

Communities In Schools of North Texas – Cycle 8
21st Century Community Learning Center - Grantee Evaluation

I. Executive Summary

The summary of findings and insights and Next Steps are presented in this Executive Summary. The Program Director and evaluator agree that the grant has successfully addressed the goals and objectives of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers / Texas ACE Grant. The grantee and partner schools intend to continue to apply the lessons learned. Great progress has been realized through the grant's assessment-modification-planning-implementation process. The staff is pleased to have contributed to the academic success and well-being of its students and family members.

Description of Commendable Practices

Program Implementation

The Logic Model and center oversight activities confirmed that the sites had well planned and fully implemented programs. The budget allocations are well thought out and balanced to support the needs and success of the sites. The centers' demographic profiles correlated favorably with the campus profiles and supported the target population of the grant.

Program Participation

Allocated time was adequate to address the program goals and was matched by percent of student hours attended by component. Overall attendance was adequate in the upper attendance ranges to address program goals.

Results present that 89.8%, of the grantee's regular students met the minimum effect size threshold for academic interventions to be effective.

The elementary sites met the desired profile for distribution of attendance. The greatest counts and percentages of attendance for each of the elementary sites was in the 76-100% quadrant with its average elementary percentage being 69.1%. The elementary students' highest percentages of attendance for enrichment activities were in the 76-100% quadrant.

Year-to-year comparison of attendance of 90 or more days showed the five centers improved an average of 16.7 points, two centers were unchanged and three centers declined an average of 4.9 points.

Elementary students assessed with a history of attendance needs attended greater than 80 days at a rate of 73.1%.

Program Intermediate Outcomes

Grades

The average GPA's based on a 4.0 system were 3.06 for the elementary centers and 2.89 for the middle school centers. The averages for core subjects ranged from 2.90 to 3.31 for the elementary centers and 2.65 to 2.93 for the middle school centers.

The elementary sites had a passing rate of 99.2%, and the middle school sites had passing rate of 90.9%. The elementary sites had an A-B passing rate of 83.4%, and the middle school sites had an A-B passing rate of 75.0%.

Students in each site demonstrated academic success. Elementary sites averaged B-level grades for GPA and three subjects and near B-level grades for reading and math. Middle school sites averaged high C-level grades for GPA and three subjects and mid C-level for math.

The year-to-year comparisons show that two elementary sites have increased GPA passing rates, and four were unchanged. Two middle school centers improved, and two declined.

Results show that 99.4% of the elementary and 95.8% of the middle school students assessed as having the greatest needs in reading had passing GPA's. Students earned A-B GPA's at rates of 65.9% and 48.1% respectively. Results show that 99.0% of the elementary and 94.9% of the middle school students assessed as having the greatest needs in math passed math. Students earned A-B averages at rates of 69.2% and 52.9% respectively. Results show that 96.7% of the elementary and 94.7% of the middle school students assessed as having the greatest needs in reading passed reading. Students earned A-B averages at rates of 59.9% and 51.4% respectively.

Attendance

The elementary and middle school sites averaged year-to-year improvement for attendance in the > 90-day ranges.

The elementary sites identified 104 students, 14.8% of the program's elementary population, as assessed as having a history of attendance concerns. Results show that 73.1% of the high needs students attended > 80 days.

Behavior

Year-to-year comparisons show that non-criminal referrals decreased for three of the four middle school sites by 16 referrals, 12.6%.

Course Completion

Three of the grantee elementary centers reported a total of five students retained for 2017, a 98.6% course completion rate. The middle school centers reported no retentions.

Achievement Test Scores

The students with greatest need in the subject of the STAAR test performed, with the exception of elementary reading, within a few percentage points of the program population. Students assessed as having high risk outperformed their center's population on four centers.

Stakeholder Perceptions

Surveys were conducted to assess the preferences for family engagement activities and follow-up feedback. The students were also surveyed on multiple occasions regarding their preferences for enrichment activities. Changes were made in the activities offered based on the feedback.

End-of-the-year surveys of students, parents, campus teachers and campus leadership provided positive and useful input for the program.

Description of Programmatic Theme or Issue

Program Participation

The elementary school programs percentages of economically disadvantaged, limited English language and special education students were less than the general population of the schools. It is recommended

that the differential for economically disadvantage and ELL should be assessed, since there is greater than a negative 5-point difference.

It is recommended that a middle school planning “task force” be created to determine, implement and monitor strategies to improve the distribution of attendance to the upper quadrants.

Students attended a greater percent of enrichment hours than academic hours for two middle school sites. Lakeside MS had a minimal difference. Calhoun MS had a 26.1-point difference between the components. It is recommended that the program work closely with the two sites to establish procedures to monitor attendance patterns throughout the year.

All but two of the highest attendance percentages for the parent component were in the lowest quadrant. Parent engagement continues to be a challenge for the sites. While activities are planned with input and well implemented, parent participation is an annual struggle.

Description of Next Steps to Support the Centers

The Program Director will work with Elementary sites to address the low numbers in economically disadvantage and ELL students at each campus. We will look at the reasons why these special populations may not be participating thus far and ensure we work with school teachers and parents to encourage more participation where needed.

Middle Schools are challenged yearly with attendance in the fall terms, often competing with sports, arts and other afterschool and/or community and church activities. With our program scheduled to start in late August this year, we hope that more of our middle schools will enroll and participate in our program more than they have in the past.

Lakeside and Calhoun Middle have had to employ various methods to ensure continued student participation; the Program Director and Site Coordinators will work together to come up with academic and college and career activities that are as engaging as the enrichment activities they have been incorporating into their programs.

Parent engagement is an issue for most of our schools, often times being an ongoing challenge for our sites as well. SCs and FES will continue working with the schools to partner with them in as many parent events as possible. The FES, PD and SC will also continue to work with parents on their needs and wants at each campus, utilizing various scheduled times (morning, mid-day and evening) to offer more parents the opportunities to get involved and engaged in our parent events.

Program Intermediate Outcomes

Grades

The year-to-year comparisons in Table 10B show that each middle school site had decreased GPA percentage of passing grades (A’s – C’s). Calhoun’s decrease was 10.1 points, Myers’ was 4.8 points and the remaining two sites were less than 1-point.

Description of Next Steps to Support the Centers

Although our middle school Site Coordinators have worked hard with their part-timers to actively engage students in checking their grades on a weekly basis, as well as encouraging them to reassess when needed and encourage them to attend tutoring initiatives, a lot more of these strategies need to be employed to maximize our impact in their success. The Program Director and FES will work closely with the SCs to

ensure par-timers are effectively using the tools and strategies provided to them to speak to their students. The FES will also be involved in engaging parents in the same conversations, particularly when students are not showing the progress that is expected.

Attendance

The middle school sites averaged their high attendance percentages for the academic component in the 26-50% and 51-75% quadrants. Their largest average percentage was in the 26-50% quadrant.

The middle school sites averaged their highest percent of attendance for the college and career component in the lowest quadrant of attendance, 0-25%.

The middle school sites' highest aggregate percentage of attendance for enrichment activities was in the 26-50% quadrant with their lowest average in the top quadrant.

It is recommended that a middle school planning "task force" be created to determine, implement and monitor strategies to improve the distribution of attendance to the upper quadrants.

Middle school sites identified 85 students, 15.3% of the middle school population, as assessed as having a history of attendance concerns. Results show that 50.6% of these high needs students attended > 80 days. The results show that the students with assessed attendance needs continue to struggle to achieved high percentages attendance. It is recommended that the program determine, implement and monitor strategies to improve the attendance of students assessed as having risk in this area.

Description of Next Steps to Support the Centers

The Program Director will continue to encourage program staff to work with school administration and teachers to urge students that struggle with attendance to attend program more. The FES will also engage parents in these conversations, informing them of the attendance concerns, sharing student grades with them and urging them to convince their students to be more active participants in the program.

Behavior

Counts and percentages for criminal referrals increased for two middle school sites and decreased for two sites. The middle school criminal referrals increased by 28 referrals, 66.7%. Year-to-year counts and percentages for criminal referrals increased for two elementary sites, decreased for two sites and remained constant for two sites. The elementary criminal referrals increased by 13 referrals, 65.0%. The elementary non-criminal referrals increased by 15 referrals, 9.1%.

The results of behavioral referrals reinforce the evaluator's experience as a public-school administrator. First, a sizable majority of discipline referrals are from a few number of students. Second, the students with a history of multiple referrals are a challenge to interventions. This, of course, does not diminish the need for and goal of providing effective behavioral intervention strategies. It is recommended that the grantee investigate specific approaches or programs that have demonstrated progress in this area.

Description of Next Steps to Support the Centers

The Program Director, FES and Site Coordinators will discuss the findings of the evaluator and determine what programs can be of aid to those that are struggling in this area. Site visits for SCs between campuses will be encouraged, enabling them to give direct feedback to their peers, thus improving programs all around.

Furthermore, Site Coordinators and part-time staff will be encouraged to work with the school administration on what classroom strategies and professional development the Program Director can provide to help mitigate these behavior issues.

Lastly, ongoing meetings with Behavior Intervention Specialists, led by the PD, will address behavior issues, identify strategies used across each campus and provide time to discuss a strategic plan to address this in the coming year.

Achievement Test Scores

The grantee's percentages of met standard on the STAAR range was from 91.7% to 45.6%, which elicits both praise for some and concern for others. One recommended suggestion is that the grantee have the sites work in collaborative teams to share, implement and monitor strategies for improvement on STAAR.

Description of Next Steps to Support the Centers

Same as above, the PD will meet with Academic Liaisons, as well as BISs and SCs to have conversations about successful strategies utilized by those who were successful in this area. All program staff will discuss the evaluator's findings in our planning meetings and throughout the year, to continuously monitor which strategies are working and which need to be modified.

Stakeholder Perceptions

The parent survey completion rate was calculated per the total student count. It is recommended that the program reinforce the one-per-student expectation for the parent survey to help increase the completion rate. Coordination with the grantee and its sites is recommended to incorporate information about the need to return a survey for each student into the recruitment and enrollment process.

The average student survey completion rates for the grantee's elementary sites was 88.6% and 80.6% for the middle school sites. It was recommended that different level sites work together to develop and share strategies to increase participation.

Participation on the campus leadership survey ranged from five responders at one middle school site to one responder at three elementary and one middle school sites. It is recommended that survey feedback be included as a discussion point during the annual planning and drafting of the MOU's.

The average campus teacher survey completion rate for the grantee's elementary sites was 68.5%, and it was 45.3% for the middle school sites. The range for completion rates was wide, 95.4% to 22.1%, elementary, and 53.2% to 26.0%, middle school. It was thought last year that implementing the use of an on-line survey tool may be of value here. It is recommended that grantee work with the sites to use additional methods, activities and days and work more closely with the campus leadership to survey all campus teachers involved in the program.

Description of Next Steps to Support the Centers

The Family Engagement Specialist position has had turn over this year. The new FES started in the summer, this year and has already started planning for the following year. To introduce herself to parents at each campus, the FES will distribute a letter where we can outline the expectation of having one set of documentation per student, including the enrollment packet and the surveys, highlighting the importance of the feedback they provide about our program.

The Program Director will start conversations with program staff to ensure the 100% student participation of students' expectation is clear. Elementary and Middle School SCs will share what strategies worked and what middle school sites can do to improve student participation in surveys.

The Program Director will engage school administrators in conversations about the need to improve survey participation from their leadership team. School teachers and administrators work in different capacities with Site Coordinators, based on individual relationships fostered by both parties. The PD, FES and SCs will engage school teachers and administration in conversations about referrals to the program and the expectation of survey participation at the end of the year. The Program Director will encourage Site Coordinators to keep a log of teachers who refer students throughout the year, informing them to expect a survey at the end of the year for the student they referred, including the questions they will be answering.