

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

YEAR 1: 2024-2025

NITA M. LOWEY 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS PROGRAM PROJECT ACES

MULLICA TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
Elwood, New Jersey

OCTOBER, 2025



Prepared By:
**MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION
ASSOCIATES, INC.**
Newtown, PA

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Mary Beth Slivka
President

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Introduction

This is the final report of the evaluation of the first year of implementation under the current funding cycle of the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC), Project ACES, administered by the Mullica Public Schools.

As part of the overall evaluation effort, staff from the program evaluator, Management and Evaluation Associates, Inc. (M and E), conducted a planning session during the Fall 2024 with the program director to address program implementation issues and to confirm the scope of the evaluation activities for the year. M and E's initial monitoring visit was conducted on December 5, 2025, and the second visit was conducted on May 15, 2025. As part of the monitoring effort, interviews were conducted with the program director, both site coordinators, and selected staff and students, and surveys were also administered to teachers, students, and parents.

Executive Summary

Final Assessment of Program Goals and Objectives

The following sections describe M and E's final assessment of the achievement of the program's goals and objectives for the 2024-25 program year.

Goal #1: *To provide high-quality educational and enrichment programs that will enable students to improve their academic achievement and promote positive behavior and appropriate social interaction with peers and adults.*

Objective 1.1: The grantee will establish and maintain partnerships and collaborative relationships with schools, families, youth, and the community to enhance students' access to a variety of learning opportunities.

Objective 1.2: The grantee will adopt intentional strategies and research-based practices designed to support student skill building and mastery, both academically and from a youth development perspective.

Objective 1.3: The grantee will adopt practices to support the orientation, training, and development of afterschool staff in the adoption and use of intentional strategies and research-based practices to ensure program quality.

Objective 1.4: Students regularly participating in the program will be positively impacted in terms of performance on state assessments in language arts and mathematics.

Objective 1.5: Students regularly participating in the program will demonstrate improved school-day attendance, decreased disciplinary actions or other adverse behaviors, improved social-emotional functioning, and the development of 21st century skills.

Assessment:

Objective 1.1 - There is clear evidence of the attainment of this objective. During the 2024-25 program year, the 21st CCLC program in Mullica Township established partnerships and collaboration agreements with nine different community organizations and coordinates its efforts with six external agencies and organizations, including neighboring 21st CCLC programs. These agencies and organizations continued to be valued resources that support programming by

providing and sharing activities, advice on parenting and/or student learning, and other types of social services for parents and families. In addition, the program director had met four times (four meetings had been planned) with the Program Advisory Board and partners and collaborators, and the Student Advisory Board met four times to solicit input and feedback about program activities for purposes of planning and program improvement. The data clearly demonstrate that these collaborations and coordination have proven to be useful. (see paragraphs 3-6 on pp. 11-13)

Objective 1.2 - There is clear evidence of the attainment of this objective. During the 2024-25 program year, the ACES program provided seven academic/enrichment programs; nineteen cultural, recreation, and youth development activities; eight health, nutritional, and physical activities; ten character education programs; and five parent involvement activities. There is also ample evidence from stakeholder interviews and surveys that these activities were well-organized and led, well-staffed and supplied, well-received, well-coordinated with the regular school day program, and demonstrated a positive impact on students' educations and well-being. (see paragraphs 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 13 on pp. 11, and 14, 16-19; see also selected relevant survey items in Figures 1, 3, 6 on pp. 29-31)

Objective 1.3 - There is clear evidence of the attainment of this objective. During the 2024-25 program year, the staff of the ACES were provided with several opportunities for their continuing professional development from several different sources, including the NJDOE, the school district, and the ACES program. In addition, there is also positive feedback from the program staff attesting the relevance and usefulness of the professional development sessions. (see paragraph 7 on p. 14 and the relevant survey item in Figure 4 on p. 26)

Objective 1.4 – There is evidence of the attainment of this objective as measured by the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment and school district records. In English Language Arts, nearly half (49.4%) of the students tested with the NJSLA either fully achieved or exceeded expectations (Levels 4 & 5) and a large percentage (37.8%) was shown to be partially meeting expectations or approaching expectations (Levels 2 & 3). In mathematics, more than one third of the students (35.9%) fully achieved or exceeded expectations on the NJSLA; however, a large percentage (51.3%) of students were also shown to be meeting partial expectations or approaching expectations. In addition, student record data also show that more than 94% of students consistently attended during the regular school day in 2024-25 (an increase of 0.63% from 2023-24). Finally, the data in Table 4 (see p. 27) show a substantial decrease in the number of students and occurrences of disciplinary infractions, as well as a decrease in the number of per student infractions (i.e., from approximately five per student to approximately three per student). (see Tables 1-4, pp. 24-26)

Objective 1.5 - There is clear evidence of the attainment of this objective. During the 2024-25 program year, program administrators reported that attendance was good; however, the teachers reported that attendance varied depending on the time of year. There is evidence (in both interview and survey data) that students' participation and engagement in the ACES program had at least some positive impact on their self-confidence and self-esteem; their social interactions and disciplinary behaviors; their critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making skills; as well as their social-emotional learning. (see paragraphs 9, 10, 13, 14 on pp. 17-20 and selected relevant survey items in Figures 1-6 and accompanying comments on pp. 29-31)

Goal #2: To implement activities that promote parental involvement and provide opportunities for literacy and related educational development to the families of participating students.

Objective 2.1: The agency will establish collaborative relationships that offer opportunities for literacy and related educational activities to the families of participating students.

Objective 2.2: Parents participating in grant-funded activities will increase their involvement in the education of children under their care.

Objective 2.3: Grantees will adopt intentional strategies to communicate to parents and adult family members about program goals and objectives, activities, and their child's experience in the program.

Assessment:

Objectives 2.1 to 2.3 - There is evidence of attainment of objectives 2.1 and 2.3 and partial (or limited) attainment of objective 2.2. During the 2024-25 program year, the ACES program coordinated its services and activities with several different partners and other external agencies and programs, some of which provided opportunities for parents and families to become more involved in their children's education. The program director and staff also crafted a variety of programs and events to inform parents of participating students about the program's goals, objectives and activities, and which provided opportunities for the parents to participate in the activities with their children. However, the site coordinator and teachers who were interviewed suggested that parent attendance and participation had been, at best, limited. Nevertheless, there is some evidence from parent surveys that parent and family-oriented services and activities had been well-received by those who attended and had a positive impact on parents' knowledge, skills, and participation in program activities. (see paragraphs 3, 5, 12, and 15 on p. 11, 13, and 19-20; see also selected relevant survey items in Figures 4-6 on pp. 30-31)

Goal #3: To measure participants' progress and program effectiveness through monitoring and evaluating.

Objective 3.1: Throughout the grant period, the grantee will continually assess program quality and effectiveness and use this information to support quality improvement.

Objective 3.2: The grantee will work to obtain data on students' in-school progress in the areas of academic achievement, behavior, and social development and use this information to inform the design and delivery of programming.

Objective 3.3: Throughout the grant period, the grantee will adopt measures as needed within the program when data is not available from other sources to assess (a) youth engagement in program activities; (b) the academic and/or social-emotional needs of participating youth; and (c) program impact.

Assessment:

Objectives 3.1 to 3.4 – There is clear evidence of the attainment of these four objectives. Throughout the program year, the ACES program administration worked collaboratively with M and E in planning and implementing evaluation schedules and strategies for the program. In the Fall 2024, M and E met with the program director to establish a plan for the evaluation, and during the program year, M and E conducted two site visits during which interviews were conducted with the program director, site coordinators, and several teachers and students. In addition, data

collection protocols (i.e., surveys) were administered to students, staff, and parents near the conclusion of the fall term. Finally, year-end student performance data were collected from the school district. This evaluation effort has been designed to provide relevant and useful feedback to the program administrators and other stakeholders (e.g., advisory boards) regarding the extent to which program goals and objectives have been achieved, the impact the program has had on students' academic, youth development, and social-emotional learning and well-being, the impact of the program's services and activities on parents, and to provide other relevant and useful information that supports program quality and effectiveness and informs the design and delivery of the 21st CCLC Program. (See Conceptual Framework in the Appendix to this report, pp. 27-28)

Limitations of the Study

While every attempt has been made to ensure the overall validity and reliability of this evaluation study, some limitations were unavoidable. First, budgetary restraints limited this report to only the after-school program; the early morning program was not investigated. Second, the subjects in the study, including the staff, students, and parents, were not randomly selected, thus limiting the generalizability of the study findings. Third, the student performance data (i.e., the NJSLA) were not generated by program staff but were collected from, and limited to, only school district records that were readily available to program staff. Accordingly, the validity of the data was not within the control of the program staff. Finally, while comparative statistics were collected and are presented for student performance in both 2024-25 and 2023-24, (e.g., NJSLA scores, attendance figures, and disciplinary measures), these data represent different student cohorts, which once again limits the generalizability of the findings.

Final Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the interviews with the program director and selected staff, an analysis of the survey data collected from students, staff, and parents, and a review of the students' performance data; M and E has arrived at the following final conclusions and recommendations as the program concludes its first year of implementation (under the current funding cycle).

Final Conclusions

1. Mullica's 21st CCLC ACES daily after-school program provides a safe, supportive, and well-structured environment where students benefit from academic assistance, engaging enrichment activities, recreational opportunities, and meaningful social interactions.
2. A review of program indicators from the approved EWEG application confirms that all planned activities for the program year were successfully completed. Data provides strong evidence that the program has met its stated goals and objectives.
3. Comparative data indicate a decrease in disciplinary infractions from the previous year and an overall increase in the total mean scores for students in grades 3–8 in both ELA and mathematics.
4. The program achieved its Level of Service (LOS) objective with increasing enrollment throughout the year. This demonstrates that recruitment, enrollment, and retention were effective.
5. Strong alignment exists between the regular school-day curriculum and the after-school program. Because many after-school staff also work in the district during the regular school

day, communication between teachers and after-school staff is smooth and seamless allowing for consistent academic support and reinforcement of the regular school day curriculum.

6. Student feedback indicates high satisfaction with the program. Students report enjoying the activities, making new friends, choosing to be with a friend each cycle, and having fun. Data also demonstrates significant positive impacts, including improved self-confidence, self-esteem, and academic performance.
7. Parents expressed strong appreciation for and reliance on the ACES program, consistently viewing it as a positive resource for their children and families. Overall parent involvement, however, remained limited.
8. The program enjoys broad support from stakeholders, including administrators, staff, students, and parents. The program received positive interview feedback and high ratings on the program surveys, which suggest strong stakeholder engagement. The data also suggest that the ACES program is an essential part of the school community, cultivating student success and positive youth development through collaborative efforts.

Final Recommendations

M and E offers the following final recommendations for consideration of the program administration:

1. Given its demonstrated success, maintain the overall program design while continuing to incorporate best practices in after-school programming.
2. The district and school administrators should support the transition in the program director role by providing training, guidance, and collaborative opportunities to ensure the successful implementation of the ACES program, sustaining prior successes while expanding and enriching program offerings.
3. Continue providing SEL instruction to further strengthen students' social emotional skills and promote respect among participants.
4. Establish Advisory Board meeting schedules for both collaborators/partners and students for the full program year, offering virtual participation options for those unable to attend in person.
5. Leverage staff talents and passions to expand program offerings. Introduce new classes and/or bring back favorites (e.g., cooking, corn hole, outdoor/nature opportunities) and activities each program cycle, either through internal talent or external vendors, to keep programming engaging and dynamic. Continue to provide opportunities for student choice and consider introducing targeted activities designed to appeal to older participants.
6. Continue increasing parent engagement by designing meaningful opportunities for involvement. Encourage collaborators and partners to co-host family events and consider adding Saturday family activities to increase participation.
7. Expand professional development and communication opportunities to further strengthen staff skills, understanding, and capacity.

8. Continue to seek new collaborations (e.g., nearby nursing homes, local animal rescue) that can provide diverse learning experiences for students and explore other collaborations that may provide food and parent programming.
9. Disseminate this final report with school administration and stakeholders. Use it as a springboard for discussion and planning, ensuring identified issues are addressed and programming continues to evolve to meet student and family needs.

Program Description

Program Implementation

The year 2024-25 marked the first year of implementation under the current 5-year funding cycle of the Nita M. Lowey 21st CCLC Program (ACES) in Mullica Twp. with funding in the amount of \$475,000¹. The theme for the current year continued to be Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) infused with social-emotional learning (SEL). The total targeted enrollment (Level of Service, LOS) objective for the program was 151 students in grades 3-8, and as of December 5, 2024, the program was serving 159 students, of whom 20 students had been in attendance for more than 30 days². Eighty-four participating students were eligible to receive free or reduced priced meals, and 53 students were identified as having some type of disabling condition, accommodation, and/or IEP. The 2024-25 ACES Program included 17 students who were identified as African American/Black, 106 students who were identified as White/Caucasian, and 36 students who were identified as Hispanic/Latino(a). There were 76 male students and 83 female students in the program at the time of the initial monitoring visit. At the time of the second monitoring visit on May 15, 2025, the program was serving 394 students, of which 172 students (44%) were in attendance for 30 days or more. These data demonstrate that the ACES Program achieved and surpassed its enrollment (LOS) objective.

In the Fall of the program year, the morning component of ACES operated for one and one-half hours before school each day (7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.) and provided 45 minutes of academic support with a breakfast snack and 45 minutes of student choice SEL/health & wellness activities. However, in the Spring, the schedule was revised slightly to include only one hour of service, (7:00 a.m. – 8: a.m.) including 30 minutes of academic support and 30 minutes of physical movement. The breakfast snack was discontinued. The after-school component (3:35 p.m. - 5:35 p.m.) provided 45 minutes of academic assistance followed by two different 40-minute sessions of enrichment opportunities and/or recreation. Students also received an afternoon snack in the first hour of the program. Both the before-school and after-school components operated from Monday through Friday.

1. Program Administration

Throughout 2024-25, the full-time program director, Ms. Jacki Lugg, provided the leadership, management, and oversight of all aspects of the ACES Program. She was also the site coordinator for the morning program and was supported by two site part-time coordinators (Ms. Christy Rivera and Ms. Ashley Vitullo) for the after-school program. Together, these women oversaw the daily operations of their programs, made sure students were in their assigned groups and sessions,

¹ Program and administrative costs for the 2024-25 ACES Program have been projected to be \$275,808 and \$199,192 respectively.

² At the time of the initial monitoring visit, the ACES Program secretary was still entering student enrollment and participation data into PARS.

checked staff lesson plans, delivered attendance sheets to classrooms, took care of minor behavioral issues, organized office binders with program records, made necessary phone calls and answered the phone, found substitutes, when necessary, and supervised students on field trips.

2. Recruitment, Enrollment, and Retention Activities

The program administrators and staff adopted the following strategies to recruit, enroll, and retain students in the ACES program.

Recruitment: Recruitment for the ACES program happened via various strategies, such as multiple emails sent to parents of formerly registered students, coaches of after-school activities encouraging their students to join ACES, Back-to-School Night with an information and recruitment booth, postings on the school district’s website, and discussions with regular school day staff about students in need. There was also the October Daily Activity page offered to middle school students to get new faces to come into the ACES Office, as well as reaching out to Fall activities staff to stimulate students’ interest. Recruitment continued through the Spring 2025, as there were Spring athletes who were not already signed up for ACES.

Enrollment: There was an application link shared on messaging, in the school newsletter, with other activities, and on the morning announcements. The ACES page on the district website had an application which could be completed online. The ACES Office also had paper applications. The applications were in English and Spanish depending on the preference. Sports advisors of after-school activities distributed applications to their students, so they could “roll-into” ACES at the conclusion of their particular sport or activity. Applications continued to be available online and in the ACES Office for the duration of the school year.

Retention: There were favorite classes/activities that students enjoyed, which contributed to retention. Students were allowed to switch groups once per cycle to be with a friend, and they appreciated the caring and supportive staff who helped them with academics and encouraged them with enrichment activities. Students got to socialize with their peers, and there were occasional field trips that students enjoyed participating in, which also helped retention.

3. Programs, Services, and Activities

During the 2024-25 academic year, ACES provided the following programs, services, and activities.

Academic Programs:

- ELA
- Math
- Science and STEM
- Robotics
- Critical Thinking
- Fractured Fairytales
- Minute Mysteries

Cultural, Recreational, and Youth Development Activities:

- Cooking (Social Science)
- Student Council
- Jr. National Honor Society
- Schoolyard Cleanup

- Chorus
- Band
- Cross Country
- G/B Basketball
- Volleyball
- Creative Corner
- SEL Art & Music
- Digital Photography
- Instrumental Music
- HOWL Media/Video Club
- Cereal Box Collection (benefit No1Hungry EHC Pantry)
- Pop Tabs Collection (benefit Ronald McDonald House of NJ)
- Games and puzzles
- Everything Art
- Gardening

Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activities:

- Cooking (Healthy Cooking; Learn, Grow, Eat Grow! Pioneer Cooking)
- Indoor/Outdoor Recreation
- Morning Fitness
- Health & Wellness
- Zen Den Yoga
- Mindful Meditation
- Peace Circles
- Gardening

Infusion of Character Education

- Positively Powerful Girls Club
- Thanksgiving Food Drive
- Season of Giving Drive
- Drama Club – High School Musical
- Hello Week
- Red Ribbon Week
- Week of Respect
- School Violence Awareness Week
- Kindness Week
- Kindness Counts

Parental Involvement

- PTA Holiday Night
- Game Night
- Back to School Night
- Literacy night
- SEL workshops (4) with Carolyn Corbi

4. Partners and Collaborating Organizations

Throughout 2024-25, the ACES program maintained consistent collaborative relationships with a number of different agencies and organizations, which were valued resources and which supported programming by providing activities, expert advice on parenting and/or student learning, and other types of social services for parents and families. These agencies and organizations were:

- Mullica Township Education Association - provided staff, resources for activities, and programs for parents and children.
- Sustainable Mullica - a non-profit green team offered volunteer hours, instruction, materials, supplies, and resources for ACES students working in the school's award winning 12-month, by way of heated green house, sustainable garden.
- Management & Evaluation Associates, Inc. - local level independent evaluator provided evaluation, advisement, data collection and aggregation resulting in both an interim and final written report yearly as well as a 5-year comprehensive report at the end of the grant cycle.
- Mullica Township Parent Teacher Association - provided dinner and staffing at Family Reading Literacy and Family Math Literacy Nights.
- Mullica Township Educational Foundation - provided volunteers and monetary donations to the district office to offset the cost of daily nutritional snacks that the district incurs.
- Atlantic County Utilities Authority – provided recycling education, sponsors the Schoolyard Pickup Program, and offers additional STEM-related field trips and programs to students at no cost.
- AtlantiCare Health System-Healthy Schools, Healthy Children - provided health and nutrition education, cooking demonstrations, and nutrition contests to students at no cost, as well as Community and Family Health and Wellness Events.
- Mullica Township Senior Citizens and Mullica Township Historical Society - provided volunteer services, life-skill education experiences, and social-emotional mentoring through opportunities such as Storytellers, Crafts w/Seniors, ELA Book Readers, Traveling History Programs.
- Cedar Creek High School - partner

5. Coordination with External Agencies and Programs

Throughout 2024-25, the ACES Program coordinated its efforts with other 21st CCLC programs, including Newton's C2C, EHT's ASPIRE, EHC's REACH, Buena's BOOST, Millville's 21CCLC, and the Boys Girls Club of Atlantic City.

6. Advisory Boards

During 2024-25, the ACES Program Advisory Board met four times, at which time the program director provided updates and shared information about the program's progress. The program director also met four times with the program's partners and collaborators (which included many emails and individual contacts), and the Student Advisory Board met four times. For each of these advisory groups, four meetings had been planned for the program year.

The recommendations from the advisory boards and/or partners/collaborators were considered and incorporated into the program whenever possible and practical and in whatever way possible. The program director shared that she hadn't been able to incorporate as many recommendations as she would have liked due to putting out fires in September, hitting the ground with the program in October, and then recovering from surgery in November and December.

The lead volunteers of the schoolyard garden retired, and the schoolyard garden was in a transitional phase throughout the school year. Program partners along with the program students wanted ACES to take on a helpful garden role and they did so. A gardening class was added to the program offerings in Cycle 3. There was a desire to have cooking brought back into the program, and the staff actively explored how they could make that advisory group recommendation become a reality for the upcoming program year.

7. Staffing and Professional Development

During the initial monitoring visit, the program director reported that the morning program staffing was solid and dependable. Staffing the afternoon program, however, continued to be a challenge. There were some instructional staff who were fully committed to the program, but who faced challenges and tight schedules around personal and outside school time responsibilities. On the other hand, some instructional staff had not been able to fully commit to the ACES program because they also had other responsibilities, such as serving as coaches for other school clubs or leaders of activities at different times during the program year, so reliance on those individuals had been somewhat reduced. Nevertheless, they filled in gaps in staffing when available. A new 10-hour data clerk was hired in September. During the second monitoring visit, the program director reported that staffing levels for the after-school program had remained consistent and adequate.

During 2024-25, the program director attended the required quarterly NJDOE program director meetings, the NJDOE New Grantee Orientation (the data clerk also attended), NJSACC Annual Conference on After-school and Out-of-School Time (OST), and the NJSACC Soaring Conference. The site coordinators attended the one-day NJDOE Site Coordinator Summit. The Mullica school district provided in-service professional development sessions (two days in September, one day in October) for all ACES administrators, teachers, and aides, as well as monthly faculty meetings, grade level meetings, and online training for blood-borne pathogens, drug and alcohol abuse, epilepsy, HIB, and others. The ACES program provided an initial staff orientation meeting and a professional development session on team building and working together as one body, and subsequent staff meetings in January, March, and June.

Evaluation Monitoring of Program Implementation

Status of Recommendations Offered by M and E in its 2024-25 Final Report

Recommendation #1 - Given the program's ongoing success, the program director and staff should continue to offer the after-school program with the same foundation while continuously incorporating best practices in after-school programming.

Status - The same foundation of academic support, recreational activities, and physical education was maintained throughout the 2024-25 school year.

Recommendation #2 - To further enhance student engagement and learning, consider introducing new and diverse clubs and activities. Bringing back the popular cooking club and offering physical activities earlier in the program—especially for students who had PE early in the school day—may increase variety and participation.

Status - The program incorporated some new activities during the second and third program cycles, such as gardening, Fractured Fairy Tales, and Minute Mysteries. Due to space

constraints, they could not bring back cooking although, the program director is looking into some portable cooking equipment so a form of cooking might be able to happen in a regular classroom. The program director continues to search out new ideas and seeks the input of staff and students. She will also explore a play/recess time at the beginning of the program.

Recommendation #3 - Continue to promote students' social and behavioral development by integrating opportunities to build critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. Embed social-emotional learning (SEL) into physical education and STEM instruction. Encourage student accountability for behavior and provide staff training focused on fostering respectful interactions.

Status - The program director indicated that critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision making are infused into some of the clubs and activities (e.g. Games & Puzzles, Critical Thinking, Minute Mysteries, etc.) that are offered. The program also provides SEL and Kindness Counts classes. Carolyn Corbi, an outside collaborator, leads students, staff, and parents in mindfulness, breathing, and various other social emotional activities during four workshop sessions offered throughout the program year.

Recommendation #4 - Create an Advisory Board meeting schedule that is planned out for the program year. Offer online participation options for members to join, if they can't attend in person.

Status - The program director is creating a calendar of Advisory Board meetings for the upcoming program year. Four meetings will be scheduled and can be accessed through the ACES Google Classroom via Google Meet.

Recommendation #5 - Be intentional with providing programming events for parents. Explore innovative strategies to enhance parental engagement, promoting meaningful involvement through tailored outreach, interactive programming, and collaborative opportunities that align with parents' interests and availability. Consider offering Saturday opportunities for parents and inquire of their suggestions.

Status - There were four parent workshop sessions led by Caroly Corbi on mindfulness, breathing, and other SEL activities offered for families. They were held after program hours to increase attendance.

Recommendation #6 - Continue seeking new collaborations that bring fresh experiences and opportunities for students. Think about partnering with the nearby nursing home, where students can create hands-on projects for the residents and have an off-site experience. In addition, search for additional collaborators that may be able to provide food and/or interesting parent programming.

Status - The project director is looking into collaborating with various local organizations in which service learning can happen, such as a local nursing home, a local animal rescue, and the Pinelands Commission.

Recommendation #7 - The program director should share this report, in whole or in part, with all stakeholders to increase awareness and support for the 21st CCLC program. Program staff should carefully review the report's findings—particularly areas for improvement, academic needs, and stakeholder suggestions—and collaborate on actionable steps to address these concerns.

Status - The report was shared with the appropriate stakeholders.

Summary of Stakeholder Interview Feedback

During two site monitoring visits on December 5, 2024 and May 15, 2025, M and E interviewed the program director, both site coordinators, four program staff members, and four students and administered surveys to all of those stakeholders. The findings from the initial set of interviews and surveys were previously reported in M and E's Interim Report, which was submitted to the program director on April 8, 2025, and which is incorporated in its entirety into this final report. Readers are encouraged to review these findings for the specific details of these interviews and surveys. The findings presented in the following sections describe and discuss the interviews and students' year-end student-related data that were collected during the second monitoring visit on May 15, 2025. For the sake of convenience, summary tables of the findings of surveys administered in the Fall 2024 are included in Appendix B to this report.

8. Linkage between the After-School Program and the Regular School Day Program

During the initial round of interviews, the program director reported that the regular school day curriculum was reinforced during the academic assistance portion of the ACES program day, thereby creating a direct linkage from the regular school day to the after-school program. Since nearly all (~98%) of the ACES staff worked in the district in the same building during the regular school day, staff communication and collaboration was smooth and easy. Teachers interacted at grade-level meetings, I&RS meetings, and with the Child Study Team to determine individual needs and how best to support students. Communication and collaboration got better throughout the school year as students with needs and requiring support became known. There was a positive relationship between both regular school day and after-school program staffs. The biggest communication challenge was with student issues that carried over from the regular school day and intruded into the ACES program and/or vice-versa and needed to be investigated during the regular school day. When school was in session, it could be difficult to discuss behavioral issues with classroom teachers.

During the initial round of interviews, the site coordinator who was interviewed reported that the academic support hour of ACES reinforced the regular school day curriculum, thus establishing a direct link. This link was further exemplified by the regular school day staff, who provided spelling lists and math worksheets for ACES students who had been identified as needing extra help. The regular school day teachers also reached out to the ACES Office to inform the staff of any concerns of participating students.

The teachers who were interviewed reported that the after-school staff were very familiar with the regular school day curriculum. One teacher noted that the online programs (i.e., Exxat Path, Spanish) used during homework help were directly linked with the regular school day curriculum, and the regular school day staff and ACES staff communicated with one another during the day about participating students and their needs. However, another teacher remarked, "The school district is still not assigning homework, limiting the linkage to the regular school day curriculum, and since there isn't any homework, the communication between the two staffs is limited."

Two different teachers were interviewed during the follow-up monitoring visit, and one teacher commented that the ELA and math that students worked on during the Homework Help were directly linked to the regular school day curriculum. However, she thought the communication between the regular school day elementary staff and the program staff could be better. The other teacher repeated a comment made earlier by a program teacher (during the initial monitoring visit)

that the school district still did not assign homework, thus limiting the linkage to regular school day curriculum. However, she noted that communication with the regular school day staff was smooth and easy and was conducted in-person, by email, or with text messages.

9. Student Attendance and Social and Disciplinary Behaviors

During the two rounds of interviews, the site coordinators reported that attendance varied during the year. Attendance generally declined during winter months (December and January) and then increased when the Fall/Winter sports season ended. However, it declined again once the weather warmed up and Spring sports began. Regarding students' social behaviors, they reported that, in the lower grades, the children seemed to get along better and were more willing to work collaboratively with each in contrast to the older students, who tended to stick with their small groups of friends. They further reported that, most of the time, students were well behaved, and behavioral issues, when they did arise, were usually minor and tended to involve the same few students. Unfortunately, those students had been spoken to a number of times about their bad behaviors without much success.

During the initial round of interviews, two program teachers were also interviewed, and they also reported that attendance varied during the school year, depending on the time of the year and the sports seasons. One teacher noted that some grades had better attendance than others, with younger participants attending more frequently than older students. The other teacher commented that attendance had been consistent with the students who regularly attended. She also agreed with her colleague about the younger children attending more frequently than the older children, who apparently attended primarily because their parents didn't want them home alone by themselves after school. Both teachers agreed that, while most students seemed socially appropriate with one another, some were still learning how to be socially appropriate. One teacher remarked, "Many students have a lack of respect. Students often mimic one another and the teachers. Some students tend to ruin it for the others." Both teachers also agreed that students needed to be held more accountable. There were only a few students who caused disciplinary behavior issues, with one teaching remarking, "Currently there is a group of middle school girls who cause most of the problems. Students don't take the discipline seriously."

In the interview during the follow-up monitoring visit, two different teachers were interviewed, and one teacher reported that attendance continued to be good. "The 3rd-5th graders have good attendance. The older students are often involved in other activities, especially sports; so, their attendance ebbs and flows accordingly." This sentiment was echoed by the other teacher who remarked, "There are always more students attending at the beginning of the school year, and it decreases as the weather gets better in the Spring." Regarding their social behaviors, one teacher noted that most students were socially appropriate and got along well with one another, while the other teacher commented that there were always cliques among the students; some students liked to feel like they were in charge, and some students could be unkind to others. Finally, regarding their disciplinary behaviors, one teacher reported that the students were often tired and hungry during the after-school program, so they acted out of line at times and, as was the pattern noted during the initial interviews, generally, it was the same students repeatedly with behaviors requiring discipline. On the other hand, the other teacher reported that she hadn't encountered any disciplinary behavior issues within her classes.

10. Feedback from Program Participants

At the time of the initial interview, the site coordinator reported the students liked when they got to be actively engaged; however, they also shared that they missed the cooking classes from prior years. In fact, in the interview during the follow-up monitoring visit, the site coordinator reported that students continued to request that the cooking activity be re-incorporated into the program. Similarly, the teachers also reported that students were very positive about attending. One teacher reported that students really liked the program and wanted to stay for it. Parents also appreciated the program and were used to it being available for their children. The other teacher commented that students liked the program, but she hadn't gotten much feedback from the parents this year. In interviews during the follow-up site visit, the teachers who were interviewed reported that the younger students loved the program and the different program activities. The older ones, however, didn't like not getting to pick what they are doing.

During the initial monitoring visit, two students (third and fifth graders) were interviewed about a variety of issues. The feedback that was received is as follows:

When asked why they attended the ACES after-school program, one student reported she attended because her cousin attended and she liked it. The other student reported that he attended because his parents were working and he liked it. The students were also asked about how their participation in the after-school program affected them, and both students reported that attending made a difference with their grades. One student commented that he got his homework done in the program and could get help with it. Regarding their behaviors, one student commented that her behavior stayed the same, while the other student reported that he sometimes got frustrated in the program and that affected his behavior. Both students reported that attending the ACES program didn't have any effect on their attendance at school during the day insofar as they usually attended every day and were absent only when they were ill. Both students also reported that attending the ACES Program positively affected their self-confidence. One student commented that she made some new friends and learned new things that made her feel more confident, and the other student reported that his self-confidence was the same or better, as he felt better about math since he got help with it in the program. The students were also asked what they liked and didn't like about the ACES program, as well as what suggestions they had to make the program better. Regarding the things they liked, they mentioned drawing, science, playing games, the different classes, gym, and basketball. One student didn't like when some sessions (e.g., reading and drawing) went too long, while the other student reported she couldn't think of anything in the program she disliked. They suggested that the program should return to offering a cooking class and offer flag football as an activity. One student also suggested shortening some of the sessions.

In the interviews that were conducted during the follow-up monitoring visit, two students (fourth and seventh graders) were interviewed about issues similar to those that were discussed during the initial monitoring visit. Their responses were as follows:

When asked why they attended the ACES after-school program, one student reported she attended because her parents were at work. The other student attended because it was something to do after school and because it was fun. The students were also asked about how their participation in the after-school program affected them, and one student (the fourth grader) reported that attending hadn't made a difference with her grades, while the other student (the seventh grader) reported that attending had helped her grades because she got academic help in the program. They were also asked to comment on the effect that attending the ACES program had on their attendance in school

during the day and on their behaviors and self-confidence. One student (the seventh grader) reported that attending the after-school ACES program didn't have any effect on her attendance, behavior, or self-confidence. (She already attended every day, was always well-behaved, and already had good self-confidence.) On the other hand, the fourth grader reported that her attendance in school during the day had improved because of ACES. She also reported that her behavior hadn't changed (she was always well-behaved), but her self-confidence had improved as she gained friends in ACES, which made her feel better about herself. The students were also asked what they liked and didn't like about the ACES program, as well as what suggestions they had to make the program better. Regarding the things they liked, they mentioned Fun Friday (when they did arts and crafts), guided drawing, going outside to play, and the different and interesting sessions and classes. They didn't like the Fairy Tales class and the length of the program day. They suggested that there needed to be more intentional activities for middle school students (everything seemed to be focused on the younger students), and students ought to be able to choose their own groups.

11. Availability of Materials and Supplies

During the initial interview in the Fall, both teachers commented that there was an abundance of materials and supplies, and they were able to get whatever they needed to teach their subjects. This was corroborated by one of the teachers who was interviewed during the follow-up monitoring visit in the Spring. However, during that same Spring interview, one teacher (who taught arts and crafts) commented that she bought a lot of the materials she used, because what she needed was not readily available.

12. Parent Involvement/Participation

At the time of the initial monitoring visit, both the site coordinator who was interviewed and the teachers reported that parent involvement hadn't been that great. In fact, both the site coordinator and teachers reported that, as far as they knew, there hadn't been any events/activities/family type functions for parents thus far during the current program year. In the interview during the follow-up monitoring visit, the site coordinator reported that parents had an opportunity to participate in the Wellness Night that was held in conjunction with the PTA, but the teachers who were interviewed were not as positive about parent involvement and participation. One teacher commented that the program had ACES Night three different times, but parent participation tended to be low. The other teacher remarked, "Parents have been welcomed into some of the Fun Friday activities. There were Literacy and Math Nights, but parent participation tended to be low." However, she noted that, in collaboration with the PTA, a Health Night was held yielding a slightly better turnout of parents.

13. Program Accomplishments

The program director and site coordinators reported the most significant accomplishments during the program year were:

- planning events that engaged parents and the school community,
- maintaining both morning and after-school components that met a wide-variety of parent and/or student needs during an extended absence of a program director (who was recovering from surgery),
- overcoming major obstacles regarding office relocation and program director health,
- providing a safe environment for the students,
- reimagined program activities that met the needs/interests of students,

- planning new community partnership events,
- ability to maintain food distributions and collections and established a “Grab and Go” Food Pantry with USDA-approved shelf-stable goods, as the program continued to work with local Church and Community Food Distribution Programs,
- collaboration with the MTEA to plan a Family ELA/Math Literacy event in the winter,
- collaboration with the PTA to plan a Holiday Night event in December,
- Wellness Night in May,
- activities for families to attend together, and
- a gardening class was incorporated for the third cycle.

14. Program Strengths

During the two monitoring visits, the program director identified all of the following as program strengths:

- quality programming that was relevant to student interests,
- the use of 21st century technology that was placed directly into students’ hands,
- a safe, secure, supervised, and enriching environment in which students learned, played, and thrived,
- the positive regard within the school community and the community at-large for the program and the value it brought,
- the manner in which the program united stakeholders,
- the contributions of resources, personnel, and guest presenters the program received from collaborators and community groups,
- the resilience, dedication, and loyalty of the ACES staff and administration to the program ideals and providing the necessary services and support for students and families,
- the program director’s continued effort to build networks and relationships with and between collaborators with the intention of serving the “whole human” of each program participant,
- the program director and site coordinator have good relationships with the program’s partners and collaborators so as to keep quality programming, and
- a flexible staff who are willing to adjust accordingly to any situation that arises.

The site coordinators reported that the variety of activities and classes for the students, different Fun Friday experiences, and a safe place for students to be after school were among the significant strengths of the ACES Program.

Two teachers reported a significant strength was that the ACES program offered a “safe place and students are off the streets.” Another teacher commented that students were learning how to problem-solve on their own and interact socially with one another. “It is a place for students to play after school and to do things they like.” They also cited the fact that program staff worked well together, as the program offered a good diversity of programs and activities for the students.

15. Concerns, Shortcomings, Challenges, and/or Obstacles to Success

During the two monitoring visits, the program director identified the following as areas of concern:

- Discipline and student behavior. “It’s not as bad as it’s been, but there’s an uptick in mental health issues, such as acting out, anxiety, unkindness, a lack of awareness of actions, etc. among students. Students continue to act up. Many regular school day disciplinary and

behavioral issues carry over into the after-school program, some of which aren't addressed during the regular school day.”

- Different perspectives among some stakeholders, e.g., some parents want the ACES program to make exceptions for their children's bad behaviors, bad choices, and failure to attend regularly, yet they expect the full benefits of the program.
- Continued stress/exhaustion among some staff, overshadowing their enthusiasm and willingness to work hours beyond the regular school day, makes it hard to recruit and retain staff.
- Those who don't see the value of the program and/or harbor disdain for it.
- Skyrocketing costs of transportation and limited availability of drivers and buses, the rising cost of field trip admissions fees, and increased costs for materials/supplies.
- The need for regular school day released time for the site coordinators to connect with the program director and program staff to complete their duties versus attending to them during their prep times and/or lunches.
- Continued space issues, especially in the winter, when district sports, school activities, and organizations contend for the same space.
- Parents and the school community want in-person events, but many fail to “show up” for such events.
- The program director was out of work for two months due to spine surgery.
- The interim superintendent's unfamiliarity with the program and other administrators unattached to the program resulting in less program interest and not being able to commit to the future direction of ACES.
- Continued interference by some district employees, who tend to overstep their boundaries.
- There has been a big increase in the number of behavioral issues reported on the buses.
- Evenings when multiple school activities occur limiting space for ACES programming.

The site coordinators identified the change in program hours and the lack of space for recreational activities (especially once the time changes) as concerns and challenges. One program teacher commented that the ACES program was light on discipline, noting that “some middle school students are uncooperative. There are also issues with the attitudes and behaviors of some other students.” Another area of concern noted by program teachers included the fact that there was a lack of district homework, and it did not appear that the district was on board with the program to the degree it could be. Another teacher remarked, “There could be a better schedule and equity of hours as the inequity of hours impacts the morale of staff.” Finally, one teacher remarked, “There's not enough time to finish projects as students get started, and before long it's time to change to the next class or students get called to go home.”

16. Suggestions for Program Improvement

During the two monitoring visits, suggestions for program improvement were offered by members of the ACES staff. The program director's suggestions were as follows.

- Release time needs to be provided during the regular school day for the site coordinators to complete their ACES program administrative duties.
- The relationship with the AtlantiCare Healthy Schools specialist needs to be strengthened to continue to expand SEL and students' emotional health and well-being, as well as the need to secure additional parenting training opportunities.
- Mindful relationships with district staff not working in the program need to be cultivated.

- A mutual understanding with district and school administrators regarding ACES resources and program value for students and the community need to be reached, so that it is better supported and not viewed as simply a revenue source and/or an after-school childcare situation.
- It would benefit the program if district administrators attended at least some ACES events or daily program activities.
- The evaluation of contributions and/or relationships of past and present collaborators for effectiveness needs to be continued.
- Explore ways to re-incorporate cooking back into the program.
- Offer meal ideas for students who are home by themselves and need to feed themselves.

The site coordinators suggested that the ACES program should offer more physical activities, incorporate the corn hole sets into programming, and vary more the activities offered. The teachers offered several suggestions as follows: (1) students would benefit if regular school day classroom teachers gave them academic packets to work on during the after-school academic/homework hour, (2) third and fourth graders need to be broken up during the after-school program, (3) make a schedule of who goes home early and keep to it, (4) improve the snacks, (5) district personnel should check restrooms prior to programming as the participating ACES students often get blamed for restroom issues that occurred during the school day, (6) the program needs more interesting activities and needs to offer classes that are more appealing to students (e.g., more activities involving nature so students can see the beauty around them), (7) program staff should share their talents and skills, (8) the program ought to offer more life skills programming, (9) the program administrators should explore changing the program schedule so students aren't moving around as much, (10) parents should be given more voice to share what academics they want their children to work on, and (11) create a Google document of program students where classroom teachers can note students' needs.

17. Plan for Program Sustainability

The program director reported that the Mullica School District is not able to continue to offer the current ACES Program as it is currently designed without 21st CCLC funding. Nevertheless, some ideas the program director has proposed include restructuring the program administration, reducing the level of service, improving pay for staff through current contract negotiations, reexamining collaboration with external agencies and programs, and changing themes. The district could also obtain a childcare site license and/or partner with the local YMCA to offer before/after school programming.

18. Plan for the 2025 Summer Program

The summer program will run for 5 hours a day (8:30 am - 1:30 pm), four days per week (Monday - Thursday) from July 7th through July 31st. The program will offer four core classes (ELA, math, science/STEM, and physical education) for 83 students who are expected to attend each day. Students will rotate daily through "specials" (drama, home & garden, Major League Baseball STEM, and art).

Summary of Student Performance Data

Three different measures were analyzed regarding student performance in the academic and affective (i.e., social-emotional) domains including (a) the results of the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) administered in the Spring 2025, (b) attendance data, and (c) disciplinary infraction data. The data tables for each of these measures follow immediately.

A review of the *Score Interpretation Guide for Educators* published by the New Jersey Department of Education shows that students' scale scores can range between 650 and 850 for all grades and are situated in one of five performance levels. As noted in the Guide, "each performance level is a broad categorical level defined by a student's overall scale score and is used to report overall student performance by describing how well students met the expectations for their grade level/course." The five performance levels for the NJSLA ELA and Math include the following:

- Level 1 – Did Not Yet Meet Expectations (650-699)
- Level 2 – Partially Met Expectations (700-724)
- Level 3 – Approached Expectations (725-749)
- Level 4 – Met Expectations (750-785)
- Level 5 – Exceeded Expectations (786-850)

The data in Table 1 show that, for the 156 students in grades 3-8 for whom English Language Arts data were available, the total mean scale score was 743.2 (an increase from 739.4 in 2024), which situates these students within the category of Level 3, *Approached Expectations*. Disaggregating these data reveals that, across all students in grades 3-8, more than half (n=79, 50.6%) were found to have scored in the range of Levels 1-3 (12.8% at Level 1, 18.6% at Level 2, and 19.2% at Level 3). In addition, 41.7% of participating students were found to have scored at Level 4 (*Met Expectations*) and 7.7% were found to have scored at Level 5 (*Exceeded Expectations*).

For the 156 students in grades 3-8 for whom mathematics data were available, the total mean scale score was 738.8 (an increase from 734.3 in 2024), which also situates these students within the category of Level 3, *Approached Expectations*. Disaggregating these data reveals that, across all students in grades 3-8, nearly two thirds (n=100, 64.1%) were found to have scored in the range of Levels 1-3 (12.8% at Level 1, 18.6% at Level 2, and 32.7% at Level 3). In addition, 31.4% of participating students were found to have scored at Level 4 (*Met Expectations*) and 4.5% were found to have scored at Level 5 (*Exceeded Expectations*).

Table 1 data also clearly show that, aside from students who have already fully met or exceeded expectations for English Language Arts (49.4%), slightly more than one third (37.8%) tested at encouraging levels (*partially meeting* and *approached expectations*), and for mathematics (where 35.9% have already fully met or exceeded expectations), slightly more than half (51.3%) also tested at similarly encouraging levels.

The data in Table 2 show that between testings in 2024 and 2025, increases in the percentage of students achieving levels 4 and 5 in ELA (*met* and *exceeded expectations*) were observed in every grade level, 3-8. Especially noteworthy is the finding that in grades 7 and 8 respectively, the percentage of students attaining the two highest levels of achievement were 68.8% and 100%. The data further show that, for mathematics, increases in the percentage of students achieving levels 4 and 5 (*met* and *exceeded expectations*) were observed in every grade level, except grades 5 and 6. Again, it is noteworthy that, in grade 8, 66.7% of the students tested attained the two highest levels of achievement

Table 1: New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (Spring 2025)

MULLICA NJSLA RESULTS BY GRADE														
Spring 2025														
English Language Arts														
Grade	Total Number of Students	Mean Scale Score	# Level 1	% Level 1	# Level 2	% Level 2	# Level 3	% Level 3	# Levels 1-3 Combo	% Levels 1-3 Combo	# Level 4	% Level 4	# Level 5	% Level 5
3	48	733.6	12	25.0%	6	12.5%	11	22.9%	29	60.4%	18	37.5%	1	2.1%
4	31	740.8	2	6.5%	8	25.8%	6	19.4%	16	51.6%	13	41.9%	2	6.5%
5	34	745.1	2	5.9%	8	23.5%	6	17.6%	16	47.1%	16	47.1%	2	5.9%
6	24	746.8	3	12.5%	5	20.8%	5	20.8%	13	54.2%	7	29.2%	4	16.7%
7	16	759.4	1	6.3%	2	12.5%	2	12.5%	5	31.3%	9	56.3%	2	12.5%
8	3	783.7	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	66.7%	1	33.3%
Total	156	743.2	20	12.8%	29	18.6%	30	19.2%	79	50.6%	65	41.7%	12	7.7%
Mathematics														
Grade	Total Number of Students	Mean Scale Score	# Level 1	% Level 1	# Level 2	% Level 2	# Level 3	% Level 3	# Levels 1-3 Combo	% Levels 1-3 Combo	# Level 4	% Level 4	# Level 5	% Level 5
3	48	737.6	7	14.6%	10	20.8%	14	29.2%	31	64.6%	14	29.2%	3	6.3%
4	31	734.2	7	22.6%	5	16.1%	8	25.8%	20	64.5%	10	32.3%	1	3.2%
5	34	739.2	3	8.8%	5	14.7%	14	41.2%	22	64.7%	12	35.3%	0	0.0%
6	24	740.3	2	8.3%	5	20.8%	10	41.7%	17	70.8%	6	25.0%	1	4.2%
7	16	747.2	1	6.3%	3	18.8%	5	31.3%	9	56.3%	5	31.3%	2	12.5%
8	3	746.7	0	0.0%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%	2	66.7%	0	0.0%
Total	156	738.8	20	12.8%	29	18.6%	51	32.7%	100	64.1%	49	31.4%	7	4.5%

Percentages may not =100% due to rounding.

Table 2: Comparative Analysis – Percentage of Students At (level 4) and Above (Level 5) NJSLA Standards in ELA and Math

Mullica Twp. Regular School Year Program COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS – NJSLA STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA (Spring 2025)		
	Percentage Meeting and Exceeding NJSLA Expectations for Grades 3-8 (Spring 2024)	Percentage Meeting and Exceeding NJSLA Expectations for Grades 3-8 (Spring 2025)
ELA Total	43.4%	49.4%
Grade 3	23.1%	39.6%
Grade 4	34.0%	48.4%
Grade 5	52.5%	53.0%
Grade 6	50.0%	45.9%
Grade 7	41.7%	68.8%
Grade 8	54.7%	100%
Mathematics Total	33.4%	35.9%
Grade 3	34.6%	35.5%
Grade 4	32.0%	35.5%
Grade 5	38.4%	35.3%
Grade 6	39.5%	29.2%
Grade 7	31.3%	43.8%
Grade 8	26.2%	66.7%

In addition to the academic data demonstrated by the program participants, attendance data during the regular school year for students in grades 3-8 reported below in Table 3 clearly demonstrate that, for the 2024-25 school year (as of the Spring 2025), the vast majority (94.7%) of students attended regularly. These data compare very favorably with similar statistics (94.13%) collected for the 2023-24 school year.

Table 3: Participant Disciplinary Infraction Rates

Mullica Twp. Regular School Year Program COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS – ATTENDANCE RATES (Spring 2024 and Spring 2025)				
Grade	# Students (2024)	Attendance Rates (2024)	# Students (2025)	Attendance Rates (2025)
3	28	92.24%	50	94.86%
4	50	94.12%	32	95.42%
5	41	94.65%	34	95.41%
6	38	94.59%	25	93.98%
7	48	94.22%	16	93.47%
8	42	94.37%	3	92.04%
Total	247	94.13%	160	94.76%

Finally, the data in Table 4 show that there were 175 reported disciplinary infractions among 48 students in grades 3-8 during the 2024-25 school year, for an average of approximately 3.6

infractions per student. These data also show that the figures for 2024-25 were substantially less than those reported for 2023-24, when 464 disciplinary infractions were reported for 91 students in grades 5-8, for an average of approximately 5.09 infractions per student.

Table 4: Participant Disciplinary Infraction Rates

Mullica Twp. 21st CCLC PROGRAM EVALUATION - ACES COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS - DISCIPLINARY INFRACTION COUNTS (Spring 2024 and 20245)				
Grade	# Students (2024)	Number of Incidents (2024)	# Students (2025)	Number of Incidents (2025)
3	N/A	N/A	1	1
4	N/A	N/A	11	33
5	19	56	12	32
6	21	92	15	55
7	31	211	8	53
8	20	105	1	1
Total	91	464	48	175

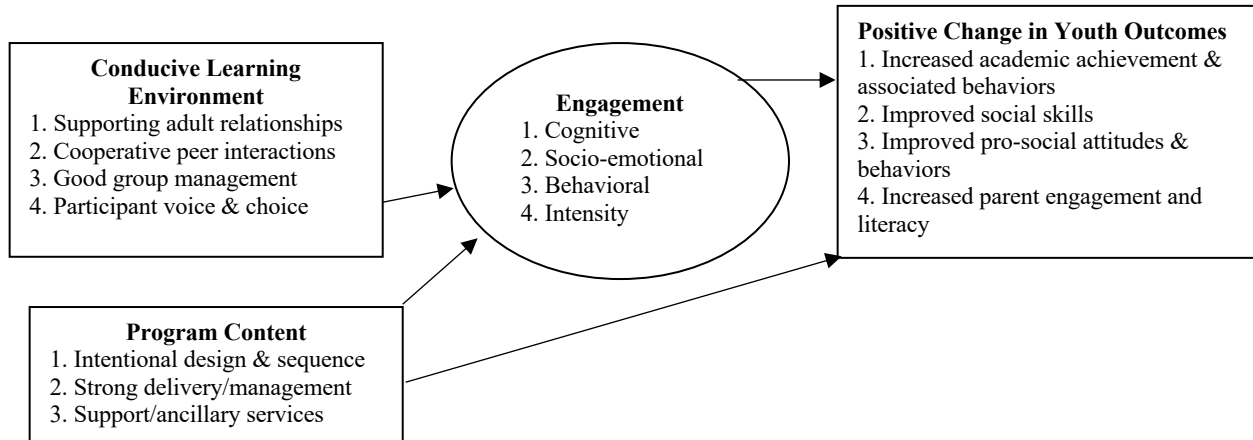
Note: In the Spring 2024, no data were available for grades 3 and 4

APPENDIX A

Evaluation Conceptual Framework and Methodology

Conceptual Framework for the Evaluation

As in past years, the model that has guided this evaluation effort is research-based and designed to review data, within selected contextual areas, in light of stated goals, objectives, and indicators. Among the contextual areas are: learning environment (is it conducive for student engagement and learning?), levels of student engagement (i.e., cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral) and its intensity, and program content (its curricular design and sequence, delivery and management, and support services). The evaluation, therefore, focuses on positive changes in youth outcomes, including student achievement, social-emotional development, and character skills needed to foster a healthy and productive school climate, and pro-social attitudes and behaviors that will enable students to perform better in their regular day school programs and progress toward meaningful adult lives. The evaluation also assesses the engagement of parents in their children's education.



Source: Grossman, J.B., Goldsmith, J., Sheldon, J., & Arbreton, A.J. (2009, Spring). Assessing after-school settings. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 121, 91.

The logic that underpins this model is predicated upon anticipated positive changes in youth outcomes (this is the dependent variable of the model). The factors (independent variables) that contribute to these anticipated outcomes are represented in the program's learning environment, the program content, and the extent to which program participants (students) are actively engaged in the program. The independent and dependent variables are operationally defined as follows.

Learning Environment

In order for the program to be successful, there must be a *conducive learning environment* that includes supportive adult-student relationships, cooperative peer interactions, good group management (in a regular day school environment, this might better be known as classroom management), and youth voice and choice.

Program Content

Effective programs are well-planned, well-implemented, and well-managed. The *content* of such programs is intentionally sequenced with empirically observable S.M.A.R.T.³ objectives. Teachers are highly qualified and motivated and driven by an outcomes orientation. Instructional activities are clear and organized, provide for active (hands-on) participation by students, and are characterized by effective nurturing teacher-student interactions, appropriate support services, and meaningful and candid feedback about learning by teachers.

Engagement

Well-planned, well-implemented, and well-managed program content that is delivered in an environment conducive for learning that pro-actively *engages* students cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally will be successful. *Engagement* infers positive motivation and active participation (students have got to want to be there and want to actively participate; but they must also be aware of the objective of what they're doing). Furthermore, engagement is measured in terms of its intensity (as in consistent attendance), its duration (the length of continued participation), and its breadth (scope of activities).

Anticipated Changes in Youth Outcomes

Grossman et al. (2009) measure success in terms of the improvements that can be observed in the following youth outcomes: (a) cognitive learning (typically, but not limited to, language arts, mathematics, writing, etc.), (b) personal social skills, and (c) pro-social attitudes and behaviors. Furthermore, because of its importance in the overall teaching and learning enterprise, the extent to which parents are engaged in their children's education, as well as their own literacy, is also assessed.

Evaluation Methodology

The data collection methodology for this evaluation effort has included the development and implementation of (a) site visit interview guides, which provided data about the program environment, content, and levels of engagement, (b) stakeholder surveys, which also provided data about the program environment, as well as stakeholder perceptions of program impact, and (c) empirical data (where available) about students' academic performance, as measured by report cards and standardized test performance data, attendance, and disciplinary behavior data. These data provided important and useful information about student outcomes and program impact.

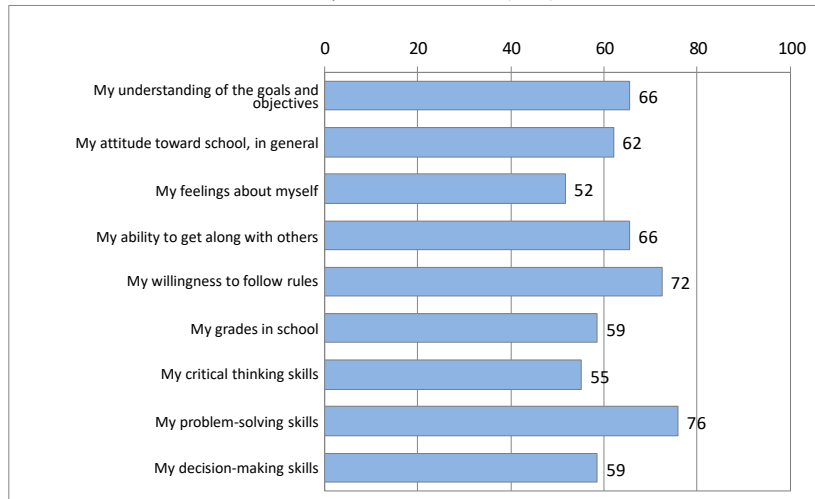
³ Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound.

APPENDIX B

Interim Report Survey Results – February 2025

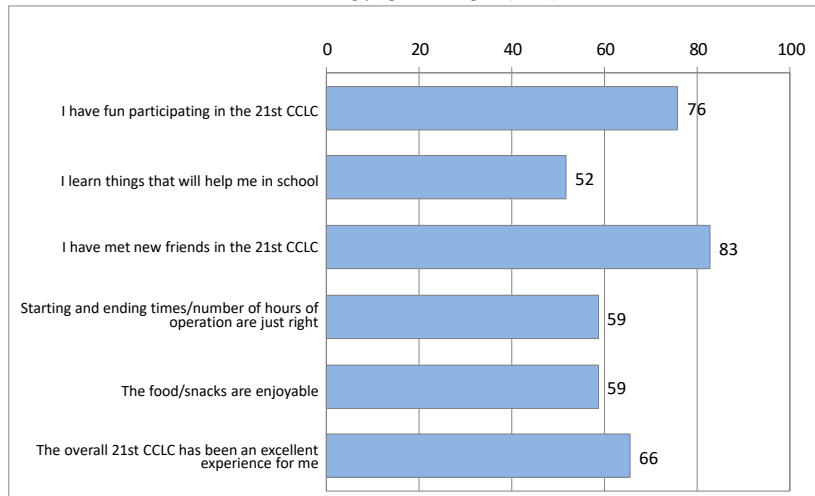
**Figure 1: Mullica Township School District
21ST CCLC Program Interim Survey (February 2025)
Student Ratings of Selected Program Variables and Outcomes**

Considering all aspects the 21st CCLC after-school program, how would you rate each of the following:
% Improved a Lot or a Little (n=29)



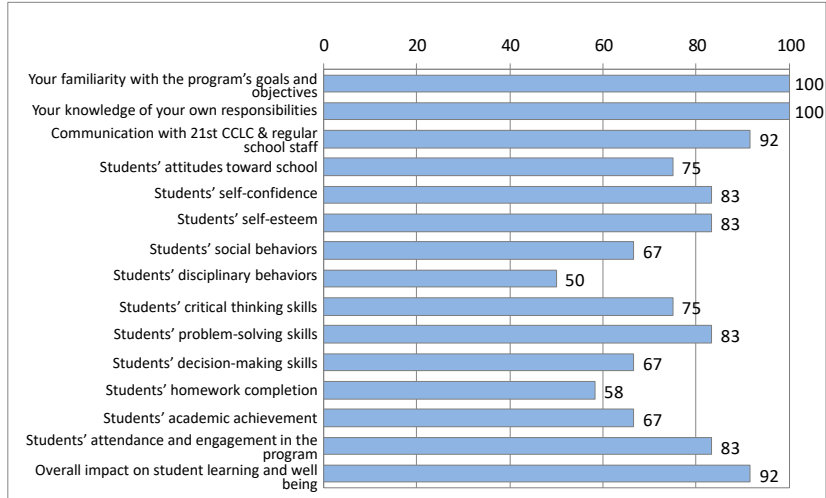
**Figure 2: Mullica Township School District
21ST CCLC Program Interim Survey (February 2025)
Extent of Student Agreement/Disagreement with Selected
Statements About the Program**

To what extent to agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
% Strongly Agree and Agree (n=29)



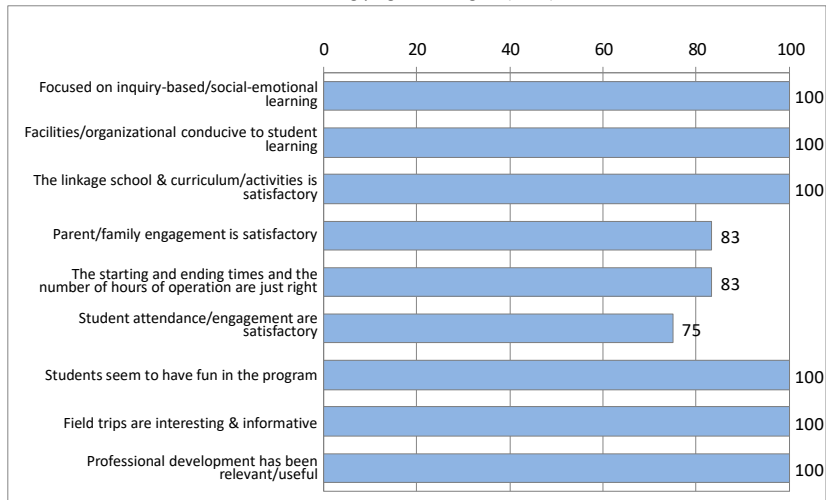
**Figure 3: Mullica Township School District
21ST CCLC Program Interim Survey (February 2025)
Staff Ratings of Selected Program Variables and Outcomes**

Considering all aspects the 21st CCLC after-school program, how would you rate each of the following:
% Excellent and Good (n=12)



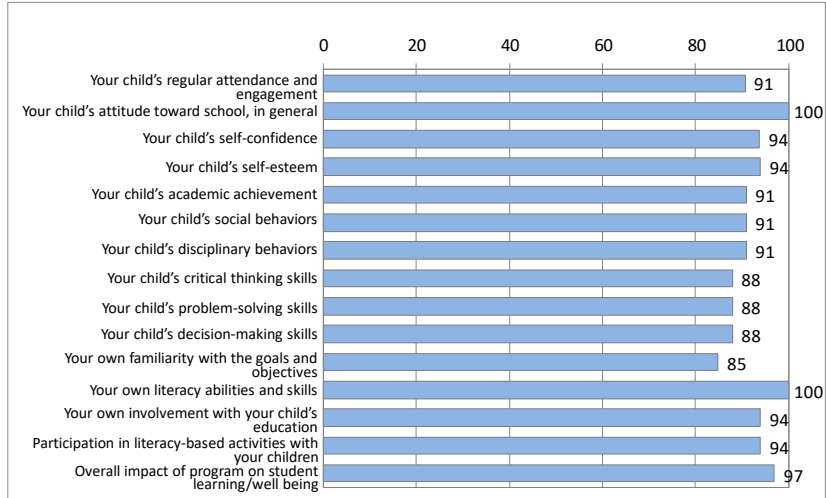
**Figure 4: Mullica Township School District
21ST CCLC Program Interim Survey (February 2025)
Extent of Staff Agreement/Disagreement with Selected
Statements About the Program**

To what extent to agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
% Strongly Agree and Agree (n=12)



**Figure 5: Mullica Township School District
21ST CCLC Program Interim Survey (February 2025)
Parent Ratings of Selected Program Variables and Outcomes**

Considering all aspects the 21st CCLC after-school program, how would you rate each of the following:
% Excellent and Good (n=33)



**Figure 6: Mullica Township School District
21ST CCLC Program Interim Survey (February 2025)
Extent of Parent Agreement/Disagreement with Selected
Statements About the Program**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
% Strongly Agree and Agree (n=33)

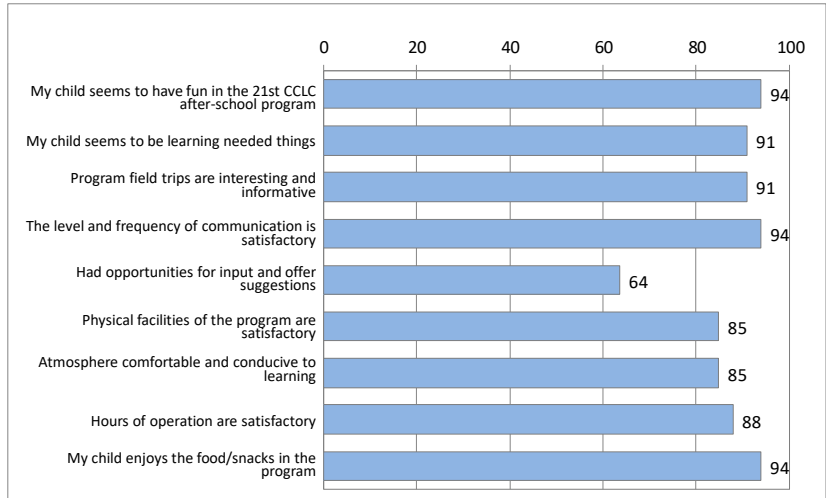
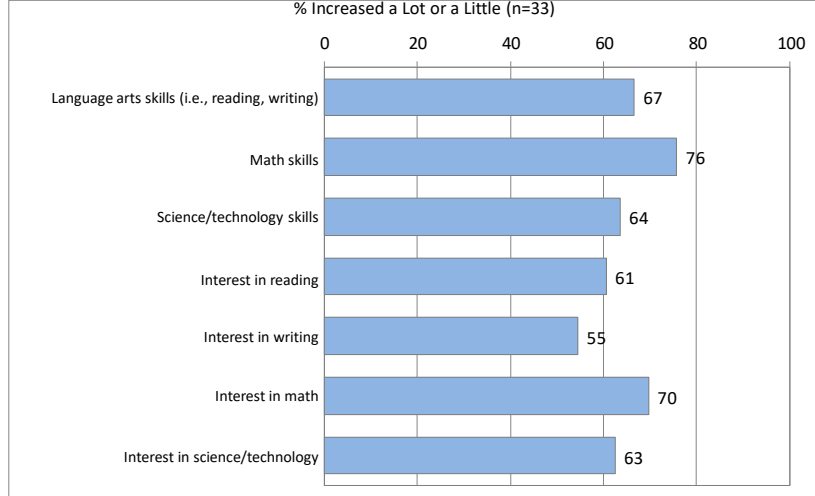


Figure 7: Mullica Township School District
21ST CCLC Program Interim Survey (February 2025)
Extent of Parent Increased a Lot or a Little with Selected
Statements About the Program

Since your child began participating in the 21st CCLC After-School Program,
have you noticed any changes in his/her...?

% Increased a Lot or a Little (n=33)



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The following staff formed the primary team assigned to this project: Mary Beth Slivka, President; Margaret Goodher, 21st CCLC Program Specialist and Lead Evaluator; Tom Monahan, Ed.D. Evaluation Design and Instrument Development Specialist; John M. Quinn, Ed.D. Vice President of Services; and Kathy Twardy, Data Analyst.

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