21st Century Community Learning Centers Implementation Study Report

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PREPARED FOR THE

Tennessee Department of Education

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND PUBLIC SERVICE

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BY

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Executive Summary

Introduction and Overview

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative is a federally funded program that offers activities for K–12 students in high poverty areas. The activities are designed to improve students' academic performance and to offer enrichment opportunities in a safe environment outside of the regular school day. As originally authorized by Congress in 1996, the 21st CCLC program was designed to create "community learning centers," opening up schools for broader use by their communities and using school resources more efficiently. When the program was reauthorized as part of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, the new legislation emphasized serving students who were academically at risk. The stated purposes of the program as reauthorized are threefold:

1. Provide opportunities for academic enrichment to help students (particularly those attending low-performing schools) to meet state and local student academic achievement standards.
2. Offer students a wide variety of additional services, programs, and activities intended to reinforce and complement their regular academic program.
3. Offer families of students served an opportunity for literacy and related educational development.

Under NCLB, the program was structured as a formula grant to the states, with local grants awarded competitively by states to local entities. The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) specified that local educational agencies (LEAs), community-based organizations (CBOs), faith-based groups (FBOs), and other public or private organizations could apply for funding. The grants were to be awarded primarily to programs that would serve K–12 students attending schools with a high concentration of low-income families (40% or more of the students are from low-income families) and schools that had been identified in need of improvement (schools that failed to make adequate yearly progress [AYP] for 2 consecutive years by state measures). Approved activities for children and their parents include:

- Remedial education
- Academic enrichment
- Math and science activities
- Arts and music activities
- Proficiency classes for those with limited ability with English
- Tutoring and mentoring programs
- Assistance to students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled
- Recreational activities
- Technology programs and telecommunications
- Expanded library hours
- Parent involvement and family literacy activities
- Drug and violence prevention
- Counseling programs
- Character education
- Entrepreneurial education

Eighty-two (82) grantees served K–12 students in 293 centers[1] that operated across the state in program year 2010 (school year 2009–2010).[2] Sixty (73.2%) of the grantees were LEAs, and 22 (26.8%) were CBOs/FBOs. Approximately half of the grantees (43) were in their first year of funding in the *current* award cycle; 22 grantees were in their second year of funding in the current award cycle; and the remaining 17 grantees were in their third year.

Evaluation in Tennessee

The TDOE partnered with The University of Tennessee College of Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (UT SWORPS) to conduct a comprehensive statewide evaluation of 21st CCLC programs beginning in the spring of 2009. The evaluation encompasses both implementation and outcome studies and is being completed in several phases. Each phase contains the following activities:

Phase 1

UT SWORPS staff met with TDOE administrators to gather information regarding areas of interest, to gain an overview of operations, and to determine availability of secondary data. A focus group and conference call were held to gain input from selected grantees about the evaluation and availability of information. UT SWORPS staff drafted a preliminary evaluation plan (see Appendix A), including research questions to guide the study, the objectives of which were:

1. To determine whether grantees are making progress toward the primary program goals to plan, implement, or expand extended learning opportunities that will improve the academic performance of underachieving students in mathematics and language arts.
2. To investigate whether 21st CCLC programs are benefiting the students' social, cultural, emotional, and safety needs.
3. To identify the distinctive features of programs exhibiting exemplary outcomes.

Phase 2

UT SWORPS evaluators conducted a Feasibility Study to refine the evaluation plan and determine the practicality of conducting a comprehensive evaluation. UT SWORPS evaluators reviewed literature on afterschool programs and information available from the Profiles and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS). UT SWORPS evaluators also conducted four site visits to established programs identified by agency administrators. The visits included interviews with the grantee directors, site coordinator, and program staff and observations of program activities to gain a better understanding of the activities offered by each program and to refine the data collection instruments. Findings from the Feasibility Study were reported in July 2010.

[1] All references describing grantee and center population in the state for program year 2010 are based on information provided by TDOE administrators. The same information source is utilized later in this report to provide sample estimates and inform recommendations.
[2] Fifteen grantees served adult family members also.

Phase 3

UT SWORPS evaluators began an implementation study to determine how the 293 21st CCLC programs located across the state operate and to identify successes, challenges, and promising practices. The plan for this study phase includes visits to a random sampling of 36 sites to achieve an 80% confidence level and a margin of error of +/- 10%. In addition to the four sites visited during Phase 2, UT SWORPS evaluators visited 16 sites in spring 2011 and will visit the remaining 16 sites during the 2011–2012 school year. Findings from the Implementation Study will be detailed in an interim report (the current report) and final report (summer 2012). The findings from the Implementation Study will be supplemented with results from online surveys of site coordinators and feeder school principals collected at the population level which will provide a snapshot of all programs operating across the state. The report is planned for early winter 2012.

Phase 4

UT SWORPS evaluators will also conduct an Outcome Study to examine intermediate and long-term outcomes for students. UT SWORPS evaluators will track student outcomes through the use of the web-based student tracking system created by the UT SWORPS Information Technology Team. The start date for this phase is 2011, and the projected report date is spring 2013.

During the 20 site visits conducted during the first half of the Implementation Study, UT SWORPS evaluators conducted interviews with grantee directors, site coordinators, and feeder school principals. Focus groups were conducted with program staff and a full day of program activities were observed. The overarching goal of the Implementation Study is to answer the research questions related to implementation identified during Phase 1 and refined during Phase 2. Those questions are:

1. How do centers recruit students for the program?
2. What approaches are used by centers to engage and retain student participants? Which are most effective?
3. To what extent do centers attract and retain qualified instructors? What guidance and training do staff members receive?
4. To what extent do centers offer high-quality services in core academic areas (math and reading)?
5. To what extent do centers offer enrichment and support activities beyond core academic areas (e.g., nutrition, health, art, music, technology, etc.)?
6. What approaches do centers use to establish strong community partnerships? Which are most effective?
7. What approaches do centers use to establish effective working relationships with school personnel and students' families? What are some of the most promising practices in this area of operations?
8. How satisfied are students and parents with center operations?

9. How do programs plan for long-term sustainability?

Additionally, UT SWORPS evaluators began answering several research questions related to Impact. Those questions addressed in the current report are:

1. Do programs help students show improvement in school attendance, study habits, homework completion, etc.?
2. Do programs improve academic outcomes such as grades, test scores, etc.?
3. Do programs enhance students' social/emotional development and sense of safety?
6. What are some distinctive features of programs exhibiting exemplary outcomes (e.g., program structure, activities, community/school/family partnerships)?

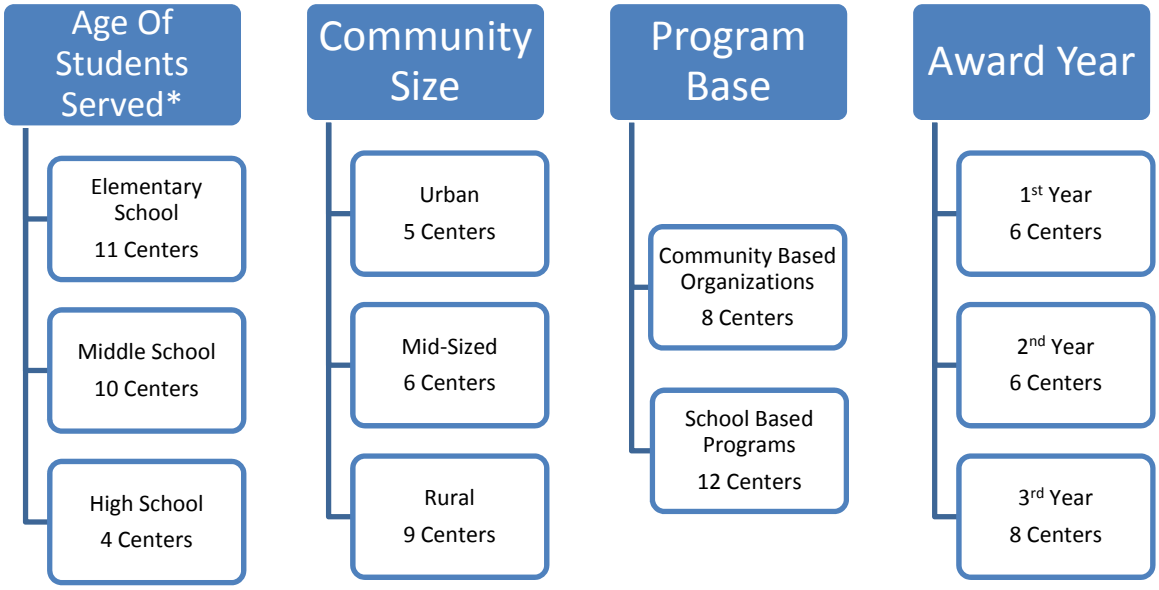
While the answers to these program impact-related questions will be addressed more fully in the Outcomes Study report, the qualitative/anecdotal information gathered during the site visits provides a starting point for assessing program outcomes.

Findings

Center Profiles

The 20 sites[3] that evaluators have visited to date were selected to be representative of the larger population of 293 centers across Tennessee. Eight of the sites were operated by community-based organizations (CBOs), and 12 were run by the school systems in which they operate (see Figure 1 below). All of the centers operated by school systems were housed in a feeder school. Two of the centers operated by CBOs were housed in a building that is off-site from the feeder school(s). Five of the centers visited were located in urban settings, and nine were designated rural. The six remaining centers were designated as mid-sized. At the time they were selected, six of the centers were in the first year of their current grant cycle, and another six were in their second year. The eight remaining centers were in their third award year. Several of the centers served more than one school level (i.e., elementary school and middle school students attended the center).

[3] As mentioned previously, four sites were visited in spring 2010 as part of the Pilot/Feasibility Study phase of the evaluation, and 16 were visited in spring 2011 as part of the Implementation Study phase.



*5 centers serve more than one age group

Figure 1. Sites Visited by UT SWORPS Evaluators

Community Needs

There were three general themes cited by grantee directors and site coordinators when asked what community need prompted the establishment of the center: faltering academics, lack of supervision, and isolated communities. The creation of the high school programs was driven by the academic concerns. While middle school programs also noted academic needs of the community as an impetus for applying for the grants, they addressed more of the enrichment needs associated with children growing up in isolated communities as well. One rural grantee director noted that the "isolation [of the community] created a group of kids without life experiences, with a very low vocabulary…You see those children fall behind in academics because of their limited experiences. They wouldn't know what a 'taxi' is so they fall behind in reading." In the elementary school, all of these themes appear, but the additional community need for supervision was more evident: "Most of the parents work out of the community, and if it were not for the [21st CCLC] afterschool program, the kids would be home alone" (site coordinator in a rural community). Programs that were utilized for child care made efforts to ensure that all of the children attending the program received the same academic benefits, regardless of the reason they were present.

Goals

The goals of the sites visited matched the community needs they were created to address. In the high schools, where credit recovery and catching up academically were the identified needs, the goals were narrowly focused. As a site coordinator from a rural CBO program said, "The bare bones is that we want to keep students on track to graduate." The middle school programs focused on academics, but also brought in enrichment and character development. A grantee director in a mid-sized area summarized

the goals as increasing student confidence because "so many of them can do it, but they think they can't. They don't believe it, but when you make a believer out of them and they realize they can do this, well [they think] 'maybe I can try something else.'" There was a sense among many of the 21st CCLC staff members that if the students could experience a success in the afterschool program, no matter how small, they would build the confidence to try more things. The more they tried, the more they would realize they could achieve, and thus success would become routine. Centers that worked with elementary students also bridged the twin goals of enrichment and academics. However, these programs defined "enrichment" differently than their middle school counterparts. Specifically, while enrichment for the middle schoolers meant more confidence boosting and character development, for the elementary schoolers it meant exposure to new experiences and learning decision making skills.

Relationship with Feeder Schools

The attitude of the site coordinators and their view of their role in relation to the teachers and the school principal was the most significant factor noted in creating a positive relationship between the feeder school and the 21st CCLC program. As one principal from a rural middle school noted, "The afterschool program should support what the school does and the school should support the afterschool program." When site coordinators and grantee directors see their role as supporting the work of the regular day teachers, the school staff appear to embrace the partnership and work collaboratively with the afterschool program. There were only two centers that hinted at cooler relationships with feeder schools and in both of these, either the site coordinator or school principal was new to their role. In one instance, a new principal was feeling out the program, and in the other, a new site coordinator was learning the school's procedures.

Sustainability

This is an area where few of the grantees have a clear plan. While most acknowledge that the end of the 21st CCLC grant is something they need to prepare for, they feel that they have few options for alternative funding, and what funds are available would not be sufficient to maintain their current level of programming. Only three of the centers said they currently utilize a mix of funding streams which would help offset the impact if they lost the 21st CCLC grant funding. Five grantees mentioned other grants they were applying for by name but noted that in the current economic environment, funding was becoming scarce. Several grantee directors noted that private donations were down as well. The consensus among the grantee directors was that few other funding options are available.

Inputs

Facilities and Resources

All but two centers visited operated on the grounds of one of their feeder schools. UT SWORPS evaluators felt that all programs visited used areas that were safe and free of health hazards. Most of the sites allowed students free access to resources and materials. For example, they had books that were readily available to students, made computers available for students to use during activities, and

allowed students to select from a variety of educational games during enrichment activities. For three sites, two in rural communities and one in a mid-sized county, the UT SWORPS evaluators were concerned that the program space or furniture and equipment was inadequate to accommodate the program's activities. This was mainly due to programs operating in a room that was too small or noisy to accommodate the afterschool activities.

Staffing

Three fourths of the programs visited utilized regular school day teachers as lead tutors in their program, and all of the programs run by school systems utilized regular school day teachers. Additionally, three of the CBOs used regular school day teachers, and four used tutors with other backgrounds. One CBO had a mix of regular school day teachers and instructors with other backgrounds. Several of the programs had assistants who either supported the teachers as they provided academic tutoring or ran enrichment activities separate from the academic tutoring. In general, the site coordinator or the grantee director was responsible for hiring the staff for the program. Most site coordinators discussed looking for characteristics such as "experience," "good rapport with the students," and "energetic" when hiring teachers. While none of the sites reported much trouble with turnover, several mentioned difficulty finding enough teachers who met their criteria, and even more mentioned not having anyone they could call in as substitutes should an afterschool teacher need a day off. This was especially true for programs in rural areas. Most centers reported that their maximum student to teacher ratio was 15:1. Some centers went as high as 20:1, but many employed assistants to keep the ratio under 10:1 or 12:1.

Across the board, the centers that employed regular school day teachers in their afterschool programs did not require the teachers to attend any additional training beyond the in-service hours they are obliged to complete each year for licensure. The assistants and other professional staff members were much more likely to be required to attend trainings through the grantee. Training topics included first aid and CPR, warning signs of child abuse and neglect, detecting bullying, and discipline strategies.

Participants

The profile of the students who attended these programs varied by the grade levels the program served. At the four high school programs visited, the principals described the communities as economically disadvantaged. The other dominant characteristic of the high school program population discussed was a lack of parental education. One principal remarked that the parents of the afterschool program's participants are "not highly educated [so there is] no one pushing them [the students] to achieve in education."

Staff at the centers that serve middle schoolers discussed the participants' home situations, economic status, and academic level as well when asked to describe the target population. Regardless of the size of the community in which the program was located (rural, urban, mid-sized), staff noted that most of their participants came from single parent households or lived with a relative or other adult.

> "Probably as high as 65-70% of the kids at this school are not living with their biological parents. They live with grandparents or step-parents who've adopted them, or with an aunt and uncle. We also have a high transient population….We have one girl who is living with someone who couldn't tell us what their names are." (site coordinator at a rural school-based program)

Staff members who worked with middle schoolers in urban settings said that the participants came from low income households. One teacher in a focus group reported that the average family income in the community served by the center was $5,000 per year. Programs working with elementary schoolers reported many of the same participant characteristics as the middle school programs—many single parent households and a mix of academic levels among parents.

Community Collaborations

Partnering with other community service agencies, businesses, schools, and individuals appeared to be one area in which the CBOs had less difficulty than the school-based programs. This is likely due to the fact that these CBOs are "known entities" within the community and generally offer more services than just the 21st CCLC afterschool program. Larger organizations may also have grant writers and CEOs who spend time in the community raising funds and recruiting community partners.

For the school-based programs, the onus for creating the partnerships falls to the grantee director or site coordinator to market the afterschool program and initiate relationships in the community. While this requires more effort on the part of the program leadership, the results have been quite positive: "I've never asked anyone to be a partner who has turned me down" (grantee director in a rural school-based program). When approaching prospective partners, a grantee director in a mid-sized community felt that the best results came from being as specific as possible. "It helps to have a plan [for the class the partner will lead] laid out and a description of the job responsibilities" and to determine whether there is anyone at the organization who can provide what they are asking for. Both CBOs and school-based programs reported experiencing difficulties in partnering with other agencies due to the recent economic downturn. Partnerships are disappearing because either agencies have closed their doors, or they have had to limit outreach efforts due to funding constraints.

Activities

Recruiting and Enrolling Participants

Recruitment in the high school programs is unique in that "you basically recruit every day," one rural site coordinator said. These high school programs are goal oriented, helping students recover a credit, make up an assignment, or earn time for time. If a student needs the services offered by the program, they will attend until they reach their goal and, then, if the program has been successful and helped them "catch up," they will not return. Therefore, the recruitment efforts for the high schools center around getting the word out that the service is available for students who need it. These programs put the afterschool program in the daily announcements, had the teachers talk about it in their classes, and made use of the computerized call-out systems to alert parents of the program.

By their nature, school-based programs and programs run by CBOs frequently utilized different strategies to target and recruit students. School-based programs were most often staffed entirely by school personnel—frequently teachers from the school in which the programs operate. They have access to student TCAP scores and other assessments, which most programs relied on to identify students demonstrating an academic need.

The second phase of the recruitment process is getting the parents to sign up their children for the program. For the high school programs, again, this mainly consisted of making the parents aware that the program was offered. Most middle and elementary school programs sent a letter home to the parents explaining why their child was "invited" to join the program and giving specifics about the program's operations. Several then followed up with personal phone calls to the parents of targeted students.

The CBOs run more of a risk of a separation between the feeder schools and the afterschool programs. If the afterschool program wants assistance from the feeder school in identifying and targeting students, CBOs may have an additional hurdle to overcome because they must first focus on relationship building with the school. Two of the CBO programs that UT SWORPS evaluators visited had the benefit of the site coordinator maintaining an office in the feeder school. While both of these site coordinators also discussed the importance of relationship-building with the school staff, these were also the only CBO programs that received referrals directly from school guidance counselors as part of the counselors' standard intervention when a student is failing a course. While steps have to be taken to maintain the relationship between the feeder school staff and the afterschool program, site coordinators being housed in the school during the day seems to facilitate collaboration.

Some programs focused on raising awareness of the program among the parents while others focused on enticing the students to join. It appeared that the latter strategy was more successful in driving enrollment.

When asked what groups of students the program had difficulty enrolling, staff at two of the high schools noted that they have a difficult time recruiting freshmen and sophomores. Because these high school programs focused on credit recovery for students who failed classes, students in 9th and 10th grades "feel there is enough time to make up" the credits before the end of their senior year. Conversely, for the middle school programs, the hardest population to recruit was at the other end of the age range—the 8th graders. In some cases, the student says they do not want to attend the program and the "parents feel they are old enough to stay home alone" and, thus, do not make them attend. In other cases, the parents want the older child home because they are the babysitter for a younger sibling.

Retaining and Engaging Participants

The number one reason UT SWORPS evaluators heard that explained why students either do not enroll or drop out of the program was transportation. Families that rely on the school bus do not have the resources to pick up their child from school every day. Even when programs provide transportation, it is not a cure-all. The programs that offer transportation in rural communities noted that the children could

be riding the bus for an hour or longer in the evening simply because of the distances the buses had to travel between the children's homes. High school students working on credit recovery can spend 30 minutes or 2 hours a day working on their lessons. The system is designed to be flexible, but it is this flexibility that makes providing transportation for these programs infeasible. The other barriers to retaining students that UT SWORPS evaluators heard were nice weather, sports programs, and the social stigma associated with the afterschool program. Nice weather, especially in the spring, distracted students from the afterschool programs at a time when the programs were really focusing on TCAP preparation. Sports practices run concurrently with the afterschool program, but some centers were able to work out tutoring schedules with the coaches to help students remain academically eligible for extracurricular activities. Finally, two programs mentioned that some students felt like the afterschool program was only for economically disadvantaged youth and, thus, did not want to attend due to this associated stigma.

Programs also offered incentives to the students to keep them from dropping out. Three programs that UT SWORPS evaluators visited used end-of-year field trips as rewards for attendance. One site coordinator reported throwing a pizza party for the student who attended 30 days. Another program had an awards ceremony where the students were given gift cards for their attendance. Programs also tried to keep students engaged through the activities they offer. One center that only had academic activities for the elementary and middle school students they serve reported structuring those activities so that they interested the children but were not too challenging and did not need to be finished at home.

Keeping the students interested in the activities is another challenge the programs face. The concern for the academic activities is to reinforce the material from the regular school day while keeping the lesson "fresh." Several teachers reported that while they were initially concerned about merely repeating the lesson taught during the day again after school, the smaller class sizes in the afterschool program naturally change the way the lesson is presented. Students also reportedly enjoyed hands-on activities and anything where they utilized technology. One of the potential challenges of engaging students that programs serving wider age ranges faced is ensuring that the activity is an appropriate match for the students' age and ability levels.

Academic Activities

The high school programs' "activity" was tutoring with teachers or peer mentors or credit recovery using a computer program. Some high school teachers mentioned offering planned academic enrichment activities to students, such as a forensics lab, but these were infrequent and seemed to be targeted to higher achieving students. In the elementary and middle school programs, the focus was more toward helping underachieving or borderline students score "proficient" on their TCAPs and master the State Performance Indicators (SPIs). Math, reading, and language arts were cited by most of the programs as their academic foci. Some also incorporated science, but this was the exception. In terms of the specific academic activities offered, UT SWORPS evaluators witnessed a wide range of offerings.

Enrichment and Recreation Activities

Enrichment activity offerings were varied and often quite inventive. Several programs mentioned field trips to places such as aquariums, Dixie Stampede in Pigeon Forge, sporting events, and trips to nearby metropolitan areas, like Nashville, Memphis, and Atlanta. Two programs that UT SWORPS evaluators visited were staging plays that would be performed for the entire school or center. Many of the programs mentioned trying to teach the participants about healthy eating, exercise, and the problems associated with obesity, an important and laudable goal as Tennessee has the third highest obesity rate in the nation, with 32.3% of residents identified as obese.[4] However, at only two programs visited did evaluators observe any programming that specifically targeted healthy lifestyle choices. Programs also reported offering activities ranging from Tae Kwon Do to piano lessons to geocaching.

Links with Regular School Day

The majority of the programs visited reported relying on informal channels to share information between the afterschool staff and regular school day teachers who were not associated with the afterschool program. The school-based programs have a clear advantage in this area because they are on-site, and at least some of the tutors in the school-based afterschool programs are regular day teachers as well. Some programs created assignment sheets or work folders for the regular day teachers to complete, indicating what work the student had to finish in the afterschool program. Some teachers utilized these systems heavily, but others seemed to feel that it was “one more thing” added to their already overflowing plates.

Often, CBOs face a hurdle in communicating with the regular day teachers that school-based programs do not. CBOs tend to rely more on the site coordinators to communicate with the regular day teachers. The relationships between the CBOs and the schools appeared to evidence more of a range of levels of collaboration. Two programs that operated on school grounds and that provided the site coordinator with an office in the school itself demonstrated the same level of collaboration as the school-based sites discussed above. Once the program moved off-site and utilized tutors who are not also regular day teachers, the barriers to communication began to emerge. A site coordinator for a CBO in an urban setting reported that the feeder school had an open door policy for afterschool staff. However, this site coordinator also reported that they relied on students in the same classes to inform the program staff if they had homework. Another site coordinator reported having to “go through their [student’s] backpacks” to see if they had homework.

Parent Interaction

The programs that reported the most avenues for and investment in parental involvement were the larger CBOs in urban areas. Teachers at school-based programs often reported speaking to parents as part of their regular day teacher duties, and they did not identify much need to communicate with parents while wearing their ‘afterschool teacher’ hats. CBO programs don’t have this natural avenue for

[4] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2009). *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data.* Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

communication and, thus, there was more investment of time and resources to establish these communication channels. Regardless of the type of program, all of the high school centers reported difficulty with engaging parents. The programs dealing with the younger students reported more interaction with the parents. This was mainly a function of logistics because the most frequent avenue for communication cited was informal conversations held when parents arrived for pick up at the end of the day.

Outputs

Number of Days/Hours of Operation

The centers that UT SWORPS evaluators visited operated from 1.25 to 3 hours each day they were open. Three centers (two elementary school programs and one high school program) offered tutoring before school in addition to their afterschool programming. Two of these programs reported offering before school tutoring to accommodate teacher and student schedules, and one offered before school tutoring to provide additional student slots in the program.

Eleven of the centers visited operated 4 days per week. Four centers operated 5 days a week, and they often reported turning Friday into "fun-day," when students were not required to complete their homework and could instead spend the entire session in enrichment or recreational activities. Only one center visited operated on the weekend. Eight of the centers visited reported also operating summer programs for the students. These ranged from 1-week "camp-like" programs to 6-week intensive academic programs.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance policies regarding the number of days per week that a student must attend were rare. More common were policies that dropped students from the program if they missed a certain number of days, either consecutively or over the course of the year. These ranged anywhere from four to 10 absences. Most of the site coordinators with whom UT SWORPS evaluators met, however, saw these absences as more of a warning sign which prompted a conversation with the student or parents to try to get the child back into the program.

Typical Day Activities

The structure of the academic activities offered differed by age group. While the elementary and middle school students usually progressed through different sessions that focused on academics or enrichment, high school students went to the room of the teacher from whom they needed extra help or worked on their credit recovery computer program. High school teachers did not plan sessions for the students but offered assistance on homework or provided more in-depth explanations of a topic with which a student was struggling. For credit or content recovery, students worked through their lessons independently until they mastered the material. For the younger students, the structure that was most often witnessed was first completing homework and then participating in a planned academic activity. The majority of

centers visited broke up the afterschool sessions into multiple activity blocks. They spent 45 minutes to an hour on one activity and then switched to another.

Parent and Student Satisfaction

While no quantitative data regarding satisfaction are available for this report, UT SWORPS evaluators gathered some qualitative data indicating the level of support that programs receive. Eleven of the 20 sites visited reported having a waiting list either at the time of the visit or at some point during the year. The fact that there is more interest than space available is indirect evidence that parents see value in the program. At one high school program, parents collected on the day of the site visit to meet with the evaluators and detail the benefits their children have received by participating in the program.

In terms of gauging student satisfaction, UT SWORPS evaluators relied on the program observations and feedback from the program staff. In only two of the dozens of activities observed did UT SWORPS evaluators note students who were not engaged in the activity and were visibly bored. More often, students were excited about the activity or at least worked diligently to complete it.

Intermediate Outcomes

Academic/Cognitive

The majority of academic improvements discussed were general impressions that the program staff had about student achievement or anecdotal information about specific success stories.[5] Some sites reported using assessments with pre and posttests, but those had not been completed and analyzed at the time of the site visits. One site coordinator referenced scores on the assessments given during the previous school year, stating that 85% of the participants demonstrated growth. A site coordinator in a rural school reported that at least 75% of the program participants showed improvement based on their in-class tests and report cards. Another site coordinator indicated using student report cards to track progress: “The improvement is phenomenal for some, but a good bit of them will progress, at least three fourths of them. Not in all subjects across the board, but in some of them.” Additionally, teachers often noted that students in the afterschool programs were more likely to turn in their homework than before they began participating.

Social/Emotional

Several of the non-academic skills and benefits that students received from participating in the afterschool program were those that are directly related to the enrichment activities the center offers. Students learned Tae Kwon Do and karate, and some students learned how to play a piano. However, program staff also listed several outcomes for students beyond developing a skill set. A program assistant pointed out that “Karate teaches them obedience, listening. The instructor is teaching them

[5] As mentioned previously, intermediate and long-term outcome measures will be addressed in future phases of the evaluation plan through use of the web-based application and through teacher, parent, and student surveys. This section only focuses on the qualitative reports of student outcomes provided to UT SWORPS evaluators during the interviews and focus groups.

stuff and they don't even realize it: respect, follow[ing] directions. They are all life lessons." Several programs also stressed the importance of building a child's confidence. As an assistant tutor remarked, "They can do anything if that confidence level is up."

Innovative Practices

UT SWORPS evaluators noted several innovative or unique practices that the centers employed to address common problems faced by many 21st CCLC programs. UT SWORPS evaluators will track these practices in future phases of the evaluation to determine what role they play in creating positive outcomes for students.

- In an effort to overcome burnout, a few of the centers created flexible schedules for the teachers involved in the afterschool program. Centers hired enough staff so that teachers could work only 1 or 2 days a week in the program. These were most frequently middle and high school programs where the teachers specialized in a subject area and provided tutoring in that subject in the afterschool program as well. The one concern for centers was the increased number of teachers needed to fully staff the program; however, all of the teachers from these programs expressed satisfaction with the way the program operated.
- In order to build community partnerships, one site director at a CBO in a rural community attended every community meeting or advisory panel discussion that even remotely pertained to the afterschool program. She became more aware of what agencies and programs were operating in the community and was able to meet with their leaders and discuss tie-ins and collaborations with the afterschool program. "The networking really helps because all the other agencies have goals and objectives also." She has been able to gets services such as presentations by community leaders, and can meet some of the community agencies' needs by having students in her afterschool program complete service learning projects.
- One school-based program that UT SWORPS evaluators visited employed a part-time site coordinator who was not a staff member at the feeder school. To overcome this potential barrier between the program and the school, the site coordinator attended the school's summer staff meeting to introduce herself and explain the program. She also put flyers in the teachers' mailboxes using a distinctive color of paper. Finally, she relied heavily on other afterschool program staff who were employees of the feeder school to market the program among regular day teachers.
- To get parents to sign up their children for the afterschool program, one center makes a formal presentation to the parents at a school event early in the academic year. They introduce the program and explain the manner in which students are targeted. The grantee director at this middle school program said, "We use the data to recruit… We share with parents that out of the 100 [students] invited [to participate in the program] only 40% of those who turn down the offer for help will graduate from high school… It's a compelling story."

- Transportation was a barrier to enrollment for many programs. The staff at one feeder for a high school program worked to create an informal network of carpoolers. After the staff identified the students who needed credit recovery, they got them together in a small group where they matched the students who lacked transportation with classmates who lived nearby and could provide rides home.
- One high school program had parents of students who enrolled in the credit recovery program sign a contract stating they would ensure that their child attended the program and that the parents would follow through with the student at home. There was a strong sense in the program that the only way the extra help could be effective was for the parents to be involved and committed.
- One urban program utilized a rewards system that not only encouraged the participants to meet certain behavioral and educational standards, but also enticed the children to attend the program and remain engaged throughout the school year. Students earned points for academic achievements like turning in their homework, raising their grades, and making honor roll. They also were rewarded for behavioral improvements or character development, such as being assertive, helping clean the classroom, or encouraging a peer. Students also lost points for being suspended from school, receiving D's or F's on their report cards, arguing, or not following directions. The points were tracked on a bulletin board in the afterschool classroom. At the end of the year, students traded in points for tangible items like shoes or iPods or even earned field trips.
- To target Tennessee's childhood obesity epidemic, one program offered activities that specifically targeted health and fitness. The school coach is an afterschool staff member. All of the students rotated through the recreational activities he lead, which were often something like dodge ball or kickball. However, before the students could play the sport, they had to participate in mandatory exercises. During the observation, students ran various types of drills across the gym, including sprints, crab walk, ladders, etc. According to the coach, while the overall goals of the recreational activity are to get the students to "learn to work together, get along and follow rules," it is also true that some of the children were above a healthy weight and this is the only exercise they got. Therefore, an implicit goal of the activities "is to help them slim down."
- The concern for the students' food security led one urban CBO to go one step further in its efforts to ensure the health and well-being of its students. At the end of the day, students were sent home with a "goodie bag" filled with healthy snacks such as granola bars, oranges, and juice. The bag also contained a treat such as a candy bar.
- In an effort to ensure that the afterschool program was aligned with the regular day school's instruction, one program created pacing guides for use in the afterschool program that mirrored the pacing guides used by the school. The afterschool guides lagged about 2 weeks behind the regular day school's guides. Doing this allowed the afterschool program to

continue to reinforce the foundations learned while the regular day teacher built upon it in subsequent lessons.

- Site coordinators at two urban CBOs worked to overcome the barrier created by operating a program off-site from the feeder school by making the effort to be a visible presence in those schools. They personally visited a feeder school every day to meet with teachers, principals, or other school staff. Some of this contact was an informal "check-in" with a participant's regular day teacher to see how the student was doing and in what areas the students were still struggling. These site coordinators, however, also went to parent-teacher conferences to advocate for the student and teach the parent how to advocate for the student, so that the parent can continue to do so after the student has left the program.
- A site coordinator in an urban area utilized the automated call-out technology to keep abreast of student assignments and upcoming tests. The feeder schools for this center alerted parents to tests and some larger assignments via the automated call-out system. The site coordinator was added to that notification list, so he received the same phone calls that the parents did. He found this to be an extremely helpful method to stay aware of students' needs.
- One site coordinator at an urban CBO program detailed the systematic approach that the umbrella organization took to gain parental involvement. The CBO had a parental involvement coordinator who worked with all of the programs that were run through the agency managing parent activities. Any parent who enrolled their child in the program had to sign an agreement stating they would be involved in the program, were committed to attending two parent meetings per year, and would volunteer for 6 hours in the program annually. The agency also offered activities for the parents, such as parent nights, a parent advisory group, and workshops for adults. Finally, the staff at the afterschool program promoted parent involvement within the feeder schools and parents checking the child's homework by modeling that behavior in their interactions with the family.
- Two of the programs that worked with elementary schools structured their day so that the recreational activity was the first activity of the day. They felt that this allowed the students time to expend some energy which then helped them focus on their homework or other activities. "They can breathe a minute and then go on with their academics." One middle school program pulled out the younger students for a special mini-session where they practiced focusing and calming techniques, such as walking across a balance beam and completing a "connect the dots" worksheet. The site coordinator reported to UT SWORPS evaluators that, due to the success they felt this strategy had with the younger students in the afterschool program, the school planned on employing it before TCAP testing to help mentally prepare the students to take the tests.

Conclusion

The beauty of the 21st CCLC grants was their recognition that different communities had different needs, and the people best suited to understand and address those needs were members of those

communities. Therefore, grantees receiving 21st CCLC funding were able to design their own afterschool programs that addressed the needs of their communities. Programs differ in size and scope. They offer different services and target different goals. One thing they all have in common is a desire to help the children they serve to succeed and a willingness to do whatever they can to reach that goal.

Introduction

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative is a federally funded program that offers afterschool activities for K–12 students in high poverty areas. The activities are designed to improve students' academic performance and offer enrichment opportunities in a safe environment outside of the regular school day. As originally authorized by Congress in 1996, the 21st CCLC program was designed to create "community learning centers," to open up schools for broader use by their communities, and to use school resources more efficiently. Early in the program, grantees were selected directly by the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

Since its inception, the program's intent and focus have changed significantly. In 1998, under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended, Title IV, Part B, the program was expanded and refined. These revisions were made to encourage school-based academic and recreational activities after school and at other times when schools were not in regular session in an effort to reduce drug use and violence. When the program was reauthorized under Title IV, Part B of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, the new legislation emphasized serving students who were academically at risk. It also required that programs focus on expanding educational enrichment opportunities for children attending low-performing schools. More specifically, the stated purposes of the program as reauthorized are threefold:

1. Provide opportunities for academic enrichment to help students (particularly those attending low-performing schools) to meet state and local student academic achievement standards.
2. Offer students a wide variety of additional services, programs, and activities intended to reinforce and complement their regular academic program.
3. Offer families of students served an opportunity for literacy and related educational development.

At the same time, the program was restructured as a formula grant to the states, with local grants awarded competitively by states to local entities. States are allocated funds in proportion to the awards they receive under Subpart 2 of Title I-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for the preceding year and are allowed to define additional criteria for funding. Funds available to initiate and expand afterschool programs at the local level have grown rapidly from an appropriation of $750,000 in the program's first year to $1.18 billion in fiscal year 2010. It is estimated that 10,140 centers operated in communities across the nation in fiscal year 2010, serving approximately 1.6 million children and 250,000 adults. Approximately 870,000 children attended for 30 days or more during the year (FY 2010 ED Budget Summary: Elementary and Secondary Education).

Overview of Implementation in Tennessee

As administration of grants shifted to the states after the 2001 program reauthorization, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) specified that local educational agencies (LEAs), community-based organizations (CBOs), faith-based groups (FBOs), and other public or private organizations could apply

for funding. The grants were to be awarded primarily to programs that would serve K–12 students attending schools with a high concentration of low-income families (40% or more of the students are from low-income families) and schools that had been identified as being in need of improvement (schools that failed to make adequate yearly progress [AYP] for 2 consecutive years by state measures). Furthermore, the TDOE specified that services could be provided to adult family members of participating students. Approved activities for children and their parents include:

- Remedial education
- Academic enrichment
- Math and science activities
- Arts and music activities
- Proficiency classes for those with limited ability with English
- Tutoring and mentoring programs
- Assistance to students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled
- Recreational activities
- Technology programs and telecommunications
- Expanded library hours
- Parent involvement and family literacy activities
- Drug and violence prevention
- Counseling programs
- Character education
- Entrepreneurial education

Funds are awarded by TDOE on a competitive basis. Successful applicants can receive up to 3 years of funding (3-year minimum grant cycle) with the opportunity for 2-year extensions for programs that are making adequate progress. The first cohort of grants in Tennessee was awarded in 2002, and some centers have reapplied and received continuous funding since that time (now in the second or third award cycle).

Eighty-two grantees served K–12 students in 293 centers[6] that operated across the state in program year 2010 (school year 2009–2010).[7] Sixty (73.2%) of the grantees were LEAs, and 22 (26.8%) were CBOs/FBOs. Approximately half of the grantees (43) were in their first year of funding in the *current* award cycle; 22 grantees were in their second year of funding in the current award cycle; and the remaining 17 grantees were in their third year. Some grantees relied exclusively on 21st CCLC funding for operations of some centers, whereas others supplemented operational budgets with other resources.

Since evaluation is such an important part of successful implementation, programs are evaluated at the federal, state, and local levels. The federal evaluation requires a focus on improved academic outcomes (grades, test scores, teacher perceptions of student progress in attendance, homework completion, etc.). At the state level, the focus is on improved academic and behavioral outcomes and identification of characteristics of successful programs (best practices). Furthermore, according to the 21st CCLC guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Education, each local grantee must undergo a periodic

[6] All references describing grantee and center population in the state for program year 2010 are based on information provided by TDOE administrators. The same information source was utilized later in this report to provide sample estimates and inform evaluation plans.
[7] Fifteen (15) grantees served adult family members also.

evaluation for the dual purposes of improving its program and providing evidence of effectiveness on academic measures.

Overview of 21st CCLC Evaluation in Tennessee

With the 21st CCLC program now well established in Tennessee, the TDOE partnered with The University of Tennessee College of Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (UT SWORPS) to conduct a comprehensive statewide evaluation of 21st CCLC programs beginning in the spring of 2009. The evaluation will encompass both Implementation and Outcome Studies and will be completed in several phases.

In Phase 1, UT SWORPS staff met with agency administrators to determine broad areas of interest, gain an overview of operations, and determine availability of secondary data that could be utilized for the evaluation. In addition, evaluators held a focus group and hosted a conference call in June 2009 to gain input from selected grantees about the evaluation and availability of information. UT SWORPS drafted a preliminary evaluation plan, including research questions to guide the study.[8] Overall evaluation objectives from this plan included:

1. To determine whether grantees are making progress toward the primary program goals to plan, implement, or expand extended learning opportunities that will improve the academic performance of underachieving students in mathematics and language arts.
2. To investigate whether 21st CCLC programs are benefiting the students' social, cultural, emotional, and safety needs.
3. To identify the distinctive features of programs exhibiting exemplary outcomes.

In Phase 2, UT SWORPS conducted a feasibility study to refine the evaluation plan and determine the practicality of conducting a comprehensive evaluation. As part of that study, evaluators reviewed afterschool program literature, information available from the Profiles and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS), and other available student and program data. In addition, evaluators conducted site visits to four established programs identified by agency administrators. During the site visits, interviews were conducted with the grantee directors, site coordinator, and program staff. Evaluators also observed program activities to gain a better understanding of the activities offered by each program and to refine the data collection instruments. Findings from the Feasibility Study were reported in July 2010.

As part of that report, a more detailed evaluation plan was generated to guide the comprehensive Implementation and Outcome Studies—Phases 3 and 4 of the evaluation. As noted in the plan, the Implementation Study focuses on Objective 1, a description of 21st CCLC program operations, but also begins to address Objective 2, an assessment of the extent to which program activities led to specific results (products or outputs). However, for the purposes of the Implementation Study, the assessment

[8] A copy of the evaluation plan with detailed evaluation objectives, research questions, and data collection activities is included in Appendix A.

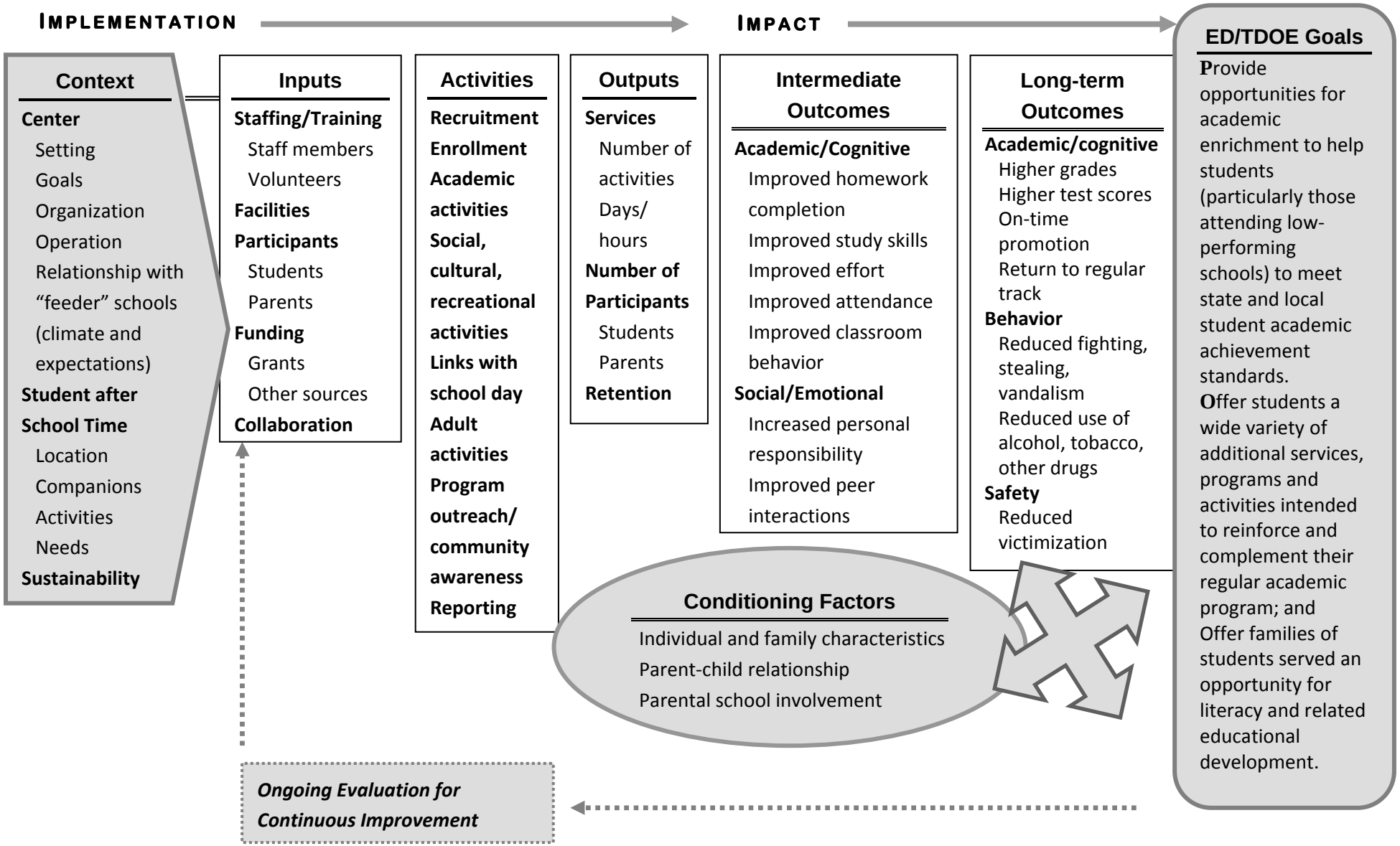
of these results is purely through anecdotal information gathered from stakeholders when asked about their impressions of their program's impact. Additionally, the Implementation Study begins the process of addressing Objective 3, identifying exemplary practices, by noting unique or innovative practices which will be matched to program impact as part of the Outcome Study. While the site visits that UT SWORPS evaluators conducted (and continue to conduct) for the Implementation Study provide an in-depth perspective of the operations of the sample, Phase 3 will also include online surveys for all site coordinators and feeder school principals that will provide a snapshot of center operations at the population level. These surveys are just getting underway at the time of this writing and, thus, are not included in the current report, which is an interim report of the findings from the first half of data collection from the Implementation Study. A follow-up/final report will be submitted at the end of data collection, tentatively scheduled for summer 2012, which will include data from all 36 site visits and the online surveys.

Phase 4 of the evaluation will focus on the impact the centers have on the participants. UT SWORPS evaluators will examine the outcomes that centers are achieving with students and switch to quantitative data collection through the use of a web-based student information tracking system developed for the TDOE by the UT SWORPS Information Technology Team. The Outcome Study will attempt to address the following research questions:

1. Do programs help students show improvement on measures such as school attendance, study habits, homework completion, etc.?
2. Do programs improve academic outcomes such as grades, test scores, etc.?
3. Do programs enhance students' social/emotional development and sense of safety?
4. Do programs help decrease disciplinary actions for students and at-risk behaviors in and out of the classroom (e.g., violence, use of drugs, smoking, contact with gangs, etc.)?
5. Are all demographic groups of students affected by program activities the same? How do they differ? What is the role of program dosage, if any?
6. What are some distinctive features of programs exhibiting exemplary outcomes (e.g., program structure, activities, community/school/family partnerships)?

UT SWORPS evaluators will present a report of the findings of the Outcome Study at the end of the data collection that addresses these research questions. The logic model presented on the following page illustrates the various aspects of the implementation and outcome studies.

21st CCLC Program Logic Model



Model adapted from Moore, M., Dynarski, M., Mullens, J., James-Burdumy, S., and Rosenberg, L. (2000). Enhancing the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Evaluation: A Concept Paper. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., in partnership with C. S. Mott Foundation and U.S. Department of Education.

Figure 2. 21st CCLC Program Logic Model

The implementation piece of the study includes visits to 36 different program sites. These visits began in 2010 at four sites identified by TDOE administrators as part of the Feasibility Study. Evaluators visited 16 additional sites during the 2010–2011 school year. The final 16 visits will be made during the 2011–2012 school year. This preliminary report provides findings from the 20 visits conducted in the 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 school years.

Evaluation Objectives and Related Research Questions of Current Study

Since program administrators were interested in learning about operations and understanding how programs may differ in their operations, an Implementation Study was a logical step. During the past year, the UT SWORPS evaluators began Phase 3 of the study, focusing entirely on the Implementation Study. The first of the three evaluation objectives guided the study:

1. To determine whether grantees are making progress toward the primary program goals to plan, implement, or expand extended learning opportunities that will improve the academic performance of underachieving students in mathematics and language arts.

Research questions were formulated based on the needs of TDOE administrators, and those questions guided the Implementation Study. Those questions are:

1. How do centers recruit students for the program?
2. What approaches are used by centers to engage and retain student participants? Which are most effective?
3. To what extent do centers attract and retain qualified instructors? What guidance and training do staff members receive?
4. To what extent do centers offer high-quality services in core academic areas (math and reading)?
5. To what extent do centers offer enrichment and support activities beyond core academic areas (e.g., nutrition, health, art, music, technology, etc.)?
6. What approaches do centers use to establish strong community partnerships? Which are most effective?
7. What approaches do centers use to establish effective working relationships with school personnel and students' families? What are some of the most promising practices in this area of operations?
8. How satisfied are students and parents with center operations?
9. How do programs plan for long-term sustainability?

UT SWORPS evaluators began the process of addressing the second (whether programs are benefiting the students' social, cultural, emotional, and safety needs) and third objectives (identify distinctive features of programs exhibiting exemplary outcomes) by asking stakeholders about their assessments of program impact and by identifying unique or innovative practices observed during the visits. This

anecdotal information regarding impact will be used to describe the quantitative findings obtained in future phases of the evaluation, enabling UT SWORPS evaluators to paint a fuller picture of the outcomes that students are achieving. The research questions addressing program impact that UT SWORPS evaluators began to address include:

1. Do programs help students show improvement in school attendance, study habits, homework completion, etc.?
2. Do programs improve academic outcomes such as grades, test scores, etc.?
3. Do programs enhance students' social/emotional development and sense of safety?
6. What are some distinctive features of programs exhibiting exemplary outcomes (e.g., program structure, activities, community/school/family partnerships)?

Organization of the Report

The next section of this report details the Theoretical Framework and Methodological and Analytical Approach and includes a description of data collection instruments, strategies, and a description of programs visited; provides an overview of the analytical approach; and discusses limitations of the study. The Findings section follows the logic model and presents discussion about Context, Inputs, Activities, and Outputs, and Intermediate Outcomes. Finally, conclusions are presented regarding the evaluation objectives and research questions.

Theoretical Framework and Methodological and Analytical Approach

The Implementation, or process, evaluation provided a way to gather information about how programs operate, including the Context within which they operate, the Inputs or resources they have available to them, the Activities in which they engage, and the Outputs or products of their activities, including numbers served and activities provided (all detailed in Figure 2 above). To understand how the 21st CCLC programs operate, the evaluation plan calls for collecting core information from all 293 site coordinators and principals of "feeder" schools (through online surveys). This part of the study is currently underway, and results will be available next year.

To achieve a greater depth of understanding, visits were planned to sites that were representative of the differences between LEAs and CBOs/FBOs, rural and urban areas, younger and more mature programs, and programs serving children of different age groups. The 2-day scheduled visits were conducted by a team of two UT SWORPS evaluators and, as reported earlier, are being conducted in two stages and will be completed during the 2011–2012 school year.

During the visits, UT SWORPS evaluators obtained a description of the larger environment in which a particular program operates, the extent to which programs recruit staff who are prepared to meet student needs, and the extent to which the target population is reached and strategies are used to retain students. Given the primary intent of 21st CCLC funding, a heavy emphasis was placed on assessing the extent and quality of academic and non-academic activities. The communication flow between program staff, school administrators, and regular day teachers was also explored. In addition, activities designed to increase parental involvement and community awareness were assessed.

This section of the report provides an overview of the data collection methods used, details the program selection process, and describes the programs visited. Additionally, this section explains both the evaluation procedures and the analytical approach used for the study this year. Limitations of the study are also discussed.

Overview of Data Collection Methods

The evaluation plan devised for the larger study was used in guiding this portion of the Implementation Study. Table 1 presents an overview describing the research questions, type of data needed, and the methods of data collection for the current study.

Table 1. Overview of Research Questions, Data Needed, and Data Collection Methods for Implementation Study

Research Question		Type of Data Needed	Method of Data Collection
IMPLEMENTATION	***1. How do centers recruit students for the program?***	Description of recruitment efforts for 21st CCLC program	Program staff interviews during site visits with selected sites
	2. What approaches are used by centers to engage and retain student participants? Which are most effective?	Program efforts to engage and keep students interested	Program staff interviews during site visits with selected sites
	3. To what extent do centers attract and retain qualified instructors? What guidance and training do staff members receive?	Program efforts to attract instructors Qualifications of program staff Staff characteristics Initial and ongoing training for program staff	Telephone interviews with grantee directors of selected sites Program staff interviews during site visits of selected sites only
	4. To what extent do centers offer high-quality services in core academic areas (math and reading)?	Activity description School administration's perceptions of academic program quality and links with school day Operational support for program effectiveness with respect to academic enrichment activities	Program staff interviews during site visits of selected sites "Typical" afternoon activities observed at selected sites
	5. To what extent do centers offer enrichment and support activities beyond core academic areas (e.g., nutrition, health, art, music, technology, etc.)?	Activity description Perceptions of program quality with respect to non-academic enrichment components Operational support for program effectiveness with respect to non-academic enrichment opportunities	Program staff interviews during site visits of selected sites "Typical" afternoon activities observed at selected sites

Research Question		Type of Data Needed	Method of Data Collection
IMPLEMENTATION	***6. What approaches do centers use to establish strong community partnerships? Which are most effective?***	Description of program efforts to establish partnerships, program outreach, and community awareness Success of partnerships and building of relationships (e.g., effective communication among stakeholders) Operational support for program effectiveness with respect to collaboration and communication	Telephone interviews with grantee directors of selected sites Program staff interviews during site visits of selected sites
	7. What approaches do centers use to establish effective working relationships with school personnel and students' families? What are some of the most promising practices in this area of operations?	Description of program effort to establish partnerships (including offering of parent literacy and educational development activities) School personnel (teachers and administrators) regarding perception of effectiveness Operational support for program effectiveness with respect to interrelationships and communication among stakeholders	Telephone interviews with grantee directors of selected sites Program staff interviews during site visits of selected sites
	8. How satisfied are students and parents with center operations?	Student perceptions of program quality and extent to which they have benefited Parent perceptions of program quality and its benefit to themselves and their child	Student survey Parent survey
	9. How do programs plan for long-term sustainability?	Other sources of funding	Telephone interviews with grantee directors—selected sites only

Research Question		Type of Data Needed	Method of Data Collection
IMPACT	***1. Do programs help students show improvement on measures such as school attendance, study habits, homework completion, etc.?***	Pattern of homework completion (quality and timeliness) at individual level of data for program participants Demonstrated study skills at individual level of data for program participants Demonstrated level of effort at individual level of data for program participants School attendance at individual level of data for program participants Student perceptions of program quality and extent to which they have benefited Parent perceptions of the program, benefit to their child, and reasons for enrolling the child	Teacher survey EIS Student survey Parent survey Staff interviews (or focus group)
	2. Do programs improve academic skills and test scores?	Grades at individual level of data for program participants Test scores at individual level data for program participants Promotion (delayed or on time) at individual level of data for program participants Return to regular track (if applicable) at individual level of data for program participants	Teacher survey EIS Student survey Parent survey Staff interviews (or focus group)

Research Question		Type of Data Needed	Method of Data Collection
IMPACT	***3. Do programs enhance students' social/emotional development and sense of safety?***	Demonstrated personal responsibility at individual level of data for program participants Interactions with peers at individual level of data for program participants Expressed aspirations at individual level of data for program participants Expressed feelings of being safe at individual level of data for program participants Patterns of victimization at individual level of data for program participants Student perceptions of program quality and extent to which they have benefited Parent perceptions of the program quality and benefit to their child	Teacher survey Student survey Parent survey Staff interviews (or focus group)
	6. What are some distinctive features of programs exhibiting exemplary outcomes (e.g., program structure, activities, community/school/ family partnerships)?	Program outcomes (intermediate and long-term as evidenced by prior analysis) Program characteristics Program activities Community/school/family partnerships	APR Data collected from various stakeholders during the course of the study Results of data analyses Summary reports Follow up interviews/visits with selected programs

Program Selection Process for Implementation Study

In 2010, UT SWORPS evaluators and statisticians looked at 21st CCLC grantee information in order to design a representative random sampling plan for site visits. The data were divided into the following strata:

- County type (urban and non-urban counties),
- Cycle type (grantee in first/second year or third year of grant cycle),
- Grantee size (*small*—those that serve one, two, or three sites; *large*—those that serve four or more sites), and
- Grantee type (LEAs or CBOs/FBOs).

Utilizing a simple random selection framework, UT SWORPS evaluators developed sampling plans by both grantee and center with a range of confidence intervals and margins of error. UT SWORPS evaluators recognized that the larger the sample, the more confident they could be that the statistical estimates derived were representative of the entire population; however, feasibility had to be considered. For example, to achieve a 90% confidence interval with a +/- 5% margin of error, 63 of the 82 grantees would need be involved in site visits in order to generalize findings to the larger population.[9] Given the available resources, this number of visits was not feasible. Consequently, the evaluation team decided on a simple random sampling plan by center with an 80% confidence level and a margin of error of +/- 10%, requiring a sample of 36 centers. Since four centers were visited during the Pilot phase of the project and no major changes were made to the data collection instruments, the remaining 32 centers chosen for the sample had the following number and proportions of the identified strata.

[9] Since 60% of the grantees had three or fewer sites, performing site visits by number of grantee sites was impractical. This stratum was dropped from the sampling plan.

Table 2. Selection Criteria for Site Visits

County Type	Grantee Percentage	Center Sample	
		#	%
Urban	22.6	7	21.9
Non-urban	77.4	25	78.1
Total	**100.0**	**32**	**100.0**

Grant Cycle Type	Grantee Percentage	Center Sample	
		#	%
1st or 2nd year	80.5	25	78.1
3rd year	19.5	7	21.9
Total	**100.0**	**32**	**100.0**

Grantee Type	Grantee Percentage	Center Sample	
		#	%
School-based	78.0	26	81.2
CBO/FBO	22.0	6	18.8
Total	**100.0**	**32**	**100.0**

Once the selection was made, a corresponding alternate site was chosen randomly and matched by *county type* for each selected site in case one of the selected sites could not participate in the study.

Description of Programs Visited

As discussed previously, the decision was made that the site visits to selected centers be spread across 2 evaluation years, with an interim report submitted after the first year. Sixteen 21st CCLC programs were visited in spring 2011, and the four programs visited in spring 2010 were included as part of this portion of the study to validate data collection instruments and determine feasibility for the larger study. The 20 programs were located across the state in urban, rural, and mid-sized areas and were a mix of school-based and community- or faith-based programs. A few were in their first years of operation, while others had been operating for multiple years and across multiple grant cycles. Table 3 details the sites visited and their characteristics.

Table 3. Sites Visited and Their Characteristics

Grantee Name	Center Name	Center Type	Award Year	Community Size
Backfield in Motion	Rose Park Community Center	CBO	2nd	Urban
Boys & Girls Clubs, TN Alliance (09)	Cleveland State	CBO	1st	Urban
Boys & Girls of the TN Valley (08)	Jackson—Madison County	CBO	2nd	Rural
Cannon County REACH Program (09)	Cannon County High School	CBO[10]	1st	Rural
Carter County Schools	Hunter Elementary	SD	1st	Mid-size
Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools (07)	Kenwood Middle	SD	3rd	Mid-size
Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools (07)	Northwest High School	SD	3rd	Mid-size
Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools (09)	Barksdale Elementary School	SD	1st	Mid-size
Douglas Cherokee Economic Authority (07)	Grainger High School	CBO	3rd	Rural
Douglas Cherokee Economic Authority (07)	Rutledge Middle School	CBO	3rd	Rural
Gibson County Schools	Spring Hill Elementary School	SD	2nd	Rural
Hardin County Schools	Pickwick South Side School	SD	3rd	Rural
Haywood County Schools	East Side Elementary School	SD	1st	Rural
Jackson County Schools	Jackson County High School	SD	3rd	Mid-size
Memphis City Schools (07)	Magnolia Elementary	SD	3rd	Urban
Martha O'Bryan Center	Kirkpatrick Elementary School	CBO[11]	2nd	Urban
Martha O'Bryan Center	THRIVE-South 7th Street-MOBC	CBO	2nd	Urban
Polk County Schools (07)	Benton Elementary School	SD	3rd	Rural
Sumner County Schools (09)	Rucker Stewart Middle School	SD	1st	Mid-size
Tipton County Schools (08)	Crestview Middle School	SD	2nd	Rural

Overview of Evaluation Procedures

Evaluators used a multi-method approach to gather information on each of the programs. First, an interview was conducted by telephone with the grantee director. Then, arrangements were made with each of the site coordinators for a 2-day visit to the program. During the on-site visit, interviews were conducted with the site coordinators, feeder school principals, and program staff. Evaluators also made arrangements to observe program activities for at least one afternoon. Each interaction was guided by a structured interview, focus group guide, or an observation guide. Each interviewee was given assurance that their comments were confidential and the information they shared would only be used to create an overview of 21st CCLC programs across the state. Descriptions of the purpose of the evaluation activities and the related instruments follow.

[10] Listed as an SD in information obtained from TDOE, but reported to be CBO during site visit.
[11] Listed as an SD in information obtained from TDOE, but reported to be CBO during site visit.

Interview with Grantee Directors

Interviews were conducted with each of the grantee directors to obtain background information and an overview of program operations. The structured interview guide used in conducting the telephone interviews consisted of 10 major questions with several prompts to assist the interviewer in covering needed information. The questions related to the program background and history, program design and goals, staffing, program activities and desired outcomes, key partnerships, program resources and sustainability, past external evaluation activities, and challenges and successes in administering the grant. (A copy of the interview guide is included in Appendix B.)

Interview with Site Coordinators

The site coordinator typically served as the primary contact for each visit and was viewed as the person who could best convey information about the operations of the specific 21st CCLC program. The interview with the site coordinator was typically the first activity conducted during the visit. The interview consisted of 14 major questions with prompts to assist the interviewer in covering all necessary information. The questions asked about program background, program goals, staff hiring, training and qualifications, recruitment of students, activities provided, attendance and participation, and school partnerships. The site coordinator was also asked about program resources, sustainability, and successes and challenges in implementing the program. (A copy of the interview guide is included in Appendix C.)

Small Group Interviews with Afterschool Program Staff

Interviews were conducted with afterschool program staff to gather firsthand information about program operations from those working at the frontlines with students, families, and school personnel. At sites where lead teachers were assisted with activities by other staff (e.g., tutors or assistants), two separate focus groups were conducted to ensure that opinions of all staff could be expressed freely. A focus group guide provided structure to the interviews. After participant introductions, the questions centered on program goals, recruitment and participation of students, activities, staff training, and communication with schools and families. The participating staff members were also asked to share their perceptions about the impact of the program on academics and student behavior and life skills. (A copy of the focus group guide is located in Appendix D.)

Interviews with Feeder School Principals

Interviews were also conducted with principals of the feeder schools (i.e., those schools attended by participants of the 21st CCLC program). Generally, the interviews were conducted in person at the school. The primary purpose of these interviews was to determine how the partnership between the 21st CCLC program and the school was working. The interview consisted of four primary questions, soliciting background information as well as the principals' perceptions of linkages between the program and school, the effectiveness of the afterschool program, and the elements of the partnership that were working well or not working well. (A copy of the interview guide is located in Appendix E.)

Observation of Afterschool Program Activities

The evaluators observed an entire day of afterschool program activities from beginning to end for the purpose of describing and assessing the activities conducted at a particular site. The two observers coordinated in order to ensure variation in the observations (i.e., where a variety of academic and enrichment activities were available for different groups of students, evaluators observed these different groups and different activities). For the specific activities, each observer described the setting, how expectations for the activity were communicated by staff, and how students engaged in the activity on a specific activity observation guide. Each observer also took notes about their observations to document what occurred in each specific activity. As many as five observations of specific activities were conducted per site. Once observations were completed, the two observers met and prepared a summary or global observation. This global observation guide allowed the observers to describe again in general terms information about the setting, how expectations were communicated, and information about all of the staff's efforts to engage students. The global observation guide incorporated a metric related to creating a "Supportive Environment" with 13 indicators and a metric related to enhancing "Interactions" between students and staff with seven indicators. For each indicator, the observers simply marked "Yes" if they observed evidence that supported the indicator or "No" if they did not observe evidence supporting the indicator or observed evidence to the contrary. Evaluators then recorded evidence from the observations to document their joint decision. This allowed the evaluators to assess each program on the individual indicators of the two metrics. (Copies of the two observation guides are located in Appendix F.)

In the Findings section later in this report, the indicators on the global observation form are broken down further into these topic areas: Facilities, Engagement, Retention, Health, Scheduling, and Relationships (see Table 4 below). A discussion of center facilities analyzes the ratings on the indices examining the safety of the physical environment, whether the space/furniture/equipment accommodate the center activities, and whether or not students can independently access resources and materials. The program's ability to engage students relies on the indices of staff providing a welcoming atmosphere, staff supporting students in building new skills or refining existing skills, staff relating to students in positive ways, staff encouraging the participation of all, and staff listening attentively and/or observing students. The section discussing retaining participants examines ratings from the indices regarding designing activities to engage students with different needs and to engage students in fun and interesting ways. The snacks that centers serve students provide the basis of the health component of the Supportive Environment metric. For a center's typical day activities, scheduling covers how well planned session flow is, the flexibility of planned activities, the variety of activities offered, and the balance achieved between both academic enrichment and recreational activities and between structured and free time. Finally, the relationships developed between staff and students and among the students themselves are described in terms of students being supervised to maintain safety, students having the opportunity to practice leadership skills, students interacting with each other in positive ways, and staff encouraging students to manage feelings and emotions.

Table 4 Topics and Metrics of Indices on the Global Observation Form

Indicator	Metric	Topic
The physical environment is **safe** and free of health hazards.	Supportive Environment	Facilities
Program **space/furniture/equipment accommodate the activities** offered (e.g., there are enough resources for students to work with, materials are in good repair, etc.)	Supportive Environment	Facilities
Students can **access resources/materials** with ease independently (e.g., computers, library/books, games, etc.)	Supportive Environment	Facilities
Staff provides a **welcoming atmosphere** (e.g., staff directly addresses students by name, staff listens to students).	Supportive Environment	Engagement
Session flow is **well planned** (e.g. staff conveys expectations/plans for the session).	Supportive Environment	Scheduling
Schedule of planned activities allows for **flexibility** (i.e., provides routine without rigidity).	Supportive Environment	Scheduling
Students can choose from a **variety** of activities. (e.g., student is presented with more than one option/choice of activity)	Supportive Environment	Scheduling
There is a **good balance of academic, enrichment, and recreational activities** for students to participate.	Supportive Environment	Scheduling
There is a **good balance of structured and "free" time**.	Supportive Environment	Scheduling
Activities are designed to engage students with **different needs** (e.g., ability level, learning style, interest).	Supportive Environment	Retention
Activities are designed to engage youth in **fun and interesting ways** (e.g., youth are engaged in hands-on learning, use of "real world" experiences to teach, etc.)	Supportive Environment	Retention
Students are **supervised** to maintain safety (i.e., staff know where the youth are and what they are doing).	Supportive Environment	Relationships
Healthy food and drinks are provided.	Supportive Environment	Health
Staff supports students in **building new skills or refining existing skills** (e.g., staff assists students without taking control; staff encourages students to think for themselves; staff verbally recognizes student efforts and accomplishments).	Interactions (Staff/Student & Peer)	Engagement
Staff **relate to students in positive ways** (e.g., staff communicates goals and expectations to students; conversations with students are not limited to directions or other "necessary talk").	Interactions (Staff/Student & Peer)	Engagement
Students have opportunities to **practice leadership skills** (e.g., staff encourages students to set goals/make plans, share ideas, opinions and concerns, take responsibilities, time to reflect).	Interactions (Staff/Student & Peer)	Relationships
Students **interact with one another in positive ways** (e.g., students assist one another, are friendly and relaxed with one another, socialize informally, consider each other's viewpoints, work collaboratively).	Interactions (Staff/Student & Peer)	Relationships
Staff encourages the **participation of all** regardless of level of ability or other factors (e.g., staff try to engage a student who may be isolated or not paying attention during an activity).	Interactions (Staff/Student & Peer)	Engagement
Staff encourages children to **manage feelings and resolve conflicts** appropriately/steps in only if needed.	Interactions (Staff/Student & Peer)	Relationships
Staff **listens attentively and/or observes students** (e.g., respond verbally or non-verbally to communicate feedback, pay attention to students as they complete tasks/interested in what students are saying or doing).	Interactions (Staff/Student & Peer)	Engagement

Overview of Analytical Approach

As stated earlier, evaluators used a multi-method approach in designing the evaluation and followed a similar approach with the analysis. Following each visit, the evaluators cleaned up notes from the interviews and focus groups. Each interview was digitally recorded, and the recordings were reviewed as needed to assure that the notes taken from telephone interviews, individual face-to-face interviews, and focus groups accurately reflected the statements of the grantee directors, site coordinators, school principals, and program staff. The recordings were also used to assure that quotes used in the report were accurate statements made by the interviewees. Using the notes from the interviews, focus groups, and observations, one of the two members of the evaluation team drafted a site visit overview/summary document to summarize findings from the site visit, and the other member of the site visit team reviewed the document for accuracy. The product was a descriptive profile for each site with information on the following topics:

- Recruiting, engaging, and retaining students
- Attracting and retaining qualified staff
- Academic activities offered
- Enrichment activities offered
- Relationship with parents
- Relationship with community partner and school staff
- Perceptions of program effectiveness
- Long-term sustainability
- Promising practices

Using the summary documents and referring to notes as necessary, UT SWORPS evaluators conducted content analyses to describe similarities and differences in operations among the 20 sites and to identify common themes and issues relevant to the evaluation. Using the logic model as the organizational framework, this report presents the findings from that qualitative analysis.

Study Limitations

As with any evaluation, this study has several limitations. First, the preliminary findings are largely descriptive, based on site visits to slightly more than one half of the 21st CCLC programs selected for the study. The remaining 16 visits to selected sites will be conducted during the upcoming school year (half in the fall and the remainder in the spring). At that time, findings from all of the site visits will be generated and reported; that report will provide a more comprehensive and representative description of the 21st CCLC programs.

Not only will additional visits be conducted during the upcoming year as part of the larger study, but the evaluation team will also supplement findings from the site visits and program observations with information gleaned from the online surveys of all site coordinators and school principals. These

structured response surveys will provide descriptive information on implementation from all operating 21st CCLC programs across the state, providing facts about program operations and opinions about key factors such as the partnership between programs and schools. This information coupled with findings from the site visits will provide a more comprehensive view of implementation across programs.

The scheduling and timing of the visits late in the school year may have posed some issues. Some of the programs may have been in the midst of TCAP exams and preparation, while others were wrapping up instruction for the end of the year. Consequently, what observers saw may have been atypical for the students. This may be remedied in the remaining visits scheduled for the fall or early spring. Additionally, the fact that visits were pre-announced and scheduled in advance meant that programs could plan for the visits and may have geared activities toward presenting a favorable picture for the observer, rather than a typical day. However, based on student behavior and comments, the observers got the sense that programs did not radically change their daily routine in most instances.

While the use of qualitative data enriches a study, it can be subjective depending on the way questions are phrased and the perceptions of the interviewer and interviewee. The same is true with observations that are based on the observer's perceptions. To safeguard against bias and ensure consistency in how questions were asked, the evaluators constructed guides for the structured interview, focus group, and observations. Having a two member team for each visit and only five staff members overall conducting the visit provided an additional check to assure consistency among visits, interviews, and observations.

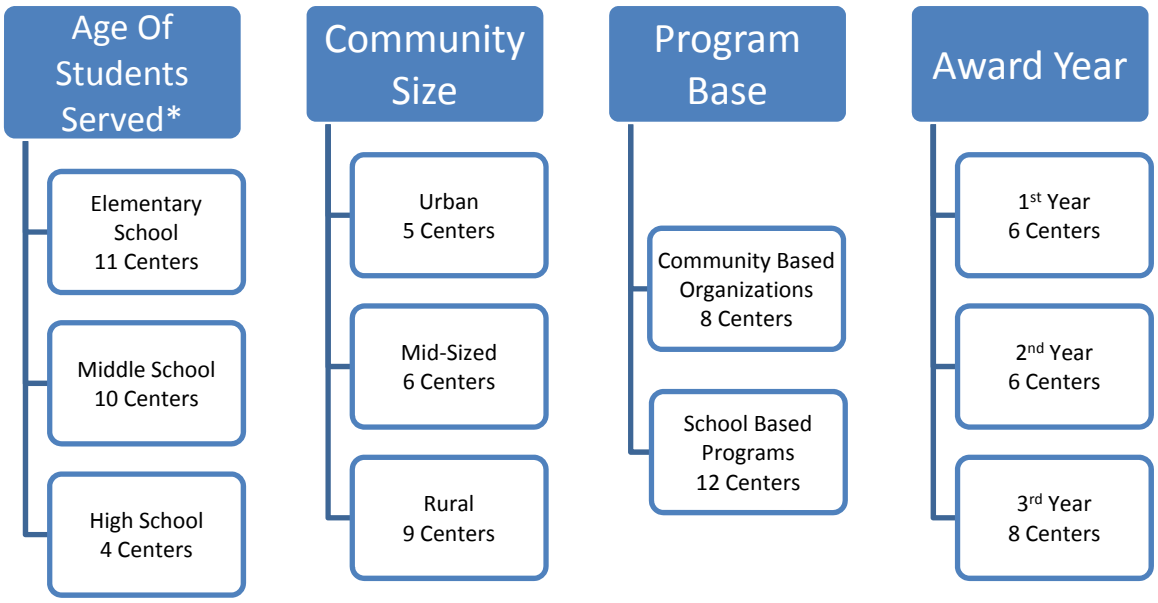
One last note of caution about the study is warranted. While this was primarily an implementation study, questions were posed to interviewees about intermediate outcomes—what they believed the program is achieving with students. Reporting on the intermediate outcomes is based solely on anecdotal evidence from the qualitative interviews, not on more objective measures. In future phases of the study, evaluators will collect and report measurable outcome data on students participating in 21st CCLC programs from available system data and surveys of students, parents, and teachers to complement the anecdotal reports.

Findings

Context

Center Profiles

As discussed previously in the Methodology section, the 20 sites[12] that evaluators visited to date were selected to be representative of the larger population of 293 centers that served students during the academic year across Tennessee. Eight of the sites were operated by community-based organizations (CBOs), and 12 were run by the school systems in which they operate (see Figure 3 below). All of the centers operated by school systems were housed in a feeder school. Two of the centers operated by CBOs were housed in a building off-site from the feeder school(s). Five of the centers visited were located in urban settings, and nine were designated rural. The six remaining centers were designated as mid-sized. At the time they were selected, six of the centers were in the first year of their current grant cycle, and another six were in their second year. The eight remaining centers were in their third award year. Several of the centers served more than one school level (i.e., elementary school and middle school students attended one center). However, none of the centers that served high school students also served students from other school levels. Eleven of the centers served elementary school students in grades K through 5. Ten centers served middle school students in grades 6, 7, and/or 8. Four centers served high schoolers in grades 9 through 12. Only one center offered services to pre-K children.



*5 centers serve more than one age group

Figure 3. Profiles of 20 Afterschool Centers Visited

[12] To reiterate, four sites were visited in spring 2010 as part of the Pilot/Feasibility Study phase of the evaluation, and 16 were visited in spring 2011 as part of the Implementation Study phase.

Community Needs

There were three general themes cited by grantee directors and site coordinators when asked what community need prompted the establishment of the center—faltering academics, lack of supervision, and isolated communities. All of the centers serving high school students cited academic needs as the impetus for creating the afterschool program. According to one site coordinator, "They [stakeholders] were seeing a need to give the students an extra opportunity to get back on the right track and make better academic decisions so more opportunities would be available to them after high school." Some of the schools had been targeted by the state for improvement due to factors such as not making AYP or low graduation rates. This was one grantee director's reasoning behind applying for the 21st CCLC grant: "We had such a high dropout rate, high failure rate. We've been on the target list for 2 or 3 years when I wrote the grant."

Centers that worked with middle schoolers also brought up academic needs when discussing the motivation for applying for 21st CCLC funding. Several noted that the parents wanted their children to get help with their homework because, as one site coordinator in a mid-sized community stated, "The parents didn't understand the homework." However, this group also mentioned more needs at the intersection of academic and enrichment outcomes. One rural grantee director noted that the "isolation [of the community] created a group of kids without life experiences, with a very low vocabulary…You see those children fall behind in academics because of their limited experiences. They wouldn't know what a 'taxi' is so they fall behind in reading." A site coordinator in a rural community said she "saw the need for this program because it's not only academic but would benefit the whole child."

Another community need that prompted many grant applications was a lack of afterschool programs in the area: "Most of the parents work out of the community, and if it were not for the [21st CCLC] afterschool program, the kids would be home alone" (site coordinator in a rural community). This was not just a concern for the elementary school programs, but a grantee director of a middle school program also remarked that "students in this area...were going home to empty homes and that was the prime time to experiment." This grantee director said the primary community needs that prompted the opening and funding of the center were "alcohol and drug prevention, violence prevention and pregnancy prevention." Another site coordinator noted that "there was a big need at the middle school age level to have a safe place for students to do fun activities and get homework help and just have a safe place to be while parents are at work."

In the elementary schools, all of these themes appeared, but the community need for supervision was more evident. Centers recognized that not all of the students applying to their program demonstrated an academic need. Some centers utilized eligibility criteria to limit enrollment to students with an academic need, ranking students based on failing grades, not completing homework, scoring below proficiency on TCAPS, and teacher recommendations. These criteria identified enough students to fill all available slots for some programs, but others had space available that they subsequently filled with other interested students who had non-academic needs. Students who did not have an academic need for the program still received homework help or tutoring but were also utilized as peer mentors. As one site coordinator said, "We try not to be babysitters…They [the students] are here doing homework. We

try to reinforce the academics as much as possible. For the higher achieving kids that don't necessarily need the tutoring, we try to challenge them as much as possible."

Goals

Not surprisingly, the goals of the sites visited matched the community needs they were created to address. In the high schools where credit recovery and catching up academically were the identified needs, the goals were narrowly focused:

- "To help get kids back on track" (teacher at a mid-sized school-based program)
- "Assist with anything that cannot be helped during class" (teacher at a mid-sized school-based program)
- "The bare bones is that we want to keep students on track to graduate" (site coordinator at a rural CBO program)
- "Keep those kids… from failing out of school" (site coordinator at a rural CBO program)
- "To bring the greatest number of kids to the greatest understanding of the subject matter. We want the kids to experience academic success." (site coordinator at a rural school-based program)

The stated goals of the middle school programs, in line with the community needs that prompted opening the centers, focused on academics, but also brought in enrichment and character development. In a focus group, one teacher in an urban, CBO stated that the goal is "to help the kids become more successful, be that academically, behavior, character, [sic] in life, in general; and to show them ways to do that." A grantee director in a mid-sized area summarized the goal as increasing student confidence because "so many of them can do it, but they think they can't. They don't believe it, but when you make a believer out of them and they realize they can do this, well [they think] 'maybe I can try something else.'" This notion of confidence impacting student achievement was echoed by a tutor in a focus group:

> "I think confidence sums up most of what we were talking about. They [students] are going to pay more attention to you because they feel confident. They are going to have better rapport with the teachers and with other kids. In doing other activities they will be more confident and then they will also do their homework because they feel they can and that's going to improve their grades."

Along the same lines, a grantee director in a rural school-based program focused on "increas[ing] academic standards and promot[ing] a sense of self-esteem and well-being among the program participants." There was a sense among many of the 21st CCLC staff members that if the students could experience a success in the afterschool program, no matter how small, they would build the confidence to try more things. The more they tried, the more they would realize they could achieve, and, thus, success would become routine.

Life skills was another area that several center personnel noted as an important goal. As the site coordinator from a mid-sized CBO pointed out, "They need to know how to set goals and achieve those goals, make that a lifestyle so they can be successful." This was echoed by a rural site coordinator: "If we can teach them to be responsible young people, to care about people and themselves, then that's going to come out in their homework, their grades, and [their] job." A theme heard at most of the sites visited was "focusing on the whole child." One site coordinator at a center that serves both elementary and middle schools said, "We definitely want academics, but we are trying to educate the whole child. If all they get is some kind of character building, that's fine."

Centers that worked with elementary students also bridged the twin goals of enrichment and academics. However, these programs defined "enrichment" differently than their middle school counterparts. Specifically, while enrichment for the middle schoolers meant more confidence boosting and character development, for the elementary schoolers it meant exposure to new experiences and learning decision making skills. For example, a site coordinator at a rural school said one of her program's main goals was "to move them [students] from non-mastery to mastery and to expose them to things they otherwise wouldn't see." In an urban setting, a site coordinator hoped to "make the students more socially aware of what's good and bad…knowing what's right and wrong."

These centers also recognized that they were dealing with a younger population that had specialized needs. The fact that this group of students required some kind of supervision was acknowledged by one site coordinator when she said that a goal of her program is "to keep them [the students] in a safe place…to keep them in a safe environment, give them structure and consistency." She went on to say that another goal is to help the students "see how fun learning can be." This need to integrate fun was echoed by a tutor in a focus group: "Provide a relaxing environment – they just came from [an] 8 hour school day. They need an opportunity to socialize but hopefully that can be done with a bit of learning."

Relationship with Feeder Schools

"It takes time to develop a relationship and [for] both sides to feel comfortable."

(teacher at an urban CBO)

The majority of the centers visited during the evaluation reported positive relationships with their feeder schools. The attitude of the site coordinator and their view of their role in relation to the teachers and the school principal was the most significant factor noted in creating this positive relationship. One principal stated, "The afterschool program should support what the school does and the school should support the afterschool program." When site coordinators and grantee directors see their role as supporting the work of the regular day teachers, the school staff appeared to embrace the partnership and worked collaboratively with the afterschool program. For example, at one CBO, the grantee director said, "Our job is to help these educators succeed." In her interview, the principal of one

of the feeder schools to this CBO noted that her "students have a lot of needs, and we do not have enough tutors. We depend on [the afterschool program] to assist them." A site coordinator in another center emphasized that he "work[s] very hard not to undermine the classroom and that's a very delicate thing." The principal of the feeder school for this site sees the program as "essential for our graduation rate" and worried that, "If we lost funding and the program went away, I would probably lose my job." One other site coordinator stated repeatedly to the evaluators that even though she has an office in the school building, she tries very hard to remember she's a guest in the school and not take the relationship for granted. This appears to be working as the guidance counselors at the school remarked, "She says she's a guest in the building but we see her as part of the school."

There were only two centers that hinted at cooler relationships with feeder schools and in both of these, either the site coordinator or the school principal was new to their role. In one instance, a new principal was feeling out the afterschool program, and in the other, a new site coordinator was learning the school's procedures. The site coordinator explained, "We were asking kids for it [their report cards] and the school system said 'you can't do that, you can't receive a report card unless a parent signs off.' So I said, 'how do we do that?' and they didn't want to tell me." Because this site coordinator and the principal in the other center were both new, hopefully the advice from the teacher in the quote above rings true, and the relationship will develop with the investment of time and effort from both sides.

Sustainability

This is an area where few of the grantees have a clear plan. While most acknowledge that the end of the 21st CCLC grant is something they need to prepare for, they feel that they have few options for alternative funding, and what funds are available would not be sufficient to maintain their current level of programming. Only three of the centers said they currently utilize a mix of funding streams which would help offset the impact if they lost the 21st CCLC grant funding. Five grantees mentioned other grants they were applying for by name but commented that in the current economic environment, funding was becoming scarce. Several grantee directors noted that private donations were down as well. Most of the grantee directors agreed that few other funding options are available:

> ***Research Question**: How do programs plan for long-term sustainability?*

- "We know we are supposed to be working toward self-sufficiency, but the reality is that we are a poor community and we don't have extra funds to run the program at this standard." (grantee director at a rural school-based program)
- "We couldn't do it without 21st Century." (grantee director at a rural school-based program)
- "If we lost the funding, the program would stop that day." (grantee director at a rural school-based program)

Inputs

Facilities and Resources

Of the 20 centers visited, only two operated their afterschool programs away from their feeder school. These programs were both CBOs that operated other afterschool programs in addition to their 21st CCLC afterschool program. All other programs utilized feeder school facilities to operate their programs. During the site visits, when compiling the global observation forms, UT SWORPS evaluators concluded that all sites utilized areas that were "safe and free of health hazards" (see Table 5 below). At 14 of the sites, UT SWORPS evaluators noted that "Students can access resources/materials with ease independently (e.g., computers, library/books, games, etc.)." For example, sites that demonstrated this indicator had books that were easily available to students, had computers available for students to use during activities, and allowed students to select from a variety of educational games during enrichment activities. All of the centers that did not demonstrate this indicator were elementary and middle school centers, and four of the six were located in rural communities.

For three sites, two in rural communities and one in a mid-sized county, evaluators concluded that the "program space/furniture/equipment" was inadequate to accommodate the program's activities. This determination was made for two of the centers because the spaces they were allotted were quite small. One CBO operated its program and stored supplies in a bifurcated classroom that it shared with another program. The standard size classroom was separated by bookcases that were lined up in the middle of the room. During the observation, the space was cramped for the three students in attendance. If the program was at its reported capacity of 30, it is inconceivable how all students would physically fit in the room, let alone participate in any activities. Another program had insufficient supplies for the students. During the recreation activity, the students were to play "Just Dance" on the Wii, but only two of the four controllers were working. Four students attended the observed session, which meant that two could not participate in the activity. This was also an under-attended day according to the teacher. The issue for the third center was not lack of space or resources, but the inappropriateness of the space they used. The entire afterschool program operated in a school cafeteria, and the noise level in the room distracted the students. At times, this program reportedly shared the cafeteria with other programs. In programs that had adequate space/furniture/equipment, evaluators observed the use of multiple rooms for the program, the use of school computer labs, the use of gymnasiums for recreational activities, and the use of the teacher's regular day classroom to run tutoring sessions.

Table 5. Ratings on Global Observation Forms of Indices for "Supportive Environment" Metrics Regarding Program Facilities

1. Supportive Environment	Number of Sites Rated "Yes"								
	Total (N=20)	ES (n=11)	MS (n=10)	HS (n=4)	School-based (n=12)	CBO (n=8)	Urban (n=5)	Mid-sized (n=6)	Rural (n=9)
a. The physical environment is **safe** and free of health hazards.	100% (20)	100% (11)	100% (10)	100% (4)	100% (12)	100% (8)	100% (5)	100% (6)	100% (9)
b. Program **space/furniture/ equipment accommodate the activities offered** (e.g., there are enough resources for students to work with, materials are in good repair, etc.).	85.0% (17)	81.8% (9)	80.0% (8)	100% (4)	91.7% (11)	75.0% (6)	100% (5)	83.3% (5)	77.8% (7)
c. Students can **access resources/materials** with ease independently (e.g., computers, library/books, games, etc.).	70.0% (14)	63.6% (7)	70.0% (7)	100% (4)	75.0% (9)	62.5% (5)	80.0% (4)	100% (6)	44.4% (4)

Staffing

Attracting and retaining quality instructors is essential to the success of any afterschool program. Three fourths of the programs visited utilized regular school day teachers as lead tutors in their program. All of the programs run by school systems employed regular school day teachers. Additionally, three of the CBOs had regular school day teachers, and four used tutors with other backgrounds. One CBO had a mix of regular school day teachers and instructors with other backgrounds. Programs that utilized regular school day teachers did so because it "ensures that they are aligned with the homework." The staff members who were not teachers included college students, retirees, and other professionals. Several of the programs employed assistants who either supported the teachers as they provided academic tutoring or oversaw enrichment activities separate from the academic tutoring. In one program, the assistants were responsible for facilitating the academic component with students who were determined not to be academically "at-risk" but attended the program for child care services. The academic session run by the assistants included working on the students' homework and then playing educational games. Three centers systematically used cadres of volunteers from programs such as AmeriCorps or who were recruited through their own efforts, but other programs reported having occasional volunteers come and work in the center in a less formal manner.

> ***Research Question**: To what extent do centers attract and retain qualified instructors?*

In general, the site coordinator or the grantee director was responsible for hiring the staff for the program. Several discussed working with the feeder school principals to select the best regular day teachers to staff the afterschool program. Some of the school-based centers worked hand in hand with the school staff to determine the best candidates for the afterschool teaching positions:

> "We're lucky that our administration supports us, and was kind enough to help us. And they had a session where we threw out who had shown interest. And they stayed objective and confidential as they could, but they said, 'You might want to rethink about that one. Maybe you want to look in this direction' and not necessarily telling us who to pick but giving us guidance." (site coordinator at a school-based program in a mid-sized area)

CBOs also worked collaboratively with their feeder schools to select regular day teachers who were the best fit for the program. One site coordinator felt that her program had established such a strong reputation in the community that, "If we need a recommendation for a teacher [from the feeder school] they'll give us their best and brightest." In only one of the sites visited was the hiring of afterschool staff the responsibility of a feeder school principal who was not also the site coordinator. In this instance, the grantee director expressed some frustration because she had very little oversight of the program: "If I feel that someone isn't doing their job, I don't have the power to fire them. When I ask someone to do something, I don't have the power to enforce it. They don't have to listen to me."

In terms of who to hire, most site coordinators discussed looking for teachers with characteristics such as "experience," "good rapport with the students," and "energetic." They searched for teachers who "genuinely care and they try to make it [the lessons] fun and different." While none of the sites reported much trouble with turnover, several mentioned difficulty finding enough teachers who met their criteria, and even more mentioned not having anyone they could call in as substitutes should an afterschool teacher need a day off. This was especially true for programs in rural areas. One site coordinator from a CBO reported, "It's been a struggle because, as a nonprofit, we don't really pay that much." When sites experienced turnover, it was usually attributed to outside forces. Several teachers or site coordinators left to become principals at other schools. The other reason mentioned was the increased pressure on teachers: "There has been a lot of extra work put on teachers' plates the last two years…one more thing is just not going to work…It's not the [afterschool] program itself, it's the extra work involved. [Teachers ask themselves] 'Is it worth it?' Family time comes into play" (mid-sized elementary school site coordinator). Most centers reported that their maximum student to teacher ratio was 15:1. Some centers went as high as 20:1, but many employed assistants to keep the ratio under 10:1 or 12:1. One site explicitly reported using the number of qualified and available teachers to determine the enrollment size so the ratio can stay small rather than scrambling to find teachers who did not meet their criteria to cover the number of enrolled students.

Innovative Practice

In an effort to overcome burnout, a few of the centers visited created flexible schedules for the teachers involved in the afterschool program. Centers hired enough staff so that teachers could work only 1 or 2 days a week in the program. These were most frequently middle and high school programs where the teachers specialized in a subject area and provided tutoring in that subject in the afterschool program as well. The concern for centers was the increased number of teachers needed to fully staff the program; however, all of the teachers from these programs expressed satisfaction in the way the program operated.

Across the board, the centers that had regular school day teachers in their afterschool programs did not require the teachers to attend any additional training beyond the inservice hours they are were obliged to complete each year for licensure. Teachers at most sites reported that the grantees were receptive to finding funding if they found trainings or conferences they were interested in attending. Several teachers attended trainings paid for by the grantee that they otherwise would not have been able to attend. The assistants and other professional staff members were much more likely to be required to attend trainings through the grantee. These included topics such as first aid and CPR, warning signs of child abuse and neglect, detecting bullying, and discipline strategies. Other trainings for enrichment leaders included ideas for "games and creative ways to do instructional time" (tutor from an urban CBO) or "ideas for various short activities" (tutor from a rural school-based program) if the scheduled activity ended sooner than anticipated or if there was inclement weather. Most site coordinators reported receiving additional training not required of teachers or assistants in the program which was geared more toward program management and policies and procedures specific to their grantee.

> ***Research Question**: What guidance and training do staff members receive?*

The emphasis that programs placed on the quality of their instructors was apparent in the evaluation visits. When completing the Global Observation forms, UT SWORPS evaluators noted that at every site visited, "Staff provides a welcoming atmosphere (e.g., staff directly addresses students by name, staff listens to students)." (See Table 6 below.) For only three of the sites did evaluators feel that staff did not "relate to students in positive ways (e.g., staff communicates goals and expectations to students; conversations with students are not limited to directions or other 'necessary talk')." The main reason evaluators cited for this rating was that staff did not share the purpose of the activity with the students. These sites also noticeably lacked informal conversation, either among students or between students and staff members. At one site, students identified as "talkers" were separated from their peers during snack time. The remaining students sat in groups at tables in the cafeteria and ate their snacks in almost complete silence. In centers that evaluators believed demonstrated positive interactions between staff and students, teachers spent time with students explaining the skills they were practicing. For example, evaluators observed a teacher explaining to students in a math tutoring session that, "Everything we're

doing today is proportions. It may be shapes, graphs, whatever, but it is all proportions." Staff at these centers also engaged the students informally, asking about big events in their lives and checking in if they seemed to be having a bad day. One teacher asked a student if she had gotten a dress for an upcoming family wedding. At another site, the site coordinator spoke with a student about a personal issue the student was dealing with. The site coordinator related the issue to an experience she had, discussed how she handled the situation, and ultimately advised the student to meet with the school guidance counselors for additional support.

Another indicator that evaluators examined in the area of Staff/Student interactions was whether or not "Staff supports students in building new skills or refining existing skills (e.g., staff assists students without taking control; staff encourages students to think for themselves; staff verbally recognizes student efforts and accomplishments)." Evaluators felt that 13 of the sites visited achieved this. For example, at one high school center, evaluators observed a teacher and one of the tutors walking around during the first 30 minutes of the session and asking questions, initiating conversations with students (e.g., "What formula would you use?"), or walking over to a student who raised his/her hand to ask for help. Another teacher at a middle school had developed such a rapport with her students that when she praised them for using "big brain words" and kept them in line by sending them to "time out" when they spoke out of turn, they laughed and smiled but followed her instructions. Tutors in a CBO provided feedback to students completing a writing assignment with statements such as, "I like your 'why'" and "I like how you are using new words."

At six centers, evaluators did not feel that, "Staff supports students in building new skills or refining existing skills." Almost half of the centers serving elementary schoolers and a third of those designated as rural or mid-sized were sites where UT SWORPS evaluators did not observe evidence to support these indices of engagement. One third of the school-based sites also did not demonstrate this indicator. At one of these sites, evaluators witnessed a teacher telling a student the steps to solve a math problem rather than working with the student to help her figure out the process on her own. At another site, students told the teacher, who was also the site coordinator, that they finished a lesson, and without looking up from her own computer, the teacher said, "Good job, baby." She provided no other feedback to the students.

UT SWORPS evaluators also looked to see if "Staff encourages the participation of all regardless of level of ability or other factors (e.g., staff try to engage a student who may be isolated or not paying attention during an activity)." In several centers visited, the groups were very small, between three and five students, so it was not possible to become isolated. Some other examples from the 17 centers that demonstrated this indicator were a teacher who noticed a student playing a math game by himself and calling another student over to join him. Both students appeared to enjoy playing the game together. In fact, it was the first time one of the students smiled during the entire observation. In another center, a middle school student isolated himself during the snack period and told the teachers he was having a bad day and didn't want to be bothered. During the math activity later, the teacher saw one student on an educational website she thought that the student having a bad day might also enjoy. She had the

students play a game with each other on the site, and the student having the bad day began smiling and laughing.

Finally, at 16 of the centers visited, UT SWORPS evaluators observed that "Staff listens attentively and/or observes students (e.g., respond verbally or non-verbally to communicate feedback, pay attention to students as they complete tasks/interested in what students are saying or doing)." Examples of this included staff maintaining eye contact with students while talking with them, staff treating the students as equals while participating in activities, and staff providing timely feedback to students as needed, without taking over their assignment. Again, UT SWORPS evaluators felt that the elementary school programs and those in rural communities struggled with this engagement indicator more than programs serving other ages or communities.

Table 6. Ratings on Global Observation Forms of Indices for "Supportive Environment" and "Interactions" Metrics Regarding Program Engagement

	Number of Sites Rated "Yes"								
1. Supportive Environment	Total (N=20)	ES (n=11)	MS (n=10)	HS (n=4)	School-based (n=12)	CBO (n=8)	Urban (n=5)	Mid-sized (n=6)	Rural (n=9)
d. Staff provides a **welcoming atmosphere** (e.g., staff directly addresses students by name, staff listens to students).	100% (20)	100% (11)	100% (10)	100% (4)	100% (12)	100% (8)	100% (5)	100% (6)	100% (9)
2. Interactions (Staff/Student & Peer)									
a. Staff supports students in building new skills or refining existing skills (e.g., staff assists students without taking control; staff encourages students to think for themselves; staff verbally recognizes student efforts and accomplishments).	68.4% (13) [1]	54.4% (6)	70.0% (7)	100% (3) [2]	66.7% (8)	71.4% (5) [3]	80.0% (4)	66.7% (4)	62.5% (5) [4]
b. Staff relate to students in positive ways (e.g., staff communicates goals and expectations to students; conversations with students are not limited to directions or other "necessary talk").	84.2% (16) [1]	72.7% (8)	100% (10)	100% (3) [2]	83.3% (10)	85.7% (6) [3]	80.0% (4)	83.3% (5)	87.5% (7) [4]
e. Staff encourages the participation of all regardless of level of ability or other factors (e.g., staff try to engage a student who may be isolated or not paying attention during an activity).	94.4% (17) [5]	90.0% (9) [6]	100% (10)	100% (3) [2]	100% (12)	83.3% (5) [7]	100% (4) [8]	100% (6)	100% (8) [4]
g. Staff listens attentively and/or observes students (e.g., respond verbally or non-verbally to communicate feedback, pay attention to students as they complete tasks/interested in what students are saying or doing).	80.0% (16)	63.6% (7)	90.0% (9)	100% (4)	75.0% (9)	87.5% (7)	100% (5)	83.3% (5)	66.7% (6)

[1] n = 19 [2] n = 3 [3] n = 7 [4] n = 8 [5] n = 18 [6] n = 10 [7] n = 6 [8] n = 4

Participants

During the interviews and focus groups, program and school staff were asked to describe the target population for the afterschool program. They answered in terms of the students' current academic circumstances, their socioeconomic background, and their grade level. Very little demographic information was shared during the interviews and focus groups. As such, the following discussion focuses on the student characteristics highlighted by the staff members, and an analysis of demographic

information such as sex, race, ethnicity, special educational status, and the like will be reported when such information becomes available via the UT SWORPS web-based student tracking application.

The profile of the students who attended these programs varied by the grade levels the program served. At the four high school programs visited, the principals described the communities as economically disadvantaged. Two reported that more than 70% of their students receive free and reduced lunch. One said that 55% received the subsidy but felt that it was underutilized due to the stigma associated with it. His goal was to have 90% of the students qualified for the federal benefit.

The other dominant characteristic of the high school program population was a lack of parental education. One principal noted that the parents of the afterschool program's participants were "not highly educated. [There is] no one pushing them [the students] to achieve in education." Another principal commented, "When you work in these rural communities you face a lot of battles with parent-family involvement [and] motivating students. The culture here is not strong toward success in education." He further remarked, "We have a community here that has grown up over generations never needing an education. They had a 6th grade education and were able to feed their family and put a roof over their head and that was considered 'successful.' Now, even though they are graduating, there isn't a guaranteed job for them out there." Another principal felt that parents may not have the ability to help their children with their studies: "We still have kids who are the first in their family to graduate high school…It [the culture] goes way, way back and to ask these parents to get engaged—they may not be able to. No parent wants their child not to be successful, they just may not know how."

Staff at the centers that served middle schoolers discussed the participants' home situations, economic status, and academic level as well when responding to questions about the target population. Regardless of the size of the community in which the program was located (rural, urban, mid-sized), staff reported that most of their participants came from single parent households or lived with a relative or other adult. A teacher in an urban setting said that in the community the households are "89% single parent," and another in the same center followed by reporting that those households usually have three to 10 children "so there are lots of siblings." A site coordinator at a rural program also spoke about this trend:

> "Probably as high as 65-70% of the kids at this school are not living with their biological parents. They live with grandparents or step-parents who've adopted them, or with an aunt and uncle. We also have a high transient population….We have one girl who is living with someone who couldn't tell us what their names are."

A site coordinator in a mid-sized community reported on the larger proportion of single parent and other nontraditional households sending children to the afterschool program: "My majority would be single parent families. I know I have 4 single fathers raising daughters, and I have at least 4 sets of grandparents or maybe more."

Staff members who worked with middle schoolers in urban settings talked about the participants from low-income households. One teacher in a focus group reported that the average family income in the

community served by the center was $5,000 per year. While no one at other sites had specific numbers, all of the centers in rural communities also reported low incomes. These rural counties suffered a lack of industry within their borders. Several interviewees pointed out that the school system was one of the biggest employers in the community and the only visible career path requiring a college education. For those in the mid-sized communities, more socioeconomic diversity was reported. One site coordinator commented that while the school reported that 65% of the students receive free and reduced lunch, "They have some in the program who aren't on free and reduced lunch but who just come for daycare." Another stated that the "majority is sitting there in the middle" of the socioeconomic scale.

A final difference noted with respect to the participants in urban versus mid-sized and rural settings was the academic level of the students involved in the programs. Even though middle school programs offered enrichment and recreational activities to the students, when recruiting and enrolling, they "let them know it's an 'academics first' program" (site coordinator at an urban CBO). In the urban settings, the number of students with academic needs was large enough to fill all of the available slots in the program. Even if low grades or test scores were not a requirement to enroll in the program, the focus of the program attracts students with academic needs. A teacher in an urban CBO stated, "Predominantly the kids struggle…[The] majority are average ability, but they are just not succeeding [in school]." Conversely, in the mid-sized and rural communities, the total population of students might have been so small that there were not enough struggling students to fill the available program slots. Generally, these programs prioritized students based on academic need. As one site coordinator said, "First we try to get the special education students because that's where our target point is… [The] next priority is ELL [English Language Learners] students… [The] next priority is reading…Then it is kids who need to improve their grades in general or they are below grade level in some areas." However, if space was still available, the programs often opened up to students with other needs: "We take at-risk students first, based on their TCAP scores, free and reduced lunch status, and teacher recommendations. Then we can take others. We have had a waiting list for the last two years" (site coordinator at a rural school-based program). The staff saw this diversity as one of the strengths of their programs.

> "[There are] struggling students and bright ones here – mix because they need to be here mostly because their parents work and they need a safe place to be. And it is good to have that diversity. It creates opportunities for some competition. The diversity encourages also friendships among kids who during the rest of the day would not hang around together." (teacher at a mid-sized school-based program)

Programs serving elementary students mirrored the middle school program. They reported many single parent households and a mix of academic levels. Of the three programs serving elementary students in urban settings, only one had open slots. The other two programs reported having waiting lists. The site coordinator of the program that had the openings attributed this to the transient nature of the population: "In this area families move and so the child leaves the program because they leave the school." All three programs noted that the population was predominantly low income and socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Much like their middle school counterparts, the elementary school programs in the mid-sized and rural communities targeted students based on academic need, but then most opened up their enrollment to the larger student body. Only two of the six programs serving elementary school students limited enrollment to students who demonstrated academic need, and both of these programs reported operating at capacity or having waiting lists. The other programs prioritized, much like the middle schools, based on academic need, then safety concerns: "[We have] some who need tutoring and some who don't. Most need a safe place to be because their parents work" (urban CBO teacher). Again, these rural communities lamented the lack of nearby industry and the low incomes of the families they served.

Community Collaborations

Partnering with other community service agencies, businesses, schools, and individuals appeared to be one area in which the CBOs had less difficulty than the school-based programs. This is likely due to the fact that these CBOs were "known entities" within the community. They generally offered more services than just the 21st CCLC afterschool program. As one grantee director stated, "A lot of them [community partners] seek us out. We've been around for 116 years. We're a community organization with a history. Ninety percent of the time they are coming to us." Larger organizations may also have had grant writers and CEOs who spent time in the community raising funds and recruiting community partners.

> ***Research Question:*** *What approaches do centers use to establish strong community partnerships? Which are most effective?*

For the school-based programs, the onus for creating the partnerships fell to the grantee director or site coordinator to market the afterschool program and initiate the relationships in the community. While this requires more effort on the part of the program leadership, the results have been quite positive: "I've never asked anyone to be a partner who has turned me down" (grantee director in a rural school-based program). Another grantee director said, "Everybody who we've called is willing to come in…It just takes a phone call." When approaching prospective partners, a grantee director in a mid-sized community felt that the best results came from being as specific as possible. "It helps to have a plan laid out and a description of the job responsibilities" and determine whether there is anyone at the organization who can provide what they asked for.

Both CBOs and school-based programs are experiencing difficulties in partnering with other agencies because of the recent economic downturn. Partnerships have disappeared because either the agency has closed its doors or has had to limit its outreach efforts due to funding constraints. A rural site director noted, "It's hard here with community partners because there isn't a lot to draw from… The economy has been so bad that we don't have people who can afford to come in." Additionally, a program may have an agreement that allows them to use a facility, but if another organization comes in and wants to use the space and is able to pay for it, then the afterschool program loses access.

Innovative Practice

One strategy employed by a site director at a CBO in a rural community was to attend every community meeting or advisory panel discussion that even remotely pertained to the afterschool program. This allowed her to become more aware of the agencies and programs that were operating in the community and to also meet with their leaders and discuss tie-ins and collaborations with the afterschool program. She felt that "the networking really helps because all the other agencies have goals and objectives also." She has been able to truly partner with agencies because she not only gets services such as presentations by community leaders, but can meet some of the community agency's needs by having students in her afterschool program complete service learning projects.

Activities

Recruiting and Enrolling Participants

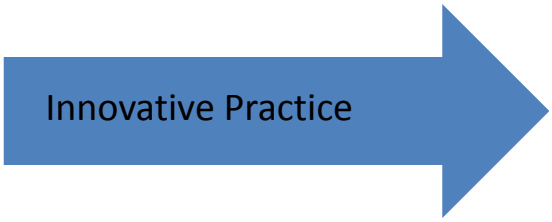
Recruitment in the high school programs is unique, in that "you basically recruit every day," as one site coordinator put it. These high school programs were goal-oriented: recovering a credit, making up an assignment, earning time for time. If a student needed the service offered by the program, they attended until they reached their goal and then, if the program was successful and helped them "catch up," they did not return. Therefore, the recruitment efforts for the high schools centered around getting the word out that the service was available for students who needed it. Most programs put the afterschool schedule in the school's daily announcements so that the students knew it was available. During the interviews, the regular day teachers involved in the afterschool program also reported making announcements in their classes, reminding students that the program was available. To make the parents aware of the program, several high schools utilized new technologies, such as a computerized call-out system with pre-recorded announcements.

> ***Research Question:*** *How do centers recruit students for the program?*

By their nature, school-based programs and programs run by CBOs frequently utilized different strategies to target and recruit students. School-based programs were most often staffed entirely by school personnel; frequently, they were teachers in the schools in which the programs operate. They had access to student TCAP scores and other assessments which most programs relied on to identify students who demonstrated an academic need. In some cases, the site coordinators partnered with school data specialists and guidance counselors to target those students who would most benefit from the program. In other cases, the site coordinators relied on teachers to refer students to the program.

One school-based program visited employed a part-time site coordinator who was not a staff member at the feeder school. To overcome this potential barrier between the program and the school, the site coordinator attended the school's summer staff meeting to introduce herself and explain the program. She also put flyers in the teachers' mailboxes using a distinctive color of paper. Finally, she relied heavily on other afterschool program staff who were employees of the feeder school to market the program among regular day teachers.

The second phase of the recruitment process was to get the parents to sign up their children for the program. For the high school programs, again, this mainly consisted of making the parents aware that the program was offered. Sometimes, due to economic constraints, more creative measures were necessary to get the parents on board. One teacher related, "I have had students ask for detention so they could stay for tutoring because their parents wouldn't come and get them any other way" due to high gas prices and distances between the school and the child's home. For the middle and elementary programs, most schools sent a letter home to the parents explaining why their child was "invited" to join the program and giving specifics about the program's operations. Several then followed up with personal phone calls to the parents of targeted students.



One program makes a formal presentation to the parents at a school event early in the academic year. They introduced the program and explained the manner in which students were targeted. The grantee director at this middle school program said, "We use the data to recruit… We share with parents that out of the 100 [students] invited [to participate in the program] only 40% of those who turn down the offer for help will graduate from high school… It's a compelling story."

Most of the programs reported being successful in their recruitment efforts. They had filled their slots, and some had waiting lists. As mentioned earlier, some of the programs operating in rural communities had space available after enrolling all the interested students who demonstrated an academic need. They opened up their programs to students whose needs related more to child care services.

The CBOs ran more of a risk of a separation between the feeder schools and the afterschool programs. They can lack the interconnectedness that school-based programs come by naturally. Therefore, if the afterschool program wanted assistance from the feeder school in identifying and targeting students, CBOs may have had an additional hurdle to overcome because they must first focus on relationship building. One site coordinator detailed the efforts he has made to first introduce himself to the school staff: "I've worked very hard at getting a good relationship with the principal, the counselors and we're working on the teachers next… We're making headway." The second step was to make sure he wasn't stepping on anyone's toes in his recruitment efforts: "We all had a meeting together and there was an understanding that [the 21st CCLC program] was not competing for members from [another established]

program [at the feeder school] and that we are looking for a different total population of students." Proximity may also help CBOs overcome this hurdle. Two CBO programs visited had the benefit of their site coordinator maintaining an office in the feeder school. While both of these site coordinators also discussed the importance of relationship-building with the school staff, these were also the only CBO programs that received referrals directly from school guidance counselors as part of the their standard intervention when a student was failing a course. While steps have to be taken to maintain the relationship between the feeder school staff and the afterschool program, the site coordinator being housed in the school during the day seems to facilitate collaboration.

Some programs focused on raising awareness of the program among the parents, while others focused on enticing the students to join. It appeared that the latter strategy was more successful in driving enrollment. Several CBO programs talked about setting up booths at feeder school open houses. Another center targeted the parents through handing out pamphlets at local businesses. Two programs reported putting up posters or billboards that explicitly marketed the program as "Free Tutoring" (see Figure 4 below). While these efforts were somewhat successful in attracting participants, the programs that focused their efforts in these areas did not operate at capacity. Enticing the students to join the program appeared to yield greater enrollment.

Figure 4. Sign Outside a Rural School Promoting the Afterschool Program

Innovative Practice

Two programs used participation in enrichment or recreational activities to increase student interest in their programs. In order to participate in those activities, however, students had to attend the tutoring component of the program first. One of these CBOs served urban elementary school students, and the majority of the participants were not successful academically. The other CBO who used this strategy worked with high school students in a rural community. If the students who signed up for the program

to participate in the enrichment activities did not need tutoring, they were utilized as peer mentors in the program.

When asked to specify the groups of students the program had difficulty enrolling, staff at two of the high schools noted that they had a difficult time recruiting freshmen and sophomores. Because these high school programs focused on credit recovery for students who have failed classes, students in 9th and 10th grades "feel there is enough time to make up" the credits before the end of their senior year. One site coordinator also took some of the responsibility for the underrepresentation of this group in his program. He pointed out that there are a lot of students who need credit recovery services to graduate. Because there is a time limit on how many years a student can work on their high school coursework and still receive a diploma, he felt he needed to target those upperclassmen whose time was running out: "I started working more hours [unpaid] because when I didn't, there were a lot of students who got bypassed, mostly underclassmen, which just delayed the problem."

Conversely, for the middle school programs, the hardest population to recruit was at the other end of the center's age range—the 8th graders. In some cases, the students said they did not want to attend the program, and the "parents feel they are old enough to stay home alone," according to the teachers and, thus, did not make them attend. In other cases, the parents wanted the older child home because they babysat for a younger sibling.

Retaining and Engaging Participants

Retaining

Enrolling students in the program was the first step, but keeping them enrolled and engaged in the programming was a constant challenge for afterschool programs. The number one reason that UT SWORPS evaluators heard explaining why students either did not enroll or dropped out of the program was transportation. One site coordinator at a middle school program in a rural area was adamant about the role transportation played in the decision to send children to the program: "I guarantee you that if we had transportation that those parents that are not into it would make their kids stay." This was echoed by another rural site coordinator at a high school program: "The single biggest challenge is transportation because a huge percentage of our kids ride the bus. If they stay after, they need a ride." An additional transportation hurdle faced by the high school programs was created by the structure of their programs. Students in credit recovery programs worked at their own pace. The system is designed to be flexible. The students can spend 30 minutes or 2 hours a day working on their lessons. This made providing transportation for these programs infeasible.

> ***Research Question:*** *What approaches are used by centers to engage and retain students? Which are most effective?*

Even when programs provided transportation, it was not a cure-all for keeping students enrolled and engaged. The programs in rural communities that offered transportation noted that the children could ride the bus for an hour or longer simply because the buses had to travel long distances between the

children's homes. When school starts at 7:15 a.m., no one was pleased with the children getting home as late as 7 p.m. Some of the programs that provided transportation would bus the participants to a single drop-off point closer to their homes, but parents were responsible for picking them up from this location, which could still be 30-plus minutes from the child's home. Rural programs that pulled from an entire county served participants who lived on the other sides of mountains and across large bodies of water.

The staff at one feeder for a high school program worked to create an informal network of carpoolers. After the staff identified the students who needed credit recovery, they got them together in a small group where they matched the students who lacked transportation with classmates who lived nearby and could provide rides home.

Two other themes that evaluators heard regarding program drop outs were weather and sports. Many programs reported a decrease in participation in the spring when the weather began to warm up and the afternoons were sunny. This is especially concerning because most programs were ramping up their tutoring and really working with the students during this time of year to prepare for TCAPs. The other reason the programs cited for why students dropped out of the program was competition from sports. Practice usually ran concurrently with the afterschool programs. Many programs overcame this obstacle by working with the coaches. Since students have to maintain their grades to play sports, some afterschool programs reported creating schedules with the coaches where the student went to tutoring for 30 to 60 minutes and then went to practice.

Finally, UT SWORPS evaluators heard that there was a stigma attached to the afterschool programs at two centers located in larger areas. The afterschool program was seen as an intervention for minority students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. A teacher at one of these sites recalled that when he asked why a student had dropped out of the program, she reported, "I don't need this, I have money." Clearly, ensuring that the program attracts a wide range of students is a challenge that programs operating in larger communities must address.

Programs also offered incentives to the students to keep them from dropping out. Three programs that UT SWORPS evaluators visited used end-of-year field trips as rewards for attendance. One site coordinator threw a pizza party for the student who attended for 30 days. Another program has an awards ceremony at which the students were given gift cards for their attendance. Programs also tried to keep students engaged through the activities they offered. One center that only has academic activities for the elementary and middle school students they serve reported structuring those activities so that they interested the children, but were not too challenging and did not need to be finished at home. A site coordinator at a middle school remarked, "I'm not forceful with a child if they don't want to do the activity… I try to get them to do the basic activity and say 'if you don't want to answer all the questions, just look up one and then you can read your book.'" Another indicator of engagement on the Global Observation form that UT SWORPS evaluators observed was whether the "Activities are designed

to engage youth in fun and interesting ways (e.g., youth are engaged in hands-on learning, use of "real world" experiences to teach, etc.)." Evaluators felt that six programs did not engage the participants in this manner; however, three of those were high school programs offering credit recovery only and were never intended to be anything other than a service to help students graduate.

A high school program had parents of students enrolled in the credit recovery program sign a contract stating they would ensure that their child attended the program and that the parents would follow through with the student at home. There was a strong sense that the only way the extra help could be effective was for the parents to be involved and committed.

One site coordinator made an interesting point about the 30-day attendance mark set by federal guidelines. She noted that one of her students who attended for 30 days in the afterschool program would receive approximately 60 hours of tutoring. This center also offered a summer program that operated during weekdays for one month. Students attending the summer program were at the center for 6 hours a day. If they attended all 20 days over the summer, they received 120 hours of tutoring, double what those attending for 30 days of afterschool received, but they would not have attended for the benchmark "30 days" under the federal guidelines.

Engaging

Keeping the students interested in the activities was another challenge that the programs faced. The concern for the academic activities was to reinforce the material from the regular school day while keeping the lesson "fresh." How did the teachers ensure that they did not merely repeat the lesson taught during the day again after school? Several teachers reported that while they were initially concerned about this, the smaller class sizes in the afterschool program naturally changed the way they presented the lesson. Teachers can work with the students in small groups or even one-on-one and focus on the areas with which they struggle. Teachers also reported that often they had components of the lesson that were too involved for the school day, but they could use them in the afterschool classroom to reinforce or flesh out the concepts. The regular textbooks and teaching guides also provided several suggestions for instruction that the teachers utilized in the afterschool program. They also reported getting ideas from other teachers regarding new approaches.

Of the 20 sites visited, UT SWORPS evaluators concluded that 14 offered activities "designed to engage youth in fun and interesting ways (e.g., youth are engaged in hands-on learning, use of 'real world' experiences to teach, etc.)." According to several teachers, students "enjoy most hands on activities." One teacher reported that the smaller groups in the afterschool program allowed more opportunities for hands-on learning. In the afterschool program they dissected a frog, but they "lacked the equipment to do, class wide, such activities in regular class." Science activities more readily lend themselves to this type of hands-on learning. One of the academic activities that the UT SWORPS evaluators observed in which the students seemed the most engaged was in a middle school classroom where they made

"goo." As the students combined chemicals in plastic containers to create the "goo," they discussed states of matter and chemical changes and used some basic math skills. Nevertheless, other subjects still allowed students this type of hands-on learning. An elementary school program had students make math kites as a way to work on math operations in an artistic activity. This latter activity, however, illustrates one of the potential challenges of engaging students, which is ensuring that the activity is an appropriate match for the students' age and ability level. One observer of the math kite activity sat with 2nd graders who were engaged not only in the art component of making the kite, but also in the academic component of finding different math operations that all arrived at the same solution. Some students finished early, but several took the entire session or needed extra time the next day to complete the activity. The second observer sat with 5th graders who worked on the same project. The 5th graders did not seem at all engaged by the academic component of the activity and rarely challenged themselves to find more difficult math operations than simple addition or subtraction. For this group, the artistic component of the activity was the enticement, and the academics were secondary. A challenge for any program working with students from a range of grades is to ensure that the activities offered are appropriate to all of the students' academic levels.

Innovative Practice

One urban program utilized a rewards system that not only encouraged the participants to meet certain behavioral and educational standards but also enticed the children to attend the program and remain engaged throughout the school year. Students earned points for academic achievements such as turning in their homework, raising their grades, and making honor roll. They were rewarded also for behavioral improvements or character development, such as being assertive, helping clean the classroom, or encouraging a peer. Students lost points for being suspended from school, receiving D's or F's on their report card, arguing, or not following directions. The points were tracked on a bulletin board in the afterschool classroom. At the end of the year, students traded in points for tangible items like shoes or iPods, or they could even earn field trips.

Of the 20 sites observed, UT SWORPS evaluators felt that only 11 structured "Activities [that] are designed to engage students with different needs (e.g., ability level, learning style, interest)" (see Table 7 below). Centers struggled with this indicator regardless of organizational base or community size. All high school programs were rated as meeting this indicator because the programs were tailored to meet the needs of individual students. However, half or fewer of the elementary and middle school programs were found to engage students with different needs. With the burdens already placed on teachers from the regular school day, tailoring additional lessons for each grade can be time consuming, but it is an investment that will likely show dividends in terms of student achievements in the future.

Table 7. Ratings on Global Observation Forms of Indices for "Supportive Environment" Metrics Regarding Retaining Participants

1. Supportive Environment	Number of Sites Rated "Yes"								
	Total (N=20)	ES (n=11)	MS (n=10)	HS (n=4)	School-based (n=12)	CBO (n=8)	Urban (n=5)	Mid-sized (n=6)	Rural (n=9)
j. Activities are designed to engage students with **different needs** (e.g., ability level, learning style, interest).	55.0% (11)	45.5% (5)	50.0% (5)	100% (4)	58.3% (7)	50.0% (4)	60.0% (3)	50.0% (3)	55.6% (5)
k. Activities are designed to engage youth in fun and interesting ways (e.g., youth are engaged in hands-on learning, use of "real world" experiences to teach, etc.).	70.0% (14)	72.7% (8)	90.0% (9)	50.0% (2)	83.3% (10)	50.0% (4)	80.0% (4)	83.3% (5)	55.6% (5)

The most common engagement strategy discussed, regardless of the age of the students, was the use of technology. As one rural site coordinator responded, the students "love the computers. They love technology. The weeks they go to the computer lab they really love it." The younger students responded to the interactive write boards, also called Promethean Boards, because they could manipulate the touch screen and work in larger groups. The high school students also responded well to the use of computers. Three of the four high school programs utilized computer programs for their credit recovery component. One high school principal referred to this cohort of students as "screenagers," because computer and cell phone screens have become a main vehicle they use to gather information and have social interactions. He said, "The students like using the technology [for credit recovery] and having the teacher there only if they need it [sic]."

Academic Activities

The academic activities were varied greatly by the age of the students. At the high school programs, the "activity" was tutoring with teachers or peer mentors or credit recovery using a computer program. Some high school teachers mentioned offering planned academic enrichment activities to students, such as a forensics lab, but these were infrequent and seemed to be targeted to higher achieving students. For the high school students, the academic activities were driven by student needs, including additional help in a subject, extra time to make up an assignment, or recovering credits for failed courses.

> ***Research Question:*** *To what extent do centers offer high-quality services in core academic areas?*

Elementary and middle school programs focused more on helping underachieving or borderline students to score "proficient" on their TCAPs and master the State Performance Indicators (SPIs). Math, reading, and language arts were cited by most of the programs as their academic foci. Some also incorporated science, but this was the exception. In terms of the specific academic activities offered, UT SWORPS evaluators witnessed a wide range of offerings. A teacher in a rural middle school went through an interactive PowerPoint presentation with students to reinforce language arts skills such as identifying hyperbole and alliteration. A math session in a rural middle school assigned a worksheet from a "real life" math scenario book on which students had to calculate wages and expenses while reinforcing TCAP concepts such as calculating perimeter and area. In an elementary school CBO program, students took turns reading a story to the entire group. Reading was seen as an important component for many sites. One site coordinator explained, "Because if they can read they can do science and social studies." Several programs brought students to computer labs to access academic websites for skills practice in areas from math to language arts to science. In fact, most centers tried to incorporate technology as much as possible. They all reported that the students greatly enjoyed using the computers and the Promethean Boards.

Academic activities were not limited to just skills practice and TCAP preparation. Several centers engaged in academic enrichment activities as well. In a rural middle school, a science teacher had students dissect owl pellets. The session provided an opportunity to discuss the owl's diet and habitat, digestive system, and the impact environmental changes have on wildlife. Tutors in a mid-sized CBO used worksheets to play Madagascar Solitaire with students to develop planning and strategy skills. Students in an urban CBO program participated in academic bowl practice which covered multiple academic subjects.

During the observations, very few teachers or tutors explained to the students the purpose of the activity in which they engaged. They provided instructions but did not tell the students how completing the activity would benefit them on the TCAPs or what skill was being reinforced. Students completed the activity and never questioned the purpose of the sessions, so it is possible that the skills or strategy were covered in a session that occurred prior to the UT SWORPS evaluators' visit or that the activity involved reviewing material previously discussed, not introducing new material.

Enrichment and Recreation Activities

Enrichment activity offerings were varied and often quite inventive. Several programs mentioned the field trips they took. These trips were seen as one of the few avenues to expose children in rural communities to things they would otherwise not see that most people take for granted:

> "An escalator –many of them coming from a rural area had never seen one before! They have not been to many places. I ask my students what is their favorite place in the whole world to go to, and one little boy says his the favorite place in the whole world to go is the Huddle House [restaurant] down the road. So I asked him 'Have you ever been to Chattanooga?' [20 miles away] And he said 'No.'" (teacher in a rural school-based program)

Some of the field trips mentioned included aquariums, Dixie Stampede in Pigeon Forge, sporting events, and trips to nearby metropolitan areas, like Nashville, Memphis, and Atlanta.

Two programs that UT SWORPS evaluators visited were in the process of staging plays that would be performed for the entire school or center. For both, participation was optional. However, at one of the programs, all students not acting in the play participated in an enrichment activity in which they taped and edited "commercials" using computer software that would run during the play's intermission. This same center had another unit involving geocaching with hand-held GPS devices. The students learned about latitude and longitude and coordinate mapping and got to interact with community members as they searched for the hidden treasures.

> ***Research Question:*** *To what extent do centers offer enrichment and support activities beyond core academic areas?*

Another site sponsored a winter guard squad that competed in regional events. During the second year in which the squad was active, they won a trophy at one of the meets, and the students took turns carrying the trophy to their classes during the school day. As the site coordinator of this rural program explained, "People (in this community) don't get to see those things a lot." This program also strove to incorporate a service learning component. Students who did not respond well to traditional classroom learning were allowed to complete their tutoring with the shop teacher, after which they worked on a project to make shepherd's hooks for an elementary school's garden. Other enrichment activities discussed included piano lessons, Tae Kwon Do, African culture and dance classes, and jazz band, just to name a few.

Many of the site coordinators mentioned trying to teach the participants about healthy eating, exercise, and the problems associated with obesity, an important and laudable goal, as Tennessee has the third highest obesity rate in the nation, with 32.3% of residents identified as obese.[13] However, in only two programs did evaluators observe any programming that specifically targeted healthy lifestyle choices. Several held recreational sessions that used Wii gaming systems and the Just Dance game, among

[13] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2009). *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data.* Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

others. While these games get children to be more active than traditional video games, they do limit the number of children who can participate at one time by the number of controllers hooked up to the system—usually a maximum of four. One center had students access a healthy food choices website as part of their recreation time.

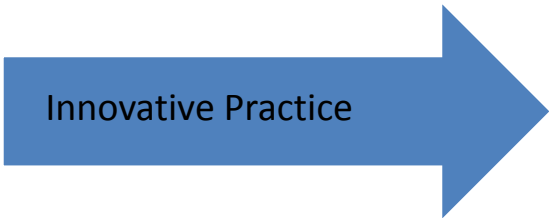
The first program that offered activities that specifically targeted health and fitness was a rural elementary program where the school coach was an afterschool staff member. All of the students rotated through the recreational activity that he led, which often included something like dodge ball or kickball. However, before the students could play the sport, they had to participate in mandatory exercises. During the observation, students ran various drills across the gym, including sprints, crab walk, ladders, etc. According to the coach, while the overall goals of the recreational activity were to get the students to "learn to work together, get along, and follow rules," it was also true that some of the children were above a healthy weight and the program's exercise component was their only physical activity, so an implicit goal "is to help them slim down."

Another program had a community member talk regularly with the students about proper nutrition. UT SWORPS evaluators were able to sit in on a session regarding portion control. The tutor discussed appropriate portion sizes of different foods of varying nutritional values. Students saw how small the portion of a muffin was compared to portions of some fruits and vegetables. The concern regarding this activity was that after measuring out the portions of the admittedly low quality snacks, students were allowed to take multiple portions of these foods, which included items such as Hostess muffins, Cinnamon Burst Cheerios, Sprite, and powdered cheese flavored popcorn. Along these same lines, very few centers offered students what UT SWORPS evaluators considered a "healthy snack" (see Table 8 below). The six centers that evaluators felt earned a positive rating on this indicator served items such as granola bars, applesauce, fresh fruit, and cheese. Snacks that did not achieve the "healthy" label included Rice Krispy treats, ice cream sandwiches, canned fruit in syrup, potato chips, flavored milk, and artificially sweetened fruit drinks. As Table 8 demonstrates, providing healthy snacks for participants was a challenge for centers regardless of the size of the community in which they operated. High schools appeared to have greater success than elementary and middle schools. School-based programs struggled with this rating the most. Only one school-based program visited offered students something that UT SWORPS evaluators deemed to be a healthy snack. Certainly budgetary constraints are a factor in selecting snacks, and healthy options can be more expensive. This may be another area where CBOs have more resources due to their higher profiles in the community and the provision of multiple services allowing them to pool resources. Regardless of the availability of healthy snacks, this is certainly an area where school-based programs need to look to their CBO counterparts for guidance.

Table 8. Ratings on Global Observation Forms of Indices for "Supportive Environment" Metrics Regarding Health

1. Supportive Environment	Number of Sites Rated "Yes"								
	Total (N=20)	ES (n=11)	MS (n=10)	HS (n=4)	School-based (n=12)	CBO (n=8)	Urban (n=5)	Mid-sized (n=6)	Rural (n=9)
m. Healthy food and drinks are provided.	31.6% (6)[1]	20.0% (2)[2]	22.2% (1)[3]	75.0% (3)	9.1% (1)[4]	62.5% (5)	40.0% (2)	20.0% (1)[5]	33.3% (3)

[1]n=19 [2]n=10 [3]n=9 [4]n=11 [5]n=5



The concern for the students' food security led one urban CBO to go one step further in its efforts to ensure the health and well-being of its students. At the end of the day, students were sent home with a "goodie bag" filled with healthy snacks such as granola bars, oranges, juice, and a small treat such as a small candy bar. Since the majority of the students who attended this center were on free and reduced lunch, food security during non-school hours may be a real concern for these families, and this center took steps to address the problem.

Links with Regular School Day

When UT SWORPS evaluators asked about the links between the afterschool program and the regular day school, the concern that surfaced was the sharing of information. How do afterschool staff know if a student has homework? What avenues does a regular day teacher have to alert the afterschool staff if a participant is struggling with a concept in class? How can afterschool staff align their sessions with the topics covered during the day? The majority of the programs visited reported relying on informal channels to share information between the afterschool staff and regular school day teachers not associated with the afterschool program. The school-based programs had a clear advantage in this area because they were on-site, and at least some of the teachers in all of the school-based afterschool programs were regular day teachers as well. In rural districts, teachers reported, "We are so small we all walk through the same hallways so we see each other and we talk." Several reported using email to communicate. One program went so far as to sit down with the regular day teachers at the feeder school to get their feedback when placing students in groups in the afterschool program, asking the regular day teacher which afterschool teacher they felt the student would work best with.

> ***Research Question:*** *What approaches do centers use to establish effective working relationships with school personnel and students' families? What are some of the most promising practices?*

One of the programs visited created pacing guides for use in the afterschool program that mirrored the pacing guides used by the school. The afterschool guides were about 2 weeks behind the regular day school's guides. Doing this allowed the afterschool program to continue to reinforce the foundations learned while the regular day teacher built upon them in subsequent lessons.

Three school-based programs reported employing more systematic communication methods. One program in a mid-sized community utilized an assignment sheet that students filled out during the day and brought to the afterschool program, so that the afterschool teachers could check it off as students completed assignments. This program also had a board in each classroom where homework, upcoming tests, and other announcements were posted, so that afterschool staff was fully aware of what the students needed to focus on. A rural program utilized a system whereby each participant in the afterschool program had a folder that was given to the regular day teacher once a week to be filled with assignments, worksheets, topics with which the student has struggled, and other ideas for the afterschool teachers. The third program used a combination of assignment sheets on which the students tracked their work and folders in which the teachers placed additional worksheets or paperwork addressing other areas of concern. In only one school-based program was there any mention of challenges in the communication between regular day teachers and afterschool staff. In this mid-sized system, the afterschool teachers reported that the level of communication "really depends on the personality of the teachers." Another teacher followed up this comment, stating, "Some teachers are really on top of it [communicating] and others are like 'whatever.'" Since this was a school-based program, the teachers in the afterschool program had the benefit of using what they referred to as "back door" methods, such as accessing the school's computer system to see a teacher's lesson plans so that they knew what topics the teacher was covering in class and could then reinforce them after school.

Often, CBOs faced a hurdle in communicating with the regular day teachers that school-based programs did not. CBOs tended to rely more on the site coordinators to communicate with the regular day teachers. The relationships between the CBOs and the schools appeared to evidence more of a range of levels of collaboration. Two programs that operated on school grounds and provided the site coordinator with an office in the school itself demonstrated the same level of collaboration as the school-based sites discussed above. These two programs also employed regular day teachers as afterschool teachers so, for all intents and purposes, they operated identically to the school-based programs and applied similar communication methods—face-to-face and email. Once the program moved off-site and used tutors who were not also regular day teachers, the barriers to communication emerged. A site coordinator for a CBO in an urban setting noted that the feeder school had an open door policy for afterschool staff. However, this site coordinator also reported that they relied on students in the same classes to inform the program staff if they had homework. Another site coordinator reported having to "go through their [student's] backpacks" to see if the participants had homework.

Site coordinators at two urban CBOs worked to overcome this barrier by making the effort to be a visible presence in the schools that feed their centers. Though the programs operated off-site and they did not have offices in a feeder school, they made personal visits to at least one feeder school every day to meet with teachers, principals, or other school staff. Some of this contact was a more informal "check-in" with a participant's regular day teacher to determine how the student was doing and the areas with which the student was struggling. These site coordinators, however, also went to parent-teacher conferences to advocate for the student and taught the parent how to advocate for the student, so that the parent could continue to do so after the student left the program. The two feeder school principals interviewed both spoke very highly of one of these site coordinators' programs and the relationship between the program, the school, and the family. One described a reciprocal relationship and said that the site coordinator was the school's bridge to the parents. The site coordinator shared parent concerns with the school when a parent may have been hesitant or unable to talk with the teachers. The other principal said that the afterschool program "compliments what's done in the school."

Setting up a more formal system of conveying assignments and areas of concern was a double-edged sword. One feeder school principal, who reported being "very satisfied" with the afterschool program overall, expressed some concern for the length of time between when a topic was covered in the classroom and when it was reinforced in the afterschool program. Although there was contact via "email and visits," specific information about what the child needed to know was not being conveyed. The principal felt that "instead of saying that they need help with math, [the teachers need to be] communicating a child needs help with fractions." This principal suggested having the teachers fill out a form to pass to the afterschool staff that details the skills the child needs help with. A similar system was established, also with the backing of the feeder school principal, at a CBO in a rural area. Students repeatedly told the afterschool staff that they did not have any homework, when in fact they did. Now at the end of the day, students in the afterschool program go to all of their teachers and have them initial a sheet that lists the child's homework assignments for the day. While the practice is being followed and has cut down on students saying they do not have any work, the site coordinator was concerned that it bred some animosity between the already overworked teachers and the afterschool program: "Teachers have so much work on them already… The homework sheets have had negative comments from the teachers because it takes up their time at the end of the day."

Innovative Practice

A site coordinator in an urban area utilized the automated call-out technology mentioned earlier to keep abreast of student assignments and upcoming tests. The feeder schools for this center alerted parents to tests and some larger assignments via the automated call-out system. The site coordinator was added to that notification list, so he received the same phone calls the parents did. He found this to be an extremely helpful method of staying aware of students' needs.

Parent Interaction

The afterschool program is building bigger relationships between school and home... One of the biggest challenges is getting parents involved… it's a battle and I think the afterschool program helps.

(principal at a mid-sized high school feeding a CBO)

The programs that reported the most avenues for and investment in parental involvement were the larger CBOs in urban areas. Teachers at school-based programs often reported speaking to parents as part of their duties as a regular day teacher, and they did not identify much need to communicate with parents while wearing their "afterschool teacher" hats. CBO programs do not have this natural avenue for communication, and, thus, there is more investment of time and resources to establish these communication channels. These centers reported offering parent nights at the afterschool program where the program sponsored family activities. Two of the examples provided were a family reading night at which parents and students read to each other and an "Iron Chef Cook-off," where families grilled dinner together. Several of these CBOs also had parent committees that allowed parents to have input on program effectiveness and to discuss opportunities to become involved in the center. The only two programs that reported offering classes to parents were urban CBOs; however, it was not clear if these classes were provided using 21st CCLC funding or other funding streams.

Innovative Practice

One site coordinator at an urban CBO program detailed the systematic approach that the umbrella organization takes to gain parental involvement. The CBO has a parental involvement coordinator who works with all of the programs that are operated through the agency and manages parent activities. Any parent enrolling their child in the program has to sign an agreement stating that they will be involved in the program and committing to attend two parent meetings per year and provide 6 hours of volunteer service in the program annually. The agency also offers activities for the parents, like

parent nights, a parent advisory group, and workshops for adults. Finally, the staff at the afterschool program promotes parent involvement with the schools and checks the child's homework by modeling that behavior in their interactions with the family.

Regardless of the type of program, all of the high school centers reported difficulty with engaging parents. "Parent involvement is tough. The parents that work aren't available and the ones that don't work don't usually care" (site coordinator in a rural school-based program). A grantee director in a rural area pointed out that for many of the parents who never graduated from high school themselves there is an "intimidation factor… [because] I'm walking into a place where I failed." This grantee director further noted that there is also pressure from the other side: "Kids don't want the parent involved [because] it's not cool."

The programs dealing with younger students reported more interaction with the parents. This was mainly a function of logistics because the most frequent avenue for communication cited was informal conversations held when parents arrived for pick up at the end of the day. Only two centers visited reported little to no interaction with parents. At one of these centers, a teacher said, "Unless I have a problem, there is no reason to communicate with the parent." This view was clearly the exception across the sites visited as more centers took steps to draw parents into the program. Two described sending home newsletters to parents, one of which required the parent to sign it and return it to the site coordinator. Several centers mentioned inviting parents to special events such as school plays or family reading/math/science nights, and others reported hosting end-of-semester or end-of-year parties where at least one family member of each student attended.

Outputs

Number of Days/Hours of Operation

The centers visited by UT SWORPS evaluators operated from 1.25 to 3 hours each day they were open. Ten centers operated for 2 hours a day, and five operated for 2.5 hours per day. Only three centers operated for 3 hours a day, and they were all located in urban or mid-sized settings. Two were CBOs that offered other programs beyond the 21st CCLC afterschool program. Three centers (two elementary school programs and one high school program) offered tutoring before school in addition to their afterschool programming. Two of these programs reported offering before school tutoring to accommodate teacher and student schedules, and one offered before school tutoring to provide additional student slots in the program.

Eleven of the centers visited operated 4 week days per week. Four centers operated 5 days a week; three of these are also the centers that run 3 hours of programming a day. Those centers that operated 5 days a week often mentioned turning Friday into "fun-day," when students were not required to complete their homework upon arrival and could instead spend the entire session in enrichment or recreational activities. Only one center opened on the weekend. Eight of the centers visited reported also operating summer programs for the students. These ranged from 1-week "camp-like" programs to 6-week intensive academic programs.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance policies regarding the number of days per week a student must attend were rare. Of the three programs that that had an explicit attendance policy, all required students to attend 3 days per week. All three were also programs that operate 5 days a week. More common were policies that dropped students from the program if they missed a certain number of days, either consecutively or over the course of the year. These ranged anywhere from four to 10 absences. Most of the site coordinators with whom UT SWORPS evaluators spoke, however, saw these absences as more of a warning sign:

> "The program has a formal attendance policy that states 10 days missed means the student is dropped from the program, but I see this 10 days as more of a 'red flag' and will start calling to try to get the kids back in the program, especially since we don't have a huge waitlist." (site coordinator at a mid-sized middle school program)

Because the high school programs are generally not designed for the students to attend regularly, the percentage of those students who attend is discussed separately from the other programs. High school programs are "as needed" interventions for students who must work through a credit recovery program or who want extra help in a subject. The flexibility these programs offer this age group is one of their strong suits. As such, the site coordinators reported that only 15%–20% of their students attend 2–3 days a week. In fact, teachers reported viewing success in these programs as a student completing their credit recovery and ending their participation.

For the middle school and elementary school programs, the average regular participation rate was about 75% of the students enrolled. Eleven of the programs visited reported that 70%–90% of the enrolled students attended regularly. Three schools did not provide a percentage to evaluators. Two schools reported very low rates of regular attendees: 35% and 45%. They were both programs operating in rural communities. One served middle school students only, and the other served middle and elementary school students. Neither center offered transportation to students participating in the afterschool program.

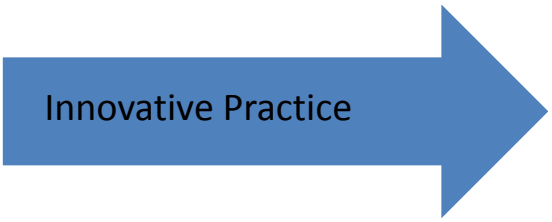
Typical Day Activities

The structure of the academic activities offered differed by age group; while elementary and middle school students usually progressed through different sessions focused on academics or enrichment, high school students went to the room of the teacher from whom they needed extra help or worked on their credit recovery computer program. High school teachers did not plan sessions for the students, but offered assistance on homework or provided more in-depth explanations of a topic with which a student was struggling. For credit or content recovery, students worked through their lessons independently until they mastered the material.

For the younger students, the structure that was most often witnessed was first completing homework and then participating in a planned academic activity. Homework completion was handled in one of

three ways. Some centers had all participants come together and work on their homework for a designated period of time. The benefit of this was that students with the same assignment could help each other. In some cases, the assigning teacher worked in the program and was available to help the students with the assignment. The drawback to this strategy was that some students finished their assignments before the end of the allotted time for homework. These students were often allowed to read or play academic-based computer games. Occasionally this activity distracted the students still working on their assignments. Another strategy was breaking students into groups to participate in academic or enrichment activities. If a student had homework, he or she went with the peer group but worked on homework while the others participated in the activity. This strategy was employed by many programs. The evaluators' concern was that students who had homework were often distracted by the activity and appeared not to concentrate on their homework. Additionally, the teacher running the session was unavailable to provide assistance to the student with homework, as the majority of their efforts were spent leading the activity. The last strategy that the evaluators observed was having students with homework go to a separate room while their classmates were broken into peer groups to participate in activities. These students were able to focus on their homework, and a teacher was available to help them if they struggled with an assignment. As students completed their homework, they filtered back into their peer groups and joined the academic or enrichment activity already in progress. While there was no "downtime" for the students as in the first strategy, this appeared to cause some disruption among the academic or enrichment activities because the teacher facilitating the activity had to take time to explain the session and bring each child coming from the homework session up to speed.

The majority of centers visited broke up the afterschool sessions into multiple activity blocks. They spent 45 minutes to an hour on one activity and then switched to another. For the smaller programs with fewer staff members, the staff member worked with the group of students leading multiple activities. Larger programs that employed more staff members tended to have the students rotate from teacher to teacher.



Two of the programs that worked with elementary schools structured their day so that the recreational activity was the first activity of the day. They felt this allowed the students time to expend some energy which then helped them focus on their homework or other activities. According to a rural site coordinator, "They can breathe a minute and then go on with their academics." One middle school program pulled out the younger students in the program for a special mini-session where they practiced focusing and calming techniques such as walking across a balance beam and completing a "connect the dots" worksheet. The site coordinator indicated to UT SWORPS evaluators that, due to the success of this strategy with the younger students in the afterschool program, the school was planning on employing it before TCAP testing to mentally prepare students to take the tests.

When examining the indices relating to Scheduling on the global observation forms, UT SWORPS evaluators found that most of the centers visited had a fixed schedule. At only eight of the centers did UT SWORPS evaluators note that "Students can choose from a variety of activities (e.g., student is presented with more than one option/choice of activity)" (see Table 9 below). Most of those that gave students a choice in activities did so by offering enrichment activities rather than academic work. Often, the "choice" was a special activity, such as participating in a school play or jazz band instead of the regularly scheduled enrichment activity. When centers offered more than one academic activity (i.e., math and language arts), students were generally broken into smaller groups and rotated through both activities during the afterschool session. One middle school site coordinator indicated that the decision not to allow students to choose activities was done purposefully: "At this age they are more inclined to say they're not interested and by not giving them the choice, they all experience everything…[for example] the girls started out being very hesitant about karate but now they are excited about going and earning a higher level of belt."

At only one center did UT SWORPS evaluators feel the session observed was not "well planned (e.g., staff conveys expectations/plans for the session)" (see Table 9 below). During all but this one observation, staff either explained the flow of the session to the students or it was obvious that the students had participated in the activity previously and knew the expectations. The one session that did not flow occurred during the Pilot phase of the evaluation, and the center admittedly had asked the staff to facilitate a special academic activity during the visit. There was some confusion among the students and the staff as to how the activity worked, and the staff member had to return to the instructions in the workbook repeatedly. For this reason, during the second phase of the evaluation visits, UT SWORPS evaluators requested that the centers not hold special events or activities during the site visits, so that a more natural flow could be observed.

Twelve of the centers visited demonstrated some level of flexibility in their programming ("Schedule of planned activities allows for flexibility [i.e., provides routine without rigidity]") (see Table 9 below). All of the high school programs fit in this indicator simply because they are designed to have students working at their own pace and on individually designed programs. The elementary and middle school programs that UT SWORPS evaluators felt demonstrated this quality were those where the session tutors were able to adjust the activity to better suit the needs of the students, individually and as a group. In one program, the teacher allowed the students to spend extra time practicing their math skills rather than move on to science when the schedule dictated. Another program did not have specific time frames for activities. Rather, when the teacher felt it was appropriate to move on, she brought one activity to a close and moved on to the next. Two other programs that generally had set schedules were modified during the site visit to accommodate special programs.

How a program balanced its time was also examined. The UT SWORPS evaluators looked for "a good balance of academic, enrichment, and recreational activities for students to participate" and also "a good balance of structured and 'free' time" (see Table 9 below). In terms of the former, evaluators concluded that 12 of the centers achieved this balance. Three of the four high school programs only offered academic components in the form of credit recovery and tutoring and, thus, were not rated as

achieving this indicator. Three elementary school programs, all located in urban or mid-sized communities, offered only academic activities. One additional elementary school offered academic and recreational activities, but no enrichment offerings were observed or discussed during the visit. At only one site did evaluators note that no academics were offered during the visit. While the site's printed schedule listed specific times for academic activities, during the observation evaluators saw only one student working on homework. The rest of this urban CBO's enrollees were engaged in enrichment or, more frequently, recreational activities.

Balancing structured and free time is an indicator that is more age-relative than others. For the younger students, some structure is necessary for safety reasons. For the oldest students, adding a "free time" component to a credit recovery course would be puerile and counterproductive. Of the seven centers that evaluators ranked as having a good balance, the most frequent "free time" observed was during the snack when students were permitted to talk amongst themselves and move between peer groups. One program worked some free time into the transitions between activities by having the students walk around the building (outside, if weather permitted) where they joked and interacted freely with each other.

Table 9. Ratings on Global Observation Forms of Indices for "Supportive Environment" Metrics Regarding Scheduling

1. Supportive Environment	Number of Sites Rated "Yes"								
	Total (N=20)	ES (n=11)	MS (n=10)	HS (n=4)	School-based (n=12)	CBO (n=8)	Urban (n=5)	Mid-sized (n=6)	Rural (n=9)
e. Session flow is **well planned** (e.g., staff conveys expectations/plans for the session).	95.0% (19)	90.9% (10)	90.0% (9)	100% (4)	100% (12)	87.5% (7)	80.0% (4)	100% (6)	100% (9)
f. Schedule of planned activities allows for **flexibility** (i.e., provides routine without rigidity).	57.9% (11)[1]	54.4% (6)	70.0% (7)	100% (3)[2]	50.0% (6)	71.4% (5)[3]	60.0% (3)	50.0% (3)	62.5% (5)[4]
g. Students can choose from a **variety** of activities (e.g., student is presented with more than one option/choice of activity).	40.0% (8)	45.5% (5)	50.0% (5)	50.0% (2)	41.7% (5)	37.5% (3)	60.0% (3)	50.0% (3)	22.2% (2)
h. There is a **good balance of academic, enrichment, and recreational activities** for students to participate.	60.0% (12)	63.6% (7)	80.0% (8)	25.0% (1)	58.3% (7)	62.5% (5)	40.0% (2)	50.0% (3)	77.8% (7)
i. There is a **good balance of structured and "free" time**.	35.0% (7)	45.5% (5)	40.0% (4)	25.0% (1)	50.0% (6)	12.5% (1)	40.0% (2)	33.3% (2)	33.3% (3)

[1] n = 19 [2] n = 3 [3] n = 7 [4] n = 8

Moving on to the indices for the Relationships between staff and students and among students overall, evaluators felt that 18 of the centers visited showed evidence of "Students interact[ing] with one another in positive ways (e.g., students assist one another, are friendly and relaxed with one another,

socialize informally, consider each other's viewpoints, work collaboratively)." At the two centers where UT SWORPS evaluators saw no evidence of this indicator, students worked independently and interaction between them, even to provide assistance on an assignment, was discouraged. This was the exception, however. UT SWORPS evaluators observed students working together and encouraging each other much more frequently at other centers. For example, in one center a student helped another student sound out a word in an effort to spell it. When the student spelled the word correctly, the helper put his arm around the speller and said, "You did a good job." Additionally, at 16 of the centers, evaluators noted evidence indicating, "Staff encourages children to manage feelings and resolve conflicts appropriately/steps in only if needed." For example, at one site a student laughed when a classmate gave a wrong answer. The staff member quickly said, "It's not funny; we're not here to criticize. We're here to help."

At only two centers did evaluators conclude that students were not "supervised to maintain safety (i.e., staff know where the youth are and what they are doing)." Both of these programs operated in elementary schools. The evaluators' concern with the first program was that students who had homework were taken to a separate room. When they completed their work, they would leave that room and walk alone to wherever their peer group was engaged in an activity. There was no communication between the teacher leading the homework session and the teacher leading the activity to alert the latter that the student was on their way. Evaluators were concerned about unsupervised students wasting time in the transition and going into areas where they were not allowed. In the second program, UT SWORPS evaluators saw a 3rd grade student with a medical concern being sent off to seek help on her own. The student told the site coordinator who led the session that she needed her inhaler. The site coordinator sent her alone to her locker to look for it. She returned to the classroom some time later and said that she was unable to find it in her locker. The site coordinator told her to go to the office to call her parent and then go wait in the school gym. Although there was another session of the afterschool program running in the gym, the student was sent out without an escort who could ensure that she had no further or escalating medical issues along the way.

At only five of the sites visited did UT SWORPS evaluators note that "Students have opportunities to practice leadership skills (e.g., staff encourages students to set goals/make plans, share ideas, opinions and concerns, take responsibilities, time to reflect)." At centers that demonstrated this indicator, evaluators noted examples such as students working in groups and assigning tasks to individual members, and a student who acted out was given time to reflect on the choices he made and the consequences of his actions.

Table 10. Ratings on Global Observation Forms of Indices for "Supportive Environment" and "Interactions" Metrics Regarding Relationships

	Number of Sites Rated "Yes"								
1. Supportive Environment	Total (N=20)	ES (n=11)	MS (n=10)	HS (n=4)	School-based (n=12)	CBO (n=8)	Urban (n=5)	Mid-sized (n=6)	Rural (n=9)
l. Students are **supervised** to maintain safety (i.e., staff know where the youth are and what they are doing).	90.0% (18)	81.8% (9)	100% (10)	100% (4)	83.3% (10)	100% (8)	100% (5)	100% (6)	77.8% (7)
2. Interactions (Staff/Student & Peer)									
c. Students have opportunities to practice leadership skills (e.g., staff encourages students to set goals/make plans, share ideas, opinions and concerns, take responsibilities, time to reflect).	26.3% (5) [1]	18.2% (2)	30.0% (3)	33.3% (1) [2]	33.3% (4)	24.5% (1) [3]	20.0% (1)	66.7% (4)	0.0% (0) [4]
d. Students interact with one another in positive ways (e.g., students assist one another, are friendly and relaxed with one another, socialize informally, consider each other's viewpoints, work collaboratively).	90.0% (18)	81.8% (9)	100% (10)	100% (4)	91.7% (11)	87.5% (7)	100% (5)	83.3% (5)	88.9% (8)
f. Staff encourages children to manage feelings and resolve conflicts appropriately/steps in only if needed.	88.9% (16) [5]	80.0% (8) [6]	88.9% (8) [7]	100.0% (3) [2]	90.9% (10) [8]	85.7% (6) [3]	100.0% (5)	80.0% (4) [9]	87.5% (7) [4]

[1] n = 19 [2] n = 3 [3] n = 7 [4] n = 8 [5] n =18 [6] n = 10 [7] n = 9 [8] n = 11 [9] n = 5

Parent and Student Satisfaction

The evaluation plan includes a research question regarding parent and student satisfaction with center operations. In the evaluation plan, this question is to be addressed through the use of student and parent surveys developed by UT SWORPS evaluators and distributed to select respondents by 21st CCLCs. These surveys have a scheduled implementation date of spring 2012. While no quantitative data regarding satisfaction is available for this report, UT SWORPS evaluators gathered some qualitative data indicating the level of support programs receive. Eleven of the 20 sites visited reported having a waiting list either at the time of the visit or at some point during the year. The fact that there is more interest than space available is indirect evidence that parents see value in the program. At one high school program that UT SWORPS evaluators visited, parents were aware of the visit because the students performed a special presentation of an enrichment program for the evaluators. Several parents

> ***Research Question:*** *How satisfied are students and parents with center operations?*

came not only to watch the presentation, but stayed after to meet with the evaluators and detail the benefits their children received from participating in the program.

In terms of gauging student satisfaction, UT SWORPS evaluators relied on the program observations and feedback from the program staff. In only two of the dozens of activities observed did UT SWORPS evaluators note students who were not engaged in an activity. One of these was a language arts session covering paragraph construction using a computer program. Students displayed differing levels of engagement and one student repeatedly stated that he wished to be finished with the lesson. In another program, a student painting wooden cars disengaged from the activity, saying, "This is boring," and painted a rubber ball that he then used as a stamper. Staff were seemingly oblivious to his behavior and continued painting their own cars. UT SWORPS evaluators saw many more examples, however, of students quickly engaging in the activities and attending to the session for the duration. During the owl pellet dissection mentioned above, students continually brought the bones they found in their pellets to the teacher for feedback. They also showed each other and worked collaboratively to determine what kind of animal the bone came from. Teachers at an urban CBO knew they were meeting the goal of student satisfaction because they "see them going out the door smiling; hearing that they had fun doing an activity."

Intermediate Outcomes

"We let them know that their successes are our successes, too!"
(teacher at an urban CBO)

Academic/Cognitive

During the visits, no site provided UT SWORPS evaluators with concrete measures of academic improvements. [14] This was expected as the visits occurred towards the end of the academic year and students had not yet taken TCAPS and final grades were not complete. UT SWORPS evaluators also did not request this data from the program staff in preparation for or at the time of the visit, but rather asked staff how they knew that students were benefiting from the program, both academically and socially. The majority of academic improvements discussed were general impressions the program staff had about student achievement or anecdotal information about specific success stories. Some sites indicated using assessments with pre and posttests, but again, those had not been

> ***Research Question:*** *Do programs improve academic outcomes such as grades, test scores, etc.?*

[14] As mentioned previously, intermediate and long-term outcome measures will be addressed in future phases of the evaluation plan through use of the web-based application and through teacher, parent, and student surveys. This section only deals with the qualitative reports of student outcomes provided to UT SWORPS evaluators during the interviews and focus groups.

completed and analyzed at the time of the site visits. One important side note here is that most sites were still reeling from the updated TCAP scoring system. In an effort to bring Tennessee's scoring system in line with national and international student performance, the baselines for proficiency in certain subjects were raised. The 2010–2011 school year was the first year after the scores using the new system were released. Several schools that previously met AYP no longer did, and they were struggling with the new designations. A grantee director in a school-based program said, "Academically, we thought we were doing a wonderful job until they changed the scoring on the TCAPs and the proficiency levels all went down." The TCAPs that students were preparing to take during the site visits were the second round under the new standards. Many afterschool staff members with whom evaluators met expressed the hope that the scores from this round of tests would reflect the efforts they have made over the year to address the deficiencies revealed by the new standards.

As mentioned above, several centers use pre/post assessments to measure student progress. These are often done through the regular day school, and then the afterschool staff makes note of the progress that program participants have made. Assessment tools mentioned include the DIBELS and A+ Learning Links assessments. One site coordinator referenced scores on the assessments given during the previous school year, stating that 85% of the participants demonstrated growth. A site coordinator in a rural school reported that at least 75% of the program participants showed improvement based on their in-class tests and report cards. Another site coordinator indicated using student report cards to track progress: "The improvement is phenomenal for some, but a good bit of them will progress, at least three-fourth of them. Not in all subjects across the board, but in some of them." Additionally, teachers often indicated that students in the afterschool programs were more likely to turn in their homework than before they began participating.

Beyond grades and scores, some staff stressed the academic skills that students gained in the afterschool program. A tutor in a mid-sized school-based program said, "What I like most is that they get an independent learning mentality: We teach them how to find the answers on their own and that helps them in their school work." A site coordinator in an urban CBO also remarked, "When they read aloud, you can hear improvement in their vocabulary."

> ***Research Question:*** *Do programs help students show improvement in school attendance, study habits, homework completion, etc.?*

Several program staff shared success stories about students' academic achievements in the program:

> "There was a little 5th grader who ran up and shared his report card, saying, 'Look, I made a B!' Even if it is just one subject; it gives them a sense of accomplishment…It helps build them up." (teacher in rural middle school)

> "[Name redacted] – he's in special ed. He also lives with his grandparents. He was below Kindergarten in terms of reading and math and he was in the 3rd grade. In a year he raised at least two grade [levels] for reading and even more for math. Afterschool care really helped." (teacher in a rural elementary school)

> "Every time I go to graduation I see kids walk across the stage and I think, 'if it had not been for 21st Century…they would not be there, they would not have been getting that diploma.'" (grantee director for a rural high school program)

When asked who they felt was most likely to benefit from the academic activities offered through the 21st CCLC, center staff mentioned dosage and student involvement as the two main factors that determine the level of benefit:

- "Everybody gets something [out of it] – those who are interested and put more effort, they get out more." (teacher in a rural elementary school)
- "Those that do not give 100% are less likely to benefit." (site coordinator in an rural school)
- "The ones that came consistently benefited the most, compared to those who came three or four days and then missed for a few." (site coordinator in a rural elementary school)
- "The ones who don't benefit, it's because they aren't there." (site coordinator in a rural school)

Social/Emotional

Several of the non-academic skills and benefits students received from participating in the afterschool program were those that were directly related to the enrichment activities the center offered. Students learned Tae Kwon Do and karate, and students learned how to play a piano. However, program staff also listed several outcomes for students beyond developing a skill set. A program assistant pointed out that "Karate teaches them obedience, listening. The instructor is teaching them stuff and they don't even realize it: respect, follow[ing] directions. They are all life lessons." Many staff discussed students from different backgrounds coming together and "learn[ing] how to talk out a problem, learn[ing] how to share." Another teacher said that students learn "simple skills, like to look someone in the face [when talking to them]…real world, outside of this school skills."

> ***Research Question:*** *Do programs enhance students' social/emotional development and sense of safety?*

Several programs also stressed the importance of building a child's confidence. An assistant tutor noted, "They can do anything if that confidence level is up." One principal in a mid-sized community discussed two ways she saw the afterschool program benefiting students: "Grades have come up, but grades aren't everything…we see children that are eager now to answer in class because they're not afraid that their answer might be wrong." This was echoed by regular day teachers in two separate rural school-based programs:

> "I have a little girl in class who is not afraid to put her hand up after she started coming to aftercare. At the beginning of the year she would not answer anything. Now she likes to share her opinion, she participates in discussion and she talks. She cooperates. She offers input. She has things to share. She is not afraid anymore."

> "[Name redacted] struggled with reading and comprehension and phonics. She used to be very reserved. We did not know what her voice sounded like! Now she has a story to tell me every day…when we talk during snack. [She has shown] both academic and social growth."

A teacher in an urban CBO pointed out that success in the social and emotional realm is relative to the student's starting point: "For some of them success is not being in jail."

Staff shared several success stories about students who have benefited socially and emotionally through participation in the afterschool program.

> "[Name redacted] was a really hard-nosed kid at the beginning of the term, socially shut down… He turned around and he loved what we were doing and it all helped him come out of his shell. I saw him running to his mom saying, 'You're never going to believe what we are doing…' He was excited about something other than a video game."

> "At the beginning of the year I had some 2nd graders who could not even work together. Afterschool offers them the opportunity to learn to play together."

> "We have this kid with several surgeries in his legs; walking problems. When you see him with [the African dance instructor] you go 'Wow!'…He looks like he can dance even though he has trouble walking."

In terms of who is more likely to benefit from the enrichment activities, most staff reiterated the impact of student dosage and effort. One urban site coordinator at a CBO stated, "We've seen improvement in all but one who is intentionally choosing not to do any work."

Summary

In the spring of 2010 and 2011, UT SWORPS evaluators, guided by the logic model presented earlier, visited 20 afterschool programs across Tennessee. The visits were part of the Feasibility and Implementation Studies examining afterschool programs established as part of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, which is a federally funded program that offers activities for K–12 students in high poverty areas. The activities are designed to improve students' academic performance and offer enrichment opportunities in a safe environment outside of the regular school day.

To determine the number of site visits, the evaluation team decided on a simple random sampling plan by center with an 80% confidence level and a margin of error of +/- 10%, requiring a sample of 36 centers. The centers visited were selected to be representative of the total population of 293 centers across the state in terms of their age group served, community or school-based status, the population density of their setting, and the current award year. Four centers were visited during the Feasibility Study phase in the spring of 2010. The remaining 32 center visits were split between the 2010–2011 and

2011–2012 school years. This is an interim report submitted to the Tennessee Department of Education summarizing the findings from the first group of site visits.

Before scheduling the site visits, UT SWORPS evaluators conducted telephone interviews with grantee directors to gather information regarding the program's background and history, design and goals, staffing, activities and desired outcomes, key partnerships, resources and sustainability, external evaluation, and the challenges and successes in administering the grant. During the 2-day visits, UT SWORPS evaluators interviewed site coordinators, asking the same questions regarding the specific site. Small-group interviews with program staff focused on program goals, recruitment and participation of students, activities, staff training, communication with schools and families, and perceptions on the impact of the program on academics and student behavior and life skills. Feeder school principals were interviewed to gauge how the partnership between the 21st CCLC program and the school was working. Finally, UT SWORPS evaluators observed an entire day of programming at the center for the purpose of describing the activities conducted at a particular site and assessing how they were conducted. The overarching purpose of the steps undertaken during the evaluation was to answer the research questions regarding program implementation.

Implementation Research Questions

How do centers recruit students for the program?

Because of the type of service they provide, high school programs, both school and community-based, have to "recruit every day" by marketing and promoting the program to the students who need it. They put information in the feeder school's daily announcements, have teachers remind students of the program during regular class times, and utilize technology such as automated call-out programs to market the afterschool program.

School-based programs for middle and elementary school students employ teachers and school data to identify and recruit students to the program. CBOs requested that teachers refer families to their program but also relied on name recognition of the larger grantee. Programs in rural communities were more likely to have space available after enrolling targeted students. Often, they opened up the program to students not demonstrating an academic need, but who lacked a safe place to go after school.

What approaches are used by centers to engage and retain student participants? Which are most effective?

"The single biggest challenge is transportation…" With high gas prices and large distances to travel across counties with challenging topography, many programs cited lack of transportation as the main reason students drop out of the program. Even programs that provide transportation for students face challenges associated with that service. In more rural areas where the homes are spread out, students might ride the bus home for 1 to 1.5 hours, and in some cases might not get home until 7 p.m. Parents felt that these days were too long for their children. Other programs bused students from the school to

a single drop-off point closer to the students' homes. Some parents still had to drive 30 minutes over a mountain or around a large body of water to arrive at the drop-off point.

Programs found many ways to engage the participants to attend regularly. They offered prizes, parties, and awards when students attended for 30 days. They had end-of-year field trips that students with regular attendance could go on. Centers also strove to keep their programming interesting and engaging for the students. Teachers used different games and strategies than those employed during the regular school day. They recognized that students most enjoyed the "hands-on" activities and those that used technology, so they made an effort to work those in whenever possible. Additionally, they were able to offer activities during the afterschool sessions, such as the dissection of owl pellets or language arts PowerPoint presentations, which they could not offer during the regular school day.

To what extent do centers attract and retain qualified instructors? What guidance and training do staff members receive?

Generally, site coordinators and/or grantee directors were responsible for hiring afterschool teachers. Three fourths of all programs visited, and all of the school-based programs visited, used regular day teachers as afterschool teachers in an effort to match the curriculums. They looked for teachers who "genuinely care and they try to make it [the lessons] fun and different." Most centers reported no problems with turnover, but some noted difficulty finding teachers willing to be alternates in the program to cover if another afterschool teacher needed an afternoon off.

The programs that utilized regular day teachers as afterschool teachers did not oblige those teachers to attend additional training beyond the annual inservice hours they were required to complete to maintain their teaching licensure. The assistants and other professional staff members were much more likely to be required to attend trainings though the grantee. Training topics included first aid and CPR, warning signs of child abuse and neglect, detecting bullying, and discipline strategies.

To what extent do centers offer high-quality services in core academic areas (math and reading)?

For the high school programs, the academics offered were tutoring by teachers in the core subject areas of math and language arts. They also provided credit recovery services to students who failed a course during their high school career. The main academic focus for the elementary and middle school programs was reading and math. Several programs stated that they targeted those students who were borderline proficient in reading and math on their TCAPS. While skills targeting SPIs were reinforced, teachers were also able to delve deeper into academic subjects with students by taking those skills and applying them in different ways or to real-life scenarios.

To what extent do centers offer enrichment and support activities beyond core academic areas (e.g., nutrition, health, art, music, technology, etc.)?

Several programs took students on field trips in an effort to expose them to places, people, and events they otherwise would not see. Two programs that UT SWORPS evaluators visited were in the process of

staging plays. One program took students geocaching, and another had a winter guard squad and jazz band. Other enrichment activities discussed were piano lessons, Tae Kwon Do, African culture and dance classes, and jazz band. Since it is one of the ways centers enticed students to participate, the majority tried to incorporate technology frequently into their programming. While several programs mentioned the importance of teaching the students about good nutrition and exercise, the programs that evaluators observed offered varying degrees of quality snacks. Additionally, few centers offered what could be considered *healthy* snacks.

What approaches do centers use to establish strong community partnerships? Which are most effective?

Partnering with community agencies may be one of the areas in which CBOs have an advantage over school-based programs. Often, the CBOs are larger and offer more services to the community beyond the afterschool program. As such, they are "known entities" in the community and are often approached to partner with other agencies. Conversely, potential community partners may not even be aware that a school-based program offers an afterschool program, or that it is a separate entity from the school. It is up to the site coordinator or grantee director to seek out those partnerships. Most felt that when they approached a potential community partner, having a plan and a list of what the program wanted from the partner was most effective. Most potential partners were very receptive to working with the afterschool programs when approached—"It just takes a phone call." The challenge that centers faced in engaging community partners was the lack of viable partners in the community. Centers in both rural and urban settings reported that partners have closed due to economic factors.

What approaches do centers use to establish effective working relationships with school personnel and students' families? What are some of the most promising practices in this area of operations?

The majority of programs visited indicated using informal channels to communicate with regular day school staff. Those afterschool programs employing regular day teachers had an obvious advantage in this area. Teachers described talking in the hallways or sending emails about students in the afterschool program. When communication challenges in school-based programs occurred, the afterschool teachers had access to the feeder school's data management systems and could see student assessment scores and classroom grades to target their afterschool instruction.

CBOs relied more on the site coordinators to communicate with the regular day school. Site coordinators reported some strong and some challenging relationships with feeder schools. Centers that were more integrated into the school, operating on school grounds and housing the site coordinator's office in the school building, demonstrated some of the stronger relationships with the feeder school. Other site coordinators reported having to rely on information from the students themselves regarding their assignments because the schools were not forthcoming.

Parent involvement has been a challenge for programs at every level. CBOs appeared to have more avenues for parent involvement, again because they were often more involved in the community.

Several had parent involvement coordinators or parent committees that worked to increase parents' involvement. CBOs were also the only centers to indicate offering classes for parents, but it was unclear if these were provided using 21st CCLC funds.

Regardless of the base, programs that worked with younger students had the benefit of parents coming to pick up their children at the end of the day. Several used this time as an opportunity to talk informally with the parents and discuss their child's behavior and academic progress. High school programs faced an additional challenge because many parents never graduated themselves, and, thus, the school building was "a place where I failed." To increase involvement, centers sent home newsletters about the afterschool program and sponsored family events such as reading and math nights or end-of-year picnics.

How satisfied are students and parents with center operations?

Student and parent satisfaction will be measured in the second phase of the Implementation Study through a parent and student survey distributed by the 21st CCLCs on behalf of UT SWORPS. However, during the site visits, anecdotal information regarding satisfaction levels was noted. Eleven of the 20 sites visited reported having a waiting list either at the time of the visit or at some point during the year. Parents at one site who were aware of the visit came together to tell the UT SWORPS evaluators how much they appreciated all that the program had done for their children. In only two of the dozens of activities that UT SWORPS evaluators observed did students express boredom during the session. All three of these are indirect evidence which indicates that students and parents are satisfied with the services that 21st CCLCs provide.

How do programs plan for long-term sustainability?

While programs recognize the need to prepare for a time when the 21st CCLC grant expires, few have any concrete plans for this change. Some centers are supported by multiple funding streams that would help minimize the impact of the loss of funding. Five grantees discussed other grants they were applying for by name. The current economic downturn has had an impact in this area as well. Funding streams are disappearing, and grantees who thought they had a solid plan for the period after the grant expires find themselves scrambling as more and more grantors reduce or eliminate their contributions.

Impact Research Questions

Quantitative data regarding student outcomes will be available for analysis during future phases of the evaluation process. However, during the visits, UT SWORPS evaluators gathered some anecdotal information about improvements in student outcomes that program staff and partners observed.

Do programs help students show improvement in school attendance, study habits, homework completion, etc.?

While no school attendance data were gathered, teachers in the afterschool program responded that students were turning in their homework more frequently. Additionally, stakeholders indicated that students gained study skills such as how to find an answer to a question on their own.

Do programs improve academic outcomes such as grades, test scores, etc.?

Most programs are still reeling from the changes made to the TCAP scoring system 2 years ago. Many students who had shown gains previously now were considered to be below proficient. At the time of the visits, most programs were waiting to see their scores from the second year of testing under the revised scoring system. However, site coordinators stated that students showed improvements on the periodic assessments given throughout the year, and that most students showed some improvement on their report cards in at least one subject area.

Do programs enhance students' social/emotional development and sense of safety?

Some of the "life skills" that stakeholders felt that students learned through participation in the afterschool program included discipline and listening to instruction (through Karate), teamwork and respecting their peers (through group work), and self-confidence (through the successes they have in the afterschool program).

What are some distinctive features of programs exhibiting exemplary outcomes (e.g., program structure, activities, community/school/family partnerships)?

Several innovative and unique practices were noted during the site visits. Many programs developed uncommon solutions to common problems heard throughout the visits. While programs should be encouraged to look at these practices as suggestions to implement, it is highly likely that what is working for one program targeting urban elementary students would not work for a rural high school program. Thus, programs should carefully consider the feasibility of the innovative practices highlighted in this report. The practices discussed here and others collected during the second round of site visits will be matched to the Outcomes Study findings to determine the effect that the innovations have on creating exemplary outcomes.

Conclusion

The beauty of the 21st CCLC grants was their recognition that different communities had different needs, and the people best suited to understand and address those needs were members of those communities. Therefore, grantees receiving 21st CCLC funding were able to design their own afterschool programs that addressed the needs of their communities. Programs differ in size and scope. They offer different services and target different goals. One thing they all have in common is a desire to help the children they serve succeed and a willingness to do whatever they can to reach that goal.

Appendix A

21st CCLC Program Evaluation Plan

21st CCLC Program Evaluation Plan

Evaluation Objectives

1. **To understand how 21st CCLC programs are implemented and structured, as a means of identifying ways to increase the effectiveness of programs and sustain them beyond the grant period.**
2. **To investigate whether 21st CCLC programs are benefiting the students' academic, social, cultural, emotional, safety needs, to assess who is most likely to benefit, and to identify the circumstances under which participants are more likely to experience desired program outcomes.**
3. **To identify the distinctive features of programs exhibiting exemplary efforts.**

Research Question	Type of Data Needed	Data Source	Method of Collection
Implementation			
1. How do centers recruit students for the program?	Description of recruitment efforts for 21st CCLC program	Site Coordinator survey Principal survey Program staff interviews (or focus group) Parent survey	Online survey with Site Coordinators – statewide Online survey with "Feeder" School Principals –statewide Program staff interviews –mix of telephone and personal interviews during site visits (or focus group depending on center size) –selected sites only Parent survey –telephone interviews with parents of students randomly selected to be included in program outcomes study
2. What approaches are used by centers to engage and retain student participants?	Program attendance (aggregate data) Days/hours of participation overall (aggregate data) Program efforts to engage and keep students interested	APR Site Coordinator survey	APR data will be available to SWORPS for all sites –statewide Online survey with Site Coordinators – statewide

Research Question	Type of Data Needed	Data Source	Method of Collection
Which are most effective?	Retention/student turnover (aggregate data) Student perceptions of program quality and extent to which they have benefited	Principal survey Student survey – Program staff interviews (or focus group)	Online survey with "Feeder" School Principals –statewide Student survey administered at the end of the school year; random sample Program staff interviews – mix of telephone and personal interviews during site visits (or focus group depending on center size) –selected sites only
3. To what extent do centers attract and retain qualified instructors? What guidance and training do staff members receive?	Program efforts to attract instructors Qualifications of program staff Staff characteristics (e.g., time with the program, educational background, etc.) Initial and on-going training for program staff	Site Coordinator survey Principal survey Grantee Director interview Program staff interviews (or focus group)	Online survey with Site Coordinators – statewide Online survey with "Feeder" School Principals –statewide Telephone interviews with Grantee Directors – selected sites only Program staff interviews –mix of telephone and personal interviews during site visits (or focus group depending on center size) –selected sites only
4. To what extent do centers offer high-quality services in core academic areas (math and reading)?	Activity description Days/hours of participation by activity (aggregate) Student perceptions of academic program component Parent perceptions of academic program component School administration perceptions of academic program quality and links with school day Operational support for program effectiveness with respect to academic enrichment activities	Site Coordinator survey Principal survey Student survey Parent survey	Online survey with Site Coordinators – statewide Online survey with "Feeder" School Principals –statewide Student survey administered at the end of the school year; random sample Parent survey –telephone interviews with parents of students randomly selected to be

Research Question	Type of Data Needed	Data Source	Method of Collection
		Staff interviews (or focus group) Field Observations	included in program outcomes study Program staff interviews –mix of telephone and personal interviews during site visits (or focus group depending on center size) –selected sites only "Typical" afternoon activities observed at selected sites
5. To what extent do centers offer enrichment and support activities beyond core academic areas (e.g., nutrition, health, art, music, technology, etc.)?	Activity description Facilities Days/hours of participation by activity (aggregate) Student perceptions of program quality with respect to non-academic enrichment components Parent perceptions of program quality with respect to non-academic enrichment components School administrators' perceptions of program quality with respect to non-academic enrichment components Operational support for program effectiveness with respect to non-academic enrichment opportunities	Site Coordinator survey Principal survey Student survey Parent survey Staff interviews (or focus group) Field observations	Online survey with Site Coordinators – statewide Online survey with "Feeder" School Principals –statewide Student survey administered at the end of the school year; random sample Parent survey –telephone interviews with parents of students randomly selected to be included in program outcomes study Program staff interviews –mix of telephone and personal interviews during site visits (or focus group depending on center size) –selected sites only "Typical" afternoon activities observed at selected sites
6. What approaches do centers use to establish strong community partnerships? Which are most effective?	Description of program efforts to establish partnerships, program outreach, and community awareness Partner perceptions of effectiveness Success of partnerships and building of relationships (e.g., effective communication among stakeholders)	APR Site Coordinator survey Principal survey	APR and grantee profile data will be available to SWORPS for all sites. Online survey with Site Coordinators – statewide Online survey with "Feeder" School Principals –statewide

Research Question	Type of Data Needed	Data Source	Method of Collection
	Operational support for program effectiveness with respect to collaboration and communication	Grantee Director interviews Staff interviews (or focus group)	Telephone interviews with Grantee Directors – selected sites only Program staff interviews –mix of telephone and personal interviews during site visits (or focus group depending on center size) –selected sites only
7. What approaches do centers use to establish effective working relationships with school personnel and students' families? What are some of the most promising practices in this area of operations?	Description of program effort to establish partnerships (including offering of parent literacy and educational development activities) School personnel (teachers and administrators) regarding perception of effectiveness Parent perceptions of partnership Operational support for program effectiveness with respect to interrelationships and communication among stakeholders	APR Site Coordinator survey Principal survey Grantee Director interviews Staff interviews (or focus group) Parent survey	APR and grantee profile data will be available to SWORPS for all sites. Online survey with Site Coordinators – statewide Online survey with "Feeder" School Principals –statewide Telephone interviews with Grantee Directors – selected sites only Program staff interviews –mix of telephone and personal interviews during site visits (or focus group depending on center size) –selected sites only Parent survey –telephone interviews with parents of students randomly selected to be included in program outcomes study
8. How satisfied are students and parents with center operations?	Student perceptions of program quality and extent to which they have benefited Parent perceptions of program quality and its benefit to themselves and their child	Student survey Parent survey	Student survey administered at the end of the school year; random sample Parent survey –telephone interviews with parents of students randomly selected to be included in program outcomes study

Research Question	Type of Data Needed	Data Source	Method of Collection
9. How do programs plan for long-term sustainability?	Other sources of funding	APR Grantee Director interviews	APR and grantee profile data will be available to SWORPS for all sites. Telephone interviews with Grantee Directors – selected sites only
Outcomes Study			
1. Do programs help students show improvement on measures such as school attendance, study habits, homework completion, etc.?	Pattern of homework completion (quality and timeliness) at individual level of data for program participants Demonstrated study skills at individual level of data for program participants Demonstrated level of effort at individual level of data for program participants School attendance at individual level of data for program participants Student perceptions of program quality and extent to which they have benefited Parent perceptions of the program, benefit to their child, and reasons for enrolling the child	Teacher survey EIS Student survey Parent survey Staff interviews (or focus group)	Teacher survey administered at the end of the year; students randomly selected to be included in program outcomes study Attendance data will be extracted from EIS at the end of each grading period by TDOE (or at the end of each semester or at the end of each academic year depending on available resources); coded with a program ID for safeguarding privacy and confidentiality, and transmitted to SWORPS –all program participants. Student survey administered at the end of the school year; random sample Parent survey –telephone interviews with parents of students randomly selected to be included in program outcomes study Program staff interviews –mix of telephone and personal interviews during site visits (or focus group depending on center size) –selected sites only

Research Question	Type of Data Needed	Data Source	Method of Collection
2. Do programs improve academic skills and test scores?	Grades at individual level of data for program participants Test scores at individual level data for program participants Promotion (delayed or on time) at individual level of data for program participants Return to regular track (if applicable) at individual level of data for program participants	Teacher survey EIS Student survey Parent survey Staff interviews (or focus group)	Teacher survey administered at the end of the school year for students randomly selected to be included in program outcomes study Achievement data will be extracted from EIS at the end of each grading period by TDOE (or at the end of each semester or at the end of each academic year depending on available resources); coded with a program ID for safeguarding privacy and confidentiality, and transmitted to SWORPS –all program participants. Student survey administered at the end of the school year; random sample Parent survey –telephone interviews with parents of students randomly selected to be included in program outcomes study Program staff interviews –mix of telephone and personal interviews during site visits (or focus group depending on center size) –selected sites only
3. Do programs enhance students' social/emotional development and sense of safety?	Demonstrated personal responsibility at individual level of data for program participants Interactions with peers at individual level of data for program participants Expressed aspirations at individual level of data for program participants Expressed feelings of being safe at individual level of data for program participants Patterns of victimization at individual level of data for program participants	Teacher survey Student survey Parent survey Staff interviews (or focus group)	Teacher survey administered at the end of school year for students randomly selected to be included in program outcomes study Student survey administered at the end of the school year; random sample Parent survey –telephone interviews with parents of students randomly selected to be included in program outcomes study Program staff interviews –mix of telephone and personal interviews during site visits (or focus group depending on center size) – for selected

Research Question	Type of Data Needed	Data Source	Method of Collection
	Student perceptions of program quality and extent to which they have benefited Parent perceptions of the program quality and benefit to their child		sites only
4. Do programs help decrease disciplinary actions for students and adverse behaviors in and out of the classroom (e.g., violence, use of drugs, smoking, contact with gangs, etc.)?	School suspensions at individual level of data for program participants and comparison group School expulsions at individual level data for program participants and comparison group Incidents of fighting, stealing, or vandalism at individual level of data for program participants Use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs -individual level data for program participants	EIS Teacher survey Student survey Parent survey Staff interviews (or focus group)	Data on suspensions/expulsions and other incident reports will be extracted from EIS at the beginning of the academic year and at the end of each grading period by TDOE (or at the end of each semester or at the end of each academic year depending on available resources); coded with a program ID for safeguarding privacy and confidentiality, and transmitted to SWORPS –all program participants. Teacher survey administered at the end of the school year for students randomly selected to be included in program outcomes study Student survey administered at the end of the school year; random sample Parent survey –telephone interviews with parents of students randomly selected to be included in program outcomes study Program staff interviews –mix of telephone and personal interviews during site visits (or focus group depending on center size) –selected sites only

Research Question	Type of Data Needed	Data Source	Method of Collection
5. Are all demographic groups of students affected by program activities the same? How do they differ? What is the role, if any, of program dosage?	Student characteristics at individual level of data for program participants Program attendance at individual level of data for program participants Activity attendance at individual level of data for program participants Program staff perceptions	EIS Web based application Program staff interviews (or focus group)	Data with respect to participant demographics will be extracted from EIS by TDOE at the end of each academic year; coded with a program ID for safeguarding privacy and confidentiality, and transmitted to SWORPS –all program participants. Daily program attendance and participation data downloaded from web based application – all students Program staff interviews –mix of telephone and personal interviews during site visits (or focus group depending on center size) –selected sites only
6. What are some distinctive features of programs exhibiting exemplary outcomes (e.g., program structure, activities, community/school/ family partnerships)?	Program outcomes (intermediate and long-term as evidenced by prior analysis) Program characteristics Program activities Community/school/family partnerships	APR Data collected from various stakeholders during the course of the study Results of data analyses Summary reports Follow up interviews/visits with selected programs	APR and grantee profile data will be available to SWORPS for all sites. Data gathered from various stakeholders –site visits, telephone, surveys, interviews during the course of the study SWORPS data analyses/summary reports SWORPS follow-up interviews/visits with selected programs

Appendix B

Grantee Director Interview Guide

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS
PROJECT/GRANTEE DIRECTOR INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION:

Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) administrators have asked the University of Tennessee Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (UT SWORPS) to evaluate the effectiveness of afterschool programs funded by 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants. As part of that evaluation, we are interviewing grantee directors about the afterschool programs they oversee.

We want to thank you in advance for talking with us! As a Grantee director, you are a critical source of information for understanding afterschool programs as you can share valuable insights about operations and benefits for participating students.

We want to assure you that everything you say will be confidential. Generally, we report information only in aggregate form. Our reports never associate the names of individuals or programs with specific comments. If we use any specific comments, it will only be to illustrate a point expressed by the larger population of afterschool care grantee directors.

Before we get started, do you have any questions?

Introduction & Background on Project/Grantee Director (3-5 minutes)

1. **"Tell me a little about you and your role as the Project/Grantee Director for the 21st CCLC program."**

   How long have you been working in this position? *[PROBE for time working on the 21st CCLC program/grants; number of 21st CCLC grant cycles administered]*

   Describe your roles and responsibilities in administering the 21st CCLC grant.

Program Background & History [4-6 minutes]

2. **"I would like to hear about the history of [CENTER NAME]. For the remainder of the interview, when I ask about center specific information, I will be referring to [CENTER NAME]."**

   When (in what year) did this center begin operating? And when (in what year) did it first receive 21st CCLC funding?

   What percentage of the center's budget is currently supported by 21st CCLC?

   In addition to the 21st CCLC grant, what other funding sources does THIS center receive? (*PROBE for in-kind, corporate, foundations, local, state, and federal grants/awards utilized*.)

   What community needs prompted the opening and funding of [CENTER NAME] under the 21st CCLC grant? What we are interested is to hear what community needs prompted applying for 21st CCLC funding for the center.

Program Design and Goals [4-6 minutes]

3. **"Given the context of its environment and the needs it was created to address, how would you describe the goals and objectives for [CENTER NAME]?"**

   From your perspective, what is the most critical objective for THIS center? *[PROBE academic achievement, artistic/cultural, physical fitness/healthy life skills, career development, community service, college readiness]*

   What do you feel has been the most challenging program goal to work toward at THIS center? Why do you think that's the case?

Staffing [4-6 minutes]

4. **"How does the [CENTER NAME] attract and maintain qualified staff?"**

   What qualifications do you look for in the site coordinator? For teachers and other staff?

   What training do site coordinators, teachers and other staff receive above and beyond their teacher training requirements?

Describe the successes and challenges you've faced in attracting and maintaining qualified staff?

Activity Description/Outcomes [5-8 minutes]

5. **"Now I'm going to ask you about the activities offered at [CENTER NAME] and how they vary from year to year. Then I'd like to hear about the successes you have witnessed at this site."**

   Each year, how is it decided what activities to offer for THIS site? *[PROBE for collaboration with school staff, assessments done early in year to identify student needs, input from students, input from parents, staff areas of expertise, etc.]*

   What do you perceive are the academic successes for THIS center? How do you know about these successes at THIS site? [*There might be some of the same record keeping/evidence coming up here but we want to make sure we get everything there is in terms of helpful data to track academic progress*]

   What do you feel are the successes in enrichment/non-academic activities for THIS center? How do you know about these successes at THIS site? [*There might be some of the same record keeping/evidence coming up here but we want to make sure we get everything there is in terms of helpful data to track program outcomes]*

Key Partnerships [6-8 minutes]

6. **"Would you talk about the success and challenges you've faced in establishing and maintaining partnerships within the community, enhancing community awareness of [CENTER NAME], and program outreach efforts."**

   What has been done to build partnerships with community organizations, enhance community awareness of [CENTER NAME], and promote program outreach?

   What has worked well in these efforts?

   What are some of the challenges that you have faced in working with community partners? What might resolve these challenges?

7. **"Now let's move to the relationships among [CENTER NAME] staff, regular school day staff, parents, and community partners. Tell me about efforts to establish effective working relationships among these key partners and the successes and challenges you've faced."**

   What have you and [CENTER NAME] staff done to establish and maintain partnerships with regular school day staff? With parents? *(Probe for efforts related to parent literacy and educational development activities)*

   In your opinion, what has worked well? (*Probe for support from school administrators*)

   What are some of the challenges that were faced in working with school day staff? With parents? With community partners? What might resolve these challenges?

   What successes and challenges have you experienced in communicating and working with [CENTER NAME] staff?

Resources/Sustainability [4-6 minuets]

8. **"I would like to ask about the resources and funding that are utilized for [CENTER NAME]."**

   What have you found to be the most challenging obstacle to securing financial resource(s) for THIS program?

   What plans are in place to fund the THIS center when the 21st CCLC grant ends? [*PROBE sustainability strategy, business plan, community development plan. Look for diversity in the funding federal and state government, corporate foundations, private foundation, community agencies*]

   Are there any additional resources that might sustain THIS center once the 21st CCLC grant has ended? (optional)

Evaluation [4-6 minutes]

9. **Can you tell me about any external evaluation that might have occurred with [CENTER NAME]?**

   Has THIS center been a part of any external evaluation study? If so, who conducted the study?

   What was the primary purpose of the study?

   What findings resulted from the study? (*Ask if there was a report produced and obtain a copy or ask the director to email a link or a copy of the report)*

   How did you use the findings?

Closing [4-6 minutes]

10. **"In closing I would like to hear about the challenges and successes you had in administering the 21st CCLC grant."**

    What do you see as the greatest successes with respect to administering the 21st CCLC grant?

    What have been the major challenges in administering the 21st CCLC grant? *[PROBE for challenges in terms of resources, collaborations, communication, engagement, etc.*]

    What do you see as your greatest challenge in the next four to five years?

Thank you for all the information you've shared! As we process information, we may be asking for your help to review any self-assessment data that you keep for the program. We may also contact you if we have further questions or need clarification after observing program operations and meeting with other staff. Again, thank you for your time and insight.

Appendix C

Site Coordinator Interview Guide

21ST CCLC SITE COORDINATOR INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION:

Department of Education (DOE) administrators have asked UT SWORPS (Office of Research and Public Service) to conduct a two-phase study to assess the effectiveness of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC). During the first phase, we will be working with DOE administrators and 21st Century Community Learning Centers on understanding program operations and activities and how best to secure data at the individual student level. That will allow us to assess benefits to participating students (which is the second phase of the study). The study is scheduled to begin in August 2010 at the beginning of the school year.

In preparation for the full study, we are conducting a small pilot study. The **purpose of the pilot** is to: 1) test some of the instruments designed to gather information and 2) hear ideas about the best ways for collecting the information we need for the study. We wanted to consider differences in school based programs v. community/based programs, programs operating in urban or semi-urban areas and rural areas, and programs that are in different stages in terms of maturity. So we selected 4 centers that serve middle school students, and you were one of those selected. Data collected during these site visits will be supplemented with information gathered from pilot sites' Feeder School staff (Principal and teachers) and data your center may have submitted via the PPICS application.

<u>I want to assure you that everything you share with us during our interview will remain **confidential**</u>. Even though we may use your comments, our reports will never reflect the names of individuals who made specific comments. We will use the information gathered today to inform decisions for the study. This interview will last approximately 2 hours.

It would also be very helpful if we **recorded** this interview, to make sure we capture all information shared. Would that be OK with you today? Only research staff involved in the project will have access to the recordings and the recordings will be destroyed after the information has been compiled.

Before we get started, do you have any questions?

Introduction & Background on Site Coordinator (4-6 minutes)

1. **"Tell me a little about you and your roles and responsibilities in working with the 21st CCLC program."**

   How long have you been working at this center? With the 21st CCLC program?

   Tell me about other positions you've held in the organization. (Optional)

   What past work experiences or education helped prepare you for your current role as the coordinator? (Optional)

   Describe your roles and responsibilities with the 21st CCLC program.

Program Background [10-12 minutes]

2. **"Next, I would like to know how the center operates and how the 21st CCLC program fits in with other program operations."**

   How long has the center been in operation?

   When did the center begin to receive funding from 21st CCLC grant?

   Approximately how many students does your site currently serve? (PROBE: for *total and under 21st CCLC program*--***IF MIX***, *KEEP IN MIND TO SEEK CLARIFICATION THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW FOR PIECES OF INFORMATION THAT MAY NOT APPLY TO ALL)*

   Tell me more about the population(s) your site serves? *(PROBE for feeder school(s), ethnicity, level of English proficiency, family socioeconomic status)*

   What community or school needs prompted the decision to have the 21st CCLC program?

Program Goals [10-12 minutes]

3. "I'd like to hear your views on the goals of the 21st CCLC program and how these goals are measured."

What do you see as the goals of the 21st CCLC program?

Which is the most important or primary goal from your perspective?
What is the program goal that has been most challenging to work towards? Why do you think that's the case?
How do you measure progress towards EACH of the goals?

NOTE: *[IT IS **CRITICAL** TO PROBE for SPECIFICS for SELF-EVALUATION of **EACH GOAL** mentioned. During the discussion, identify data/records that would be helpful to review during the site visit to assess feasibility of utilizing information for our evaluation efforts. **PROBE ALSO** if some of the data to assess goals related to academic improvement is available also for "similarly situated" students that are not participating in the program –(i.e., students from the same feeder school(s)]*

Teacher Hiring, Training & Qualifications [10-12 minutes]

4. "Tell me about staffing for the 21st CCLC Program and describe their roles and responsibilities."

How is the program currently staffed (full-time, part-time, volunteers)? *[PROBE for Number in each category, if a mix*]

What is the staff/student ratio at present? [*PROBE if it varies by different activities or season*]

Could you share with me an overview of various staff members' roles and responsibilities?

5. "Finding the right staff to meet the needs of the children and the program can be a challenge. Talk to me about how you hire and train staff and about any retention issues you've faced."

What are the qualifications you look for when hiring program staff? How do you go about attracting quality staff? What are some of the challenges in recruiting?

How many of the staff members that are currently on board are certified to teach or have previous teaching experience? Other qualifications that make them a good fit for the program?

What training and professional development opportunities are available to staff? *[PROBE for INITIAL and ON-GOING training requirements, if any, AND opportunities]*

What is the level of staff turnover? [***IF turnover has been an issue,** PROBE to understand if turnover is "seasonal" and how it affects program activities offered*].

Recruitment of Students [8-10 minutes]

6. "Talk some about student recruitment."

What are the eligibility requirements for students to participate in the program? [*PROBE also for identification of feeder school(s)]*

How do you go about recruiting students to enroll in the program? *[**IF multiple methods are mentioned**, PROBE for what has been most effective? PROBE also for collaboration, if any, with feeder school(s)in efforts to recruit students AND the extent to which there is waiting lists/need to serve more than slots are available for]*

What have been the major challenges in recruiting students? *[PROBE re: extent to which target population is reached. If not, explore reasons]*

Services Provided/Activity Description [8-10 minutes]

7. "Tell me about the activities this center offers – both the ones to enhance academic performance and those non-academic or enrichment activities."

What are the activities offered to students in a "typical week" that are designed to help improve academic performance? [PROBE re: frequency offered, individual v. small group v. large group, variation between time of the year school is in session and summertime, variation depending on grade level]

What about enrichment/non-academic activities (cultural/recreational/etc.) offered in a "typical week"? *[PROBE re: frequency offered, individual v. small group v. large group, variation between time of the year school is in session and summertime]*

Does the center offer any activities for adults or specifically for parents? [*PROBE re: types of activities, frequency offered, level of attendance*]

How do you go about deciding every year what activities to offer? *[PROBE for collaboration with school staff, assessments done early in year to identify student needs, input from students, input from parents, staff areas of expertise, etc.]*

ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION [30-35 minutes]

8. "I would like to hear about this center's attendance policies as well as your experiences with student attendance and retention."

Describe your attendance policies? What are your criteria for "counting a student as having attended the program for one day"? *[PROBE for minimum number of hours required to attend, or whether the student has to participate in certain number or certain kind of activities. OBTAIN any written policies]*

What is the average number of hours a student spends in the program during a "typical week"? *[PROBE for variation during the year]*

What do you do to engage students who don't attend regularly before they are dropped from the program?

How much turnover does the program experience during a typical year? Is there a pattern in terms of Time of the year? Grade level? Demographic group? Need for Academic Improvement? Reasons? How many days can a student miss before he/she "loses the slot"?

9. "Next I would like to know more about the attendance requirements and incentives you offer to encourage participation in specific activities."

Do students have choices in the activities they participate? How is that handled?

Are there any activities that students are REQUIRED to participate? [*If so, are ALL students required to participate or just some? If only some, what are the criteria and what are the activities that are required?]*

Is there any incentive offered to encourage student participation in academic activities? (e.g., recover or earn extra credit, make up school absences, opportunity to go on a field trip, etc.)

***10. "Think about the academic and non-academic activities offered. What differences do you see in the percentages of students participating and the benefits they receive from the activities? Please tell me also how you track improvements over time."**

What percentage of students participate regularly (i.e., at least 2-3 days a week) in academic activities offered during a "typical week"? *[PROBE for variation during the year AND 2-3 types of activity that are most popular choices]*

Who is more likely to benefit from attending these academic activities? For what percentage of students attending do you see improvement over time? How do you know there has been improvement? [*There might be some of the same record keeping/evidence coming up here but we want to make sure we get everything there is in terms of helpful data to track academic progress*]

What percentage of students participate regularly (i.e., at least 2-3 days a week) in enrichment/non-academic activities offered during a "typical week"? [PROBE for variation during the year and 2-3 types of activity that are most popular choices]

Who is more likely to benefit from attending these enrichment/non-academic activities? For what percentage of students attending do you see improvement over time? How do you know there has been improvement? [*There might be some of the same record keeping/evidence coming up here but we want to make sure we get everything there is in terms of helpful data to track program outcomes]*

School Partnerships [5-7 minutes]

11. "Next I would like us to turn to this center's relationship with the feeder school and its staff.

Describe this relationship and talk about some of the successes and challenges you've experienced. "

How does this center initiate and develop partnerships with school day teachers, and other staff?

How often do you or your staff work with school day staff on issues related to the program, activities, curriculum, and/or individual students?

What has worked well in your partnership with feeder school(s) teacher and administrators?

What are some of the challenges that you have faced in working with the feeder schools? What might resolve these challenges?

Closing/Sustainability [5-7 minutes]

***12. "In closing I would like to hear about the challenges and successes you had in implementing the 21st CCLC program."**

What do you see as this center's greatest successes with respect to implementing the 21st CCLC program?

What have been the major challenges in implementing the 21st CCLC program? *[PROBE for challenges in terms of resources, collaborations, communication, engagement, etc.*]

What do you see as your greatest challenge in the next four to five years?

Thank you for all the information you've shared! As we process information during our site visit, we'll be asking for your help to review data that you keep for self-assessment of your program. We hope that we could also use these data for the state evaluation to avoid duplication. Towards the end of our visit, we also want to spend about 30-45 minutes with you to discuss the most feasible methods for collecting data from parents, teachers, students, and school administrators that will be needed for the evaluation. At that time we may also have some more questions that we need clarification on after having the opportunity to observe program operations and meet with other staff.

*May be asked during Exit Interview at the end depending on time constraints.

Appendix D

Focus Group Interview Guide

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR AFTERSCHOOL CENTER STAFF

Time Estimate (Minutes)	Purpose	Comments, Questions, & Further Instructions
[3-5]	Purpose of Study/Session. Housekeeping. Ground Rules. On the table prior to participants arrival, there should be: Tape recorder, ready to turn on and record Name tents for participants Markers As participants enter the room, the Moderator and Note taker will be "hostesses", welcoming each participant and inviting them to sit at the table. Ask participants to write his /her name on a name tent and place on the table in front of them.	<u>Purpose</u> Department of Education (DOE) administrators have asked UT SWORPS (Office of Research and Public Service) to conduct a two-phase study to assess the effectiveness of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC). We want to first understand program operations and activities and then we can move to the second phase of assessing program benefits for students. This focus group is part of a pilot for the first phase of the study. We believe that some of the most valuable insights into student activities will be generated from sessions like this as you all play such a critical role in working with children. We also feel that your perceptions regarding the benefits of the program and challenges faced will also be valuable as you see from day to day how kids are affected by program activities. <u>Housekeeping</u> It will probably take about 1.5 to 2 hours for us to complete our discussion. I would like each of you to make sure your cell phones are either off or on vibrate. [Pause] <u>Ground Rules</u> Before we get into our discussion, I would like to share the ground rules for our time together. ❑ <u>We believe that everything you tell us is important.</u> For that reason, we are recording the session. This allows us to go back and listen to all the ideas and experiences shared. ❑ <u>Everything you share with us will remain confidential</u>. This group's facilitators are the only people who will listen to the recordings. We are the only ones with access to the recordings. In this way, we protect your identity – our report never reflects the names of individuals who made specific comments or points during these group discussions. We will use the information gathered today to create an overview of programs across the state; this is not an evaluation of any individual respondent, center, or grantee. ❑ We ask that, as much as possible, you <u>talk one person at a time</u> so we can hear everyone's comments. ❑ We ask that you <u>respect differences of opinion</u> among group members.

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Time Estimate (Minutes)	Purpose	Comments, Questions, & Further Instructions
[5-10]	Introductions – participants & facilitators. Group warm-up and background information.	**1. My first request is for each of you to share a little about yourself, so we can get to know you better. Let's go around the table and I'd like each person to tell us**: your name, what kind of activities you are involved in here at the center, and how long you have been working in your current position at [center name]. Finally, it would be great if you could share with us the title of your favorite book [*Go around the room in round robin.]* **2. Thank you for sharing. Before we start our discussion, please also tell me by a show of hands how many of you work with youth during the afterschool program but also interact with them during the regular school hours each day?** [*Assistant Moderator should discretely make note here also of who identifies as school day staff so later on differences of opinion can be explored, if any, at that level]*
[10-12]	Implementation-Program Goals	**3. We understand that each afterschool program is different based on its objectives, the community, and the population it serves. As staff working most closely with youth at this center, what are <u>your</u> goals?** [Assistant Moderator should *LIST on Flipchart]* **4. Of all the goals listed, which one do you see as most critical for the success of the program and tell me what makes you say that?** [PROBE if what is seen as most critical changes during the course of the year IF the program operates also in summer time.] **5. For each of these goals, how do you know if you are making progress/what are the indicators you use to measure success?** [PROBE about points in time progress is assessed using various indicators if not clear from discussion] [Assistant Moderator should *LIST in a separate column on Flipchart and record how often each is measured]*

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Time Estimate (Minutes)	Purpose	Comments, Questions, & Further Instructions
[15-20]	Implementation-Recruitment/Participation	**6. Describe for me the children or target population that this program is trying to attract?** *[PROBE for specific profile in terms of demographics, academic needs, non-academic needs, etc.]* **7. Putting on your teacher hats, if you were to assign a grade to how successful this program has been in reaching the target population you just described, what kind of a grade would you assign and why?** [*It is OK for the group to go with minus or plus rather than just A, B, etc. The important thing is to get a sense of their perception and have them elaborate on that*] What *segments of target population have been the hardest to reach?* *What recruitment strategies* have worked *in the past or do you have ideas for future.* *Will you share reasons some students* choose not to participate when they could benefit. **8. Next I'd like us to shift from recruitment to program attendance. If I had walked in this center last week, each afternoon/all 5 week days, to what extent would I have seen the same students?** *What percentage of the youth actually attends every day at least for a couple of hours?* *What is the average number of hours spent each day by those who attend every day?* *What is the average number of hours spent each week for those who attend regularly but not every day?* *In your experience what are the reasons some attend only a few days a week?]* ASK ONLY if center operates in summer time ---What if I walked in the center each day the last week of June. What percentage of the students attending now, would I be seeing then? What is the average number of hours spent each by those attending in summer? **9. I'd like to hear how you go about tracking attendance on a daily basis.** Who is responsible to track that? *[IF some in group identify themselves, PROBE for process used/recordkeeping/if information is shared with anyone else]* Aside from daily attendance, do you also keep track of time each student spends in a specific activity? *[IF yes, PROBE for process used/recordkeeping/if information is shared with anyone else]* **10. Tell me about your experiences with youth dropping out of the program?** What are the reasons they drop out? Are some more likely to drop out than others? If so, who? Are there special times in the year that more drop out?

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Time Estimate (Minutes)	Purpose	Comments, Questions, & Further Instructions
[10-15]	Implementation - Services Provided/Activity Description	**11. Next, I would like to hear about the academic and enrichment or non-academic activities offered to students here. Let's start with the academic activities provided.** In a "typical afternoon" during the school year, what percentage of the students attending regularly here takes advantage of an academic activity offered? [PROBE for incentives to participation/what has helped motivate students participate] What are a couple of the most popular choices when it comes to activities? Are activities/choices affected by the regular school day program? If so, what would be some examples? Are academic activities offered during the summer months? *[ASK ONLY if the center operates during summer months]* If so, is it the same activities or different options but with the same academic goals targeted? To what extent do students take advantage of these? **12. Now, let's talk about enrichment or non-academic activities.** In a "typical afternoon" during the school year, what percentage of the students attending here regularly take advantage of a non- academic activity offered? What are a couple of the most popular choices? What about summer months? [*ASK ONLY if the center operates during summer months]* Do students have a choice of what activity to attend? For instance, is there flexibility on any given day if one needs help with math/tutoring as opposed to access to resources for working on a science project? **13. Describe for us how you decide each year what to offer in terms of both academic and enrichment or non-academic activities?** *[PROBE for understanding how that process works AND also for input from needs assessments done early in the year, students, parents, and feeder school staff]*
[5-7]	Implementation-Staff Training	**13. I'd like to switch gears a little and hear about any opportunities for training you've had since you started in your current position.** Was there some initial training? If so, what did it cover? What kind of opportunities for professional development did you have, if any, during the last year or so? Can you think of way you've used this training on your job? (e.g., an idea for a new activity, different ways to motivate youth, etc.)

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Time Estimate (Minutes)	Purpose	Comments, Questions, & Further Instructions
[8-10]	Implementation-Communication with other Stakeholders	**14. Tell me about your communication with regular school day teachers about the needs of individual kids and their progress over time. What grade would you assign to the quality of communication and why?** *PROBE for venues used for communication (formal/informal), topics (progress, curriculum, coordination of homework, access to students' day school textbooks, etc.) Also if grade assigned lower than A explore suggestions for improving communication.* NOTE: Will *need to ADJUST wording/time spent on this depending on the composition of the group's participants as in some it may be 100% day school teachers and in others 0%--see BELOW*] -- IF ALL Regular Day time Teachers ASK: **How do you decide how to supplement what is taught during the regular school day? Same curriculum? What types of different teaching strategies are used during afterschool care? How are different levels of ability addressed?** **15. (*ASK ALL*): And how about communication with parents/families. How is that going?** What are the venues for communication? Using the same grading scale we used before (A through F), how would you rate the quality of communication at present? [IF not consensus on A rating –PROBE for suggestions that would improve communication with parents] What are the most common topics with parents?
[1-2]	Impact-Introduction/Transition	**Thank you for sharing your ideas, opinions, and knowledge about the program. For the last part of our session, I would like to hear your impressions of the impact the program has been having on students' lives –both on the academic side but also benefits in other areas of the students' lives, if any.**

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[8-10]	Impact-Academics	**16. As the academic year is coming to an end, I'd like you to think of students who have been attending the program regularly this last year**, **In what ways has the program helped the students academically?** [PROBE for improvements in study habits, students' grades, reading/math skills, test scores, etc.] *IF TIME ALLOWS ASK* … **And if I was to ask you to share with us a success story in terms of academic improvement, what would that story be? No need to use the youth's name. Just describe where they were before and where they are now and why you think the program helped.** [*Recognize participants to share as time allows*] **17. Would you say that all students who participated benefited from the academic activities or did some benefit more than others? Can you explain?**
[8-10]	Impact-Behaviors/Safety	**18. And aside from academics, what types of skills have students learned that may be helpful as they grow into adulthood?** *IF TIME ALLOWS ASK* … **What are some success stories you have to share that indicate that the program has a larger impact in terms of the youth's social development and safety?** [*Recognize participants to share as time allows*] **19. Would you say that all students who participated benefited from the enrichment activities or did some benefit more than others? Can you explain?**
[5]	Closing	**20. We've talked about a lot, but is there anything we did not address that would be important for us to know if we are to truly understand program operations and program impact?** **Thank you so much for your participation and for sharing your valuable insights with us.**

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Appendix E

School Principal Interview Guide

21ST CCLC
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION:

Administrators at the Department of Education (DOE) have asked The University of Tennessee Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (UT SWORPS) to conduct a study to assess the effectiveness of afterschool programs that are funded at least partially by 21st Century grants. UT researchers will be gathering information from student records; surveying parents, students, and teachers; and making onsite visits to selected centers where we are interviewing staff and observing afterschool activities. The afterschool program serving students in your school [Program Name] was selected for an onsite visit. As part of activities scheduled for the visit, we wanted to interview you as the School Principal to obtain your views on operations of the afterschool program.

I want to assure you that everything you share with us during our interview will remain confidential. If we use your specific comments, it will only be to illustrate a point expressed by other school principals or by afterschool program staff. Our reports will never associate the names of individuals or their affiliations with their specific comments. Let me assure you: <u>This is not an evaluation of any individual, school, afterschool program, or grantee</u>. We will use the information gathered today to create an overview of programs across the state.

Our interview will last approximately 45 minutes. It would be very helpful if we **recorded** this interview to make sure we capture all the information you share and that we accurately reflect your comments. Would that be okay with you? Only research staff involved in the project will have access to the recordings and the recordings will be destroyed after the information has been compiled. That way we protect your confidentiality.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Introduction & Background (3-5 minutes)

1. **"Tell me a little about your background as principal and the school."**

   How long have you been the principal at this school?

   Have you been working in education for a long time? (*If not provided, ask:)* How long? In what capacity?

   How would you characterize the overall academic performance of this school? (e.g., Has the school been identified as exemplary or low performing by the district or state?)

   How would you characterize the level of safety in the community?

For the reminder of the interview, I may use the term 21st Century CCLC to refer to [CENTER NAME]. I'll try to use the name you are most familiar with, but please excuse me if I slip up.

Program/ School Links (10-12 minutes)

2. **"I would like to hear about your partnership with the [CENTER NAME]."**

   How long has your school had a partnership with the [CENTER NAME]?

   What other academic or youth development afterschool programs or alternative activities are offered at this school or in the community to support youth?

   What is your role in the partnership with [CENTER NAME]*? [PROBE for reporting responsibilities, input into the academic and non-academic afterschool activities, allocation of space, transportation, etc.]*

   How does [CENTER NAME] recruit students from your school? *[PROBE for description of recruitment, the principal and school involvement, information about students]*

   What are some approaches that [CENTER NAME] uses to establish effective working relationships with you and other school personnel? *[PROBE for what is effective and what could use improvement, frequency of meetings/communication, who usually initiates contact, exchange of information about students, sharing of resources, joint trainings, etc.]*

   How effective is [CENTER NAME] in keeping you informed about important decisions and issues related to students and resources? *[PROBE for strengths/limitations of this relationship, how they exchange information about students, share resources, strategies, etc.]*

Perception of Effectiveness of Afterschool Care Program (10-12 minutes)

3. **"I would like to ask your opinion about the effectiveness of the [CENTER NAME] and how well the program compliments/augments the regular school day curriculum, content, and activities."**

   In your opinion what are the strengths of the [CENTER NAME] afterschool program? [PROBE *for qualifications of leadership and staff, ability to engage and retain students, diversity of activities, quality of academic and non-academic activities, coordination with school curriculum*)

   At the [CENTER NAME], what do you see as the most promising activities and/or strategies used with students to enhance academics? To facilitate student growth in other ways?

How would you describe the link between the regular school day academics and the [CENTER NAME] afterschool program? [*PROBE for strengths of the relationship, areas of improvement, and impact on students*]

Closing (3-5 minutes)

4. **"In closing I would like to ask what you feel has worked and what has not worked in your partnership with [CENTER NAME]."**

   What have been your greatest successes in working with [CENTER NAME]?

   What are the greatest challenges you have encounter working with this afterschool program?

Appendix F

Program Observation Guide—Global

Program Observation Guide—Specific Activity

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES (GLOBAL) OBSERVATION GUIDE*(PG.3)

Date:	Name of Center:	Observer Initials:	Start Time:	End Time:	Duration:

Check ALL that Apply for Observation of Afternoon Session	Number of Girls: _____
__Academic -*specify* Subject(s): _____	Number of Boys: _____
_____	
_____	Age/Grade of Students: _____
__Non-Academic/Enrichment -*specify*: _____	
_____	Number of Teachers/Facilitators: ____
_____	Number of Aides: ____
__Non-Academic/Recreational- *specify*: _____	
_____	
_____	

PART I: INITIAL INFORMATION

1. Describe the setting (room, building, field, non-school location, etc.) for the afternoon. If some of the activities observed are held in different areas, be specific about all areas visited.

IF YOU WERE PRESENT AT THE TIME AFTERSCHOOL ACTIVITIES STARTED FOR THE DAY/TIME STUDENTS ARRIVED…..

2. How were expectations for afternoon activities communicated by staff (if at all)? What did you think was the "plan" for the afternoon?

3. Did students seem to know what was expected of them (e.g., did they quickly engage in various activities, ask questions, appear interested?)

PART II: Complete this part based on observation of entire afternoon session. Examples/Evidence cited though should still be as specific as possible. You should be able to observe all areas listed. For each area, **please mark Y if you observe evidence that support the statement OR N if you observe evidence to the contrary**. Recorded Observations/Examples/Evidence should provide enough information to illustrate reasons for decision.*(see pg. 3)

Areas of Observation	Y/N	Observations/Examples/ Evidence
1. Supportive Environment		
a. The physical environment is **safe** and free of health hazards.		
b. Program **space/furniture/ equipment accommodate the activities** offered (e.g., there are enough resources for students to work with, materials are in good repair, etc.)		
c. Students can **access resources/materials** with ease independently (e.g., computers, library/books, games, etc.)		
d. Staff provides a **welcoming atmosphere** (e.g., staff directly addresses students by name, staff listens to students).		
e. Session flow is **well planned**(e.g. staff conveys expectations/plans for the session).		
f. Schedule of planned activities allows for **flexibility** (i.e., provides routine without rigidity).		
g. Students can choose from a **variety** of activities.(e.g. student is presented with more than one option/choice of activity)		
h. There is a **good balance of academic, enrichment, and recreational activities** for students to participate.		
i. There is a **good balance of structured and "free" time**.		
j. Activities are designed to engage students with **different needs** (e.g., ability level, learning style, interest).		
k. Activities are designed to engage youth in **fun and interesting ways** (e.g., youth are engaged in hands-on learning, use of "real world" experiences to teach, etc.)		
l. Students are **supervised** to maintain safety (i.e., staff know where the youth are and what they are doing).		
m. **Healthy food and drinks** are provided.		

Areas of Observation	Y/N	Observations/Examples/ Evidence
2. Interactions (Staff/Student & Peer)		
a. Staff supports students in **building new skills or refining existing skills** (e.g., staff assists students without taking control; staff encourages students to think for themselves; staff verbally recognizes student efforts and accomplishments).		
b. Staff **relate to students** in positive ways (e.g., staff communicates goals and expectations to students; conversations with students are not limited to directions or other "necessary talk").		
c. Students have **opportunities to practice leadership skills** (e.g., staff encourages students to set goals/make plans, share ideas, opinions and concerns, take responsibilities, time to reflect).		
d. **Students interact with one another in positive ways** (e.g., students assist one another, are friendly and relaxed with one another, socialize informally, consider each other's viewpoints, work collaboratively).		
e. Staff encourages the **participation of all** regardless of level of ability or other factors (e.g., staff try to engage a student who may be isolated or not paying attention during an activity).		
f. Staff encourages children to **manage feelings and resolve conflicts** appropriately/ steps in only if needed.		
g. Staff **listens attentively and/or observes students** (e.g., respond verbally or non-verbally to communicate feedback, pay attention to students as they complete tasks/interested in what students are saying or doing).		

* NOTE: For this part of the guide, please complete required information based on your observation alone. At the end of the site visit, you must debrief with the second team member observing. After the debrief one completed tool should be archived for the center reflecting examples of both observers views/evidence [consensus is not required]. Forms completed by individual team members should not be archived and should be treated as worksheets only.

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM (SPECIFIC ACTIVITY) OBSERVATION GUIDE

Date:	Name of Center:	Observer Initials:	Start Time:	End Time:	Duration:

Complete for one specific activity observed. __Academic -*specify* Subject(s): _____ _____ _____ __Non-Academic/Enrichment -*specify*: _____ _____ _____ __Non-Academic/Recreational -*specify*: _____ _____ _____	Number of Girls: _____ Number of Boys: _____ Age/Grade of Students: _____ Number of Teachers/Facilitators: ____ Number of Aides: ____

DIRECTIONS: Both PART I and PART II are to be completed for one specific activity. It can be *any* type of activity but it needs to be observed from its beginning to its end. If you choose to observe an academic activity, please make sure for the next observation you choose a different type of activity to ensure detailed qualitative information on a variety of activities during our visits to different sites. If there is more than one observer, opportunity should be taken to observe different activities to complete this section.

PART I: INITIAL INFORMATION

1. Describe the setting (room, building, field, non-school location, etc.) for the specific activity.

IF YOU WERE PRESENT AT THE START OF THE ACTIVITY:

2. How were expectations for the activity communicated by staff (if at all)? What did you think was the "plan" for the activity?

3. Did students seem to know what was expected of them (e.g., did they quickly engage in the activity, ask questions, appear interested?)

PART II: ACTIVITY LOG: Please keep a **running log** of what is occurring during the activity observed, using the bullets below as a guide. Please note also **the start and end time for completing this part** of the observation. Please **insert additional pages, if needed**.

Describe the activity, providing details about type of activity observed, materials used, how the activity is being accomplished, etc.

Is the activity well organized? (e.g., clear implicit or explicit objective, evidence of advanced planning, etc.)

What are the students doing (e.g., acquiring information, practicing for a skill, discussing a project, etc.)

How are students organized (whole group, small groups, working independently)?

How are students interacting with one another? Be sure to note examples of collaboration, cooperation, praise, feedback, shared responsibility for activity.

How is staff interacting with students? Be sure to note facilitation, feedback, guiding.

Are there unengaged students? If yes, what are they doing?