

Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center

FOCUS 21

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

AT PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FOCUS 21 IMPLEMENTATION AT A GLANCE



2 schools



160+ students



10+ activity topics



From 3 - 6 PM

FOCUS 21, our 21st Century Program at **School 2** and **School 16**, is built around one simple belief: **every child deserves support beyond the school day**. From 3 P.M. onward, we surround students with everything they need to thrive, including daily homework help, hands-on STEM projects, creative visual and performing arts, and dedicated attention to their physical and mental well-being. This isn't just aftercare; it's a carefully designed safety net that keeps students safe, engaged, and emotionally supported during the hours that matter most.

01



**Academic
Support**

02



**STEAM
Enrichment**

03



**Social & Emotional
Growth**

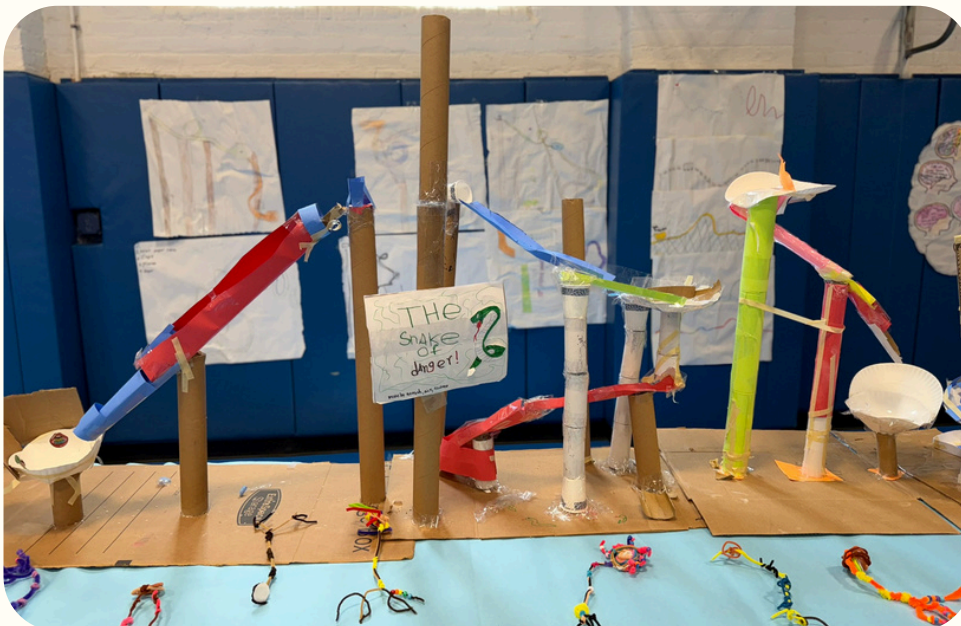
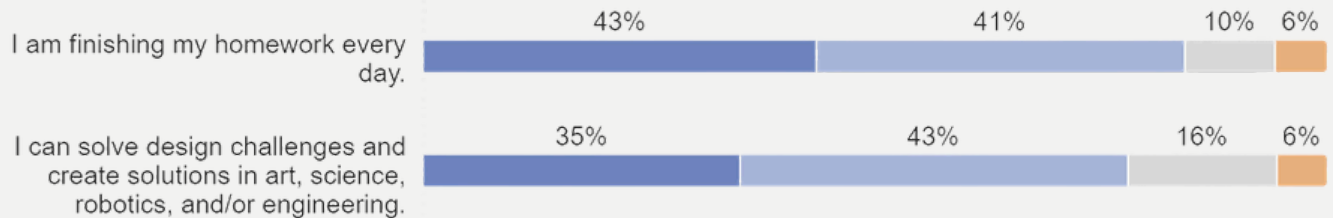
When Paterson students are given the right tools, the right environment, and the right people in their corner, they don't just meet high standards. They exceed them. **FOCUS 21 is where that journey begins.**

The program empowers students to confront challenges while adhering to state and local academic standards. It nurtures their confidence, enabling them to thrive both inside and outside the classroom. Survey results from the 2024-25 school year reveal that 84% of students at School 2 and School 16 report either completing (43%) or mostly completing (41%) their homework everyday since being in the FOCUS 21 program. Furthermore, students show greater confidence in being able to solve design challenges or create solutions in various academic subjects.

Since being in this program:

■ Yes! ■ Mostly Yes ■ Mostly No ■ No!

151 Responses



"I think this program is a must for School 2 and 16 because it is not only fun but it also enhances our academic abilities".

-FOCUS 21 Student

Our program embraces STEAM by fostering exploration, encouraging trial and error, and promoting teamwork. **We provide hands-on projects that inspire our students to become leaders, critical thinkers, and effective problem solvers.**

During STEAM enrichment, students engaged in a melted crayon art activity.

Students discovered that crayons undergo a physical change of matter, from solid to liquid, when exposed to heat. As gravity pulls the wax, it drips down the canvas and the crayon returns to a solid form when dried.

See examples of student projects



"The program teaches me how to build essential skills for the future."



-FOCUS 21 Student

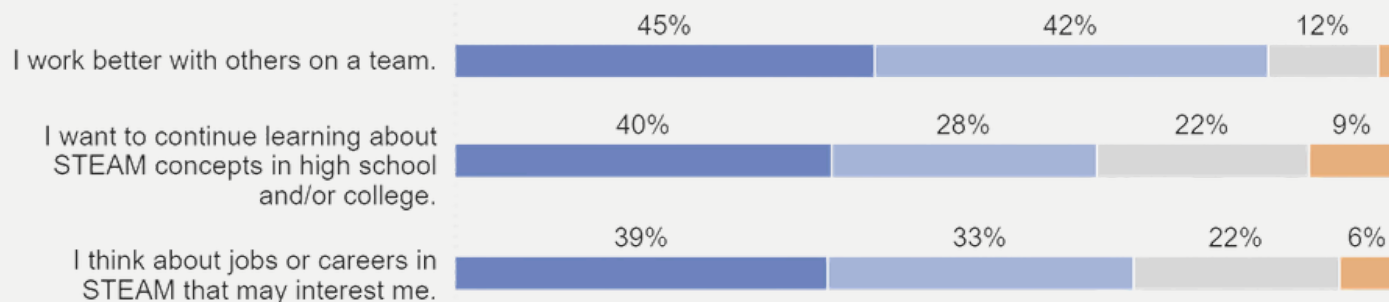


During the 2024-2025 school year, students from School 2 and School 16 responded to a survey about their experiences with STEAM enrichment. **Since joining the program, 87% of students report working better with others on a team, 72% report thinking about jobs or careers in STEAM that may interest them, and 68% report wanting to continue learning about STEAM concepts in high school and/or college.** These results suggest that the STEAM activities they participate in are both engaging and thought-provoking for them.

Since being in this program:

151 Responses

■ Yes! ■ Mostly Yes ■ Mostly No ■ No!



At Paterson, we are committed to creating a nurturing and inclusive environment for all our students, enhancing their mental and emotional well-being through engaging workshops and activities.

Our afterschool program assists students in:



**Managing their
emotions**



**Cultivating meaningful
friendships**



**Peacefully resolving
conflicts**

This commitment is underscored by the significant impact of our efforts. In fact, **48% of surveyed students from School 2 and School 16 revealed that without the FOCUS 21 afterschool program, they would otherwise be spending time alone.** This highlights the crucial role our program plays in fostering community and support.

What would you be doing if you didn't go to this afterschool program?

151 Responses

Spending time alone

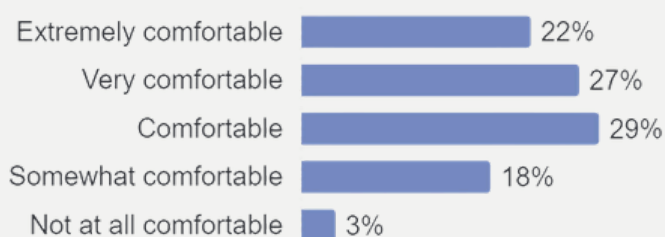


48%

Students also learned different social skills, especially how to work in a team. When asked what they learned in the program, responses included "important social skills," "to be kind," and "how to work in a group." **Survey results revealed that 78% of students feel comfortable sharing their opinions during activities and lessons**, highlighting the program's positive impact on their social development.

How comfortable did you feel sharing your opinion during the activities and lessons?

152 Responses



"I learned [by participating in the FOCUS 21 program] that it's better being with friends than being alone."

-FOCUS 21 Student



A Letter to the Reader



Our students at School 2 and School 16 would like to convey a united message to everyone reading this snapshot. Although they express their afterschool experiences in various ways, their fundamental sentiment remains consistent: **our 21st Century program is a vital component of their lives.**

Dear Reader,

We want you to know that our after-school program is a true necessity for us. It is the place where we receive homework help, are exposed to STEAM projects that challenge us, visual and performing arts that build our creativity, and sports, games, and many other activities to engage with our friends.

Every day we are surrounded by people who care and support us while creating a safe space for us to learn, build, and grow. We rely on this program to help us face challenges and find our confidence. This program provides opportunities that help us focus and give us tools to do well during the school day.

Thank you for taking the time to read this story and for seeing why this program is so important to our lives.

— Sincerely, The Students of School 2 and School 16



PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Paterson — A Promising Tomorrow
Together We Can*



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