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21st Century Community Learning Centers

A Descriptive Evaluation for 2013-2014

This evaluation study provides descriptive information about the implementation and outcomes of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program in West Virginia, from September 2013 through May 2014.

Method of study. The report draws on information from online surveys of directors of 27 CCLC programs and from school teachers for 2,117 of the 11,432 participating students.

Findings. Most participating students were in the elementary grades. The mean number of days students attended ranged from about 9 to 93 days, depending on the program. Teachers perceived the greatest improvements in participating students' behaviors related to completing homework to teachers' satisfaction, participating in class, turning in homework on time, and being attentive in class. Regarding CCLC program volunteers, the largest sources were K-12 and higher education service learning programs. The groups with which program directors reported the greatest level of success were local clubs, AmeriCorps, and local businesses. Regarding work with partners, the most frequent types of support received were program resources, joint planning, and programming. With the exception of a few activities, 80% or more of program directors who had engaged in the various partnership activities considered them to be effective. Regarding professional development, the topics best attended by program directors were programming, staff development, family involvement, integrating afterschool with the regular school day, STEM/STEAM, and federal/state requirements. As for parent and community involvement, two thirds reported being well below target goals or having no success at all. Program directors reported offering more than 400 substance abuse prevention activities, involving more than 5,700 students and nearly 700 adults. Less than a third of directors reported that the continuous improvement process for after school (CIPAS) was very helpful; however, a strong majority (61.5%) of program directors indicated that WVDE monitoring visits were very helpful.

Limitations of study. We cannot assume that the CCLC attendance was a key factor in the improvement of behaviors perceived by teachers. Results are based on perceptions of teachers and program directors.

Recommendations. The following recommendations are based primarily on our analysis of what program directors themselves thought would improve the program.

- Provide more opportunities for networking among program staff to encourage the sharing of best practices.
- Make reasonable efforts to reduce the reporting burden and other compliance-related tasks in order to reserve time for program implementation. Balance any reduction in such requirements with the need to keep grantees accountable and focused on improving program delivery.
- Revamp state evaluation reporting systems and online databases to be less cumbersome and more user friendly, and provide more training in how to use them.
- Focus more professional development on programming and staff development.
- Provide additional technical assistance to support programming and federal/state requirements
- Provide more information resources on programming and program sustainability.

For more information, contact coauthor Patricia Cahape Hammer, Office of Research (phammer@k12.wv.us), or download the full report from the Office of Research website: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/research/reports2015.html>.

Teachers perceived the greatest improvements in participating students' behaviors related to completing homework to teachers' satisfaction, participating in class, turning in homework on time, and being attentive in class.

Program directors identified "programming" as their top priority for more professional development, technical assistance, and information resources.

Program directors also urged the WVDE to make reasonable efforts to reduce the reporting burden and other compliance-related tasks while keeping grantees accountable and focused on improving program delivery.