

21st Century Community Learning Centers: Aligning School and Afterschool Learning Opportunities

About two in three 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) grantees are school districts and about one in five grantees are community-based organizations, yet roughly nine in ten centers are located in schools. Regardless of the entity funded, and the location of the program, alignment of programming with the school day is required. Current law states that 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) “...assist students in meeting State and local academic achievement standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and mathematics, by providing the students with opportunities for academic enrichment activities and a broad array of other activities (such as drug and violence prevention, counseling, art, music, recreation, technology, and character education programs) during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (such as before and after school or during summer recess) that **reinforce and complement the regular academic programs of the schools attended by the students served.**”

While this language can be strengthened as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization, many current and previously funded 21st CCLC grantees are leading the way in strong coordination and alignment between the academic and enrichment activities they offer and the curriculum-based coursework students complete during the school day. Below are several examples of this integration, beginning with three local area examples, in case a local site visit is of interest, followed by a state-by-state listing. This is by no means a comprehensive list and additional examples can be obtained upon request.

BUGS Program, Baltimore, Maryland

The BUGS Program utilizes, math and reading grades, attendance, and state assessment scores to evaluate student success. BUGS has a highly successful track record of achieving positive outcomes in the lives of the students served. The program sponsor, Living Classrooms Foundation, was the first community-based organization in Maryland to be awarded a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant from the Maryland State Department of Education. The BUGS Program consistently operates at program capacity with a waiting list. Average Daily Attendance has been excellent at approximately 90% the past five years. During the 2007-2008 school year, participating students exceeded nearly all program objectives. Strong alignment with the school day has resulted in the following:

Reading Grades: In 2007-2008, the goal was to have a 40% increase in number of students whose Reading scores improved by one letter grade or more and a 15% increase in the number of students achieving a grade of Satisfactory (S) or better by the end of the year. By the end of the year, 44% of BUGS participants improved at least one letter grade in Reading with 71% having a grade of S or better by the 4th Quarter.

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Math Grades: In 2007- 2008, the goal was to have a 40% increase in the number of students whose Math scores improved by one letter grade or more and a 15% increase in the number of students achieving a grade of S or better by the end of the year. 18% of BUGS participants improved at least one letter grade in Math with 76% having a grade of S or better by 4th Quarter. Additionally, 9% of students who began the year with a grade of Poor or Unsatisfactory, improved their grade to S or better in both Reading and Math.

In 2007-08, gains on the MSA (state test) for participating BUGS students were incredible. On the MSA for Reading, 6 out of 28 or 21% of participants increased their test scores by two levels from a Basic to Advanced, and 14 out of 28 or 50% of participants increased their test scores by one level from a Basic to Proficient or from Proficient to Advanced. In total, 20 out of 28 (71%) increased their test scores by one proficiency level or more in Reading.

On the MSA for Math, 7 out of 28 students increased their test scores by two levels from a Basic to Advanced, and 13 out of 28 or 47% of students increased their tests scores by one level from a Basic to Proficient or from Proficient to Advanced. In total, 20 out of 28 (71%) increased test scores by one proficiency level or more in Math.

Community Lodgings, Alexandria, Virginia

Community Lodgings receives 21st Century Community Learning Center grants for both the Middle and High School components of their Youth Education Program. Over 75 at-risk children attend their afterschool and summer programs each day, receiving nearly 400 hours of individual academic instruction and socio-emotional support over the course of a year. Their Family Learning Center, where youth programs are held, is designated as a Parent Resource Center by Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS.) Program staff monitors student progress through LeapTrack, a computer program that helps students master core subjects using material that parallels ACPS curriculum. Family Learning Center staff attends parent-teacher conferences with parents of the youth in the afterschool programs to help with translation for non-English speaking parents and to empower parents to advocate for their children. The Family Learning Center also hosts the school principals at the beginning of each school year in order for parents to meet the principal. The program spends approximately 10 hours per week working with parents in the community with everything from translating notices sent by teachers to calling landlords regarding late rent payments. Community Lodgings presents ACPS Parent Workshops each month in coordination with the ACPS Division Wide Parent Liaison and the Office for English Language Learners.

Higher Achievement, Washington, DC

The community based organization Higher Achievement utilizes 21st CCLC funds to support middle school student learning during out-of-school time through small group, academic instruction afterschool and during the summer. Higher Achievement creates unique, grade-level curricula aligned with district curriculum standards to ensure that

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learning during out-of-school time complements and aligns with learning happening during the school day.

When preparing to launch Higher Achievement in a new state or district, the Curriculum Associate conducts a correlation assessment between existing Higher Achievement curricula and the English/language arts and math standards for that state/district. A standards correlation document is prepared and used for communication with district personnel, school principals, teachers, parents, and other interested stakeholders. Higher Achievement also maintains correlation documents with national English/language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science standards.

Following the correlation exercise, Higher Achievement may develop new curricula to ensure that mentoring sessions will align with the school day lessons students are learning. As new Higher Achievement Centers open, relationships are built with teachers in the host and feeder schools to ensure that a true alignment is occurring. Higher Achievement staff monitors changes in district, state and national standards. As changes to the standards occur, Higher Achievement standards correlation documents are revised accordingly.

During the After-School Academy, Higher Achievement Center staff communicates with each scholar's (scholars are student participants in Higher Achievement) family at least once per trimester in the course of his or her first year in the program and at least twice a year in the second and subsequent years. The conversations include listening to the parent to learn what he or she perceives to be the scholar's greatest strengths and needs and how the parent would like Higher Achievement to help support the child. Achievement Coaches (homework coaches) also contribute to communication efforts with families. Outside of Higher Achievement Study Hall hours, the Achievement Coach places phone calls to families and teachers as necessary to keep them abreast of scholars' successes and needs. Once per term, the Achievement Coach places check-in phone calls to families of the entire study hall roster.

Through review of report cards and conversations with parents, Higher Achievement Center Directors prioritize scholars who are in greatest need of individual support and request conferences with those scholars' school teachers. These are accomplished during a teacher's planning period, after school, or during parent/teacher conference days held at the school. During these conferences, the Center Director talks with the teacher to learn specifically how the child is struggling and then work with the teacher to identify ways that Higher Achievement can best support the child. The Center Director communicates with the scholar's parent(s) when these conferences are taking place and attempts to include the parent(s) in the conversations whenever possible. At the time of enrolling their child in Higher Achievement, each parent signs a waiver that grants Higher Achievement staff access to the child's school records and teachers for such conferences.

Woodcraft Rangers, Los Angeles, California

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A community based organization currently receiving 21st Century Community Learning Center funds, Woodcraft Rangers has three curricula that link tightly to the school day:

- 1) “Rock the Classroom, ” which is a literacy through music tool from Open Court and Houghton Mifflin is used both during the school day, and as part of Woodcraft Rangers afterschool program. The difference is that during the day, kids are writing songs to go with the material, and in the afternoons, students write fables to go with the material. Otherwise, the same format is used. This is currently used for 4th and 5th graders with plans to expand.
- 2) The high school age afterschool curriculum is also aligned with the school day. The visual and performing arts daytime teachers are working with the students on a fashion show – during the afterschool program the students work on the clothing while during the school day, the same students are designing backdrops and sets for the show.
- 3) Woodcraft Rangers also works with the school arts department. By coordinating with the afterschool Woodcraft Rangers program, the high school has been able to work on theater productions and performances utilizing arts staff hired by the afterschool program. Before the program, the school was unable to do such performances.

21st Century Community Learning Center, Rexburg, Idaho

The state of Idaho has correlated the standard achievement test focus areas into the afterschool program lesson plans. Afterschool staff work closely with classroom teachers to provide extra assistance in areas where the students need help. Using the Idaho Standards Achievement System (ISAT), lowest scoring areas become the targeted focus of afterschool programming. A close relationship exists between afterschool staff and Title 1 and Special Education personnel.

Davenport Community Schools 21st CCLC, Davenport, Iowa

The Davenport Community Schools Stepping Stones afterschool programs employ certified instructors to work on homework help, small group tutoring, and intensive academic intervention related to the needs of students. In most instances, staff are “teachers of origin” who work in the school during the core day and join the afterschool program after their daily contractual obligations are completed. Daily afterschool instruction parallels the district-wide “Treasures” K-5 curriculum taught during the core day. Curriculum specialists from the district’s administrative levels assist with the planning, selection and alignment of supplemental instructional materials and activities for the afterschool program. The activities also match a weekly pacing guide. As an example, if the school-day reading curriculum focus was cities and towns then the theme of the afterschool art activity for the week would be cities and towns. The same vocabulary and core concepts are reinforced in the afterschool program as are delivered during the day. Teachers within the Stepping Stones programs also develop a wide variety of hands-on enrichment activities that are aligned with core curriculum and

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provide an experiential enhancement of their school-day classroom instruction.

To assess performance and impact, the Davenport Community School District Out of School Time model measures both social-behavioral and literacy/language outcomes. Literacy/language outcomes are measured in terms of students' ability to read grade-level appropriate words "on-sight" (referred to in Davenport Community Schools as high frequency words), and students' ability to read fluently. High frequency words are taken from the core-day reading / language arts curriculum. Fluency is measured according to "words correct per minute" for a passage written to be appropriate for each grade level. Stepping Stones participants are matched for free/reduced lunch status to students attending their school during the core day, but who do not attend the Stepping Stones program. In this way, a control group is created to compare the growth in high frequency words and fluency of Stepping Stones students to non-Stepping Stones students. All kindergarten through fifth grade students at six Stepping Stones sites are assessed in August, December and May; corresponding control groups are also assessed during these months.

The Promise Program, Paris, Kentucky

The 21st CCLC Promise Program is a K-12 program staffed by regular day time teachers who work with students afterschool through the program. At the elementary level, teachers recommend the students who are most at-risk for failure in math and reading and these students are actively recruited to attend. The elementary program has two teachers from each grade, grades first through fifth, one focuses on math while the other teacher focuses on reading. The program works with students to bring them up to grade level using the curriculum that is used daily, as well as the research-based computer program, Study Island. At the middle school level, grades sixth through eighth, math teachers all stay afterschool and work with the students who are behind or have tested extremely low. The middle school staff also uses the computer based Study Island and the curriculum that is used during the day. In the high school program, before and after school tutoring is offered as is home work help in all Math, Science, English and Foreign language classes.

Clare-Gladwin RESD 21st CCLC, Michigan

A partnership between three area high schools, Farwell, Beaverton and Gladwin, resulted in over 100 high school credits recovered from October 2008 thru July 2009. Students from these schools chose to stay afterschool, come before school started, and/or attend summer sessions to recover credits necessary to graduate. The program was possible with a 21st Century Learning Center grant from the Michigan Department of Education, secured by Clare-Gladwin RESD, and in-kind contributions from the local schools. There is no cost associated with recovering credits to students or families. Students are provided a small snack after school, computer connection to any core class that needs recovery and certified teachers to assist with the class. Door to door transportation was also provided.

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High school students in need of tutoring or homework help were also welcome to attend the afterschool sessions. The program is the high school continuation of the K-8 SPARKS program that has been in place in some areas for the past seven years. Clare-Gladwin RESD wrote for and received funding to offer the high school program in Harrison High School and Alternative Ed starting in the fall of 2009. Activities include free tutoring, homework help, credit recovery, character education and life skills. Parents are encouraged to understand the rigor of high school merit curriculum beginning its third year, the importance of passing high school classes, and staying in line for on-time graduation.

Project PASS, Camdenton, Missouri

Staff members for the 21st CCLC-funded PASS programs are all certified teachers. Because improving reading skills is a key program component, the school district's literacy coach provides in-service literacy training for PASS teaching staff each year. An annual Teacher Training Academy also helps teachers learn how to complement afterschool programs with the regular school day and how to develop lesson plans with themes, community guest speakers and field trips for the year.

According to Assistant Superintendent Roma France, "One of our early concerns was adequate staffing. Ten years later, we have such a committed staff that many have been with us from the beginning because they believe that all kids deserve the second chance to learn, often in a different way. This staff and a dedicated leader are the keys to our success."

PASS staff consult regularly with daytime teachers and administrators so that they can effectively target the skills students are learning in the classroom. PASS staff also use a special curriculum designed to connect with regular classroom work. Project PASS emphasizes hands-on learning to engage students, a quality outlined by the state department of education. A variety of learning opportunities appeal to students' differing learning styles, including activities in math, silent and oral reading, music and using computers as a learning tool.

Activities are always changing. One week, a doctor may visit to discuss healthy lifestyles and medical careers, and another week, students dance along with a visiting folk arts group. PASS students have participated in a mock Olympics event to measure and convert standard measurements to those used in other parts of the world. Field trips immerse students in the greater world around them, such as the wonders of Marvel Cave in the Cave State of Missouri. The program has also instituted Fantastic Fridays, part of PASS that is open to all the district's students. Samplings of the programs offered are Sign Language Club, 4-H, computer classes, piano lessons and Science Club. There have been Lego labs, Garden Club, Spanish classes, Eye Spy Club, art lessons, Writing Club and strategic thinking classes. All activities correlate to MAP testing requirements. Many of the special Fantastic Fridays activities are offered through a partnership with 4-H that provides a chance for youths to participate as year-long 4-H members. This

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unique partnership gives PASS students special opportunities to learn life, leadership and citizenship skills in a hands-on way.

Arnold Community Learning Center, Lincoln, Nebraska

The Arnold Community Learning Center in Lincoln is a 21st Century-funded Community Learning Center (CLC) that works closely with school staff to ensure that the program curriculum is aligned with the school day. The afterschool CLC staff attend school improvement committee meetings with school staff to integrate the school improvement goals into the afterschool curriculum. The CLC site supervisor attends Teacher Council, Professional Learning Community, and other school staff meetings to work with school staff to extend the school day plans for students into the afterschool hours. The homework club teachers are school paraeducators who work closely with teachers and students during the school day and then carry that expertise into the afterschool homework club that intentionally focuses on the school improvement goals of improving vocabulary and math facts. The Lincoln Community Learning Centers Initiative also funds a curriculum coach: a school district employee who works with district curriculum specialists to regularly train all CLC staff in aligning afterschool curriculum with district standards. It is because of this intentional and meaningful involvement of CLC staff with school staff that Arnold Community Learning Center has seen a 94 percent increase in academic performance for CLC students who participate in the afterschool programs at Arnold 30 days or more during the school year.

Lincoln YMCA, Lincoln, Nebraska

The Lincoln YMCA has been the lead agency for four afterschool Community Learning Centers for over 10 years. The centers provide before school tutoring and care, after school educational programming as well as family and community support. In addition the CLCs also provide a summer program which allows the educational opportunities to continue throughout the summer. Each year an Annual Plan is developed by the YMCA Staff, the school Principal, a teacher committee and a parents group. This group of individuals keeps the children's educational goals and objectives as its' number one focus. The main objective is to closely align the schools educational agenda with the extended school day that occurs through the Community Learning Center program. Several of the programs offered are homework assistance, tutoring, reading enhancement and other clubs which reinforce the daily learning objectives of the particular school. In addition families and community leaders are encouraged to become involved in the activities of the Community Learning Center to help meet the objectives of the schools' learning environment.

Santa Fe Public Schools 21st CCLC, Santa Fe, New Mexico

The Santa Fe Public Schools 21st CCLC Strategic Plan for SY '09-'10 was developed and adopted to ensure strong alignment of afterschool programming instruction and curriculum with the school day. Textbooks used afterschool are aligned with those used in the school day program for literacy and math, and have been purchased with the

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guidance of the coordinators of those departments.

21st Century FLIGHT Program, Lyndhurst, Ohio

The 21st Century FLIGHT Program has two sites: Greenview Upper Elementary School and Memorial Junior High School. The afterschool mentoring time always includes guided work on daily homework assignments. Both locations feature mini-lessons on OAT (Ohio standardized test) math and language arts benchmarks and standards. Students rotate to the teachers with expertise in these subjects and build their skills in a small group format. They are able to bond as a small cohort group and help each other with guidance from their adult mentors.

Akron After School 21st CCLC Program, Akron, Ohio

The Akron 21st CCLC program operates in 27 elementary buildings with an initial enrollment of 3400 students receiving intervention in reading and math and enrichment classes. A team of researchers from the Ohio State University (OSU) College of Social Work designed a study of the Akron program with guidance from Akron's leadership and also from experts statewide. Akron's OST initiatives showcase the power of a three-component trilogy: Expanded, accelerated, and connected learning. Extended learning occurs outside the regular school day. Accelerated learning, both in school and during OST, speeds up learning and content mastery. Connected learning brings both accelerated and extended learning back to classrooms, supporting students and teachers alike. Akron's leaders have developed innovative programs and services that exemplify the potential and power of extended, accelerated, and connected learning, demonstrating how this learning can be an integral, essential component of expanded school improvement. Akron's universal programs and services reach an impressive number of young people and show promising outcomes for students who attend regularly. Teachers, especially teachers involved in OST programs and services, report the benefits of expanded school improvement initiatives. There is some evidence that Akron's OST initiatives benefit parents. For example, they enhance parent-school relationships via improvements in parent involvement programs. Leaders attribute increases in student achievement and improved behavioral outcomes to expanded, accelerated, and connected learning.

CincyAfterSchool , 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Ohio

Cincinnati's twenty eight 21st Century Community Learning Center programs support the school's educational agenda and the district's goal for every school to be a center of community learning. Each 21CCLC program's community-based partner embeds a full-time coordinator in the school building to build relationships that support the recruitment and retention of the students who need the program most. While CincyAfterSchool network leaders and district personnel jointly create common quality standards and data sharing tools, site personnel also ensure alignment and integration through communication packets that connect the school day work, afterschool assistance in homework and individual instruction, and parent review. At each site, a full copy of the curriculum is available for afterschool staff to track student progress. Access to student

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academic and demographic information is also seamless. All of these supports work to advance the common goal of academic improvement. A recent report revealed CincyAfterSchool student performance success:

- 51.6% scored higher on reading tests
- 50.8% scored higher on math tests
- 94% plan to attend college

Neighborhood Afterschool Initiative, Canton, Ohio

Stark Community Foundation convened and coordinated a community/faith-based collaborative organization: NASI - Neighborhood Afterschool Initiative. This non-profit collaborative identified one of its members, who had a 501c(3) status to apply for three 21st CCLC grants. These three grants cover 9 Canton City Elementary schools with complete afterschool programs. The schools participating have a 92 % average free and reduced meals participation rate. The programs in all 9 schools have a strong alignment with instruction/curriculum delivered during the school day. School teachers are employed to tutor students during the first afterschool hour in subject matter that they have not mastered in school or on state exams. Afterschool students receive much more one-on-one attention and the results after two years show academic levels increasing for participating students. The last two hours of afterschool involve life skills work, the arts, and exercise. Another benchmark recorded is parent participation, which is monitored with year end questionnaires and special parent-child program participation. Attention is also focused on the number of days students attend afterschool, and the relationship afterschool attendance has to behavior and grades.

Heartbeats to the City, Inc., Canton, Ohio

Heartbeats to the City, Inc was awarded a 21st CCLC grant to work with students in the Canton City School District in Canton, Ohio. The community based organization has a strong alignment to the school curriculum as follows:

- Teachers are hired for the afterschool academic enrichment piece.
- The curriculum is aligned throughout the district so that each grade level has the same standards taught for each nine week grading period with common 9-week assessments. The afterschool curriculum follows the same curriculum map and is able to embed the standards in lessons taught in a more hands-on manner.
- The curriculum office of the school district advises the 21st CCLC program on best practices and curriculum materials.

Mound Street Academies 21st CCLC, Dayton, Ohio

Mound Street Academies is a credit recovery high school located in Dayton, Ohio, that serves approximately 340 students' ages sixteen to twenty-two years of age who are significantly behind their cohort group (5 or more credits) or they have experienced a life changing event that has caused them to drop out. 85% of the students are below or basic in reading and math, 70% of students have dropped out or been suspended/expelled from traditional high school and 92% are economically disadvantaged.

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The goal of Mound Street Academies' 21st CCLC program is to provide focused supplemental academic supports in reading/language arts, math, science, and technology aligned with state content standards. It is also the intention of the program to provide enrichment programs that will increase students' exposure to the cultural arts and increase students' job readiness skills through leadership training, character development programs and social skill building. Since one in three students at Mound Street Academies are parents themselves, the program provides parent and family engagement programs that increase opportunities for parents to increase their parenting skills and provide parents and their children opportunities to strengthen literacy skills.

Mound Street Academies professional development plan supports the academic component of the 21st CCLC program as well as providing the tools necessary to support the social and emotional elements of youth development. The program provides the opportunity for 21st CCLC staff to attend after school literacy and math data analysis, testing and assessment workshops, teacher-leader training, coaching techniques workshops, and alignment with assessment and instruction workshops. In addition the 21st CCLC program is supported by the Mound Street Academies curriculum specialists. Academies curriculum specialists will also work with 21st CCLC staff to ensure that plans are aligned with Ohio standards based curriculum, provide technical support and serve as instructional leaders to support improvement strategies from a practitioner perspective.

Pickerington Local School District 21st CCLC, Pickering, Ohio

The Pickerington 21st Century Grant Program is organized around the district's power standards. The power standards are aligned with the state of Ohio academic content standards. Lessons and activities have been developed to align with each power standard. The lessons and activities are interactive in order to teach the curriculum standard in a different way to students who struggle in a regular classroom environment. Each 21st century tutor has a binder that is organized around the curriculum standards. Behind each curriculum power standard there are the interactive lessons and activities. A program called Aimsweb is used to monitor progress of the students in reading and math. The students are given a goal and are assessed every three weeks in order to determine if they are making progress in math and reading. Technology is incorporated throughout the program to further engage the students in the program. Students and parents are surveyed regularly to see if the program is meeting their academic needs.

Shelby County ESC Opportunity School/Sidney High School, Ohio

The 21st CCLC grant at the Shelby County ESC Opportunity School/Sidney High School is an afterschool program that provides a half credit per semester in science. The afterschool STEM class includes oral and written communication skills, self-direction, social responsibility, mastery of technology and the ability to work in teams. The curriculum involves Bio-Technology, Environment, Ecology, Water Chemistry, Global Warming and Future Energy Sources. The curriculum is aligned to the following state standards: life science, Earth and space, scientific inquiry, and physical science. Students

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conclude the semester program with a CAPSTONE project, which requires students to interweave their learning and present the results to their colleagues. The primary barrier in maintaining this program is funding through these difficult economic times. The 21st CCLC grant is the lifeline to the success of this program. The STEM class attracts highly gifted students, as well as students who are not successful in the traditional school setting.

Community Education Partnership of West Valley City (CEP) 21st CCLC Programs, West Valley City, Utah

The Community Education Partnership of West Valley City (CEP) 21st CCLC Programs all have a tutoring component at the beginning of each afterschool program day. Student progress in Math and Reading is tracked during the school day. Teachers observe students who are not working at their grade level. Teachers then refer students needing assistance to the Afterschool Site Coordinators for extra tutoring before and afterschool. Following each tutoring session, students attend an enhancement class of their choice: art, dance, music, chess, sports, science, quilting, or others.

CEP programs started this project with a new 21st CCLC grant in September, therefore limited data is available. Initial observations show that students are making substantial progress improving their reading and math skills through participation in the program.

One of the program sites is starting a new project titled, “Project Swing.” Students who have passed the state proficiency exam in one year and not in another year are being targeted for special tutoring in the afterschool program. Students between third through sixth grades who swing back and forth year to year within 10 points of passing or not passing the CRT test, are selected for extra tutoring. Tutoring is targeted to the specific skills each student is lacking.

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