy and related educational activities to the families of participating students by June of each year.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 2.1b	Pemberton Township will host, at a minimum, one parent led family involvement activity for program participants as evidenced by flyers and sign in sheets.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 2.2a	As a result of participating in grant-funded activities, at least 75% of families will indicate an increase in the involvement of their child's education by June. This will be evidenced by responses in the pre/post parent surveys. Grant-funded activities are defined as field trips, workshops, events, family math night, family literacy night, family science night, and program showcase.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 2.3a	Throughout the project period, the Program staff will communicate with parents and adult family members about the program goals and objectives; activities; and their child's experience through e-mail, social networking, phone conferences, virtual meetings, and individual conferences at programs or events. This will be indicated by parent/adult family member responses on pre/post surveys.	SATISFACTORY

INDICATOR	INDICATOR BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT
Indicator 3.1a	Throughout the grant period and each program year, the independent evaluator will work with the Program Director and Program Staff to assess and monitor program implementation and effectiveness. Using staff, parent, student, and school day teacher surveys and structured interviews, as well as focus groups, the independent evaluator will collect data for the action research process to aide in the program/activity design to improve implementation and effectiveness. This is evidenced by the interim and final year reports.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 3.1b	Program staff will monitor student attainment of activity SMART goals through record keeping and a variety of assessment opportunities to include projects, presentations, group activities and rubrics.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 3.2a	The Program Director and Program Staff will measure the students' progress regarding academic achievement based on the review of each student's progress and regular communication with the school day teachers, interim progress reports, and marking period grades. Additionally, student progress will be tracked in their participation in tutoring/remediation activities and on assessments to see if there has been improvement on the targeted skill. Participants' progress in the areas of behavior and social development will be measured using a pre/post participation survey for parents, school day teachers, and school administration for each participating student. These surveys will measure for improvement/change in attitude, behavior, cooperation, motivation, and social interaction.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 3.2b	Program administration will create and monitor a google doc spread sheet that allows for constant contact between school day staff and program staff regarding various student needs academically and socially.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 3.3a	Interviews and surveys will be conducted by the independent evaluator to obtain feedback regarding the impact of participation in program activities/services, from the program staff, parents, school day teachers, and the students in the areas of youth engagement in program activities, academic or social-emotional needs, and the program impact.	SATISFACTORY
Indicator 3.4a	Using pre/post surveys, pre/post structured interviews, and pre/post focus groups with the parents/family members of participating youth to indicate the impact of the program on their involvement in the educational experience of participating students and the improvement of familial relationships.	SATISFACTORY

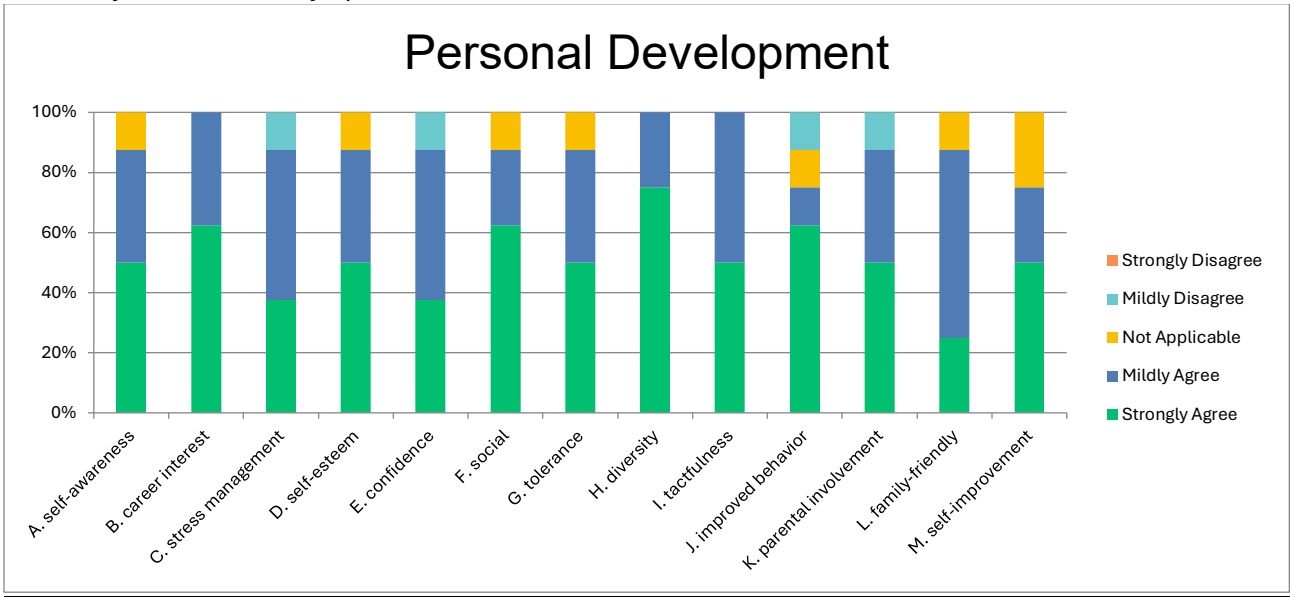
Busansky Student Survey - part one



A. I can complete my homework assignments most days.
B. If I need help with schoolwork, teachers are there to help.
C. I participate in activities that help me improve my physical fitness.
D. I learn new and interesting things.
E. I learn about nature and the importance of preserving nature for future generations.
F. I use computers and technology.
G. I participate in math and reading activities.
H. The activities help me to create, design, and engineer things.

	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. homework completion	62%	38%	0%	0%
B. academic help	63%	25%	12%	0%
C. physical fitness	50%	50%	0%	0%
D. interesting content	75%	25%	0%	0%
E. nature and preservation	38%	50%	12%	0%
F. computers & technology	50%	50%	0%	0%
G. reading activities	50%	25%	12%	12%
H. creation and design	50%	50%	0%	0%

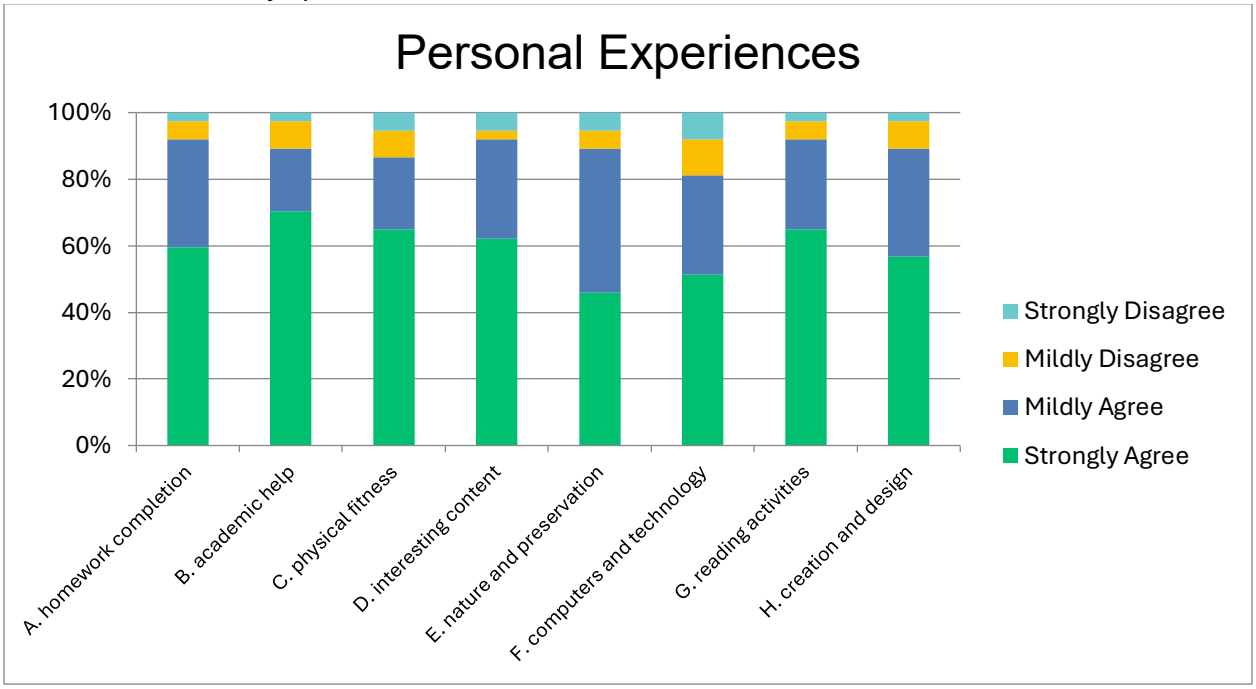
Busansky Student Survey - part two



A. I am more aware of my strengths as well as areas in my life that need to be improved.
B. Participation in the program is helping me identify my skillset which might lead to a career interest.
C. Participation in the program is helping me find positive ways to deal with stressful situations.
D. Participation in the program is helping me develop my sense of self-worth or self-esteem.
E. Participation in the program is helping me become more confident and assertive.
F. I have many opportunities to spend time with friends.
G. I am learning to cooperate and work with others with whom I may have differences.
H. I am learning to respect other people's personal and cultural differences.
I. I am more willing to express my opinions without hurting other people's feelings.
J. I get in less trouble in school because of things that I learn from adults in the after-school program.
K. My parents or caregivers are more involved in my education since I've become a participant in this program.
L. Overall, the program is having a positive effect on my family.
M. I am becoming a better version of "me".

	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Not Applicable	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. self-awareness	50%	38%	12%	0%	0%
B. career interest	62%	38%	0%	0%	0%
C. stress management	38%	50%	0%	12%	0%
D. self-esteem	50%	38%	12%	0%	0%
E. confidence	38%	50%	0%	12%	0%
F. social	63%	25%	12%	0%	0%
G. tolerance	50%	38%	12%	0%	0%
H. diversity	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
I. tactfulness	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
J. improved behavior	63%	13%	12%	12%	0%
K. parental involvement	50%	38%	0%	12%	0%
L. family-friendly	25%	63%	12%	0%	0%
M. self-improvement	50%	25%	25%	0%	0%

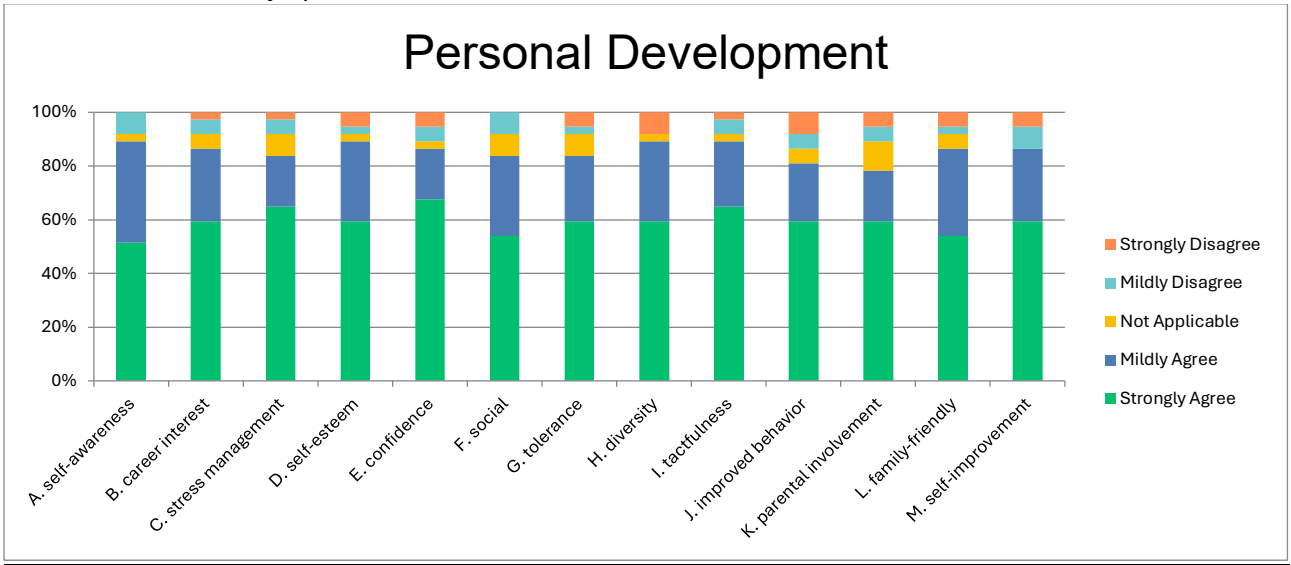
DNCR Student Survey - part one



A. I can complete my homework assignments most days.
B. If I need help with schoolwork, teachers are there to help.
C. I participate in activities that help me improve my physical fitness.
D. I learn new and interesting things.
E. I learn about nature and the importance of preserving nature for future generations.
F. I use computers and technology.
G. I participate in math and reading activities.
H. The activities help me to create, design, and engineer things.

	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. homework completion	60%	32%	5%	3%
B. academic help	70%	19%	8%	3%
C. physical fitness	65%	22%	8%	5%
D. interesting content	62%	30%	3%	5%
E. nature and preservation	46%	44%	5%	5%
F. computers and technology	51%	30%	11%	8%
G. reading activities	65%	27%	5%	3%
H. creation and design	57%	32%	8%	3%

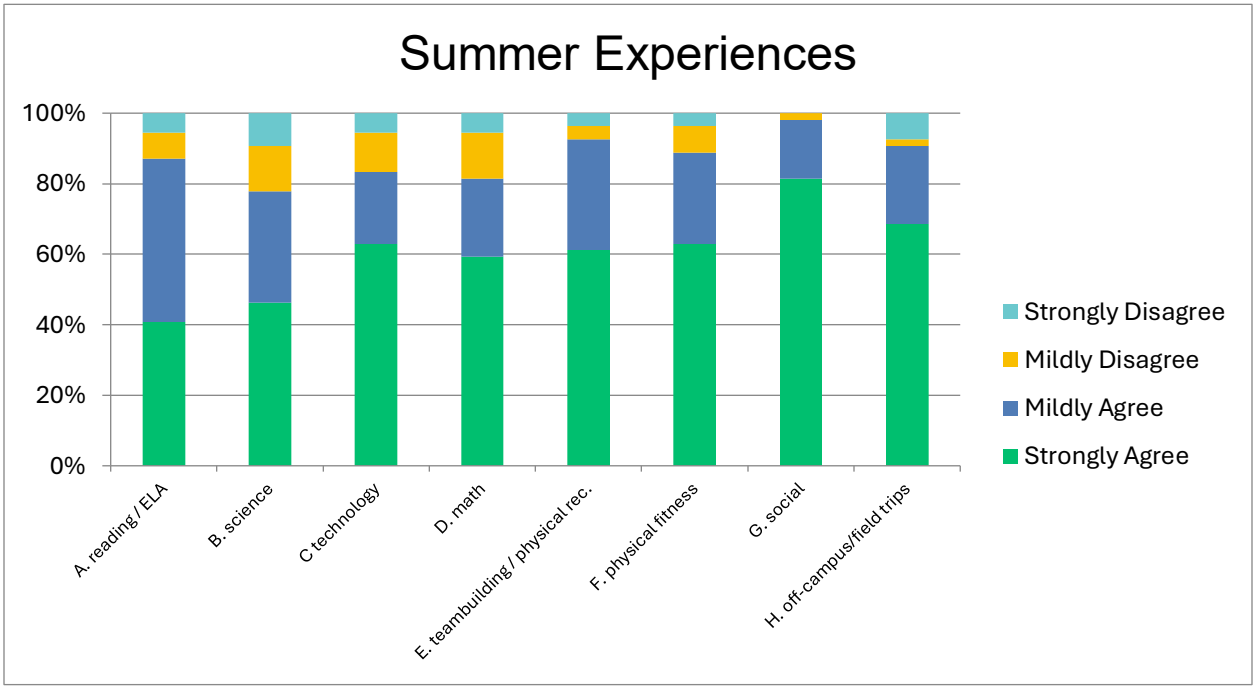
DNCR Student Survey - part two



A. I am more aware of my strengths as well as areas in my life that need to be improved.
B. Participation in the program is helping me identify my skillset which might lead to a career interest.
C. Participation in the program is helping me find positive ways to deal with stressful situations.
D. Participation in the program is helping me develop my sense of self-worth or self-esteem.
E. Participation in the program is helping me become more confident and assertive.
F. I have many opportunities to spend time with friends.
G. I am learning to cooperate and work with others with whom I may have differences.
H. I am learning to respect other people's personal and cultural differences.
I. I am more willing to express my opinions without hurting other people's feelings.
J. I get in less trouble in school because of things that I learn from adults in the after-school program.
K. My parents or caregivers are more involved in my education since I've become a participant in this program.
L. Overall, the program is having a positive effect on my family.
M. I am becoming a better version of "me".

	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Not Applicable	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. self-awareness	51%	38%	3%	8%	0%
B. career interest	59%	28%	5%	5%	3%
C. stress management	65%	19%	8%	5%	3%
D. self-esteem	59%	30%	3%	3%	5%
E. confidence	68%	19%	3%	5%	5%
F. social	54%	30%	8%	8%	0%
G. tolerance	59%	25%	8%	3%	5%
H. diversity	59%	30%	3%	0%	8%
I. tactfulness	65%	24%	3%	5%	3%
J. improved behavior	59%	23%	5%	5%	8%
K. parental involvement	59%	20%	11%	5%	5%
L. family-friendly	54%	33%	5%	3%	5%
M. self-improvement	59%	28%	0%	8%	5%

Summer Survey - part one



A.I have participated in reading/ELA activities and strengthened my skills for the upcoming school year.

B. I have participated in hands-on science activities and learned something new and interesting.

C. I have used computers and technology this summer.

D. I have participated in math games and strengthened my skills for the upcoming school year.

E. I have participated in team-building activities or other types of physical recreation.

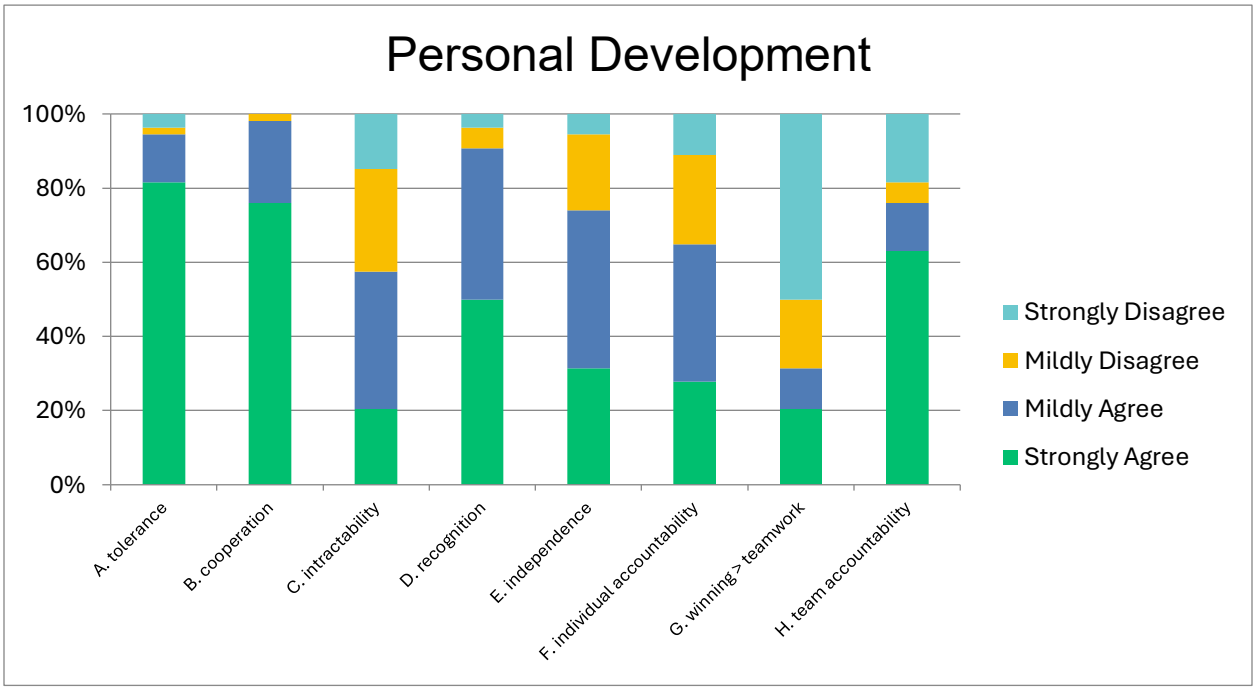
F. I have improved my physical fitness through participation in recreational activities.

G. I have had opportunities to make new friends and acquaintances.

H. The off-campus and/or field trips have been fun and interesting.

	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. reading / ELA	41%	46%	7%	6%
B. science	47%	31%	13%	9%
C technology	63%	20%	11%	6%
D. math	59%	22%	13%	6%
E. teambuilding / physical rec.	61%	31%	4%	4%
F. physical fitness	63%	26%	7%	4%
G. social	81%	17%	2%	0%
H. off-campus/field trips	69%	22%	2%	7%

Summer Survey - part two



A. It's important to understand and tolerate people's differences.

B. It's important to be able to work with people even though we may not have much in common.

C. I must be the person in charge when I work in groups.

D. It's important to get credit for my contributions to the team.

E. I prefer projects and activities that I can do by myself.

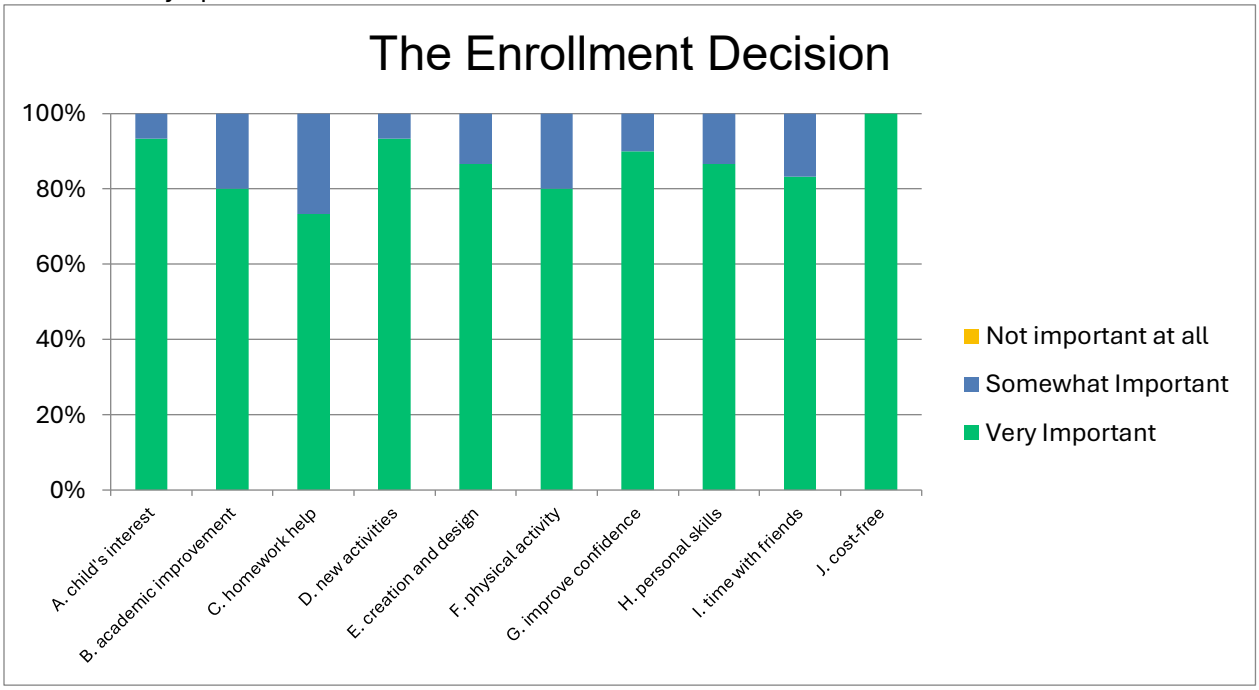
F. Whenever there is a group activity, there is always at least one person who doesn't contribute.

G. Winning is more important than cooperation and teamwork.

H. No one person should be singled out for blame if the team loses.

	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. tolerance	81%	13%	2%	4%
B. cooperation	76%	22%	2%	0%
C. intractability	20%	37%	28%	15%
D. recognition	50%	40%	6%	4%
E. independence	31%	43%	20%	6%
F. individual accountability	28%	37%	24%	11%
G. winning > teamwork	20%	11%	19%	50%
H. team accountability	63%	13%	6%	18%

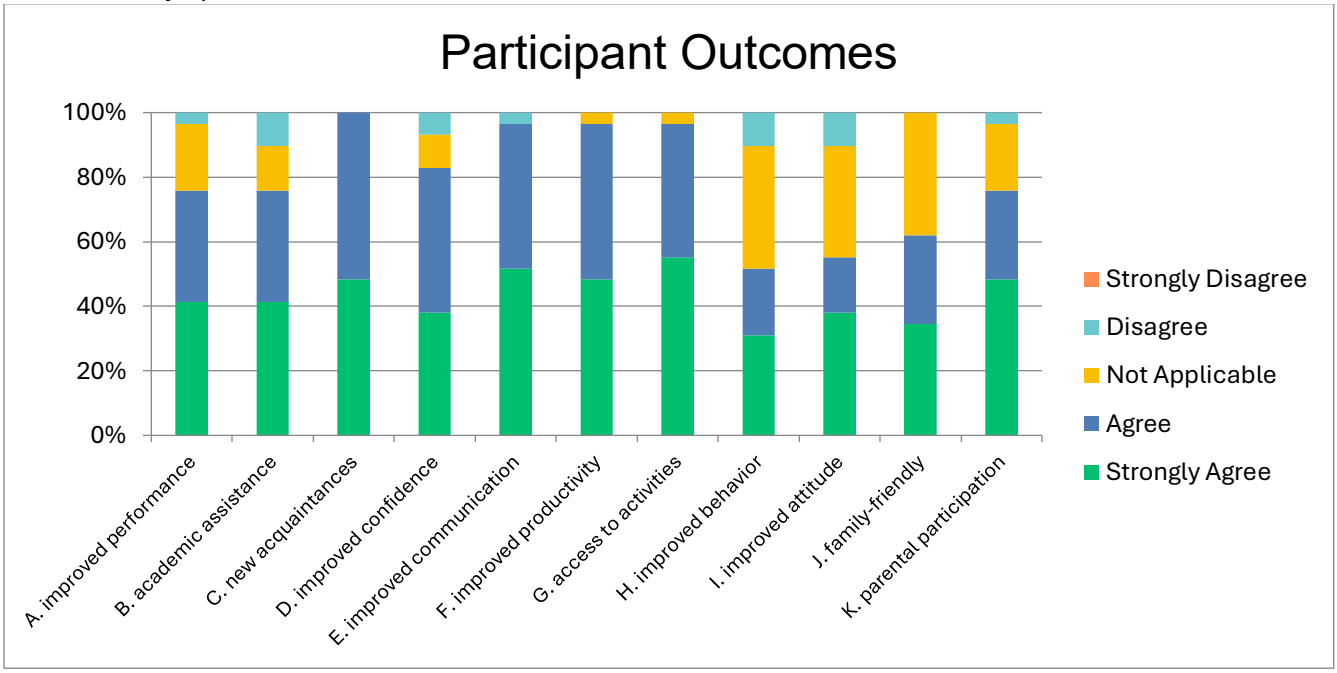
Parent Survey - part one



A. My child expressed interest in participating.
B. I believe the program will help my child perform better in reading or math.
C. I want my child to get help with homework.
D. I want my child to participate in new types of activities.
E. I want my child to create, engineer, develop skills, and produce artifacts.
F. I want my child to be more physically active after school.
G. I want my child to gain more confidence in himself/herself.
H. I want my child to develop better personal/behavioral skills (e.g., cooperation, social skills, citizenship).
I. The program provides a way for my child to be with friends.
J. The program is cost-free.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
A. child's interest	93%	7%	0%
B. academic improvement	80%	20%	0%
C. homework help	73%	27%	0%
D. new activities	93%	7%	0%
E. creation and design	87%	13%	0%
F. physical activity	80%	20%	0%
G. improve confidence	90%	10%	0%
H. personal skills	87%	13%	0%
I. time with friends	83%	17%	0%
J. cost-free	100%	0%	0%

Parent Survey - part two



A. My child is doing better in school overall.
B. My child is getting the academic help that he or she needs.
C. My child is making new friends.
D. My child is more confident.
E. My child talks more about what he or she is doing in school.
F. My child is more productive during the after-school hours.
G. My child can participate in activities that would otherwise not be available.
H. My child is developing better self-control and receiving fewer behavior-related referrals.
I. My child's attitude toward school has changed for the better since becoming a participant in the program.
J. I work or am otherwise busy during after school hours, thus the program is the best option for my child.
K. Overall, I participate more in my child's educational, enrichment and recreational experiences.
L. The program experiences have positively affected the entire family.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Applicable	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. improved performance	40%	57%	3%	0%	0%
B. academic assistance	37%	60%	0%	3%	0%
C. new acquaintances	43%	53%	0%	3%	0%
D. improved confidence	47%	43%	10%	0%	0%
E. improved communication	50%	40%	3%	7%	0%
F. improved productivity	53%	40%	0%	7%	0%
G. access to activities	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%
H. improved behavior	33%	27%	37%	3%	0%
I. improved attitude	37%	23%	30%	10%	0%
J. best aftercare option	63%	23%	7%	7%	0%
K. parental participation	33%	47%	13%	7%	0%
L. family-friendly	50%	47%	3%	0%	0%

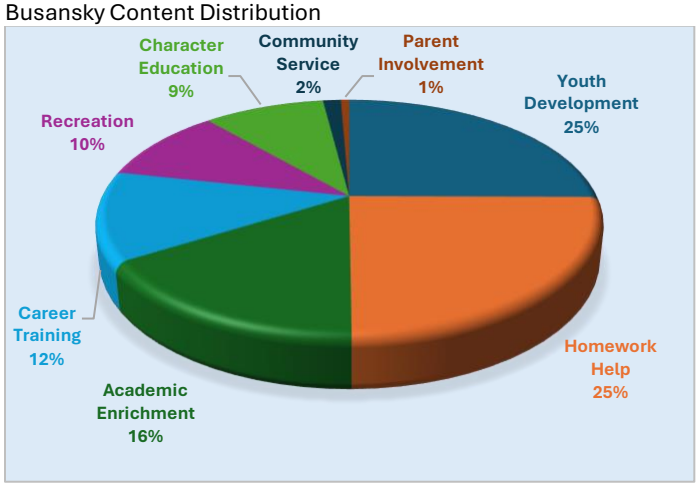
Observations and Outcomes

Busansky

At the EOY juncture of the program year, the major emphasis of this report is to correlate perspectives in relation to content exposure. The effect of the exposure will be determined by a combination of qualitative and quantitative data at the end of the program year. Affirmation of content exposure is defined by a combination of "strong" and "mild" agreement in relation to having participated or having been exposed to activities among the various components defined within the Project Activity Plan.

Program participants engaged in a survey to assess their level of experiences in the after-school program. The respondents provided affirmation that the program delivered on the core offerings. The ability of the program to facilitate homework completion, provide opportunities for physical fitness, and engage the participants with a platform of computers and technology, were areas that were unanimously affirmed. Overall, the program engaged the participants in an atmosphere that supported their creative abilities, allowing them to craft and design original artifacts or improve upon their skills within the various academic and enrichment content areas. The respondents unanimously supported that the assertion that the offerings were indeed "interesting", of which 75% provided enthusiastic support of the premise as determined by "strongly agree" responses.

Busansky Content Distribution



The figure above shows the allocation of documented activity types by hours of content as derived from PARS reports. As displayed, positive youth development and homework hep/tutoring were the core components of the program. "Homework club" was the most consistently attended program activity in the entire program. The seasonally themed "creation workshops" buoyed the youth development component, thus providing context to the high degree of positive affirmation that the respondents paid toward the ability of the program to provide creative and interesting content. A variety of enrichment programs from number skills to theater, student council to fun with words, dot the landscape of the academic enrichment component. The project theme of career exploration is nicely

supported via the offering within the career training component, wherein S.T.E.A.M. activities are featured prominently. 26% of the content hours in the recreation component were comprised of spring and winter cheer, with most of the hours spent in the seasonal *Sports Zone* activities. The character education component was infused with two activity areas, cooperative learning and the *Powerful Purpose* program.

The survey respondents provided insight to their personal self-development in relation to their time spent in program activities. Student survey findings suggest that the students benefitted inter-personally and intra-personally from their experiences and interactions. Through engagement in the social nature of the program, students grown in their capabilities in relation to tolerating differences (88% affirmation), respecting diversity (100%), and developing tactfulness & appropriateness in the expression of feelings/opinions (100%). Furthermore, students improved their intrapersonal concept as it pertains to improving one's self-awareness (88%), managing stressful situations (88%), improving confidence and assertiveness (88%), and developing self-esteem (88%). Students also cited that exposure to program activities helped them correlate personal strengths to potential career pursuits (100% affirmation), which ultimately displays the successful implementation of an enrichment program themed as career exploratory.

The ability of the students to complete homework assignments and acquire academic assistance are direct contributions that may aid the students' academic endeavors. The survey respondents agreed unanimously that they were able to complete homework assignments in the afterschool program; moreover, 88% of the respondents agreed that they were able to get help from teachers when necessary. The direct correlation to class preparedness can be best typified by the survey responses of the regular day teachers in their assessment of the students' *motivation to learn, homework completion, improvement in math, and improvement in ELA*. In the area of *motivation to learn*, for those students for whom need for improvement was identified, 56% made slight improvement, 17% made moderate improvement, 22% made significant improvement, and for 5% there was no change. Regarding *homework completion and class participation*, 24% made slight improvement, 29% made moderate improvement, 18% made significant improvement, and for 29% there was no change.

The students also participated in academic enrichment and youth development related content that infused math and ELA topics. Examples of some of the activities facilitated by the program were number skills, readers theater, and fun with words. The extra hours content exposure received in the after-school program, combined with the homework/tutoring provisions may help improve some students' abilities in math and ELA. The regular day teachers who were surveyed identified participating students who needed improvement in math and ELA. In mathematics, responses determined that 39% made slight improvement, 36% made moderate improvement, 11% made significant improvement, and for 14% there was no change. In ELA, responses determined that 38% made slight improvement, 38% made moderate improvement, 8% made significant improvement, and for 16% there was no change.

2024-2025 Academic Outcomes for Busansky

Letter Grade	4.0 Scale Equivalent
A	4.0
B	3.0 to 3.9
C	2.0 to 2.9
D	1.0 to1.9
F	0 to .9

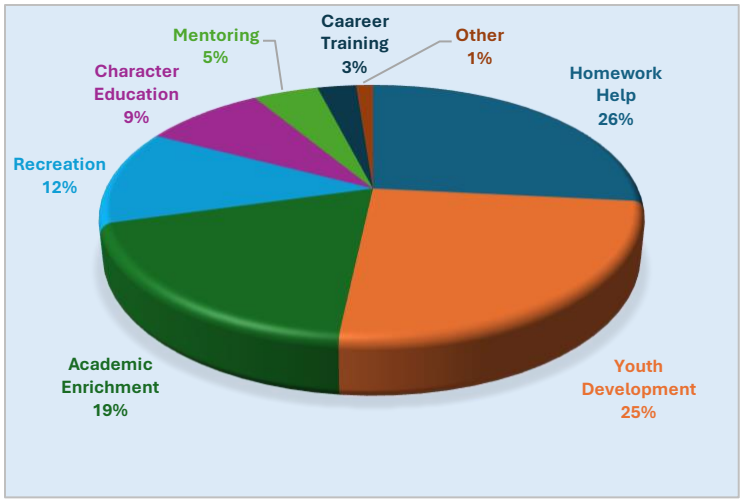
Third Grade					
Subject	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**FINAL**
Math	3.5	3.4	2.8	2.9	3.2
Reading	3.2	3.4	2.8	3.3	3.2
Writing	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.4
Fourth Grade					
Subject	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**FINAL**
Math	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.1	3.3
Reading	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.4
Writing	3.5	3.4	2.9	3.3	3.3
Fifth Grade					
Subject	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**FINAL**
Math	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.6
Reading	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.5
Writing	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.6
Site Average					
Subject	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**FINAL**
Math	3.3	3.2	2.9	2.8	3.1
Reading	3.0	3.1	2.9	3.1	3.0
Writing	3.3	3.1	2.9	3.0	3.1

The quarterly grade averages displayed within the table set shows consistency among the program participants on an aggregate scale. The trajectory of achievement scores from quarter to quarter is largely flat and unremarkable. Final averages are on the mid to upper scale of performance for all grade levels. The 5th grade group averages are about a half to one-point less than their younger grade level counterparts.

Denbo-Crichton (DNCR)

At the EOY juncture of the program year, the major emphasis of this report is to correlate perspectives in relation to content exposure. The effect of the exposure will be determined by a combination of qualitative and quantitative data at the end of the program year. The program apparently delivered on its core offerings as determined by the vast percentage of the respondents that affirmed the following: consistent homework completion (92%), exposure to interesting content (92%), reading activities (92%), nature and preservation content (90%), receiving academic support/tutoring (89%), opportunities to design and create (89%), and the usage of computers and technology (81%).

DNCR Content Distribution



The homework club activity was the most the consistently scheduled and attended activity among the various component areas with a total of 580 program hours accounting for throughout the course of the project year. A plethora of activities contributed to the wide-ranging youth development component, featuring among others cultural diversity, the Let's Grow Together series, creation workshops, and makers space. Academic enrichment featured a combination of S.T.E.A.M. and ELA offerings such as marine biology, *Mad Science*, number skills, readers theater, and *Fun with Words*. Physical recreation, typically a staple of any after school enrichment program, was suitably represented with activities such as sports zone, dance, and open recreational sessions where students get to pick their activities. *Powerful Purpose* and team building activities buoyed the character education component; similarly, the mentoring component featured the two main offerings, *Open Mind, Open Mic*, and select strategies. Lastly, the primary career training vehicle was anchored by select STEAM topics designed to expose the participants to careers of the future.

The responses garnered from prompts about character and positive youth development topics suggest that the program activities had a significant effect on behavior. 84% of the respondents agreed that they learned ways to cooperate better with classmates; moreover, 82% credited participation in program activities with improved behavior in school. The student respondents also grew positively in understanding and application of personal values. The students to varying respective degrees, attributed growth in the following areas to aspects they learned or experienced in the program: improved self-awareness (89%), stress management (84%), improved self-esteem (89%), improved confidence (87%), enhanced connection to potential career interest (87%). Interpersonally, the students also augmented their understanding of diversity and having respect for cultural and personal differences (89%), while enhancing their abilities to use tact in expressing opinions while respecting others' feelings on the topic at hand (89%).

The ability of the students to complete homework assignments and acquire academic assistance are direct contributions that may aid the students' academic endeavors. The survey respondents agreed unanimously that they were able to complete homework assignments in the afterschool program; moreover, 88% of the respondents agreed that they were able to get help from teachers when necessary. The direct correlation to class preparedness can be best typified by the survey responses of the regular day teachers in their assessment of the students' *motivation to learn, homework completion, improvement in math, and improvement in ELA*. In the area of *motivation to learn*, for those students for whom need for improvement was identified, 56% made slight improvement, 17% made moderate improvement, 22% made significant improvement, and for 5% there was no change. Regarding *homework completion and class participation*, 24% made slight improvement, 29% made moderate improvement, 18% made significant improvement, and for 29% there was no change.

The students also participated in academic enrichment and youth development related content that infused math and ELA topics. Examples of some of the activities facilitated by the program were number skills, readers' theater, and *Fun with Words*. The extra hours content exposure received in the after-school program, combined with the homework/tutoring provisions may help improve some students' abilities in math and ELA. The regular day teachers who were surveyed identified participating students who needed improvement in math and ELA. In mathematics, responses determined that 39% made slight improvement, 36% made moderate improvement, 11% made significant improvement, and for 14% there was no change. In ELA, responses determined that 38% made slight improvement, 38% made moderate improvement, 8% made significant improvement, and for 16% there was no change.

2024-2025 Academic Outcomes (DNCR)

Letter Grade	4.0 Scale Equivalent
A	4.0
B	3.0 to 3.9
C	2.0 to 2.9
D	1.0 to1.9
F	0 to .9

Third Grade					
Subject	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**FINAL**
Math	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.7	3.0
Reading	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9
Writing	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.8
Fourth Grade					
Subject	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**FINAL**
Math	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.5	2.8
Reading	2.9	2.8	2.9	3.1	2.9
Writing	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.1
Fifth Grade					
Subject	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**FINAL**
Math	3.3	2.8	2.8	3.2	3.0
Reading	3.2	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.1
Writing	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.5	3.3
Site Average					
Subject	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**FINAL**
Math	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9
Reading	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0
Writing	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.2	3.1

The quarterly grade averages displayed within the table set shows consistency among the program participants on an aggregate scale. The trajectory of achievement scores from quarter to quarter is largely flat and unremarkable. Final averages are on the mid to upper scale of performance for all grade levels.

Other Perspectives

Parents were surveyed to ascertain their initial expectations at the time of enrollment. The respondents unanimously deemed the cost-free provisions of the program as ultimately the most important factor, but the students' interest and desire to attend the program was virtually as important a factor in the decision to enroll. The survey responses suggest that the parents valued potential benefits in the personal development of their children more than the academic help provisions of the program. Based on the percentage of *very important* responses, the parents prioritized potential growth in the areas of confidence (90%), social/behavioral skills (87%), and peer socialization (83%) more than the academic improvement (80%), and homework help (73%). The parents perceived that the program would also expose the students to various new opportunities and experiences, ultimately garnering a 93% degree of *very important* responses. The ability to engage in activities that may enhance the students' abilities to create, and design was deemed a slightly more desirable aspect of the program than physical, recreational activities.

86% of the parents reported that they work or are otherwise busy during the after-school hours and the program was the best option for their children, thus providing the family with an optimal solution to after-school care. Parents boosted their level of involvement in their children's educational and enrichment experiences as affirmed by 80% of the respondents. Beyond just the utility provided by a cost-free, safe-haven during after-school hours, the parents perceived growth in several developmental attributes and behaviors since their children became active in the program. 90% of the respondents observed growth in confidence and communication; furthermore, 60% perceived improvement in attitude and behavior. Overall, all the parents surveyed agree that the program provides academic assistance and access to activities within a socially stimulating, productive environment. The parents were asked to select the component areas that they deemed most important and the top three responses were *homework help, academic enrichment, and recreation & character education* (tie). 97% of the respondents also acknowledged that they perceive overall improvement in their children's abilities in school, providing acknowledgment of the qualitative effect of the program.

The summer camp participants reported most enthusiastically about the social atmosphere and the associated opportunities to make new friends and acquaintances (81% strongly agree). The off-campus trips were acknowledged to be fun and interesting as determined by 69% strong affirmation. Recreation fitness comprised partly of teambuilding exercises was a well-affirmed staple of the program. The summer group was asked to gauge responses to survey prompts about the team/group dynamic. 65% of the respondents agree that there is *always* at least one person who doesn't contribute; however, 76% agree that in the event of a team loss or failure, no one should be singled out for blame. The students overwhelmingly support the concepts of tolerance (94%) and cooperation (98%), but the majority do value self-recognition (90%) and prefer independent activities (74%).

Focus Groups

Adding to the context of the survey results, eight Busansky students and five DNCR students participated in focus group discussions. Conversational findings gathered from the group discussions have been condensed into themes to engender the overarching perspectives of the students.

Academic Support

The students at both sites reported that they are typically given ample time during homework club to complete their assignments. Most finish their homework well before the sessions ends and are afforded opportunities to play cards or participate in activities that do not interfere with the climate as to allow others to have a relatively serene environment to complete their work. In some rare cases, students discussed having to finish homework at home, however the ability to participate in the enrichment activity format supersedes any occasional inconvenience. The staff members are well-equipped to facilitate and provide academic support as many are regular day teachers familiar with the academic content.

Staff Descriptions

The Busansky students described the ideal traits of club leaders and teachers that they consider to be most desirable among staff. Overall, the students used or alluded to the following descriptions of staff attributes that portend to a preferable climate in the after-school environment: *nice, permissive, fun, laid back, creative, kind, friendly, approachable, interpersonal*. When asked which staff members create the overall climate of enjoyability after school, the students mentioned the following staff members specifically as their favorites and provided the characteristics that make them stand out.

* The asterisks denote that the staff member was recognized by more than one student.

*Ms. S (*nice, friendly, engaging, interactive, permissive, generous*)
Ms. B (*nice, friendly, approachable, helpful, disciplinarian at times when needed*)
Ms. H (*respectful, kind, approachable*)

The DNCR students used or alluded to similar terms to describe the desirable traits for after-school staff in general, i.e. *relaxed*, *helpful, nice, kind, fun, sweet, giving*. The students seem quite happy with their teachers after school, but two teachers were mentioned among all the attending students as their favorites, and they described them in glowing terms.

*Ms. T (*nice, kind, funny, chill, generous, very creative, laid back, interactive*)
*Mr. H (*nice, helpful, smart, very creative, chill*)

Favorite Activities

The Busansky students mentioned the following clubs as their favorites: sports/recreation, Scouts, marine biology, and cheer. Soccer was declared as the most fun sport among the boys, but cheer was the favored physical recreational choice among the girls. Both sports activities were deemed invigorating for the physical exertion required to participate, but also challenging in terms the skills needed to perform well. Scouts was deemed interesting for the aspects of survival that are taught as part of the curriculum; additionally, marine biology was appreciated due to the high-interest content about animal life and habitats.

The DNCR students established preference for Cricket Club, sports training, and dance as their favorite activities; however, the club leaders and facilitators were given an equal amount of credit for their ability to make the activities fun and enjoyable. Cricket Club is a preferred activity due to the crafts and artifacts that they can produce, appealing to the students' ability to design and be authentic. Sports training is a favorite among the boys who prefer competitive recreation in various disciplines including football and basketball. Dance was described as a fun, invigorating-type activity that engenders confidence and enhances bodily coordination.

Peer Interactions

The students at both schools generally described the climate among the students to be friendly and social. Naturally, the students associate with their friends and any occasional disagreements are very quickly observed and the issues resolved by teachers and club leaders. Some annoyances occur in the form of chattiness, excitability, or the perceived level of immaturity of some classmates. However, these issues are largely benign and relatively tolerable among participants.

Suggested Improvements

The students were asked to assess the program and recommend improvements.

- More field trips especially toward the end of the year when the weather is nice
- Add another gym/recreation day to the weekly format
- Add cheerleading at DNCR
- More time for homework club; limited request, but was mentioned at both sites
- Add a librarian at Busansky for a high interest reading club
- Ask teachers at Busansky to monitor halls during homework club dismissal and usher students to activity locations
- Extra snack or bigger portions
- Add more clubs that enhance creation and design capabilities (arts/crafts, gaming, video-editing, engineering, etc.)

Findings

The program met its 30+ days attendance requirements with 68 regularly attending students at Busansky and 98 students at Denbo-Crichton for a satisfactory total of 166. The project delivered on many of its key objectives and initiated a remediation plan with actionable items to address two of the five *emerging* benchmarks derived from the end of the previous year's project assessment. The term, *emerging*, denotes that the lack of verifiable evidence suggests that the indicator threshold may not have been reached, but there were identifiable interventions and a clear understanding of the issues preventing the successful attainment of the objective. *Emerging* status of certain indicators reflects the overarching method of action research used to create a cycle of identifying issues, developing a plan of remediation with stakeholders, employing the action plan, and measuring results. The indicators and benchmarks that were a part of the action plan for the 2024-2025 project year are as follows, beginning with the two indicators that were successfully addressed during the project year.

INDICATOR	INDICATOR BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT
Indicator 1.3d	We will train all staff in being trauma informed to be better prepared to support all our students; especially those from active-duty military families.	RESOLVED
Indicator 2.1a	Through collaborative relationships with community partners, and Pemberton Township School building/district administration, our program will offer a minimum of 8 on site opportunities for literacy and related educational activities to the families of participating students by June of each year.	RESOLVED

Indicators 1.3d and 2.1a were successfully resolved as measured from year-to-year.

1.3d - KIT Academy offers professional development for child and youth programs, focusing on disability inclusion and behavior support, through self-paced online learning in KIT Academy, as well as in-person and virtual training. The evidence-based courses and training are developed and delivered by experts with deep experience in child and youth program settings. The Project Director and the Site Assistants undertook professional development coursework with KIT and received the practical and actionable skills they needed to support all children.

2.1a - The partnering organization, 4-H Youth Development/Rutgers Cooperative Extension, provided education in the areas of healthy habits, and the local library facilitated opportunities for families to access library resources.

INDICATOR	INDICATOR BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT
Indicator 1.4a	We will see an increase in the mean score by 4% of all students and an increase in the amount of advanced proficient students by 2%. This will be evidenced by the return in NJSLA scores.	EMERGING
Indicator 1.5a	There will be a 10% reduction of school conflicts and improved attitude/behavior evidenced in a pre/post survey to parents, teachers, and building administration.	EMERGING
Indicator 1.5c	There will be a 10% reduction of suspension or behavioral office referrals for students who participate in the program compared to non-participants. This will be evidenced by building administrator records.	EMERGING

The three *emerging* indicators reside in the areas of data collection and deepening linkages to the school day program, and both matters can be administered through increasing cooperative measures and communication. At the time of the publishing of this report, NJSLA test scores were not available, thus the indicator 1.4a benchmark cannot be measured. If the scores become available on a later date, this indicator can be properly measured and assessed for compliance.

In the case of related benchmarks, Indicators 1.5a and 1.5c the collection of said records may be possible but the process involves the scrutiny of releasing data of non-participants, thus establishing conditions where the data may not made available for reporting purposes. In addition, perhaps the quantitative approach which involves the collection and comparison of two groups, of which the non-participant group would be substantially larger, is not the right approach. Quite often, the number of infractions/referrals is skewed toward a few individuals within the group, hence a qualitative study might be best employed to achieve more substantive information about the relatively few students whose misbehavior rises to the referral level.

When analyzing the number of infractions/referrals among the participants, it is noted how just a few students can affect the overall average quite significantly. These students become outliers within the data set, and from an investigatory point of view, it might be more impactful to determine how the afterschool program helps these students with their behavior and which activities or "treatments" are most effective. For example, within the 3rd grade group at DNCR, 17 of the 22 participants had no reported infractions/referrals. Of the remaining five students, one had 22 infractions/referrals, another had 14, and the next highest number was 2. Even though most of the group had no infractions/referrals, the grade average was 1.8 due largely to the two students with 22 and 14, making these two students the outliers to the group. Engaging the behavioral outliers with specific program content offerings to help mitigate, tracking the numbers of and reasons for referrals, seeking to counsel these students, and measure progress at the end may establish better informational outcomes.

From an investigatory perspective, it would be informative to determine a few factors:

- How are students who are having behavioral issues during the regular day program, identified by the after-school officials?
- How is this information shared between the regular day and after school programs?
- Once identified, how does the program specifically help these students modify their behavior?
- Which activities prove most effective at producing positive changes?
- Which staff members are most effective at modifying behavior and what qualities do the staff members have?
- How should this information be collected and measured?

The group of outliers with substantially higher numbers of infractions/referrals than their peers would create a scenario where a case study approach might yield more useful information. The process of measuring the effect of program activities on these students over the course of the year might yield more evidence about the attitudinal and behavioral factors that produce high rates of referrals and how best to mitigate the factors to the benefit of the affected students.