



## Birmingham Regional Empowerment and Development Center (BREAD)

### Partnerships allow for unique programming opportunities

Partnerships are one of the key aspects of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs as they enable programs to offer unique opportunities and a broad array of additional services and activities that they may not be able to offer on their own. Through partnerships, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs are able to bring in experts in fields like STEM and the health sciences, connect students to local businesses and potential career pathways, take students on trips to learn about subjects from culinary arts to accounting, and provide additional services such as adult education classes. Together with their partners, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs are expanding the scope of services they can offer and working to address the variety of needs and interests of their youth and their families.

### Overview

The BREAD (Birmingham Regional Empowerment and Development) Center in Birmingham, Alabama, serves roughly 600 elementary and middle school students from at-risk neighborhoods, offering fun and engaging enrichment curriculum during afterschool and summer, as well as adult education classes for community members. Through their partnership network, which includes national and local partners, such as NASA, the fire department, Alabama Cooperative Extension Systems, Junior Achievement, and the City of Birmingham Mayor's Office Division of Youth Services, the program is able to expand its offerings to students, providing opportunities for students like the ability to participate in NASA's Zero Robotics competition.

### A typical day

Students primarily follow a set schedule at most of the sites that starts with each student receiving a healthy snack. Students then break into grade levels to complete their homework with assistance from staff members, followed by an enrichment activity, which can include STEM, physical education, cooking education, arts and crafts, or an activity put on by a community partner, such as local bank representatives working with students on financial literacy. At the middle school level, the largest middle school program is club-based, where students

## BREAD Center

**Birmingham, Alabama**

**600**

Average number of students served during the school year

**100%**

Students from low-income families

### Main funding sources:

- ▶ 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

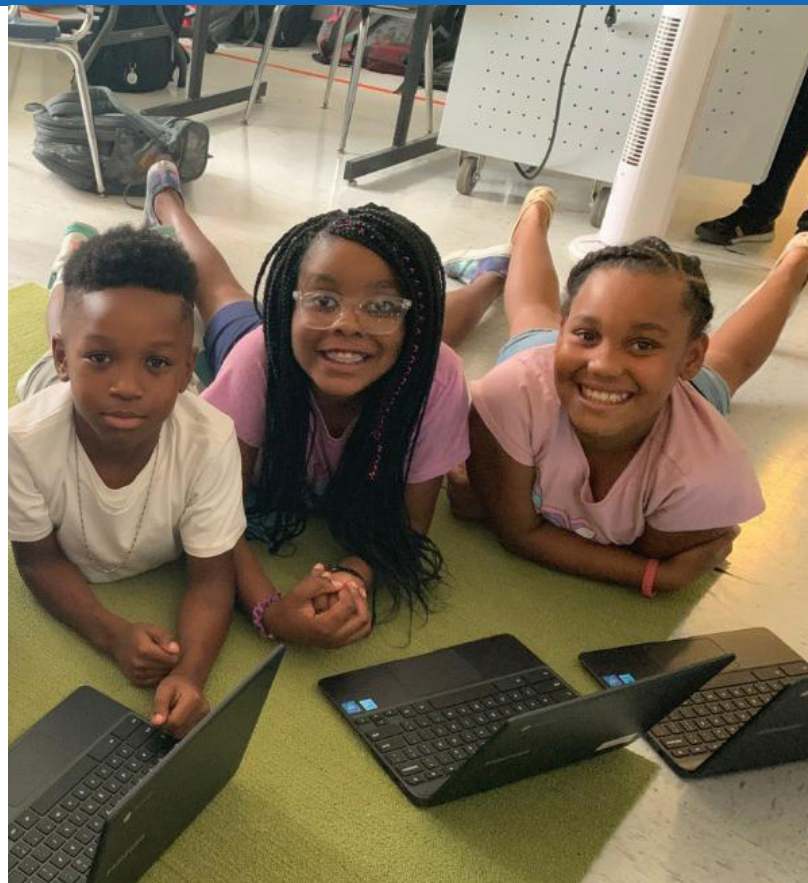
can choose what activities they want to participate in. Students have the option of participating in sports, band, dance, or a variety of project based learning enrichment courses. The BREAD Center is working to expand this structure to all sites.

## Outcomes

Results from an external evaluation of the BREAD Center at Glen Iris Elementary School indicate that students in the program made academic and behavioral gains. Among students in need of improvement, teachers report that a majority of program participants at least slightly improved their class participation (83 percent), motivation to learn (70 percent), and relationships with peers (64 percent). According to a survey of program students, 84 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they liked the afterschool program, and 77 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the program helped them behave better in school. Additionally, analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between BREAD attendance and school day attendance.

## Program characteristics

21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding has helped to form partnerships the BREAD Center otherwise would not have had, and these partnerships have been key to the success of the program. Not only do the partnerships, such as that with the City of Birmingham Mayor's Office Division of Youth Services, provide mentors and volunteers to help support operations of the organization, they also help provide interesting and engaging curriculum that exposes youth to various topics and fields of interest. For example, partners such as local bank representatives, the fire department, and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, come into the program to lead activities for students and parents that include Money Making Cents to teach financial literacy, fire safety classes, and health and nutrition lessons. Through community partnerships, students also take part in enrichment activities that align with their individual interests, such as gardening with the Jones Valley Teaching Farm, and visiting a local senior living facility where students help out as part of a service learning project, as well as activities such as cooking and storybook theatre put on by other community partners.



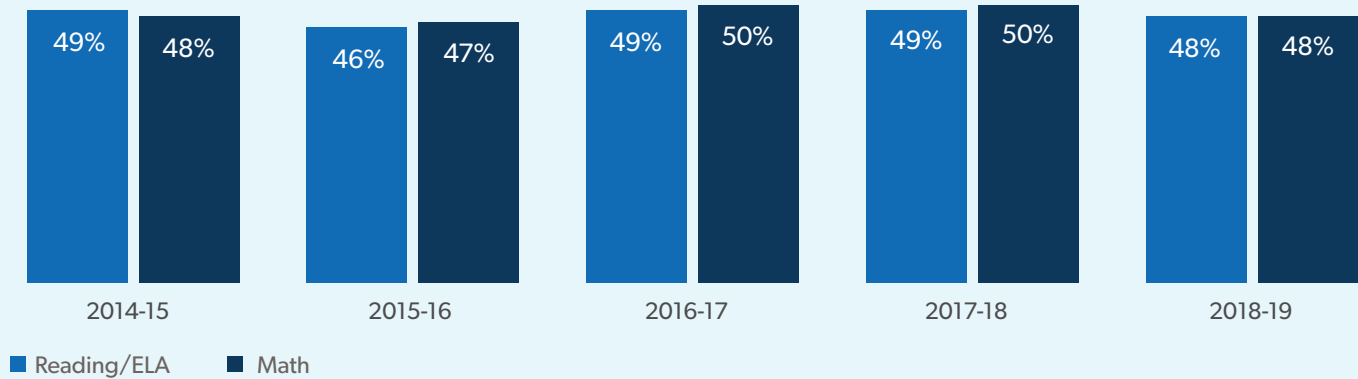
## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

21<sup>st</sup> CCLC is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to supporting local afterschool, before-school, and summer learning programs. Since its inception in 1994, the program has supported school and community based organization partnerships that provide a safe and supervised environment for youth, while inspiring students to learn through hands-on learning and other enrichment activities, find new areas of interest, and connect with positive adult mentors, as well as providing supports to their families. Today, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs serve students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools.

Read [\*Two Decades of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers: Providing afterschool and summer opportunities to millions of young people and families\*](#) to learn more.

## Department of Education annual performance reports have shown students in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs are making consistent gains in math and reading

*% of regularly attending 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC students improving in their math or reading grades*



A major focus of the program in recent years has been STEM and robotics, and through a partnership with NASA, students were able to participate in the Zero Robotics competition. For this, students program SPHERES (Synchronized Position Hold Engage and Reorient Experimental Satellites) satellites in teams to solve challenges, such as navigating obstacles and picking up objects while conserving fuel, charge, and other resources. The competition starts online, and after several phases of virtual competition in a simulation environment that mimics the real SPHERES, finalists are given the opportunity to compete aboard the International Space Station, where an astronaut conducts the competition in microgravity through a live broadcast.

Overall, one of the key components of the BREAD Center's model is making the curriculum fun and engaging for youth. While students are engaged in academic learning while at the program, they want to ensure it looks different than the school day, and each site is encouraged to continue to bring in partners and keep programming interesting for youth so that they want to continue coming back.

### Program history

The BREAD Center started in 2003 as part of an outgrowth of a church that provided a summer camp for youth. At the time, there was a community push for expanding to afterschool programs as well. Since then, the program has grown from one site to six, and has partnered with local schools to serve more students. In 2008, the BREAD Center was awarded the Excellence in Extended Day Programming Award by the Alabama Department of Education. Today, the goal of the program is to equip and prepare students and their families for success by providing fun and engaging programming that keeps kids wanting to come back, ultimately helping to keep them safe so their parents do not have to worry while at work.

### Recommendations

- ▶ Incorporate student interests and make programming fun for youth—students should want to keep coming back day after day. Programming should look different than the typical school day so students don't feel that they are still in school for additional hours.
- ▶ Utilize partners whenever possible to help meet student and community needs and interests.