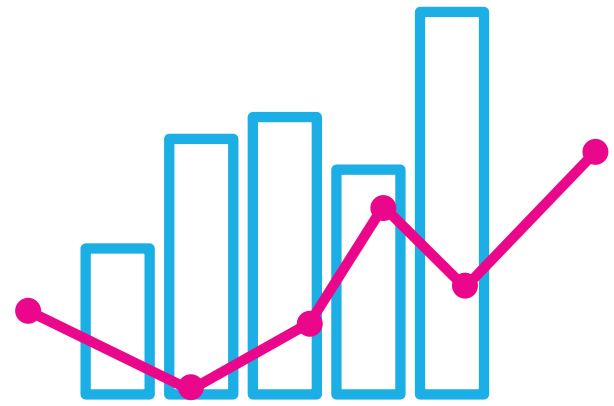


21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS 2015-2016:

A Descriptive Evaluation

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This evaluation study provides information about the implementation and outcomes of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program in West Virginia, from September 2015 through May 2016, in which 12,388 students participated overall.

Method of study. The report draws on information from online surveys of directors of thirty-six 21st CCLC programs and from regular-day school teachers of 2,034 of the 5,163 students who participated in programming for at least 30 days. It also draws on West Virginia General Summative Assessment (WVGSA) scores for 1,864 of the students who participated for at least 30 days, and a matching group of 1,864 nonparticipants. Students were grouped by grade level and compared in mathematics and English/language arts (ELA) using changes in scale score means for Grades 4–11. The mean performance level changes for the two groups were also compared, aggregated by programmatic level.

Findings. Most participating students were in the elementary grades. The mean number of days students attended ranged from about 12 to 112 days by program. Teachers reported that about 60% of students improved their behavior in the regular classroom and nearly 70% improved in completing their homework and class participation. The quasi-experimental study using scale score means for Grades 4–11 showed no statistically significant differences between the 21st CCLC participants and nonparticipants, except for fourth graders in ELA, with participants having a slight edge on nonparticipants. The comparison by programmatic level showed a statistically significant higher gain in ELA among nonparticipant elementary students compared with participants and a significantly higher gain in mathematics performance levels among participating high school students compared with their nonparticipating peers. The largest sources of program volunteers were K–12 service learning programs, parents, and higher education service learning programs. The groups with which program directors reported working most successfully were community organizations, higher education service learning programs, and local businesses. Regarding work with partners, the most frequent types of support received were in programming, program resources, and evaluation. All program directors considered their various partnership activities to be at least moderately effective. Program directors reported their greatest need for more professional development to be in programming; for technical assistance in federal/state requirements; and for information resources in programming and collaboration. More than 60% of program directors reported at least moderate success in parent and community involvement, which is a large gain compared with less than 40% the previous year. In responses to open-ended questions, the most frequently mentioned successes were in the area of program improvement; most often-mentioned challenges were in staffing and staff development.

Recommendations. Among program directors who commented, the most frequently mentioned recommendations for next year were for more networking opportunities and sharing of best practices, and for additional improvements in the reporting systems.

Limitations of study. We cannot assume that the 21st CCLC attendance was a key factor in the improvement of behaviors perceived by teachers. Some results are based on perceptions of teachers and program directors.

For more information, contact coauthor Patricia Cahape Hammer, Office of Research, Accountability, and Data Governance (phammer@k12.wv.us), or download the full report at <http://wvde.state.wv.us/research/reports2017.html>.

Teachers reported that about 60% of students improved their behavior in the regular classroom and nearly 70% improved in completing their homework and class participation.

The comparison of students participating in 21st CCLC with a matched group of nonparticipating students showed a statistically significant higher gain in ELA performance levels among *nonparticipant* elementary students but a statistically significantly greater gain in mathematics performance levels among *participating* high school students.