

Michigan Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Evaluation

2024-2025 Annual Report

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Key Findings

In the 2024-2025 program year, 85 grants were awarded to 28 grantees who oversaw 266 sites.

Demographics

Michigan 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) programs served predominantly non-White (75%), academically low-performing (81%), and economically disadvantaged (83%) students. Participants were 55% elementary, 22% middle, and 23% high school students.

Participation

In the 2024-2025 program year, 17,220 students enrolled in the program—a 3% increase from last year. About 74% of students participated during the school year, while 14% participated year-round. Returning students made up about one-third of participants.

Academic Activities

Almost all students (94%) participated in at least one academic activity for more than five hours. Almost half of high school students (44%) participated in credit recovery sessions. Participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) activities were prevalent. About 84% of participants shared that the program gave them opportunities to learn school subjects in a fun way.

Non-Academic Activities

Youth development and arts programming were the most common non-academic activities offered and attended. In addition, over 70% of elementary and middle school participants took part in sports.

Student Perceptions of Their Programs' Impact

Youth reported strong opportunities to develop growth mindsets through the program. Autonomy was more common for middle and high school participants, while only about **60%** of elementary youth reported being able to choose their activities.

School Connections

Data suggest a strong emphasis on aligning afterschool programming with school-day learning, as 84%+ of site coordinators reported frequent communication with schools and attention to grade-level content standards.

Changes Affecting Programs

Only 2 of 28 project directors were new in 2024–2025, compared to 6 in 2023–2024, suggesting improved leadership stability. However, high turnover persists among site coordinators and staff.

Enrollment and Attendance Policies

More than one-third (42%) of programs had a “first come, first served” enrollment policy. Other programs enrolled students on a formal or informal policy. Programs that gave priority to specific groups of students tended to focus on prior participants and students with academic or behavioral issues. About 40% implements a formal attendance policy.

Staff Views on Resource Support

Staff reported a positive work environment with peers and supervisors and noted that systems are in place to orient new staff. However, fewer staff reported having sufficient paid time for program planning, suggesting a need for stronger support for budgeted planning time.

Youth Outcomes

In 2024–2025, 43% of academically low-performing students improved their average GPA. Improvements in standardized test scores remained consistent with prior years, at about a 35% improvement rate.

Recommendations

Based on 2024-25 data, the state evaluation team provides the following recommendations:

1. Strengthen supports for staff planning time and preparation
2. Investigate the decline in teacher-reported school behavior improvement
3. Continue strengthening youth voice and choice, especially for elementary students
4. Support retention strategies for site coordinators and frontline staff
5. Maintain strong alignment with school-day learning while preserving enrichment balance
6. Use outcome data and youth/staff feedback to guide continuous improvement

Introduction

The US Department of Education website¹ describes the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program as follows:

This program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local academic standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children.

This report describes the organizations that received 21st CCLC grants from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) in partnership with Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP), their program sites, and the types of activities program sites provided. It also describes the students who participated in the program, the types of activities they took part in, and the outcomes they achieved.

Following the same approach used in previous years, the 2024-2025 annual report continues to use the leading indicators symbol ① to highlight program-level quality characteristics that are known from research and practice to affect student development. Although these quality measures are important to creating a context for overall development, they are not necessarily directly related to academic improvement.

¹ <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/21st-century-community-learning-centers/>

Who Participates in the Program?

Participation in the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program statewide is influenced by the types of organizations that receive grants, the staff who lead program activities, and the characteristics of students that programs recruit. In addition to the general goal of serving students who attend high-poverty, low-performing schools, the 2024–25 Request for Proposals (RFP) specifies the following priorities when determining grant allocations:

- The application proposal is a joint one between a local education agency (LEA) or an Indian tribe or tribal organization and a community-based or faith-based organization.
- Programs serving schools with a high percentage of very low-income families.
- Programs serving schools with a high percentage of students experiencing chronic absenteeism, defined as more than 10 absences during the scheduled school year.
- Programs serving schools that did not meet state proficiency targets for Math (fewer than 35.93% of students tested proficient) as reported by MISchoolData for Spring 2023.
- Programs serving schools that did not meet state proficiency targets for English Language Arts (ELA) (fewer than 44.38% of students tested proficient) as reported by MISchoolData for Spring 2023.
- Average Child Opportunity Index (COI) scores, with priority points ranging from 1 to 5, where lower opportunity scores receive higher priority points.

Grantees

Table 1 shows an overview of grantees over the past four years. In the 2024-2025 program year, 85 grants were awarded to 28 grantees who oversaw 266 sites, and there were 6 grantees who were new this year. Among the 266 sites, 230 operated during the school year while the remaining 36 sites were summer-only. Grants were evenly distributed among school-based agencies (thirteen local school

districts and two intermediate school districts) and community-based organizations (nine nonprofit community-based organizations, two universities, and two nonprofit agency). This distribution of grantees has remained stable over the past four years. As in past years, the majority of 21st CCLC sites served students in the elementary grades (148) or elementary and middle school combined (21). Fifty-three served middle school students only, and four served both middle and high school students. Forty sites served high school students only.

Table 1. Characteristics of Grantees and Sites, 2021-2025

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>	<i>2022-2023</i>	<i>2023-2024</i>	<i>2024-2025</i>
Overall				
Number of grants	62	65	71	85
Number of grantees ^a	24 (26)	24 (26)	23 (25)	28 (30)
Number of new grantees	0	0	2	6
Number of sites	250	254	250	266
Number of sites operating during the school year	250	242	228	230
Site counts by cohort				
K	78	77	51	
L	147	147	149	108
M		19	19	20
N			69	70
O				142
Grantees' fiduciary organizations				
Local school district	10	10	10	13
Intermediate school district	2	2	2	2
Nonprofit community-based organization	10	9	8	9
University	2	2	2	2
Nonprofit agency	1	1	1	2
Sites by grade level(s) served ^b				
Elementary school	134	135	138	148
Elementary and middle school	20	30	24	21
Middle school	48	42	46	53
Middle and high school	8	6	5	4
High school	40	40	36	40
Elementary, middle, and high school	0	1	1	0
^a Numbers in parentheses count individually the multiple subcontractors Grand Rapids Public Schools used as grantees.				
^b Elementary school is defined as grades K–5, middle school as 6–8, and high school as 9–12.				

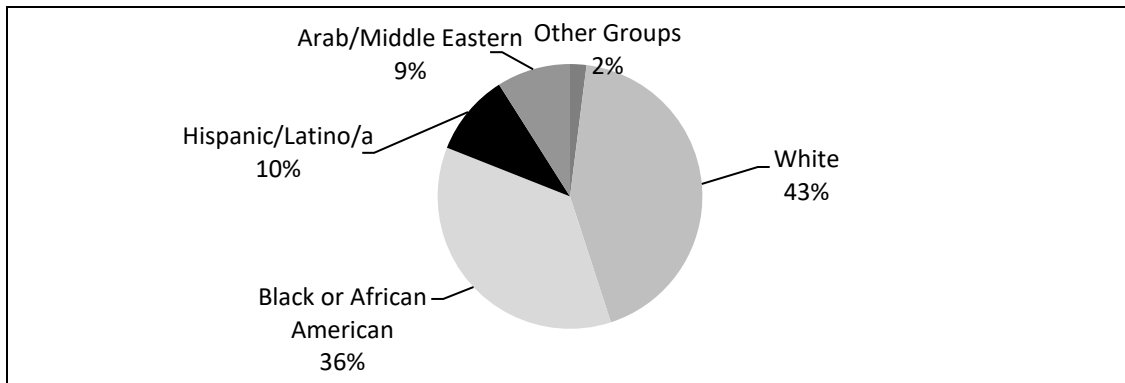
Staff

In Spring 2025, evaluators administered a survey to frontline program staff, not including project directors and supervisors. The survey covered staff demographics and program roles or identities.

Gender and Race/Ethnicity

On the staff survey, 81% of respondents identified as female. Staff responses to questions about race and ethnicity are summarized in Figure 1. Forty-three percent of staff identified as White and approximately one-third identified as Black or African American.

Figure 1. Staff Race/Ethnicity

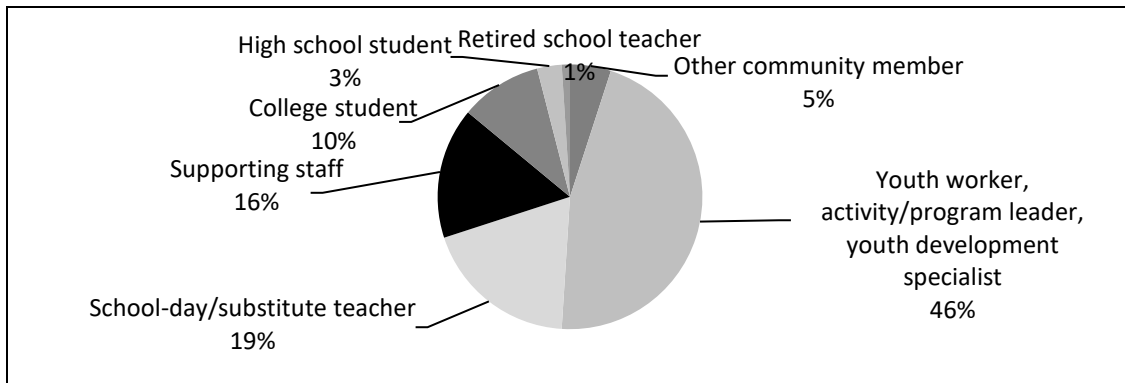


NOTE. Staff N = 828.

Staff Roles and Identities

According to the survey results, 20% (n=165) of staff members were certified teachers, and 16% reported working as a day-school teacher at the time of reporting. When asked which role they most identified with in the program and community, the largest single category was youth worker, activity/program leader, or youth development specialist (46%). This was followed by school teacher (19%) and supporting staff (16%; e.g., librarian, counselor, paraprofessional, and others). Smaller groups included college students (10%), community members (5%), high school students (3%), and retired teachers (1%) (See Figure 2 for details).

Figure 2. Staff Roles and Identities



NOTE. Staff N = 828.

Students

Gender, Grade Level, and Family Income

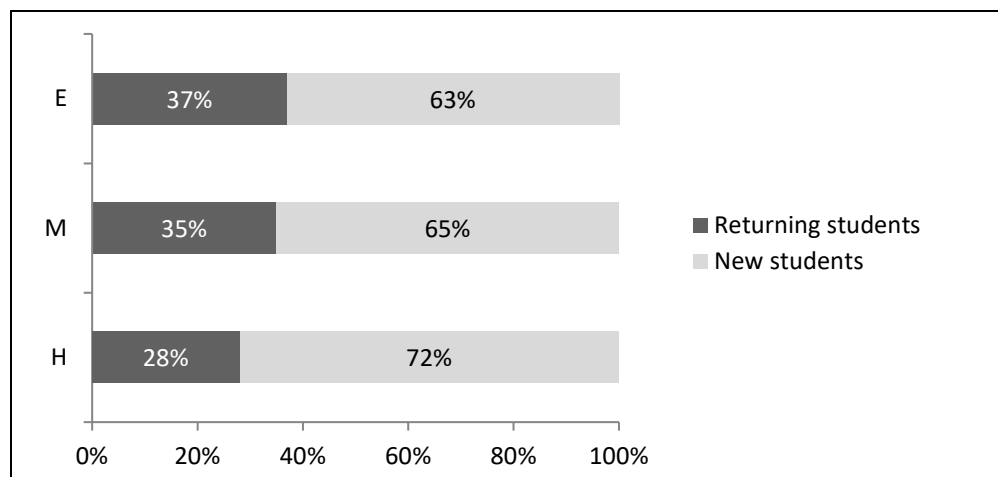
In the 2024-2025 program year, 17,220 students enrolled in the program—a 3% increase (N=564) from last year. Slightly more female students (51%, N=8,852) attended the program than male students. Most were elementary students in grades K–5 (9,474, 55%); middle school (3,830; 22%) and high school (3,906; 23%) students made up nearly identical portions of the total population. Most students (74%) participated across the school year and in summer; 26% participated only in the summer, 8% only in the fall, and 13% only in the spring semester.

Thanks to an established partnership with the evaluators at Michigan State University (MSU), the Michigan Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) provided 21st CCLC student demographic, school attendance, and outcome data, decreasing the amount of data evaluators had to request from sites. Between CEPI and site submissions, data were available for almost all program participants (96%) regarding their free or reduced-price lunch status. The data showed that 83% of students received free or reduced-price meals. In other words, Michigan 21st CCLC programs served primarily economically disadvantaged students.

New vs. Returning Students

Participants could be either newly enrolled in this program year or returning from the previous year. Research shows that sustained participation in out-of-school programming over multiple years can lead to greater benefits.² However, students' ability to attend across years can be limited as they move away or progress to higher grades and different schools. Figure 3 shows the proportions of students at each grade level who were new in 2024-2025 and who were returning from the previous year. In 2024-2025, the proportion of repeating students was 37% for elementary grades, 35% for middle school, and 28% for high school.

Figure 3. New and Returning Students by Level



NOTE. E = Elementary school (N = 9,474); M = Middle school (N = 3,830); H = High school (N = 3,906)

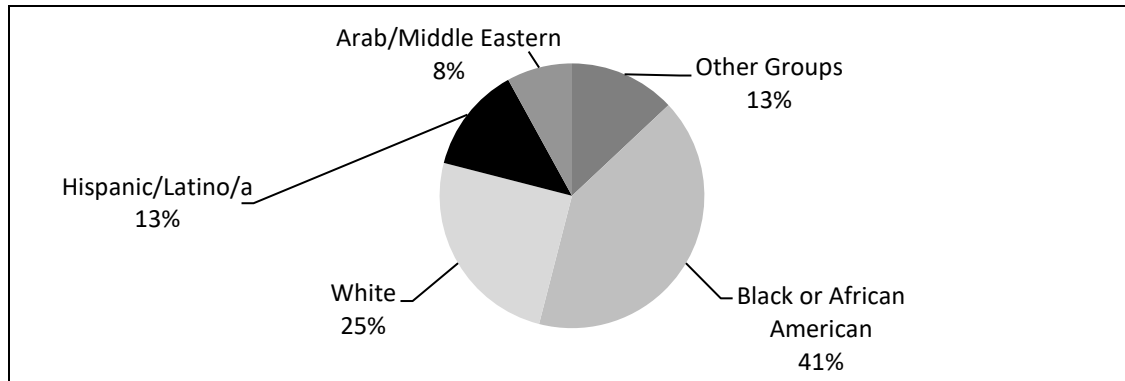
Race/Ethnicity

Figure 4 shows the distribution of participants according to race/ethnicity. The largest proportion of students, 41%, were identified as Black or African American; 25% were identified as White, 13% as Hispanic or Latino/a, and 8% as Arab or Middle Eastern. Thirteen percent were identified as belonging to another racial/ethnic group, or the information was not reported. Michigan 21st CCLC

² Vandell, D. L. Reisner, E. R., & Pierce, K. M. (2007). *Outcomes linked to high-quality afterschool programs: Longitudinal findings from the study of promising afterschool programs*. University of California, Irvine.

programs served predominantly students from minoritized racial/ethnic groups, in proportions that have remained stable over the past few years.

Figure 4. Student Race/Ethnicity



NOTE. N = 17,220.

Sustaining Participation of Students with Low Academic Performance

Students with low academic performance are likely to benefit more than higher-performing students from the academic support offered by 21st CCLC programs because they have more room for improvement. The additional instruction and enrichment opportunities may help them catch up with their peers.

The federal reporting requirements for 21st CCLC programs changed significantly as of the 2021–2022 program year. Since that year, grantees have been required to report on school subject grades for participants in grades 7, 8, and 10–12 and on standardized test scores for students in grades 4–8. The relevant metric for 21st CCLC programs is the percentage of students who improve their grades or test scores from one year to the next.

For reporting purposes, the state evaluation team defines low academic performance as (1) having an average or single grade in English language arts (ELA) or math of 2.5 or below on a 4-point scale, (2) having a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or below on a 4-point scale, or (3) scoring below the proficient level in ELA or math on the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) or the PSAT 8/9 from the College Board. Using these definitions, about 81% of the program participants whose school outcomes data were available were classified as academically low-performing students.

The evaluation team typically uses the previous year's data to determine academically at-risk status and compares those data with the current year's data to monitor growth. As in previous years, school grades were submitted by program sites or grantees. Standardized test scores were made available through a data sharing agreement between MSU and CEPI. Table 2 and Table 3 summarize how grades and test scores are used to determine academically at-risk status. Table 4 outlines how the evaluation team converts letter grades or number grades to a 4-point GPA.

Table 2. School Subject Grade Data Used for Federal Reporting

<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>Subjects</i>	<i>Data Source</i>	<i>Criteria for Academically At-risk Status</i>
7, 8	ELA, Math	Site or grantee reports	1. Average of ELA and math grades from last year is 2.5 or less <i>OR, if 1 is not available:</i> 2. Either ELA or math grade from last year is 2.5 or less <i>OR, if 1 and 2 are not available:</i> 3. Average of ELA and math grades from this year is 2.5 or less <i>OR, if 1, 2, and 3 are not available:</i> 4. Either ELA or math grade from this year is 2.5 or less
10, 11, 12	GPA in all subjects	Site or grantee reports	1. GPA from last year is 2.5 or less <i>OR, if 1 is not available:</i> 2. GPA from this year is 2.5 or less

Table 3. School Standardized Test Data Used for Federal Reporting

<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>Standardized Test</i>	<i>Data Source</i>	<i>Criteria for Academically At-risk Status</i>
4, 5, 6, 7	M-STEP ELA, Math	CEPI	Not proficient or partially proficient (proficiency level 1 or 2) this year
8	PSAT ELA, Math	CEPI	Not proficient or partially proficient (proficiency level 1 or 2) this year

Table 4. School Subject Grade Conversion Table

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Number Grade 0–100</i>	<i>Grade Point</i>
A	90 or above	4
A– or B+	85–89	3.5
B	80–84	3
B– or C+	75–79	2.5
C	70–74	2
C– or D+	65–69	1.5
D	60–64	1
D–	55–59	0.5
F	54 or below	0

What Activities Did Students Engage In?

The primary purpose of the 21st CCLC program is to provide opportunities for academic enrichment to students attending low-performing schools. To enhance the academic component of the program, grantees must also offer enrichment activities in various areas such as STEM, social-emotional learning, arts, and recreation.

The federal reporting guidelines focus on hours of participation, in categories ranging from less than 15 hours to 270 hours or more, as detailed in Table 5, along with justification for data collection and research linkage.

Table 5. Federal Reporting Guidelines on Participation Hours

<i>Hours</i>	<i>Justification for Data Collection</i>	<i>Equivalent Days</i>
Less than 15	Will help capture short, intensive programs like credit recovery	Less than 5
15–44	Captures students who were “not regular students” under previous guidelines	5–14
45–89	Captures range of regular students towards research-based dosage band*	15–29
90–179	Captures range of regular students at and above research-based dosage band*	30–59
180–269	Captures students who attend beyond research-based dosage band*	60–89
270 or more	Captures students who attend majority of year	More than 90

Academics

Participation in Academic Activities

All Michigan 21st CCLC programs were required to offer academic activities. Table 6 presents the students who attended the program for at least five hours and participated in each type of academic activity for at least five hours.

The data show that sites offered a wide variety of academic activities and that almost all students (94%) participated in at least one academic activity for more than five hours. Project-based enrichment or lessons were most prevalent among elementary and middle school students, followed by homework help. Notably, 44% of high school participants attended credit recovery sessions, suggesting strong demand for this type of support. STEM activities drew many participants, particularly among younger students.

Table 6. Percentage of Students Who Participated in Each Type of Academic Activity

<i>Type of Academic Activity</i>	<i>Percent of Students Who Participated</i>			
	<i>E</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>All</i>
Academic (Traditional)				
Homework help/tutoring ①	70%	67%	58%	66%
Credit recovery ①			44%	41%
Academic (Enrichment)				
Project-based enrichment and lessons	85%	73%	45%	74%
- ELA ①	59%	53%	39%	55%
- Science ①	52%	44%	22%	46%
- Technology (computer programs, video, media) ①	23%	27%	15%	22%
- Engineering ①	41%	36%	18%	36%
- Math ①	57%	42%	33%	50%
Did not participate in any academic activities	6%	5%	9%	6%
NOTE. E = Elementary school students (N = 9,240); M = Middle school students (N = 3,720); H = High school students (N = 3,579). Students are counted as having participated in an activity type if they attended sessions for at least 5 hours. Percentages are calculated including only sites that offered the activity type for at least 5 hours. ① = leading indicator				

Student Perceptions of Academic Support

Table 7 shows students' perceptions of the academic support provided by the afterschool program and how it affected their school performance. Students reported that their program gave them opportunities to learn school subjects in a fun way (84%). High school students, in particular, overwhelmingly agreed that

their programs helped them academically (87%). This positive assessment coincides with high school students' heavy utilization of credit recovery activities and suggests programs are providing essential academic support.

Table 7. Student Perceptions of Their Program's Academic Support

<i>Program Quality Statement</i>	<i>Percent of Students Who Agreed</i>			
	<i>E</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>All</i>
The activities here help me do better at school.	77%	78%	88%	80%
I learn school subjects in fun ways at this program.	85%	80%	87%	84%
I can use the things I do here during my school day.	79%	80%	87%	81%
NOTE. E = Elementary school students (grades 4 and 5 only, N = 1,595); M = Middle school students (N = 1,151); H = High school students (N = 764).				

Other Enrichment Activities

Program sites varied in the types of activities they offered to students in addition to academic activities. Table 8 shows the types of non-academic activities offered by grade level. The data show that recreation, sports, art, and youth development, as well as field trips and special events, were popular types of activities offered by programs. Almost all sites offered youth development programming, which includes activities such as social-emotional learning, life skills training, mentoring, financial literacy, and risk prevention interventions. Studies have found that these experiences can be important mediators of positive youth outcomes, especially for students from underserved communities.³ Art, sports, and field trips/special events were the second most prevalent activities offered, especially in elementary and middle school programs. Health and nutrition activities were the least commonly offered across all grade levels; however, about half of elementary and middle school programs still provided these opportunities.

³ Gottfredson, D. C., Gerstenblith, S., Soulé, D. A., Womer, S., & Lu, S. (2004). Do after school programs reduce delinquency? *Prevention Science*, 5, 253–266.

Table 8. Types of Non-Academic Activities Offered by Sites

<i>Activity Type</i>	<i>Percent of Sites Offering Activity Type</i>			
	<i>E</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>All</i>
Recreation (social time, games, free play, etc.)	68%	76%	63%	67%
Sports	95%	98%	63%	91%
Art	93%	93%	83%	92%
Youth development (social-emotional learning, life skills, conflict resolution, resistance skills, etc.)	99%	98%	98%	99%
Health/nutrition	53%	59%	38%	52%
Field trip or special event	93%	89%	78%	89%
NOTE. E = Elementary school sites (N = 148 sites); M = Middle school sites (N = 53 sites); H = High school sites (N = 40 sites). All = 266 sites. Sites serving more than one grade level, such as K–8, were omitted from the grade-level categories but included in the All category.				

Table 9 shows the percentage of students who attended the program for at least five hours in each type of enrichment activity. High school students had the lowest participation rates in all categories. Participation patterns were similar between elementary and middle school students: at least 80% attended youth development activities, at least 70% participated in sports, and more than half took part in art activities or attended a field trip or special event. A little more than one-third of elementary students participated in health and nutrition activities, compared to slightly less than one-third of middle and high school students.

Table 9. Percentage of Students Who Participated in Each Type of Enrichment Activity

<i>Type of Activity</i>	<i>Percent of Students Who Participated</i>			
	<i>E</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>All</i>
Recreation (social events, games, free play, etc.)	42%	43%	17%	37%
Sports ①	77%	71%	30%	67%
Art ①	65%	54%	24%	54%
Youth development ① (social-emotional learning, life skills, conflict resolution, resistance skills, etc.)	86%	82%	59%	80%
Health/nutrition	37%	29%	29%	33%
Field trip or special event ①	58%	53%	36%	52%
NOTE. E = Elementary school students (N = 9,240); M = Middle school students (N = 3,720); H = High school students (N = 3,579). Students are counted as having participated in an activity if they attended that type of activity for at least 5 hours. Percentages are calculated including only sites that offered the activity type for at least 5 hours. ① = leading indicator.				

Staff Priorities for Programming

Staff members' priorities for the program are important because they indicate where staff are most likely to focus their efforts. When asked to identify their top two priorities, 58% of surveyed staff selected "Keep youth in a safe environment that allows them to relax, play, and socialize," and 46% selected "Improve the academic achievement of all youth," as shown in Table 10. More than one-third (38%) chose "Improve the social and emotional development of youth." The least commonly selected priorities were "Provide opportunities for youth to learn STEM or other academic subjects in a fun way" and "Help youth keep up with homework," both at 12%. Overall, these findings suggest that staff recognize Michigan's 21st CCLC programs as more than an extended school day for homework completion and underscore the importance of providing youth with access to a safe and enriching environment.

Table 10. Staff Program Priorities

<i>Program Area</i>	<i>Percent of Staff Choosing This Area as 1st or 2nd Priority</i>
Keep youth in a safe environment that allows them to relax, play, and socialize	58%
Improve the academic achievement of all youth ①	46%
Improve the social and emotional development of youth	38%
Enable the lowest-performing students to achieve grade-level proficiency ①	21%
Engage youth in fun leisure activities otherwise unavailable to them (e.g., arts, music, fitness, sports, etc.)	13%
Provide opportunities for youth to learn STEM or other academic subjects in a fun way①	12%
Help youth keep up with homework	12%
NOTE. Staff N = 828. ① = leading indicator.	

Student Engagement in the Program

Participation in Decision-Making

To keep students involved, programs must offer them opportunities to make developmentally appropriate decisions about their activities.⁴

Table 11 shows that students generally reported strong opportunities for providing inputs, with 85% of students overall agreeing or strongly agreeing that adults asked what they thought about activities here (80% in elementary, 84% in middle, and 96% in high school). However, opportunities for students to actively shape their experience were more confined to older youth. For example, only 61% of elementary students said they got to choose their activities (compared to 71% in middle school and 87% in high school), and 64% of elementary students said they helped plan activities, projects, or events (70% in middle school and 86% in high school). Overall, the findings suggest that while youth input was widely encouraged across programs, meaningful decision-making and planning roles were much more common for older students than for younger ones.

Table 11. Opportunities for Youth Voice ①

<i>Survey Item</i>	<i>Percent of Students Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed</i>			
	<i>E</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>All</i>
I get to choose my activities here.	61%	71%	87%	70%
I get to help plan activities, projects, or events here.	64%	70%	86%	71%
Adults ask what we think about activities here.	80%	84%	96%	85%
NOTE. E = Elementary school students (grades 4–5 only, N = 1,595); M = Middle school students (N = 1,151); H = High school students (N = 764). ① = leading indicator.				

⁴ Akiva, T., Cortina, K. S., & Eccles, J. S. (2012). Youth experience of program involvement: Belonging and cognitive engagement in organized activities. *Applied Developmental Psychology, 34*, 208-218.

Developing Growth Mindsets

Skill building and mastery are gradual processes that occur when learners work toward goals and gain knowledge. Development of growth mindsets depends on an environment where students know that mistakes are allowed and that they are expected to try their best. Table 12 shows overwhelmingly positive and supportive experiences reported by students across grade levels, with especially strong responses from high school students. Nearly all high school youth agreed that it is okay to ask questions (98%) and make mistakes (96%) in their programs, and they also felt encouraged to be the best they could be (95%). Despite being the least frequently reported experiences, about 85% of elementary and middle school students still agreed that they got to do things they liked to do in the program and learned new skills.

Table 12. Developing Growth Mindsets ①

<i>Survey Item</i>	<i>Percent of Students Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed</i>			
	<i>E</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>All</i>
This program encourages me to be the best I can be.	88%	87%	95%	89%
At this program, it's ok to ask questions.	95%	93%	98%	95%
At this program, it's ok to make mistakes.	93%	92%	96%	93%
I get to do things I like to do here.	84%	86%	94%	87%
I learn new skills here.	85%	85%	94%	87%
NOTE. E = Elementary school students (grades 4–5 only, N = 1,595); M = Middle school students (N = 1,151); H = High school students (N = 764). ① = leading indicator.				

How Is the 21st CCLC Program Connected to the School Day?

To improve students' school-day performance, 21st CCLC programs must be formally connected to school-day classes. Table 13 displays site coordinators' responses to a list of ways that afterschool programs can connect to the school day. A high proportion of site coordinators (more than 84%) reported that their program had frequent communication with schools and paid attention to grade-level content standards. In addition, 75% said school-day curricula were used as part of the program's academic activities, and 73% reported having access to students' grades and standardized test scores. The least reported school connection effort was 21st CCLC staff attending school-day teacher meetings: about 60% of site coordinators said their programs had a designated person attend teacher staff meetings at least monthly and report back to the program. Overall, these findings suggest a strong emphasis on aligning afterschool programming with school-day learning.

Table 13. School-Day Connections

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Percent of Site Coordinators Who Agreed</i>
You or someone from your program communicated regularly with school-day staff about individual students' academic progress and needs.	87%
The objectives for your program activities were intentionally influenced by grade-level content standards (or learning objectives).	84%
Any of the school-day curricula were used as part of the program's academic activities.	75%
Your program had access to review students' grades for each marking period and standardized test scores throughout the year (not only for end-of-year reporting).	73%
Someone from your program had a specific responsibility to attend teacher staff meetings at least monthly and report back to the program.	60%
NOTE. N = 209 site coordinators.	

What Other Factors Might Affect the Program?

The context in which 21st CCLC programs operate influences their chances of success. When changes occur, such as turnover among program or school administrators or program staff, programs can struggle to maintain a positive and consistent learning environment. Strategies for recruiting students and maintaining their participation also affect program effectiveness, as do the services of outside evaluators and professional developers.

Stability

Supervisor and Staff Stability ⓘ

Project directors. Among the 22 continuing grantees (excluding new grantees), only two had new project directors in 2024–2025, compared with six new project directors in 2023–2024.

Site coordinators. A high turnover rate among site coordinators persisted this year: 35% did not return for 2024–2025 (down from 44% last year), while 24% left during the program year (up from 19% last year).

Site staff. Staff retention was tracked using the project director survey. Project directors reported that 52% of sites had a staff retention rate of 75% or higher, compared to 49% last year.

School-Related Changes

Changes in the host school can affect awareness of and support for the 21st CCLC program. As Table 14 shows, site coordinators reported changes in school staffing in 2024-2025: Thirteen percent reported that the host school had a new principal, and 8% reported that their program faced school budget cuts. Seven percent of site coordinators said the program moved to a new school or that their district superintendent was new, and 3% experienced school reorganization.

Table 14. School Changes That Affected Programs

<i>School Change</i>	<i>Percent of Site Coordinators Who Reported Change</i>
School-day administration changed ①	13%
Host school was faced with budget cuts that affected the program	8%
Program moved to a new school	7%
Superintendent changed or established	7%
School reorganized ①	3%
NOTE. N = 209 site coordinators. ① = leading indicator.	

Strategies for Recruitment and Sustained Participation

Intentionality in recruiting and sustaining youth participation plays a key role in programs' ability to serve targeted populations. Afterschool programs can enrich education, provide youth with unique opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with peers and adults, and strengthen their ties to schools and the community. Michigan 21st CCLC programs are encouraged to intentionally recruit and retain youth with challenges associated with school attendance, academic performance, behavior, poverty, and English language fluency.

Enrollment Approaches

In response to a survey question about enrollment approaches, 42% of site coordinators said their program used a "first come, first served," 27% cited a "formal enrollment policy with priority given to certain types of students" approach, and 25% had an informal policy (Table 15).

Whether or not they had a formal enrollment policy, most site coordinators reported that some categories of students were given priority in enrollment, as detailed in Table 16. The table also shows the percentages of site coordinators who said they had easy access to data on that student category. The most commonly selected priority groups were returning students (86%) and academically low-performing students identified by schools or families (82%). These were followed by students experiencing economic hardship (72%), English language learners (59%), students with special needs (55%), and students with behavioral issues as reported by families (49%) or schools (46%). Despite the potential for afterschool participation to strengthen school engagement, only about 45% of site coordinators

reported giving enrollment priority to chronically absent students, even though 71% indicated they had easy access to attendance data.

Table 15. Enrollment Approaches

<i>Enrollment Approach</i>	<i>Percent of Site Coordinators Who Reported Use of the Approach</i>
First come, first served	42%
Formal policy; priority given to certain students	27%
Informal policy	25%
No policy	6%
NOTE. N = 209 site coordinators.	

Table 16. Enrollment Priorities

<i>Enrollment Priority Category</i>	<i>Percent of Site Coordinators Who Reported That</i>	
	<i><u>Priority Was Given</u></i>	<i><u>Data Access Was Easy</u></i>
Prior program participants	86%	88%
Academically low performing students identified by the school-day staff	82%	76%
Family request due to academic issues	81%	73%
Students experiencing homelessness	72%	59%
Free/reduced-price meal students	69%	76%
English language learners	59%	72%
Special education students	55%	66%
Family request due to behavioral issues	49%	64%
Students with behavioral issues identified by the school-day staff	46%	71%
Chronically absent students (missing 10% of school days)	45%	71%
NOTE. N = 209 site coordinators.		

Attendance Policy

According to site coordinators, about half of programs (52%) had an informal attendance policy, in which youth were expected to attend regularly. Forty percent had a formal attendance policy, such as requiring participants to attend a set number of days or hours each week or participate in specific program components. As shown in Table 17, about 8% had no attendance policy at all.

Table 17. Attendance Policies

<i>Attendance Policy</i>	<i>Percent of Site Coordinators</i>
An informal policy; youth were expected to attend regularly	52%
A formal policy; based on specific attendance requirements	40%
No policy	8%
NOTE. N = 209 site coordinators.	

Program Support and Improvement Infrastructure

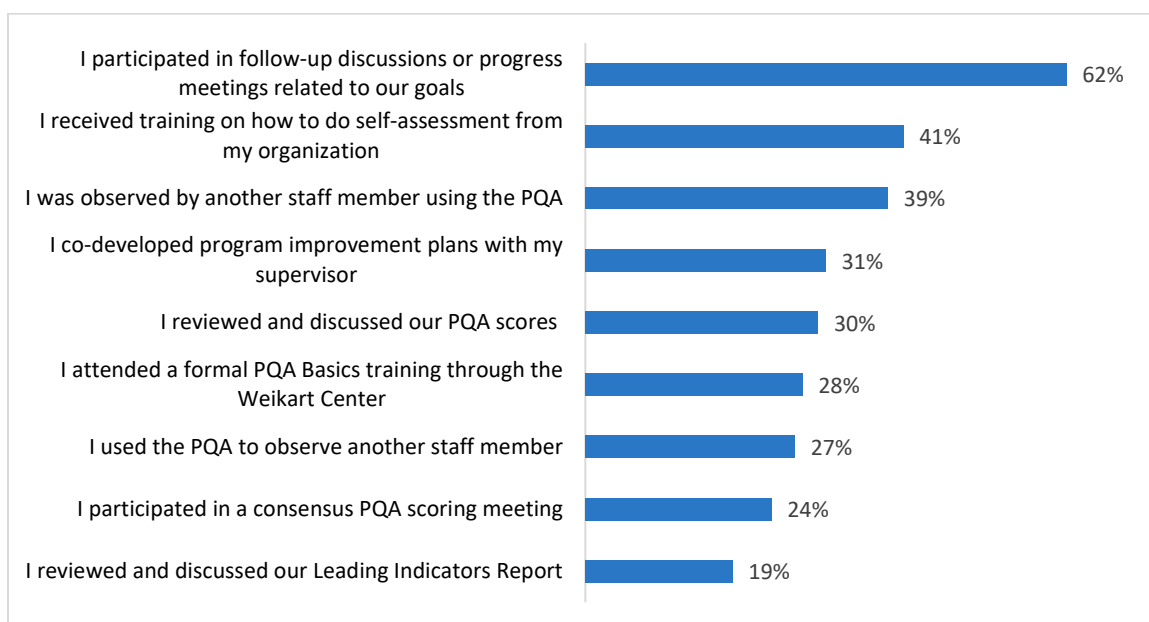
Resources provided to programs and staff are essential for high-quality implementation because they build staff capacity to deliver consistent, engaging, and developmentally appropriate programming. Access to professional development, coaching, and technical assistance helps staff strengthen instructional practices, respond to youth needs, and use data for continuous improvement. Additionally, the Michigan 21st CCLC program utilizes a low-stakes evaluation model to encourage local programs to use evaluation results for continuous improvement. These supports promote program consistency and sustainability by improving staff confidence, alignment with expectations, and overall program quality.

Staff Views on Resource Support

Most staff reported spending about 2 hours per week on program planning, and only 59% indicated they were paid for enough hours to prepare for the activities they led—suggesting a need for more intentional support to ensure adequate budgeted time for planning. On a positive note, 82% reported that new staff in their programs received sufficient support to do their job, indicating that most programs have systems in place to effectively orient new staff.

Additionally, staff reported participating in continuous quality improvement processes primarily through follow-up discussions or progress meetings related to program goals (62%), while far fewer participated in PQA-related activities (24%–39%), and only about a third reported having the opportunity to co-develop program improvement plans with a supervisor (31%). See Figure 5 for details.

Figure 5. Staff reported participating in continuous quality improvement process



Staff job satisfaction and supportive workplace relationships also play an important role in high-quality program implementation. Overall, 82% of staff reported being satisfied with their job, and 85% indicated positive levels of coworker trust, support, and psychological safety. In addition, most staff shared that supervisors were visible during activities (80%) and provided feedback (74%) at least weekly. Finally, 84% of staff reported that meetings with supervisors were well organized, encouraged staff input and were able to reach agreement when needed. Taken together, these findings suggest that 21st CCLC staff generally experienced a positive and supportive work environment.

The Usefulness of State Evaluation Data

The state evaluation team provides year-round support on data collection, reporting, and monitoring. All project directors (100%) and most site coordinators (86%) reported that evaluation was important to their program decision-making. Table 18 indicates how project directors and site coordinators perceived the usefulness of each kind of data. This year, project directors rated several resources as highly useful, including the Leading Indicators Report, Data Tables, Compliance Snapshot Report, EZReports data, and school outcomes data; each received usefulness ratings above 96%. Site coordinators identified EZReports data and Program Quality Assessment data as the most useful

resources, with 91% reporting they were ‘somewhat’ or ‘very’ useful. Activity coding and the teacher survey were rated as the least useful resources by both project directors (77%–79%) and site coordinators (71%).

Table 18. Usefulness of State Evaluation Data

<i>Data Type</i>	<i>Percent Reporting “Somewhat Useful” or “Very Useful”</i>	
	<i>Project Directors</i>	<i>Site Coordinators</i>
Leading indicators report	100%	83%
Data tables	100%	84%
Compliance snapshot report	96%	NA*
EZReports data	96%	91%
School outcomes data	96%	81%
Program Quality Assessment data	93%	91%
Staff survey	85%	85%
Youth survey	82%	80%
Activity coding	79%	71%
Teacher survey	77%	71%
NOTE: Project directors N = 27, site coordinators N = 209.		
*The Compliance Snapshot Reports were provided only to project directors.		

The Helpfulness of Local Evaluators

Table 19 shows how project directors and site coordinators responded to statements about the involvement of local evaluators in their programs. Local evaluators most commonly assisted with program improvement efforts, collecting additional feedback, and helping programs meet grant reporting requirements. Site coordinators also reported that local evaluators were involved somewhat or a great deal in the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) processes. In contrast, project directors worked with local evaluators more frequently to obtain school outcomes data for submission to MSU and to interpret reports provided by MSU.

Table 19. Involvement of Local Evaluators in Each Area

<i>Local evaluators...</i>	<i>Reported by Project Directors</i>			<i>Reported by Site Coordinators</i>		
	<i>Some/A lot</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Some/A lot</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Worked with us on program improvement	85%	15%	0%	77%	22%	1%
Collected additional feedback (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups)	85%	15%	0%	77%	21%	2%
Helped us meet the grant reporting requirements	85%	8%	7%	76%	23%	1%
Obtained school outcomes information to submit to MSU	74%	15%	11%	63%	33%	4%
Interpreted reports provided by MSU	71%	22%	7%	62%	34%	4%
Participated in the Program Quality Assessment process	63%	33%	4%	70%	28%	2%
Visited our sites	63%	30%	7%	64%	34%	2%
Worked with us on funding and stability	48%	45%	7%	36%	59%	5%
Used data to create professional development plans	45%	44%	11%	63%	35%	2%
NOTE: Project directors N= 27; site coordinators N= 128.						

The Usefulness of Professional Development and Technical Assistance Services

Technical assistance and professional development services were provided by The Forum for Youth Investment Center for Youth Program Quality, formerly known as the Weikart Center. The major goals of the works are to promote a culture of continuous improvement and to assist grantees with program improvement processes. Because most services were provided at the grantee level, project directors were asked to evaluate the usefulness of the center's professional development and technical assistance services across their major activities, as shown in Table 20. Results showed that in-person coaching was seen as the most useful (88% "somewhat/very useful"), followed by online training (80%) and peer mentoring & networking (75%). Regional training (68%) and virtual coaching (63%) were less frequently rated as useful, though still by a majority of project directors (N = 27).

Table 20. Usefulness of Professional Development and Technical Assistance Services

<i>Service Area</i>	<i>Percent of Project Directors Who Reported "Somewhat Useful" or "Very Useful "</i>
In-person coaching	88%
Online training	80%
Peer mentoring & networking	75%
Regional training	68%
Virtual coaching	63%
NOTE. N = 27 project directors.	

In addition, project directors were asked to choose the administrative skills they would like to improve next year. As Table 21 indicates, the most commonly selected areas were coaching staff on instructional quality (78%) and creating professional development plans based on data (56%), reflecting project directors' desire to strengthen program quality and improve programming. Other frequently selected topics included recruiting and retaining youth (48%), building youth governance or a youth advisory council (44%), and incorporating the Program Quality Assessment into standard organizational operations (44%).

Table 21. Administrative Skills Project Directors Want to Develop Next Year

<i>Administrative Skill for Development</i>	<i>Percent of Project Directors</i>
Coaching staff on instructional quality	78%
Creating professional development plans based on data	56%
Recruiting and retaining youth	48%
Building youth governance or a youth advisory council	44%
Incorporating the Program Quality Assessment into standard organizational operations	44%
Social-emotional learning for managers	41%
Connections to school-day curriculum and content	41%
Staff evaluations	41%
Communication with and among staff	41%
Staff recruitment and retention	33%
Connections to school personnel	22%
Connections to families	22%
Partnerships with community, stakeholders, etc.	19%
NOTE. N= 27 project directors.	

Did Students' School Performance Change?

Following the 2021 federal reporting guidelines, this section reports on the outcomes of students in Michigan 21st CCLC programs in the following academic and social-emotional categories:

- Grades: Percentage of students in grades 7, 8, and 10–12 showing GPA improvement of at least 0.5 on a 4-point scale (e.g., 2.5 to 3.0) from 2023-2024 to 2024-2025
- Standardized test scores: Percentage of students in grades 3–7 who showed improvement on the M-STEP in ELA and math; percentage of students in grade 8 who showed improvement on the PSAT in ELA and math
- Schoolwork completion, teacher survey: Percentage of students in grades 1–8 whose teachers reported any improvement in schoolwork completion
- Classroom behavior, teacher survey: Percentage of students in grades 1–8 whose teachers reported any improvement in student classroom behavior
- Social-emotional development, teacher survey: Percentage of students in grades 1–8 whose teachers reported any improvement in student social-emotional development
- Social-emotional development, student surveys: Percentage of students in grades 4–12 who reported that their program helped them develop social-emotional competencies

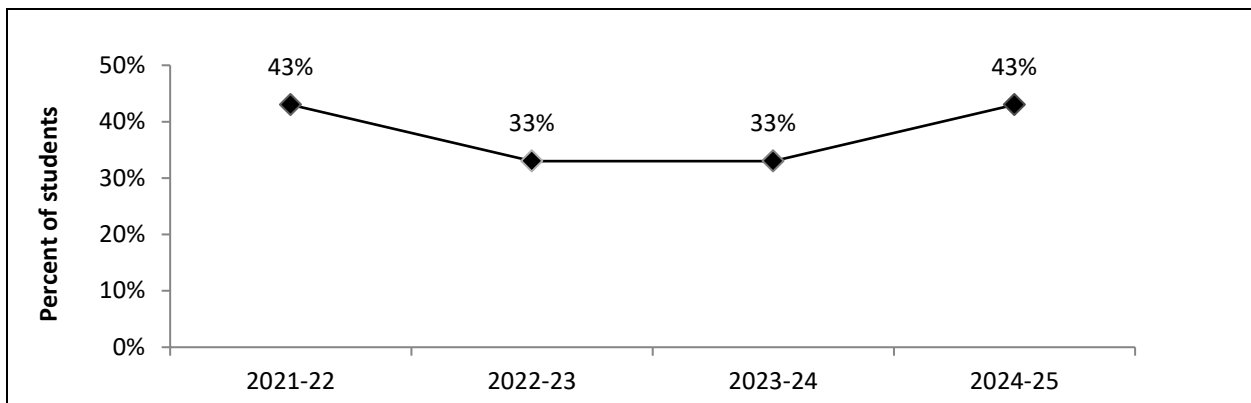
Data for this section were collected from the EZReports program reporting system, Excel files through which sites provided school grades from school records, student surveys and teacher surveys collected by 21st CCLC program staff, and CEPI.

Academic Outcome Measures

Grades

Figure 6 shows that 43% of attendees who were identified as having room for improvement (defined as a GPA below 3.0) improved their GPA by at least one-half point in 2024-2025. The percentage of students demonstrating grade improvement rose from 33% in 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 to 43% in 2024–2025.

Figure 6. Attendees With Room for Improvement Whose Grades Improved from the Previous Year

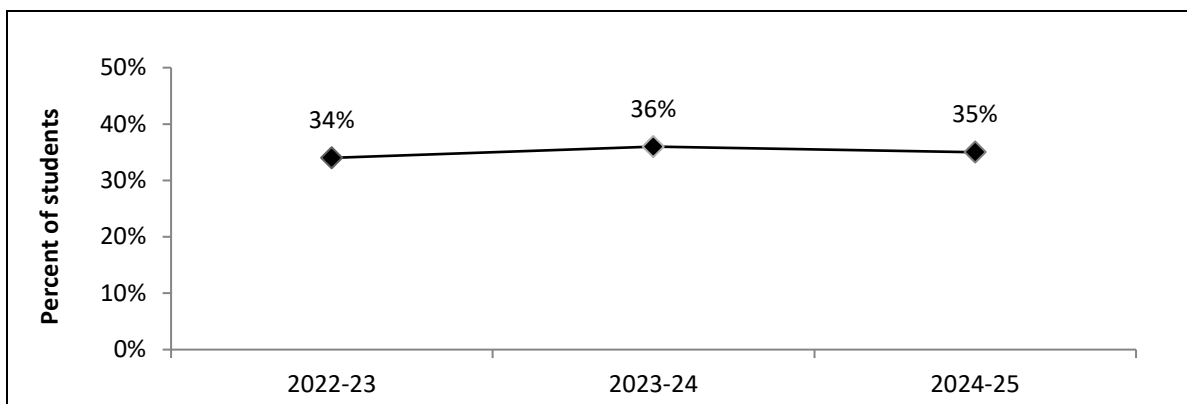


NOTE. Improvement is defined as 0.5 grade increase (on a 4-point scale) from 2021-2022 to 2024-2025. N = 2,826 students in grades 7, 8, and 10–12 for whom grades data were available and whose average GPA was below 3.0.

Standardized Test Scores

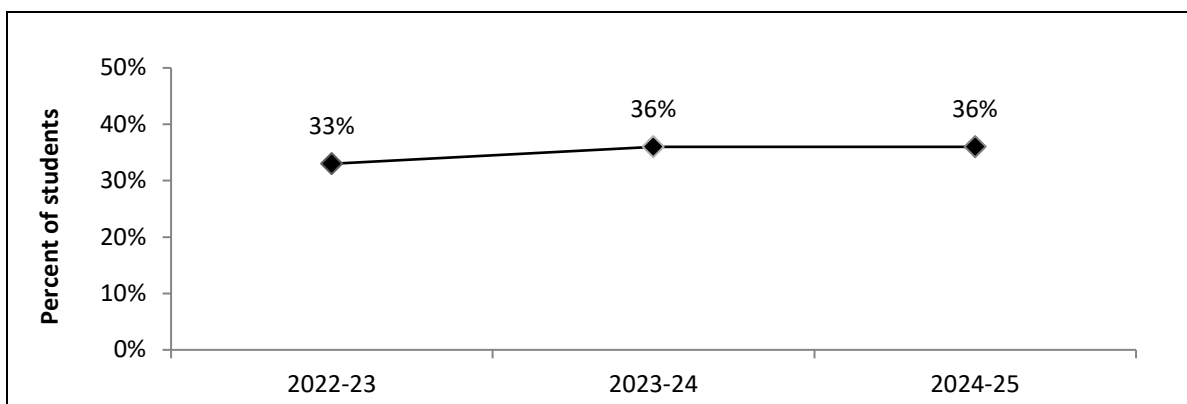
M-STEP scores were available for approximately 6,000 21st CCLC participants in grades 4–7. Just over one-third of these students showed “improvement” or “significant improvement,” results similar to those in previous years (Figure 7 and Figure 8). Note that Michigan used the “Student Growth Percentile” to define improvement in MSTEP, which was to compare a student’s’ growth against another student who performed similarly in the previous year instead of the student’s own growth. On the PSAT (Figure 9 and Figure 10), administered to eighth graders, 34% showed improvement in ELA and 37% in math.

Figure 7. Improved ELA M-STEP Scores for Students in Grades 4–7



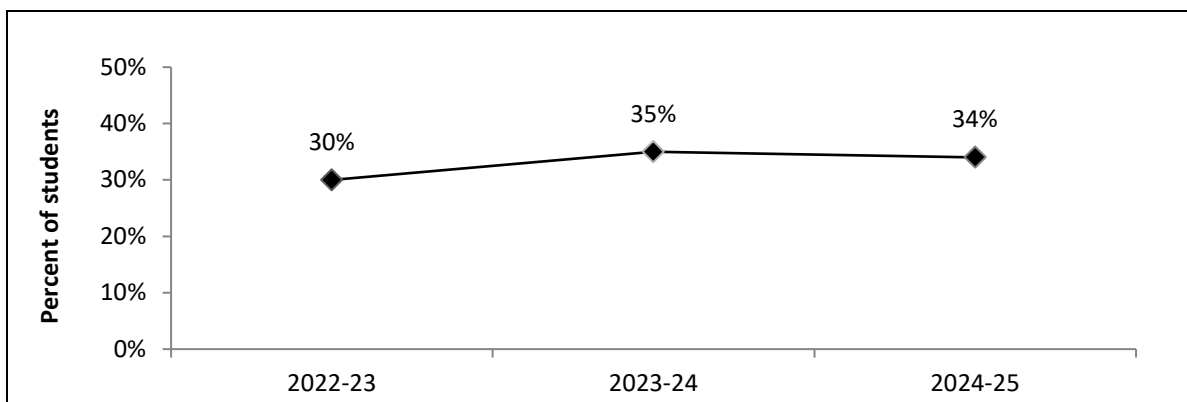
NOTE. 2024-2025 N = 5,959 students in grades 4-7 participated in ELA M-STEP.

Figure 8. Improved Math M-STEP Scores for Students in Grades 4–7



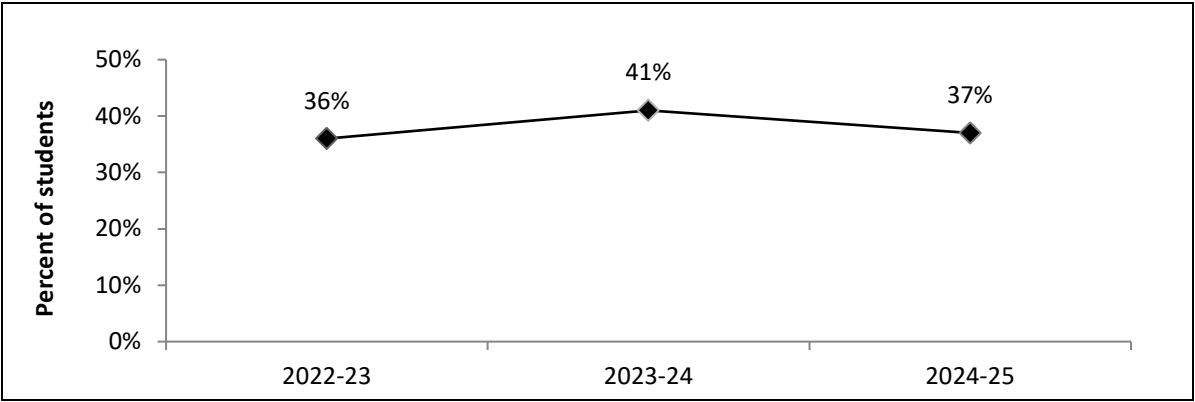
NOTE. 2024-2025 N = 6,035 students in grades 4-7 participated in Math M-STEP.

Figure 9. Improved ELA PSAT Scores for Students in Grade 8



NOTE. 2024-2025 N = 764 students in grade 8 participated in ELA PSAT.

Figure 10. Improved Math PSAT Scores for Students in Grade 8



NOTE. 2024-2025 N = 778 students in grade 8 participated in Math PSAT.

Teacher Ratings of Students

Each year, teachers rate participating students on the extent to which their performance changed during the year in homework completion, classroom behavior, and social-emotional development. Teachers rate each item based on the degree to which students' performance changed, with response options ranging from significantly improved to significantly declined, as well as unchanged and did not need to improve.

In 2024–25, the Michigan 21st CCLC teacher survey questions were revised to align with the newly developed teacher surveys pilot-tested by the 32n out-of-school time program, a Michigan state-funded OST program serving youth across the state. Table 22 summarizes the changes.

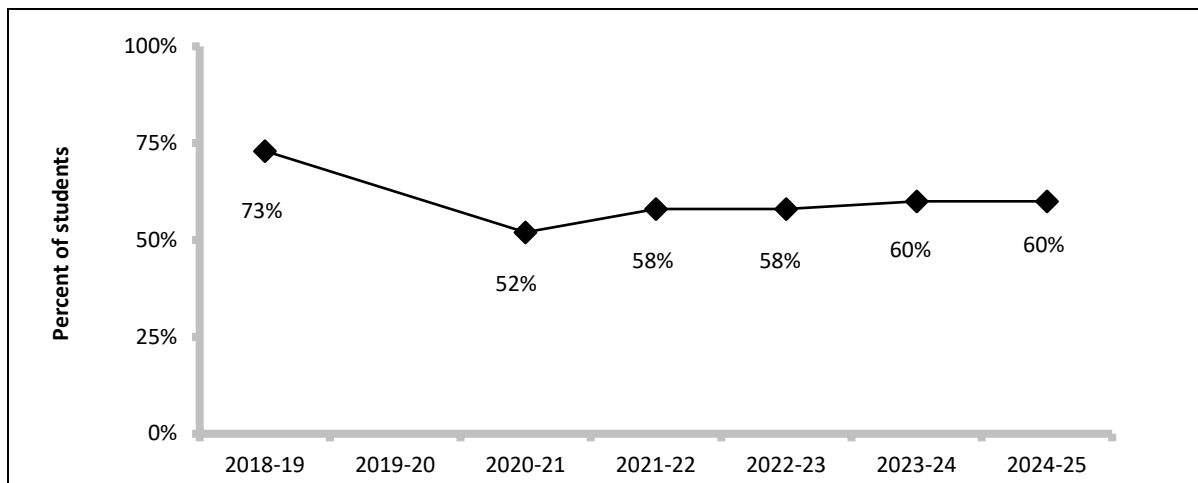
Table 22. Changes in Teacher Survey Items, 2023–24 to 2024–25

2023–24 Item	2024–25 Item	Domain	Note
Attends class/online activities regularly.	Attends school/class regularly.	Behavior	Minor wording change
Attentive and actively engaged in discussions, activities, and assignments (in-class or online).	Actively engaged in school-day activities.	Behavior	Minor wording change
Collaborates constructively with other students.		Behavior	Removed
Completes homework/assigned independent work on time and to your satisfaction.	Completes homework on time.	Schoolwork	Minor wording change
	Gets better grades.	Schoolwork	New item
Demonstrates self-regulation and persistence with challenging tasks.	Believes abilities can be improved through effort (item a).	Social-emotional development	Breaks into two items (a)
	Effectively regulates emotions (item b).	Social-emotional development	Breaks into two items (b)
Has healthy friendships.	Develops healthy friendships.	Social-emotional development	Minor wording change
	Willing to learn about others' perspectives.	Social-emotional development	New item
	Wants to be helpful to others.	Social-emotional development	New item
Looks for opportunities to grow.		Social-emotional development	Removed

Schoolwork Completion

The schoolwork completion measure includes behaviors such as turning in homework on time and getting better grades. Figure 11 shows the percentages of students in grades 1–8 who were rated by teachers as having room for improvement and who demonstrated improvement in schoolwork completion. Note that, in addition to minor wording changes to existing items, this year’s scale included a new item, “gets better grades.” Over the past seven years, the percentage of Michigan 21st CCLC participants who improved in schoolwork completion was 73% in the year prior to COVID-19, dropped sharply to 52% in 2020–2021, and gradually recovered to 60% by 2024–2025.

Figure 11. Improvement in Teacher-Reported Schoolwork Completion, 2018-2025



NOTE. 2024-2025 N = 4,913 students in grades 1–8 whose teachers indicated need for improvement. Data were not collected in 2019–2020.

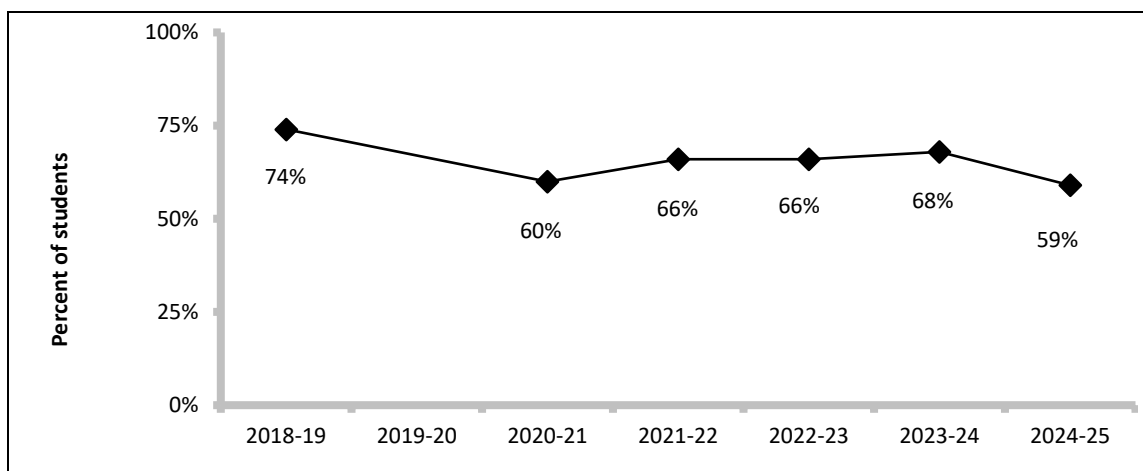
School Behavior

The school behavior measure includes two items (instead of three from the year prior) that teachers used to rate changes: “Attends school/class regularly” and “Actively engaged in school-day activities.” The item “Collaborates constructively with other students” was removed from this measure beginning in 2024-25. The analysis includes only students in grades 1–8 whose teachers indicated they had room for improvement. As shown in Figure 12, teacher-reported improvement in school behavior was 74% in 2018–19, declined to 60% in 2020–21 – the first post-COVID measure available, and then remained relatively stable between 66%

and 68% from 2021–22 through 2023–24. In 2024–25, the improvement rate dropped significantly to 59%.

While teacher-reported improvements in school-day behavior remained relatively stable in recent years, the decline in 2024–2025 warrants further investigation to better understand what may have contributed to this shift. Additional exploration is also needed to determine whether this trend reflects an increased need for behavioral and social-emotional supports among youth—potentially placing greater demand on 21st CCLC staff.

Figure 12. Improvement in Teacher-Reported School behavior, 2018-2025



NOTE. 2024-2025 N = 4,655 students in grades 1–8 whose teachers indicated need for improvement. Data were not collected in 2019–2020.

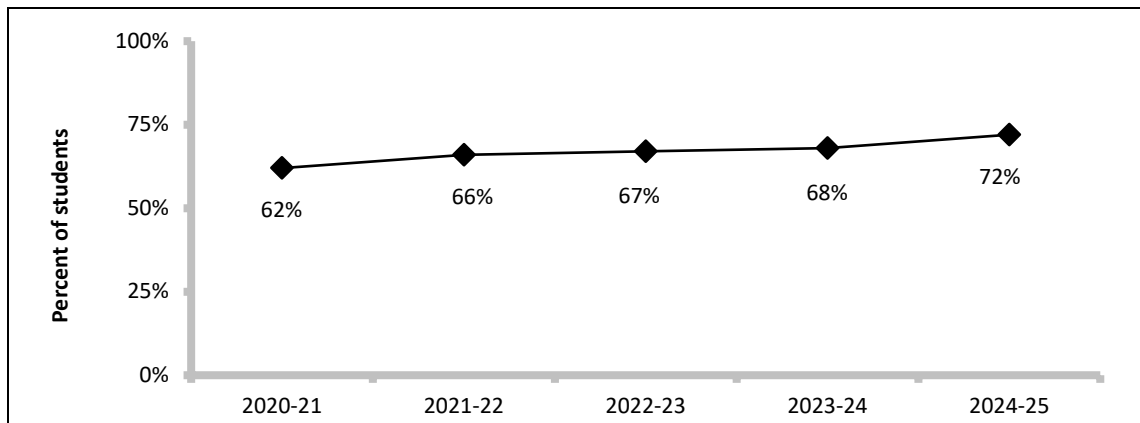
Social-Emotional Development

The social-emotional development measure was modified in 2024-25. Specifically:

- The original item “Demonstrates self-regulation and persistence with challenging tasks” was split into two separate items to better capture distinct skills:
 - (a) *Believes abilities can be improved through effort and*
 - (b) *Effectively regulates emotions.*
- The item “Has healthy friendships” was retained with a minor wording update to “*Develops healthy friendships.*”
- Two new items were added to strengthen measurement of relationship-building and empathy:
 - Willing to learn about others’ perspectives and*
 - Wants to be helpful to others.*
- The item “Looks for opportunities to grow” was removed from the measure.

Data summarized in Figure 13 showed that the percentage of students in need of improvement who demonstrated social-emotional growth increased from 68% last year to 72% this year. However, because the measure was revised, it is unclear to what extent this increase reflects true increase in social-emotional outcomes versus differences in how growth was assessed. Results should therefore be interpreted with caution. That said, because three of the five items were carried forward from the prior measure in some form, the upward trend likely reflects at least some meaningful improvement—or, at minimum, suggests that students’ social-emotional growth did not decline this year.

Figure 13. Improvement in Teacher-Reported Social-Emotional Development, 2020–2025



NOTE. 2024-2025 N = 4,630 students in grades 1–8 whose teachers indicated need for improvement.

Student Perceptions of Program Impact on Social-Emotional Outcomes

The student survey asked whether programs helped students with the social-emotional learning outcomes listed in Table 23. Data shows that students perceived strong social-emotional benefits from the program, with large majorities agreeing that the program gave them opportunities to do something good for others (88%) and helped them learn how to get along with others (87%). Most students also agreed they learned to work with people they may not like (86%) and manage conflict without fighting (85%). The lowest-rated item was learning about their feelings, though a majority of students still agreed (70%).

Table 23. Student Perceptions of Program Impact on Social-Emotional Skills

<i>Social-Emotional Skill</i>	<i>Percent of Students Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed</i>
This program gave me the opportunity to do something good for others.	88%
At this program, we learn how to get along with others	87%
We learn here that you don't have to like someone in order to work with them.	86%
At this program, we learn how to deal with a conflict without fighting.	85%
At this program, we learn about my feelings.	70%
NOTE. N = 3,528 students in grades 4–12.	

Conclusion

The 2024–2025 Michigan Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program continued to serve large numbers of students who are economically disadvantaged, academically low-performing, and from minoritized racial/ethnic groups. Participation increased slightly compared to the prior year, and programs maintained a strong focus on providing both academic enrichment and meaningful non-academic experiences that support youth development.

Program data suggest that sites offered a broad range of academic supports, including strong participation in STEM-related activities and substantial use of credit recovery among high school students. Youth also reported positive experiences related to growth mindset development, indicating that programs are creating environments where students feel encouraged to learn, ask questions, and build skills.

In terms of outcomes, nearly half of academically low-performing students demonstrated improvement in grades, and standardized test score improvement remained consistent with recent years. Teacher-reported social-emotional growth increased compared to last year, though interpretation should be made cautiously due to changes in the measurement scale. At the same time, the decline in teacher-reported school behavior improvement in the most recent year highlights an important area for further investigation, particularly given the potential implications for staff capacity and youth behavioral support needs in afterschool settings.

Finally, staff reported strong workplace relationships, satisfaction, and supervisory support, and most indicated that new staff were adequately oriented. However, fewer staff reported having sufficient paid planning time, suggesting that improving structures and budgeting for preparation time remains an important opportunity for strengthening program quality and staff sustainability.

Recommendation

1. Strengthen supports for staff planning time and preparation

Although staff reported spending about two hours per week on program planning, only about 60% indicated they were paid for enough hours to prepare for activities. MiLEAP grantees, and sites should consider strategies to protect and budget for staff planning time (e.g., built-in weekly prep hours, shared planning templates, and clearer expectations for compensated preparation time).

2. Investigate the decline in teacher-reported school behavior improvement

Teacher-reported improvement in school behavior declined in 2024–2025 compared to recent years. Additional investigation is recommended to understand whether this change reflects differences in student needs, school-day conditions—and whether it signals increased demand for behavioral and social-emotional supports that program staff are expected to address.

3. Continue strengthening youth voice and choice, especially for elementary students

While youth reported strong opportunities to develop growth mindsets, choice and autonomy was less commonly offered to younger participants. Programs should continue expanding developmentally appropriate opportunities for elementary youth to make choices and contribute to activity planning, which may support engagement and sustained participation.

4. Support retention strategies for site coordinators and frontline staff

Leadership stability improved at the project director level, but turnover remains high among site coordinators and staff. Continued investment in recruitment, onboarding, coaching, and retention supports (including professional development and supportive supervision practices) may help reduce disruption and strengthen program consistency.

5. Maintain strong alignment with school-day learning while preserving enrichment balance

Most site coordinators reported frequent communication with schools and attention to grade-level standards, suggesting strong alignment with school-day learning. Programs should continue these practices while maintaining the enrichment experiences that youth participate in most (e.g., youth development, arts, and sports), which contribute to a well-rounded out-of-school time experience.

6. Use outcome data and youth/staff feedback to guide continuous improvement

State evaluation data, professional development and technical assistant support were widely viewed as useful, but staff participation in continuous improvement activities was more limited. Continued emphasis on data-informed reflection—paired with technical supports for site-level action planning—can help programs identify priorities, strengthen implementation, and respond to emerging youth needs.