



21st Century Community Learning Centers Summary Report **2016-2017**

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Tony Evers, PhD, State Superintendent



Introduction

What Are 21st Century Community Learning Centers?

Since 2002, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has administered the federally-funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grant. Grants are awarded to applicants proposing to implement after-school, before-school, and summer school programs in schools with high concentrations of students from families with significant economic need. The DPI views the program as a critical strategy to close the achievement gaps that continue to exist for both economically disadvantaged students and students of color. The 21st CCLC grant helps the DPI and its partners support the “Every Child a Graduate, college and career ready” initiative by providing multiple ways to engage and support learning opportunities for youth.

The 2016-17 school year marked the 15th academic year in which the DPI awarded 21st CCLC funds. A total of \$16,869,518 was provided for 221 centers starting or continuing programs. This report reflects the activity of the 169 centers that were in years 1-4 of their five-year grants.

“21st Century Community Learning Centers play a vital role in helping to close achievement gaps and allowing all Wisconsin students to develop the academic, social, and emotional skills they need to be college and career ready.”

Tony Evers, PhD, State Superintendent



Summary & Conclusions

Who Do 21st CCLCs Serve?

Wisconsin's 21st Century Community Learning Centers are first and foremost about meeting the needs of students and their families. The grant targets youth who may most benefit from out-of-school time learning opportunities. Student needs can be based on the lack of other opportunities locally, socioeconomic status, level of academic performance, or another similar indicator of need.

In 2016-17, the 21st CCLCs surveyed served over 26,000 students collectively. The average program served about 130 total students during the year. On any given day the average program served about 60 students.

21st CCLCs can serve many age groups. Over three fourths of 21st CCLCs serve elementary school children. Over one third serve middle school students (often in combination with other ages), and approximately 1 in 6 programs serve high school students.

Reaching Out to Students in Need

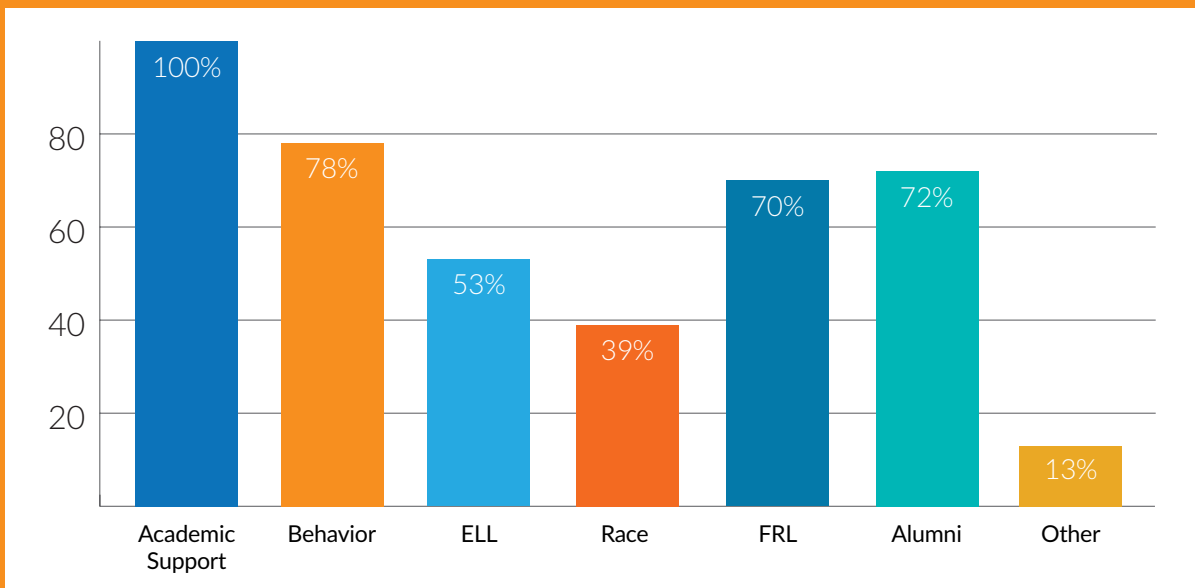
21st CCLCs exist primarily to serve those students and families who need it most; Wisconsin's 21st CCLCs do just this. All 21st CCLCs surveyed report serving students with special academic needs. Most also support those with behavioral issues, English Language Learners (ELL), economic needs (free and reduced lunch, or FRL), and students or siblings of students who have participated in the past ("Alumni").

How Much Programming Do 21st CCLCs Provide?

21st CCLCs provide coverage that working families need. In 2016-17 the average program covered about 83% of school days. This means that families had free after school care during most days that school is in session.

Having regular afterschool coverage also means that students had many opportunities for learning and enrichment after school. As can be seen below, families can count on 21st CCLCs to consistently provide their children with academic enrichment, homework help, physical activity, and other activities geared toward youth development.

Percentage of Sites Reporting Intentional Recruitment of Students, by Type of Student Group or Student Need





21st CCLCs report that their academic enrichment has a heavy focus on reading, math, and STEM. Youth development activities primarily include art, music, and nutrition. Many sites also incorporate service learning and cultural programs into youth development.

On average, a student who attends a 21st CCLC program every day in a typical week gets:

- Almost 4 hours of academic enrichment
- Between 2-3 hours of youth development
- Over 2.5 hours of homework help
- Over 2.5 hours of physical activity

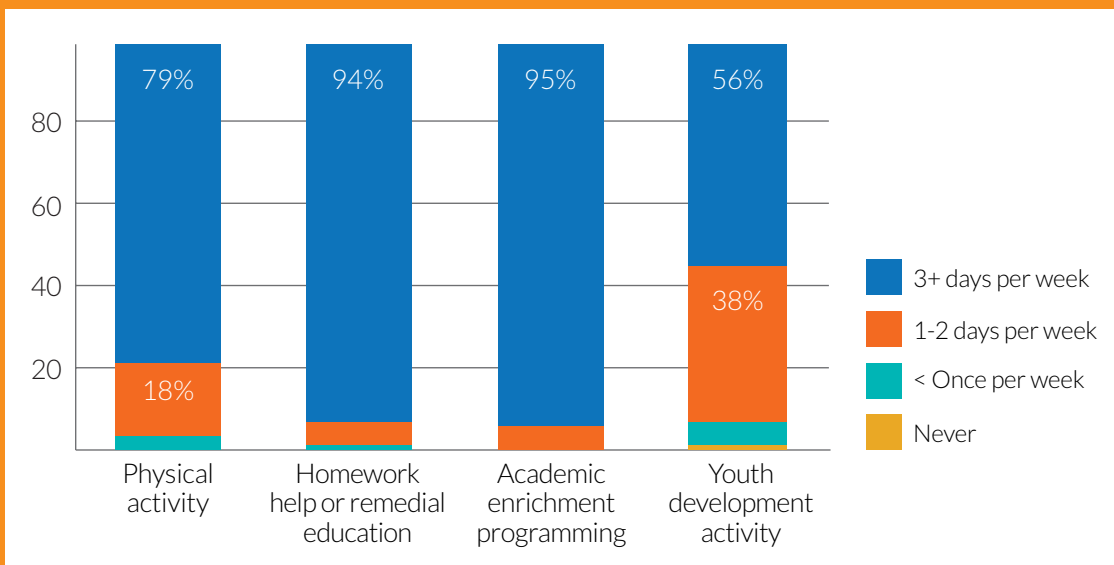
Over a year, that amount of academic enrichment is the equivalent of almost three full weeks of school, without counting the significant time spent on homework help and remedial education.

Working With the School

In order to make the best use of that extra academic time, 21st CCLCs work hard to ensure that their activities are in line with what students are learning during the school day, and almost all 21st CCLCs work on such an alignment. Most sites also use other methods (such as using day school materials, evidence-based practices, or state standards) to ensure that they are offering challenging and relevant material to help students succeed.

In addition, 90% of 21st CCLCs hire teachers and other day school staff and 85% consult with teachers directly about programming and individual students' needs.

Frequency of Core Activity Areas



Making Learning Fun

One of the best aspects of 21st CCLCs is how engaging they are for students. Students have opportunities to practice hands-on learning, to work with others, and to explore their own interests.

Many 21st CCLCs use project based learning for their hands-on experiences; this approach actively engages students. As one 21st CCLC leader wrote, project based learning “makes lesson planning easier and more fun, student learning more exciting, and family engagement easily integrated through culminating events.”

Some programs provide extremely rigorous, real-world learning opportunities for students. For instance, one CLC director wrote about a project their site had conducted:

“Small groups of students researched a provided real-world problem involving concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO’s or large, corporate farms), karst geography, and groundwater quality issues. Students then identified a series of solutions, created visual aids, and presented these to a panel of natural resource professionals during a 10-minute speech that also featured a question and answer period.”

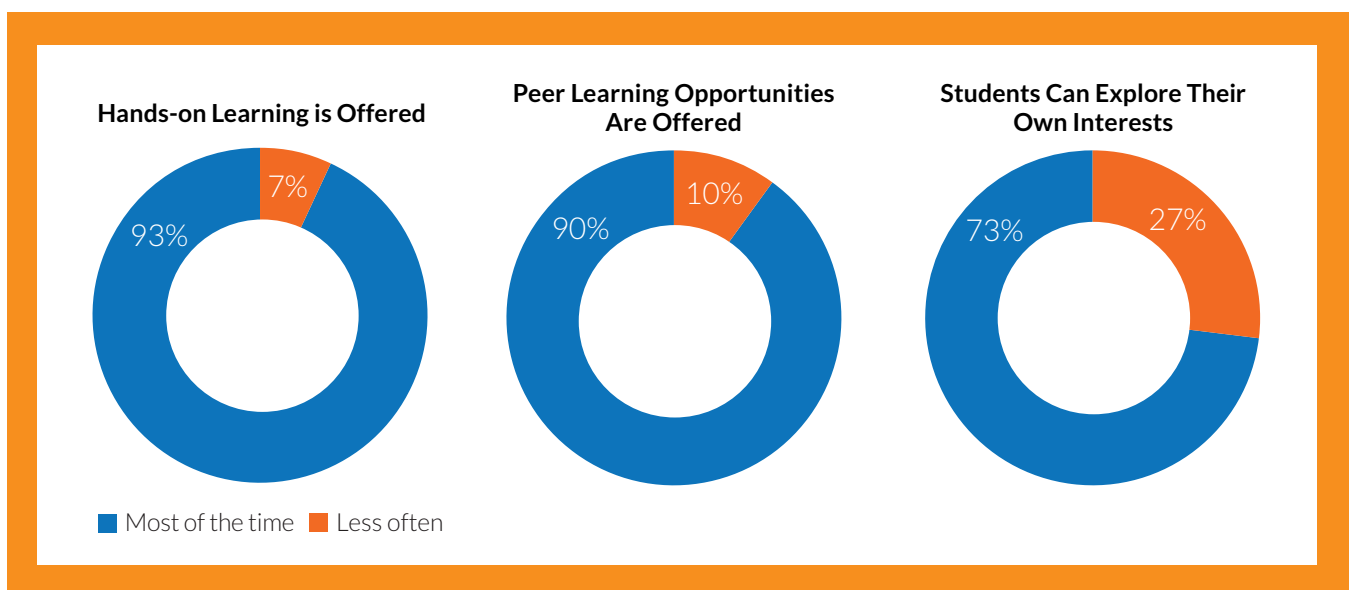
CLCs’ use of innovative, active, and responsive approaches pay off. One CLC director wrote:

“We get lots of positive feedback about our enrichment activities. On a student survey, one student wrote that he wished we had CLC on Saturdays and Sundays, too. The rewarding successes are all those little moments when we feel we’ve made a difference for a child.”

It Takes a Village

Beyond serving students, 21st CCLCs also reach out to families to provide them with additional support. Almost all 21st CCLCs help parents/guardians understand their child’s educational needs and how best to support them. As one 21st CCLC leader described:

“This year, one of our goals was to reach as many families as possible... we made a point to contact parents[/guardians] of our regular attende[es] and stay in communication with them. We talk to them about things that are going well and also things that the student may be struggling with. We have an open door policy that allows parents/guardians to come to the school during [the] program and assist in a variety of ways. This constant contact and communication has created a unified approach that has allowed us to be more effective in the growth of the students.”



Such family support is vital. But 21st CCLCs also provide another type of vital support. Whether it is an award ceremony, spaghetti dinner, kickball game, or family photo opportunity, 21st CCLCs provide fun ways to build community by bringing kids and families together. This meets an important need for both youth and their families. As one 21st CCLC leader points out, “we continue to hear how isolated families feel from school and their community.” By reaching out to those families who might otherwise feel like they have fallen through the cracks, 21st CCLCs are offering help and encouragement to those who most need it.

21st CCLCs are able to serve students and families because of the strong partnerships they have with both schools and community groups. Results of Wisconsin’s 2016-17 survey show that those programs with the greatest involvement from the school principal also have some of the strongest programs. In addition, community partners from higher education, local libraries, non-profits, and the business community provide invaluable opportunities for enrichment programs, as well as staff time and funding. In 2016-17, these partners helped provide everything from meals and homework help to classes in dance, gardening, or Lego Robotics. These partnerships are a vital ingredient in what makes a 21st CCLC a success.

Moving Forward

The Department of Public Instruction is committed to helping 21st CCLCs maximize their rich potential to help students excel in school and beyond. To that end, in 2016-17 the DPI released 10 Guiding Principles to help new and existing 21st CCLC grantees establish and maintain high level programs.

In 2017-18 DPI awarded \$17,000,000 in funds to 210 existing or new grantees throughout the state, allowing the important work of 21st CCLCs to continue.

Despite a changing federal and state level landscape, grantees have continued to offer students across the K-12 spectrum and around the state, access to high-quality academic programming, opportunities for youth development, and a safe, supportive, and fun place to be after school. The DPI is proud to support these programs and all that they do to help Wisconsin students graduate college and career-ready.





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