THE EVALUATION OF TEXAS 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER PROJECTS

CASE STUDY REPORT

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Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

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INTRODUCTION

The 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) program is authorized under Title IV, Part B, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The purpose of 21st CCLCs is to provide expanded academic enrichment opportunities to help students meet local and state academic standards in core subject areas like reading and mathematics. Additionally, 21st CCLC programs often include tutoring; youth development activities; drug and violence prevention programs; technology education; art, music, and recreation courses; counseling; and character education. Finally, 21st CCLC programs offer parents and siblings of students served by the centers opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

In 2003, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) awarded 21st CCLC grants to the first cohort of 32 projects. Grantees served students who attend schools identified as in need of improvement under Title 1, Part A (Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs), and/or have high concentrations of economically disadvantaged students. These projects funded up to five centers that represented 136 afterschool programs in 215 participating elementary, middle, and high school campuses. The projects receive funding for 3 years and continuation funding may be available to eligible projects for another 2 years. To date, four cycles of grants have been awarded to a total of 590 community learning centers.

In 2006, TEA contracted the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) and its subcontractor Academic Information Management (AIM) to evaluate Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 cohorts of 21st CCLC grantees in their second year of implementation. The evaluation study was designed to provide qualitative data that would contribute to a larger quantitative study of the grant program being conducted by TEA. SEDL proposed to identify and profile promising 21st CCLC projects across Texas and to examine common characteristics across the afterschool programs they implemented. The study was designed to replicate a large-scale study conducted by the National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning (the National Partnership), which is led by SEDL, and commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE).

This report describes SEDL's evaluation approach to the grantee selection process and the methods used to develop case profiles of 12 21st CCLCs identified as promising. Data included interviews, surveys, and direct observations of the 12 projects. SEDL's National Partnership staff collected the data in the spring of 2006. SEDL's evaluation staff then completed all data analyses. The profiles describe each grantee's (a) organizational processes; (b) academic and enrichment practices; and (c) recruitment, retention, and community involvement strategies intended to sustain the afterschool program.

Cross-case analyses are reported in a companion report titled, *The Evaluation of Texas 21st Century Community Learning Center Projects: Common Features of Promising Afterschool Programs in Texas* (SEDL, 2006). The purpose of the cross-case analysis was to identify common programmatic practices across promising grantees that TEA can share with local education agencies and community-based organizations seeking to establish or improve their afterschool programs and practices.

Overview of Research on 21st Century Community Learning Center Projects

Afterschool programs have a long and varied history in American education, serving as venues for enrichment and social development, for arts-related activities, for safe havens to prolong the school day for busy parents, and for remedial and special help to underserved and at-risk populations (Fashola, 2002; Hollister, 2003). With the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the focus has turned to the potential of afterschool programs for supplementing and enhancing academic learning. The 21st CCLC program was established to play a key role in this paradigm shift.

Local 21st CCLCs are expected to provide expanded academic enrichment opportunities for children attending low-performing schools and to help students meet local and state academic standards in core content areas. In addition, 21st CCLC programs include other activities related to youth development, drug and violence prevention, technology, art, music, recreation, counseling, and character education.

Research into 21st CCLC programs has found considerable variation in structure, curriculum, and the extent to which they focus on academic content (Fashola, 2002; Hollister, 2003). Most offer some type of academic remediation, tutoring, or homework help, although many go no further than providing tutoring and homework support, often with staff who lack the qualifications to provide substantive assistance. Recent national evaluation studies found that while homework sessions and tutoring were common offerings, homework sessions engaged students the least, teachers overseeing the sessions did little teaching, and untrained or minimally trained volunteers were relied on as tutors (Dynarski, James-Burdumy, Moore, Rosenberg, Deke, & Mansfield, 2004; Fashola, 2002).

In contrast, research on teaching and learning emphasizes a need for actively engaging students and going deeper into subject matter through *coherence, challenge,* and *engagement* (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). These principles are echoed in nationally developed standards and recommendations regarding specific content areas. Standards and related reports by the National Research Council (1994, 2001) and the National Council on Teachers of Mathematics (1989, 1991, 1998) have repeatedly emphasized that science and mathematics are active disciplines, oriented to sense-making and problem-solving, not merely to isolated facts or, on the other end of the spectrum, to hands-on activities for activities' sake. National standards and recommendations for reading and language arts similarly emphasize embedding specific skills in meaningful content (International Reading Association, 1996; National Research Council, 1997).

Afterschool programs that have a strong central educational component, such as effective homework help or academic enrichment activities, have been found to be predictive of academic success as measured by absenteeism, school dropout rates, homework completion, and school grades (Simpkins, 2003). Funded 21st CCLC programs are required to provide opportunities, including subject-area tutorial services (e.g., homework help, tutoring), non-tutorial academic activities (e.g., academic enrichment activities such as project-based learning, situating learning in real-life experiences), and non-academic enrichment activities (e.g., recreation, arts activities). Research indicates that non-tutorial academic activities and non-academic enrichment activities can enhance student learning in core subject areas through addressing core developmental needs of children and youth for "affiliation, identity, and mastery" (Vandell, Reisner, Brown, Pierce,

Dadisman, & Pechman, 2004. Examples of enrichment activities that research indicates as producing positive impacts include blending recreation and academic activities in projects, project-based learning, and youth leadership and civic engagement activities that allow for youth decision making and input guided by adults (Vandell et al., 2004).

Miller (2003) states that successful afterschool programs have activities that enable students to gain knowledge and to practice knowledge learned in school, as well as opportunities to reflect, make decisions, and solve problems. The U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice (2000) found that students need the opportunity to practice and develop their literacy skills through intelligent discussions with adults, storytelling, reading, listening, games, and other activities. They believe that quality programs provide chances for students to follow their own and/or explore new interests or curiosities and to learn how to use different intelligences such as bodily-kinesthetic or visual. They state that afterschool programs can provide the types of structured and enriched learning opportunities that can help improve students' academic performance as well as their social, emotional, and physical development needs.

The literature on afterschool programs supports an academic connection between what students learn in school and what they learn in the afterschool program. According to the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (2003), for increases in student achievement to occur, there must be a strong connection between the learning objectives of the day and afterschool programs. This continuity of learning between the school and afterschool program is supported theoretically in the work of Noam, Biancarosa, and Dechausay (2002). These researchers posit that the "bridging" of school and afterschool programs helps promote more meaningful academic learning. They have found that congruity of environments, including congruity of learning goals and teaching styles, is associated with increased academic performance in literacy and other areas. Although they do not make a judgment as to which type of bridging is most effective, the type of bridging that likely affects academic collaboration most directly is curricular bridging. This type of bridging tries to align the school curricula and the afterschool program. The effectiveness of this method on students depends on articulation of goals, development of curricula, and student engagement. The researchers recommend that program staff attempt curricular bridging by communicating with teachers about homework and through tutoring. Miller (2003) suggests that it is possible for students to "increase [their] sense of themselves as learners" and to "transfer positive experiences in a school-based program to more positive feelings about school itself" (p.46).

With respect to student engagement, motivational support is important in facilitating students' academic achievement (Bempechat, Graham, & Jiminez, 1999; Ryan & Grolnick, 1986). Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002) believe that because motivation is a malleable trait, educators are able to change their instruction and classroom climate to increase motivation among their students. The U.S. Department of Education (2003) argues that quality resources and student motivational incentives are associated with increases in student academic engagement. Such traits can be fostered in afterschool programs. According to the Learning First Alliance (2001), "Students are most motivated to learn, feel the greatest sense of accomplishment, [and] achieve at the highest levels when they are able to succeed at tasks that spark their interests and stretch their capacities. To be meaningful, learning must effectively connect to students' questions,

concerns, and personal experiences, thereby capturing their intrinsic motivation and making the value of what they learn readily apparent to them" (p.4).

While the content and delivery of academic activities are of primary importance to addressing NCLB goals for afterschool programs, other factors may also affect students' participation, which in turn play a major role in a program's effectiveness. Attracting and sustaining participation in afterschool programs has been a challenge for many 21st CCLCs. Lauver (2004) notes that low attendance is the norm in many programs for middle and high school students for a number of reasons—busy schedules, claims of boredom, desire for freedom on the part of the youth. Teen interest and involvement in afterschool programs often plummet as students reach age 15 or 16. Research cites a lack of programming that engages older youth, interest in free time outside of structured activities, and opportunities for paid employment as reasons for dropping teen involvement (Herrera & Arbreton, 2003; Lauver, 2004). Further, at-risk students, who are most in need of these programs, are often disengaged from school due to problems in their family lives or factors such as drug use, frequently resulting in higher levels of school absences (Lauver, 2004; Weisman, Soule, & Womer, 2001). Organizational and programmatic factors that may affect participation rates include

- staffing patterns and ratios;
- leadership and collaboration among program staff, school and district staff, and community organizations;
- perceptions of being in a safe environment;
- fun, engaging activities;
- flexibility in program participation; and
- opportunities for leadership and community engagement.

Strategies for attracting and sustaining afterschool program participation are found throughout the literature. Examples include providing program slots specifically for at-risk students; recruiting pairs or groups of youth participants; reaching out directly to youth and their parents; building in flexibility to match program schedules to youths' needs; mixing fun and interesting activities with relaxation time; embedding an academic agenda within engaging projects; offering community engagement and leadership opportunities; and providing opportunities for meaningful discussion and activities with adult staff and peers (Hall, Israel, & Short, 2004; Lauver, 2004; McLaughlin, 2000; Technical Development Corporation, 2004). To bolster teen interest, research suggests including community service and employment-related activities and rewarding strong leadership with opportunities to attend teen conferences (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Hollister, 2003; Sawhill & Kane, 2003; Wright, 2004).

The National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning

The National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning (the National Partnership), led by SEDL, is a 5-year initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Education to facilitate the identification and widespread adoption of effective practices among 21st CCLCs throughout the United States. In addition to SEDL, the partnership includes the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) at the University of California, Los Angeles; Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning in Aurora, Colorado; the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon; SERVE in Greensboro, North Carolina; the U.S. Department of Education Office of 21st Century Community Learning Centers in Washington, DC; and the WGBH Educational Foundation in Boston. SEDL also manages four significant subcontracts in support of this work with the Afterschool Corporation (New York City), the Coalition for Science in Afterschool (the University of California at Berkeley), Foundations Inc. (Philadelphia), and McLean Hospital at Harvard Medical School (Boston). The partnership identifies effective afterschool practices using rigorous review standards and provides tools and technical assistance that address the following two continuing challenges:

- Ensuring that afterschool programs offer high-quality, research-based academic content utilizing appropriate methods of teaching and learning

- Ensuring that programs are able to attract and retain students who participate regularly and thus can benefit from these investments

During its first year, the National Partnership focused on identifying afterschool centers across the United States that demonstrated "exemplary" or "promising" practices in the content areas of mathematics, reading, science, technology, and the arts as evidenced by student learning gains, improved attendance, and other measurable conditions. Programs and practices supported by rigorous evidence, demonstrated through statistical analysis of student performance gathered through experimental or quasi-experimental research designs, are designated as "exemplary." Those supported by less rigorous evidence, such as descriptive survey results, are designated as "promising." The project also involves using qualitative research to identify characteristics of high-performing centers that can be replicated in other afterschool settings, as well as product development, technical assistance, and training. To identify an initial pool of content-focused practices, National Partnership staff review performance reports and external evaluation materials, consult with state education agency 21st CCLC liaisons, and converse with local site staff and affiliated consultants. To date, the National Partnership has identified 57 sites for in-depth review and conducted numerous telephone interviews and 40 site visits to collect data.

An important component of the National Partnership's work involves the development of an indicator system for site identification and validation, which is being led by CRESST. Researchers conducted an extensive review of the existing research on afterschool programs, investigating the organizational, curricular, and environmental variables that have been linked to program quality. CRESST then referred to publications from organizations across the country involved in afterschool program evaluation and support. These organizations included the

National Center for Community Education, Promising Practices in Afterschool Systems, the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, the Harvard Family Research Project, the National Community Education Association, the Afterschool Alliance, the Afterschool Corporation, the Mott Foundation, Learning Point Associates, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, and the Institute of Education Sciences. Information from these publications was reviewed with an eye toward the common variables and processes associated with positive afterschool program outcomes. CRESST also received considerable guidance for indicator development from the National Partnership's mathematics and reading content area teams. Both the mathematics (led by McREL) and the reading (led by NWREL) teams convened and provided CRESST with their feedback on key curriculum content in their respective areas of expertise.

The National Partnership identified three broad themes as central to effective afterschool programming: (1) setting goals and evaluation; (2) curricular quality; and (3) program environment. Within these three broad categories, 13 characteristics of effective programs were identified: (1) clear goals for content practice; (2) assignment of research-based activities to achieve goals; (3) alignment of content materials with state standards; (4) links between content and day school activities; (5) use of research-based curriculum and teaching strategies; (6) provision of a positive program environment; (7) employment of motivational strategies to engage students in learning; (8) promotion of student engagement through meaningful experiences; (9) effective program management, support, and resources (e.g., staff/student ratio, staff education experience, ongoing evaluation); (10) opportunities for student practice; (11) periodic evaluation to check program effectiveness; (12) periodic assessment to review student progress; and (13) resetting of goals according to assessment results.

SEDL used the knowledge and resources obtained and developed through the National Partnership in the service of the qualitative evaluation of the Texas grantees. Using criteria and procedures adapted from the National Partnership study, SEDL's selection process narrowed the overall population of grantees to a set whose program characteristics reflected specific indicators of effectiveness. The National Partnership's experienced staff and consultants conducted site visits to collect data using validated site-visit protocols, interview guides, and surveys. Finally, SEDL used qualitative coding schemes developed and used by the National Partnership to analyze the data collected for individual and cross-case analyses of Texas 21st CCLC programs.

METHODOLOGICAL AND ANALYTICAL APPROACH

The goal of SEDL's evaluation was to reveal and describe the strategies and program practices used by a sample of 12 of the most promising second-year 21st CCLCs *grantees* (also referred to as *projects*) by observing the *afterschool programs* implemented by 1–2 of their grant-supported *centers* (also referred to as *center sites*). SEDL identified 12 grantees based on expert recommendations, APR data, and student performance data associated with the projects. During the spring of 2006, SEDL's National Partnership staff visited the 12 grantees and collected data through site-visit interviews, surveys, and observations. Members of the site-visit team prepared summary reports that described each grantee's organizational structure and processes as well as key program strategies and characteristics. Using these summary reports and related survey results, SEDL evaluation staff developed case profiles that summarize promising practices addressing the core content areas of mathematics, reading/language arts, and science as well as strategies employed for recruitment, retention, and community involvement.

This section describes SEDL's approach to the grantee selection process and the methods used to develop the case profiles. Cross-case analyses are reported in a report titled, *The Evaluation of Texas 21st Century Community Learning Center Projects: Common Features of Promising Afterschool Programs in Texas* (SEDL, 2006). The data included in this report and in the cross-case analysis report are intended to contribute to a larger, quantitative study of the 21st CCLC grant program being conducted by TEA.

Grantee Selection Process

SEDL subcontracted with AIM to conduct a multipart selection process to identify 12 of the most promising second-year 21st CCLC grantees in Texas. This screening process, which reduced the pool of 87 grantees down to 12, employed a variety of methods detailed below. The following assumptions formed the core of the selection process adopted by the evaluation team:

1. Best practices are associated with higher levels of student performance.
2. Best practices are associated with higher percentages of objectives met.
3. Effective programs with promising practices should be evident to Educational Service Center (ESC) nurturers assigned to assist projects. ESC nurturers are staff employed by TEA as program officers who support 21st CCLCs and cover the entire state.
4. Best practices should be defined well enough to be articulated to a third party.

The evaluation team used a composite ranking to select a group of grantees that reflected high ratings, varied demographics, and geographic representation. The composite ranking consisted of the following criteria:

- Positive changes in student performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test in reading and mathematics balanced against a change measure from peer campuses
- Accomplishment of program objectives that are self-reported by project directors on annual performance reports using a 3-point scale (3 = met the stated objective, 2 = did not meet but progress toward stated objective, 1 = did not meet and no progress toward the stated objective)

- High ratings by program officers (Nurturers) who support 21st CCLC grantees across the state on a 4-point scale (4 = outstanding, 3 = good, 2 = interesting, 1 = do not consider for the evaluation)
- High ratings on indicators of successful afterschool programs collected through phone interviews with project directors

It should be noted, the goal of the selection process was to identify a sample of promising programs that were representative of grantees across the state. Thus, the sample selected was not necessarily the "best" grantees but rather a sample that reflected varied demographic and geographic representation among a group of grantees identified using the selection criteria. The steps to the selection process are described below.

Analysis of Student Performance on TAKS

The grantee selection process included an analysis of student performance on TAKS. While TAKS performance is certainly not the only outcome of importance, the assessment is given in a standardized manner and is clearly an outcome of importance for schools.

Given the lack of individual data for participants and non-participants, overall campus TAKS performance was used as a surrogate for "expected" performance by the 21st CCLC students. The selected measure, change in performance on TAKS from year to year, was compared to the same measure for the TEA peer groups for each campus. Use of the peer groups helps control for any initial differences on TAKS performance attributable to varying demographics and grade levels. The average change for the grantees was about plus 2 points in percentage passing in comparison to peer campuses.

The use of campus level TAKS performance scores was limited in its ability to discriminate among grantees because it is derived from all students' scores at the school, whether participating in the afterschool program or not. Regardless, the evaluation team determined that campus-level student performance was an important objective measure to consider among the other subjective selection criteria and that, in combination, both types of measures contributed to the identification of promising programs. Furthermore, TAKS performance is a characteristic associated with quality programs or initiatives at schools, some of which may include promising afterschool programs.

Review of Annual Performance Report (APR) Data

A review of APR data on the accomplishment of program objectives was also conducted. In the APRs, each grantee reports on accomplishment of objectives adopted for their afterschool program. These objectives are required to fall under the general provisions of the enabling statute (Title IV, Part B of the ESEA). The programs were designed to accomplish the following:

1) Provide opportunities for academic enrichment to economically disadvantaged students and students attending low-performing schools in order to help them meet state and local performance standards in core subject areas
2) Offer students additional services and programs to complement the regular academic program of participating students

3) Offer families served by the community learning centers opportunities for literacy and related educational development

Each grantee reports progress on the above objectives adopted under the program requirements using the following nominal categories:

Table 1. Categories of Program Objectives Listed in Annual Performance Reports

Numeric Rating	Category
3	Met the stated objective
2	Did not meet but progressed toward the stated objective
1	Did not meet and no progress toward the stated objective

Source: Annual Performance Reports, Texas Education Agency

These categories are ordinal in nature. Evaluators selected the numeric values to be in the same range as other measures to allow for linear combination across the other measures. An average success rating, regardless of number of objectives, was derived for further analyses. Evaluators understood the potential for bias in this measure, however felt that this source of information was a viable contributor to the decision-making process when used in conjunction with other measures.

Nurturer Nomination of Grantees

After the initial selection process, a list of approximately 60 grantees was submitted to TEA program coordinators and the four ESC nurturers. The nurturers were asked for their nominations of promising programs. Specific instructions were given to each nurturer (see Appendix A) on how to select grantees that were likely to have promising practices that lead to success in the programs. The nurturers were provided with a list of the 21st CCLC Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grantees and centers within each grantee. Nurturers were asked to assign grantees to one of the following categories:

- Outstanding
- Good
- Interesting
- Do not consider for this study

Table 2 displays the criteria for each classification. Each nurturer was instructed to include no more than five grantees in the first two categories and provide a justification for inclusion. Nurturers were not required to enter grantees in the last two categories. One advantage to the nomination approach is that the nurturer is generally familiar with the programs and should be able to objectively rate the grantees. One drawback is that a nurturer may have been more involved with some grantees than others, possibly influencing his or her selection. Grantees in the first two categories were assigned a 3 (outstanding category) or a 2 (good category) as part of the grantee selection calculations. The nurturers' nominations resulted in 20 grantees with sufficiently high ratings to be included in telephone screenings.

Table 2: Categories used by Nurtures to Classify Grantees

Outstanding / Highly Effective Program	Good Program	Interesting / Unique Program	Do not consider this program for this study
An outstanding program: • uses successful practices in core content areas • achieves or substantially is on target to achieve at least 75% of the program objectives • successes are based on implementation practices, *not* on the success of one individual • is replicable in similar schools and/or settings • works for multiple student groups • is strongly supported by teachers and administrators • is successful in all or most centers within a grantee area • consistently shows very high levels of student performance	*A good program:* • uses successful practices in core content areas • achieves or substantially is on target to achieve at least 50% of the program objectives • successes are based on implementation practices, *not* on the success of one individual • is replicable in similar schools and/or settings • works for multiple student groups • is supported by teachers and administrators • is successful in at least 50% of the centers within a grantee area • consistently shows high levels of student performance	*An interesting or unique program:* • may or may not use scientifically based practices • may or may not have achieved intended results but has innovative approaches • may only be applicable to certain student groups • implements practices that are innovative, though not necessarily proven to be effective • implements promising practice, but unsubstantiated in terms of success	*A program that should not be considered for this study*: • has no known results • is not based on scientifically based effective practices • is not well defined • is not implemented consistently • consistently shows low levels or neutral levels of student performance • may be difficult to replicate • depends on one or two individuals for success

Source: Guidelines for Nurturers' Classification of Grantees (Appendix A).

Telephone Interview Screenings

AIM evaluators conducted phone interviews with grantee administrators in March 2006. The sample included the 20 grantees that received the highest ratings from the nurturers. In addition, nine grantees that were not nominated by the nurturers were interviewed for purposes of validating the selection process. Staff conducting the interviews was "blind" to assignments of the grantees and did not know which projects were among those nominated. Each interview took approximately 1 hour. For most interviews, the staff member most familiar with the day-to-day operation of the center sites was interviewed (project directors and/or site coordinators). In two cases, however, interviews were conducted with district-level administrators that were considered fiscal managers and were not involved in the actual day-to-day management of the afterschool program. In these cases, it was difficult to rate each response because of the interviewee's limited knowledge of the center's practices and day-to-day operations.

Phone interview protocol. The phone interview protocol was developed based on the 13 characteristics of promising programs (see page 6) identified by the National Partnership (see Appendix B for a copy of the phone interview protocol). In addition to these characteristics, questions were developed to assist in the identification of best practices and unique program settings. To develop the actual questions researchers integrated findings from various studies regarding afterschool programs.

Phone interview rating. The interview protocol included 1–3 questions regarding each indicator identified by the National Partnership. For each indicator, the interviewer assessed if the answer provided by the program administrator showed evidence that the particular characteristic was

considered in that particular grantee. For instance, the interviewer considered whether there was enough evidence provided to indicate that the grantee is using research-based models and practices. Each objective was rated on a scale of 1 to 3, where "1" indicated strong evidence, "2" indicated some evidence, and "3" indicated no evidence that the particular indicator is being implemented or considered. Each indicator was rated, and an overall interview rating was obtained by averaging all ratings into one.

Final Selections

Once the phone calls had been completed, the ratings given by the evaluation staff were combined with the other measures. This final score, with allowances for missing or incomplete data, was used in conjunction with a sampling grid to determine grantees that had the best chance for demonstrating outstanding practices and that fit within a range of demographic characteristics. The evaluation team met to select the final set for presentation to TEA for approval. Table 3 below presents the grantees and demographic information for the 12 afterschool programs that were examined and profiled for the evaluation.

Table 3. 21st CCLC Selected Grantees and Demographic Characteristics

	Grantee	ESC	% African American	% Hispanic	% Economically Disadvantaged	Average Daily Attendance	Grade Span
1	Amarillo ISD	16	10.9	38.8	57.2	29,712	elem
2	Austin ISD	13	13.4	54.7	58.7	79,707	midd/hs
3	Center ISD	7	27.6	25.0	62.1	2,485	elem/midd
4	Houston ISD	4	29.1	59.0	82.8	208,454	elem/midd
5	IDEA Academy	1	0.3	93.9	80.1	659	midd
6	Kermit ISD	18	1.9	66.7	63.1	1,174	elem
7	Lubbock-Cooper CISD	17	1.7	32.8	43.1	2,573	multidistrict
8	Mason ISD	15	0.5	35.0	53.7	603	elem/midd
9	Mercedes ISD	1	0.3	99.0	91.8	5,336	jh/alt/hs
10	Northside ISD	20	7.4	60.1	47.9	74,013	elem
11	Round Rock ISD	13	9.7	22.5	22.9	36,567	elem/midd
12	Temple ISD	12	29.3	29.8	55.9	8,105	elem

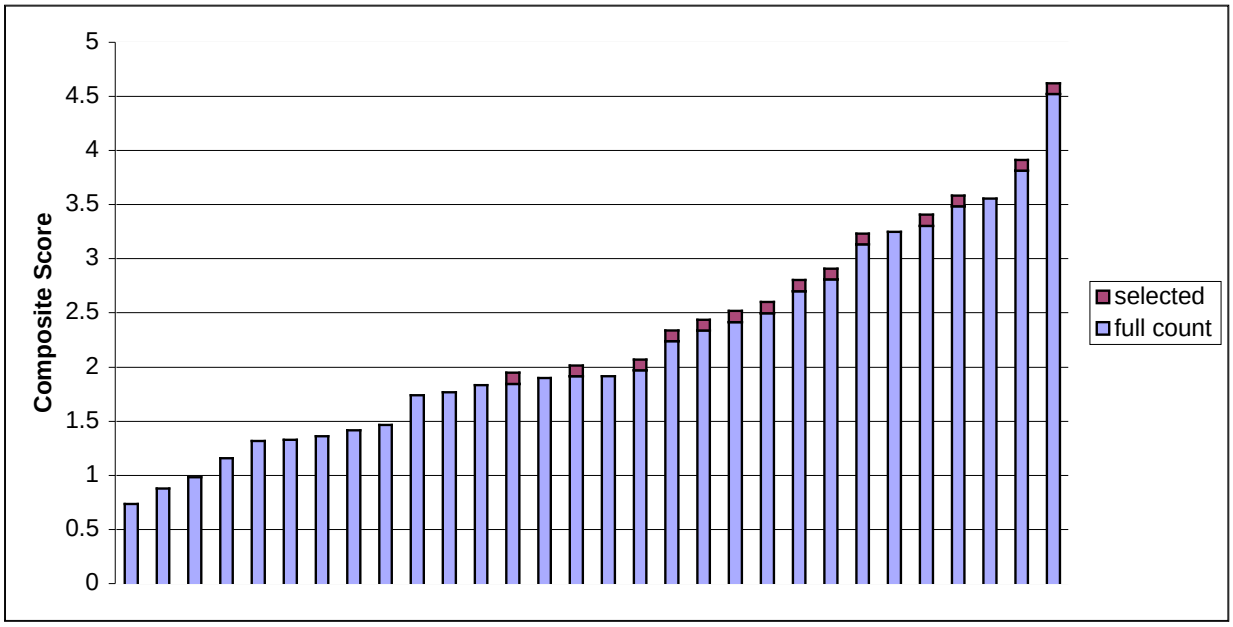
Source: Annual Performance Reports, Texas Education Agency

Validation of selection process. To validate the selection and screening process, an additional nine grantees that did not meet the initial selection criteria were added to the pool before telephone screening took place. To avoid potential bias during the telephone interviews, the AIM interviewers were unaware of or "blind" about which centers met or did not meet the selection process. The results of these grantees were then compared to those found in the selected grantees to help ensure validation of the selection process. None of the randomly selected projects from the lower ranges on the other measures passed the telephone-screening process. The validation process presented further credible evidence that the selection process was successful in identifying strong programs in both formal data analysis and the telephone screening.

As noted in Figure 1, grantees selected were in the upper half of those examined. The darker "cap" on each column indicates that the grantee was selected as part of the original set. The lower portion of each column represents the actual value of the composite score. In some cases,

grantees that received high composite scores were not selected because other grantees had been selected with similar demographic and geographic characteristics. Many of these were assigned as alternates to use as potential replacements for those that could not be visited due to scheduling conflicts.

Figure 1. Composite Rating and Selected Status.



The original list of selected grantees included Snook and Hughes Springs ISDs. Snook ISD had scheduling conflicts that prevented a site visit. In addition, the 21st CCLC program at Hughes Springs ISD had ended for the semester, so direct observations of program activities were not possible. In both cases, alternate grantees with similar characteristics and demographics were used. In the case of Hughes Springs ISD, interviews with the project director and site coordinators were conducted. The incomplete data prevented the grantee from being profiled for this case study report. However, the data collected at Hughes Springs were transcribed and contribute to the findings presented in SEDL's cross-case analysis report.

Case Studies

SEDL National Partnership staff and consultants conducted site visits to the 1 –2 centers of the selected grantees to observe characteristics of the afterschool programs; interview project directors, center-site coordinators, and afterschool instructors; and collect surveys from program staff, parents, and students. SEDL's protocol for arranging the site visits included the following:

- Introductory letters on TEA letterhead and e-mails to the 21st CCLC project director announcing the study and identifying key SEDL staff to contact for questions and/or concerns
- Follow-up telephone calls to the 21st CCLC project directors to identify one or two center-sites for site visits and to identify a key local contact staff member to assist with site-visit arrangements
- A follow-up mailing that included a brief one-page summary of the study and a sample site-visit agenda and schedule

- Communication with school personnel regarding the site-visit scheduling preferences and questions or concerns about site visits

Site-visit data collection was obtained using modified versions of the National Partnership's instruments developed by CRESST (Appendix C). The instruments were submitted to and approved by TEA's Data and Information Review Committee (DIRC).

Observations of 21st CCLC Programs

With assistance from the project directors, SEDL staff and consultants arranged to observe 1–2 centers for each grantee to conduct direct observations of instructional practices used by the selected 21st CCLC projects. In some cases, only one center received a site visit. Table 4 presents the centers that received site visits for each grantee.

Table 4. Grantees and Centers That Received Site Visits

	Grantee	Observation Center 1	Observation Center 2
1	Amarillo ISD	Oakdale Elementary	Wesley Community Center
2	Austin ISD	Webb Middle School	Reagan High School
3	Center ISD	Center Elementary	Center Intermediate
4	Houston ISD	Las Americas Middle School	Elrod Elementary
5	IDEA Academy	IDEA Academy	
6	Kermit ISD	East Elementary	Purple Sage Elementary
7	Lubbock-Cooper CISD	South Elementary	Cooper Junior High
8	Mason ISD	Mason Elementary/Junior High	
9	Mercedes ISD	Travis Elementary	Mercedes High School
10	Northside ISD	Meadow Village Elementary	Valley High Elementary
11	Round Rock ISD	Bluebonnet Elementary	Anderson Mill Elementary
12	Temple ISD	Jefferson Elementary	
*13.	Hughes Springs ISD	Hughes Springs Elementary	Hughes Springs Junior High

** Incomplete data. Included in cross-case analysis only.*

Specific information that was gathered from observations included the following:

- General background information on the afterschool program
- Staff and student background information (e.g., numbers of each, number of parents present)
- Program physical environment (e.g., space, materials)
- Subject-area tutorial activities observed
- Subject content areas covered
- Instructional practices used
- Non-tutorial academic activities observed (e.g., project-based learning)

Interviews With 21st CCLC Project Directors, Site Coordinators, and Afterschool Instructors

During the center-site visits, SEDL staff and consultants conducted interviews and focus groups with afterschool staff responsible for the 21st CCLC program implementation. Individual interviews were conducted with the project directors and site coordinators. Focus groups were conducted with site instructors when more than one instructor was available for the interview. Interview and focus group topics are shown below:

- Program background and demographic information
- Content areas and instructional practices
- Experience and primary responsibilities of site coordinator
- Content and delivery knowledge, methods, and alignment
- Organizational structure (e.g., staffing, scheduling, management, resources)
- External communication and support (e.g., school, parents, community)
- Student/adult interactions
- Program outcomes

A total of 56 interviews and focus groups were conducted. Table 5 below presents the number and types of interviews and focus groups conducted for each grantee.

Table 5. Number and Types of Interviews and Focus Groups Conducted for Each Grantee

	Grantee	Director Interview	Site Coordinator Interview	Instructor Interview	Instructor Focus Group	Total
1	Amarillo ISD	1	2		1	**4**
2	Austin ISD (Middle and High Schools)	1	1		1	**3**
3	Center ISD	1	2		1	**4**
4	Houston ISD	1	2		2	**5**
5	IDEA Academy	1	1		1	**3**
6	Kermit ISD	1	2	1	2	**6**
7	Lubbock-Cooper CISD	1	2	2		**5**
8	Mason ISD	1	2	4		**7**
9	Mercedes ISD	1	2		1	**4**
10	Northside ISD	1	2	1	1	**5**
11	Round Rock ISD	1	2	2		**5**
12	Temple ISD	1	1		1	**3**
*13.	Hughes Springs ISD	1	1			**2**
	Total	**13**	**22**	**10**	**11**	**56**

** Incomplete data. Included in cross-case analysis only.*

Surveys of Program Staff, Students, and Parents

In advance of the site visits, surveys were mailed to local site coordinators for distribution to center-site staff and participants of the afterschool programs and their parents (see Appendix D for survey instruments). The surveys were modified versions of the CRESST instruments used in the National Partnership study. The site coordinators were requested to collect the surveys prior to the arrival of SEDL's site visit staff. The majority of surveys were provided to SEDL's site visit staff at the conclusion of their visit. In centers where the survey data collection was not completed prior to the site visit, self-addressed postage-paid Federal Express envelopes were provided to site coordinators for returning the surveys to SEDL.

The number of surveys distributed at each center varied depending on the size of the afterschool program and availability of respondent populations. Site coordinators were encouraged to collect as many surveys as possible. The survey sample, therefore, was treated as a convenience sample, and the response may not be representative of the entire population of staff, students, and parents

at the centers. Table 6 below presents the number and types of surveys received for each grantee. The percentage of the population who responded to each survey is presented when APR data on number of students and staff at each campus was available.

Table 6. Number and Types of Surveys Received From Each Grantee

	Grantee	N Paid Staff*	N Students*	N Parents**	N Staff Surveys Received (%)	N Student Surveys Received (%)	N Parent Surveys Received (%)	Total Surveys Received
1	Amarillo ISD	N/A	N/A	N/A	26	94	27	**147**
2	Austin ISD	73	889	889	37 (.51)	88 (.10)	21 (.02)	**146**
3	Center ISD	36	472	472	10 (.28)	61 (.13)	40 (.08)	**111**
4	Houston ISD	38	377	377	12 (.32)	26 (.07)	10 (.03)	**48**
5	IDEA Academy	37	522	522	18 (.49)	135 (.26)	84 (.16)	**237**
6	Kermit ISD	61	558	558	34 (.56)	198 (.35)	112 (.20)	**344**
7	Lubbock-Cooper CISD	N/A	N/A	N/A	28	17	14	**59**
8	Mason ISD	13	122	122	10 (.77)	14 (.11)	12 (.10)	**36**
9	Mercedes ISD	63	927	927	27 (.43)	122 (.13)	29 (.03)	**178**
10	Northside ISD	27	350	350	24 (.89)	69 (.20)	60 (.17)	**153**
11	Round Rock ISD	45	323	323	20 (.44)	48 (.15)	32 (.10)	**100**
12	Temple ISD	40	226	226	0	33 (.14)	22 (.10)	**55**
	TOTAL	**433**	**4,766**	**4,766**	**246 (.57)**	**905 (.19)**	**463 (.10)**	**1,614**

** As reported in annual performance reports (APR) for each center and combined when two centers were observed. N/A = APR data not available. **Only one parent survey was expected for each student; thus number of parents equals number of students.*

A total of 246 program staff surveys were completed (57% response rate) and analyzed. These surveys asked afterschool staff to report their roles and responsibilities; qualifications and training in content area knowledge and instruction; the extent that afterschool subject-area tutorial and academic enrichment activities are coordinated with participants' day school curriculum; feedback and assessment practices for student participants; staff/parent communications; and the types of activities provided to program participants (e.g., tutoring, homework help, hands-on learning projects, service learning projects, non-academic activities).

A total of 905 students completed program participant surveys (19% response rate), which focused on the amount of time students spend in the afterschool program; the types of activities they participate in; their perceptions of the afterschool program and staff; and academic and/or personal impacts they perceive as a result of program participation.

Finally, 463 parent surveys were received (10% response rate) and analyzed. Both English and Spanish versions of the parent survey were made available. Of the parents who responded, approximately 14% completed Spanish versions of the survey. The parent surveys asked about parent/program staff communications; parents' knowledge of the program; the extent that parents participate/volunteer in afterschool program activities or special parent events (e.g., workshops, parents' nights); the academic impacts of program activities on their children; and their satisfaction with the activities provided to their children in the afterschool program.

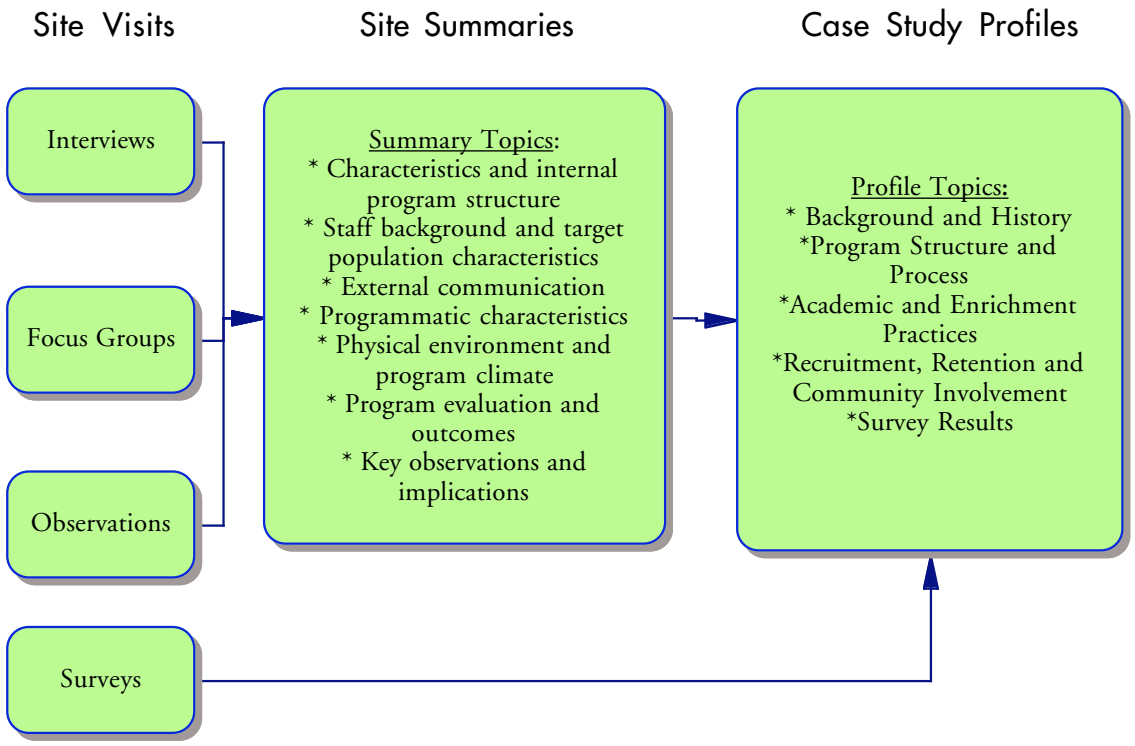
Survey Analyses. Survey responses were entered into data sets for each type of survey and organized by grantee. Descriptive statistics were used to compile participants' responses on all survey items for each of the grantees. Survey findings for each grantee were then summarized for inclusion in the case profiles.

Case Study Profiles

During center-site visits, SEDL's National Partnership staff and expert consultants audiotaped interviews and focus groups and manually recorded other observational data. Upon completion of the visit, the site-visit staff turned in the manually recorded notes and audiotapes. SEDL technical support staff cataloged the tapes and arranged for the production of transcripts to be used in cross-case analyses.

SEDL's afterschool staff and expert consultants completed 15–20 page site-visit summary forms for each of the grantees they visited. The information entered into the site-visit summaries drew from field notes, interviews, focus group notes, and other observational data collected during site visits. Finally, SEDL's evaluation staff used the site summaries and survey data to develop 10–15 page case study profiles for each grantee. Figure 2 below describes the data sources for developing the case profiles.

Figure 2. Data Sources for Case Study Profiles



The 12 case profiles are presented in the remainder of the report and include each grantee's background, history, and organizational structure and processes; academic and enrichment practices; and recruitment, retention, and community involvement strategies. Cross-case analyses will include a description of the multistep process of coding interview transcripts to identify common promising practices across the centers. Results from the cross-case analysis are reported in a companion report titled, *The Evaluation of Texas 21st Century Community Learning Center Projects: Common Features of Promising Afterschool Programs in Texas* (SEDL, 2006).

AMARILLO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

21st Century Community Learning Centers at
Oakdale Elementary School and Wesley Community Center
Site Visit: May 9–11, 2006

Overview

Background and History

- Amarillo Independent School District (AISD) was awarded a Cycle 3 grant in September 2004 to support four elementary centers and one community center.
- Students served are primarily Hispanic and low-income.

Program Structure and Process

- Each center provides 1 hour of homework assistance, 1 hour of academics, and 1 –hour of enrichment.
- College students serve as site coordinators and instructional tutors.
- Decision making is described as decentralized made in conjunction with site coordinators and instructional staff.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- The afterschool program uses a balance of academic and social learning with a strong emphasis on enhancing what the students learn at their grade level.
- Tutors work closely with site coordinators to develop lesson plans that are standards-based and linked to TEKS. A notebook of all lesson plans is maintained for tutors across centers to share.
- Homework assistance is the main vehicle to align day school and afterschool efforts.
- The afterschool program provides academic sessions in core subject areas.
- Enrichment activities included cooking, dance, art, and physical education.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- Recruitment and retention are not viewed to be a challenge. There has been an increase in student enrollment, low student turnover, and a waiting list.
- An advisory board is being established to increase community involvement.

Survey Results

- Staff reported the most commonly used teaching practices in the core content areas as providing opportunities for read-alouds, providing specific instruction on how to solve math problems, and conducting simple science experiments.
- The majority of students reported that the afterschool program has helped them be a better reader, do better with mathematics problems, and finish their homework.

Grantee Background and History

Amarillo Independent School District (AISD) received the 21st CCLC Cycle 3 grant in September 2004 from TEA and began its afterschool program in January 2005. Prior to the grant, AISD used an AmeriCorps program to provide afterschool tutoring throughout the district. Site visits occurred at the Oakdale Elementary and Wesley Community Center sites. Data on student demographics and staffing from annual performance reports were not available for these centers.

The majority of students (over 80%) in the AISD afterschool program are Hispanic. Of those, 85–90% are English-speaking, with the remaining identified as English language learners. The other approximately 20% of the afterschool students are White or African American. More than 90% of the afterschool students are identified as at-risk, with a majority from low-income, high-school-educated households. The tutors are more often than not of a different cultural background than their students; however, they seem to have a basic understanding and desire to learn more about diversity. Bilingual tutors are available to work with students who have limited English proficiency.

The 21st CCLC grant supports four elementary school centers and one community center site in AISD. The community center site serves students from three schools, grades 1–5. Each of the elementary school centers serves about 90–100 afterschool students, and the community center site serves, on average, 130 afterschool students.

Program Structure and Process

The AISD 21st CCLC center sites are all located within the Caprock Cluster of Amarillo. The programs located in the elementary schools have access to school facilities, including the cafeteria, library, a few classrooms, and the grounds, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. The community center opens its doors to the afterschool program from 3:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. Children from three local elementary schools are bused to the community center for the afterschool program. Parents are required to pick up their children from AISD's afterschool centers. College students, who serve as site coordinators and instructional tutors, provide the afterschool instruction. On average, the student to tutor ratio is about 10:1 with mixed-grade groupings.

Management and Leadership. The relationship between the school district afterschool program office and the individual centers is reportedly strong. The project director offers guidance and makes many of the organizational decisions in conjunction with the tutors. There are regular meetings and professional development for all staff about four times a year. The project director and the site coordinator made routine observations of the instructional staff. Both observe instruction and give feedback or assistance on the spot, if needed, at each center site. Staff members appear to appreciate the leadership and guidance.

Climate. The overall climate of the afterschool program is energetic, caring, and supportive. The staff know the students, and the students feel comfortable talking to staff in a relaxed, nurturing, safe, and trusting atmosphere. Students at both centers were engaged in their afterschool activities. Students actively participated in group discussions and went to the tutors with questions or to show them their work.

Programmatic Goals. The AISD afterschool program uses a balance of academic and social learning, with a strong emphasis on enhancing what the student is learning at their grade level. The program goals include linking afterschool activities to student home life and providing education for the afterschool staff. The tutors expect students to increase their performance in core subjects to at least an adequate level but push them to excel beyond. Tutors also expect the students to master the basics in not only academics but also in an area of enrichment.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

The majority of time in the AISD afterschool program is focused on academic work, through homework assistance and instruction. Less time is devoted to enrichment activities. Scheduling varies across centers, with at least 1 hour of academics per day and generally another hour of homework help per day. At the elementary school center, mathematics and reading are the focus but there is not a set amount per week given to these subjects. At the community center site, reading, mathematics, science, and social studies are studied for 1 hour on 1 designated day of the week (Fridays are "fun" day).

The afterschool tutors develop lesson plans and discuss them with their site coordinator. The lessons are standards-based and linked to TEKS. At the elementary center, lesson plans are sometimes created with input from day-school teachers and the principal. A notebook of all lesson plans is maintained for tutors across the centers to share ideas. Generally, the tutors work closely with their site coordinator and contribute to decision making on daily management and curriculum issues. The site coordinators have a great deal of input into curriculum, but the project director has ultimate authority.

The afterschool tutors use a combination of instructional strategies, some whole group, some small group, and individual instruction. In some cases, student-student pairings occurred, some between students in the same grade level and some between students across grade levels (i.e., pairings of older students with younger students). The varied instructional approaches appear to keep the students active in the learning opportunities. The reading, mathematics, and science instruction focuses on basic skills and comprehension while ensuring the students are engaged.

Key Mathematics Instruction Observations. In the mathematics session observed, students either worked on homework or participated in a mathematics game lesson. The lesson incorporated reading, both aloud and silently, in conjunction with the shapes, sizes, and measures being taught. There was emphasis on sharing and following instructions while learning counting and basic mathematics skills. The remaining students continued working individually or in pairs on their homework with the second tutor assisting until they were at a point where they could join the mathematics game lesson. Both tutors provided individual feedback and also group behavior feedback. Tutors questioned students on the lesson or homework, enabling students to show their level of understanding or need for additional instruction. Particularly in the group instruction, the tutor used open-ended questions to guide critical thinking and encourage problem-solving skills.

Key Science Instruction Observations. The science instruction observed incorporated writing, drama, physical education, and reading on the subject of weather. Students discussed the current weather conditions and projections for the week while learning about patterns, clouds, and thunder. They used multiple skills, including cognitive, procedural, and creative, to participate in the lesson.

Students were very inquisitive, asking a number of questions and being brought into the conversation individually through selection by the tutor or on their own. A number of the tutor's questions led to students using critical thinking skills to find the answers or seek out extra knowledge. The tutor also used scaffolding and sequencing techniques, enabling students to increase their individual responsibility for outcomes and use their own thought processes to advance their knowledge.

Tutoring and Homework Help. The AISD afterschool program devotes approximately 1 hour or more a day to homework help. This includes homework related to any academic topic but with an emphasis on mathematics and reading. During the site visit, tutors worked individually with each student to monitor and assist with his or her homework. Additional individual time was assigned to tutoring depending on each student's need. All students participated in homework help. If students did not have homework, they were given a book or assigned another activity. Generally the homework help was individual (tutor to student); however, some student pairs worked on homework with occasional tutor assistance or review.

Social/Development Practices. Social/developmental goals for AISD's afterschool program include enhancing students' positive attitudes and demeanor, increasing students' teamwork skills, and building relationships between the tutors and the students. The tutors specifically mentioned using games to develop students' manners, sportsmanship, and sharing. Each center offers about 1 hour of enrichment (e.g., cooking, dance, art) plus an additional 20—30 minutes of play either in the gym or on the playground. The staff describe their enrichment activities and many of their academic activities as hands-on. They emphasized that worksheets are not used.

Student Assessment Practices Tutor observation and questioning were used to assess student progress on task. No other formal means of assessment was observed. Tutors also talk among themselves and with site coordinators about student progress and needs.

Alignment With and Ties to Day School. The heavy emphasis on homework assistance in this afterschool program is the main vehicle to align day school and afterschool efforts. In the elementary school centers collaboration between the day school staff and afterschool staff occurs regularly. However, in the community center site there is very little communication between afterschool and day school staff, so the afterschool staff find it more difficult to ensure that what the student tells them (i.e., what their homework is or what they are learning in the classroom) is accurate. As mentioned previously, the lesson plans developed are kept centrally so they can be replicated and used by all tutors across centers.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

Principals and teachers refer students who need academic help to the AISD 21st CCLC program. Students who are doing well in school, however, also attend. Recruitment and retention are not viewed to be a challenge. There has been an increase in student enrollment, low student turnover, and a waiting list.

Parental and Community Involvement. Parents pick up their children from the afterschool program daily. Tutors and the site coordinators take advantage of this opportunity to talk with parents regularly about their children's progress, any behavior issues, or areas they need to work on with their children. Tutors were observed using this opportunity to talk with many of the parents.

Additionally, tutors will sometimes call parents, as needed. Few parents volunteer. The afterschool program offers English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for parents, with an average attendance of 4–5. The afterschool program also has a counselor who meets with parents as needed. Fliers are sent home with students to communicate with parents. One of the centers mentioned having an open house for parents once a semester.

Increasing community involvement is a goal of the AISD afterschool program. An advisory board for the afterschool program is being established specifically to increase community involvement and help with program sustainability. They have established a relationship with the local colleges and want to increase this by introducing joint classes for students in the afterschool program.

Program Evaluation. Each center site monitors and logs attendance as one measure of program quality. The project director evaluates each center two times a semester in order to submit the required report to TEA. Additionally, the project director conducts observations of the centers on a regular basis. Once a term, parents, teachers, and students are asked to complete a survey. The data collected from all of these methods are captured in a report completed by the project director that is submitted to the Caprock Cluster director and AISD superintendent. To date, no outside evaluation has been conducted.

Survey Results

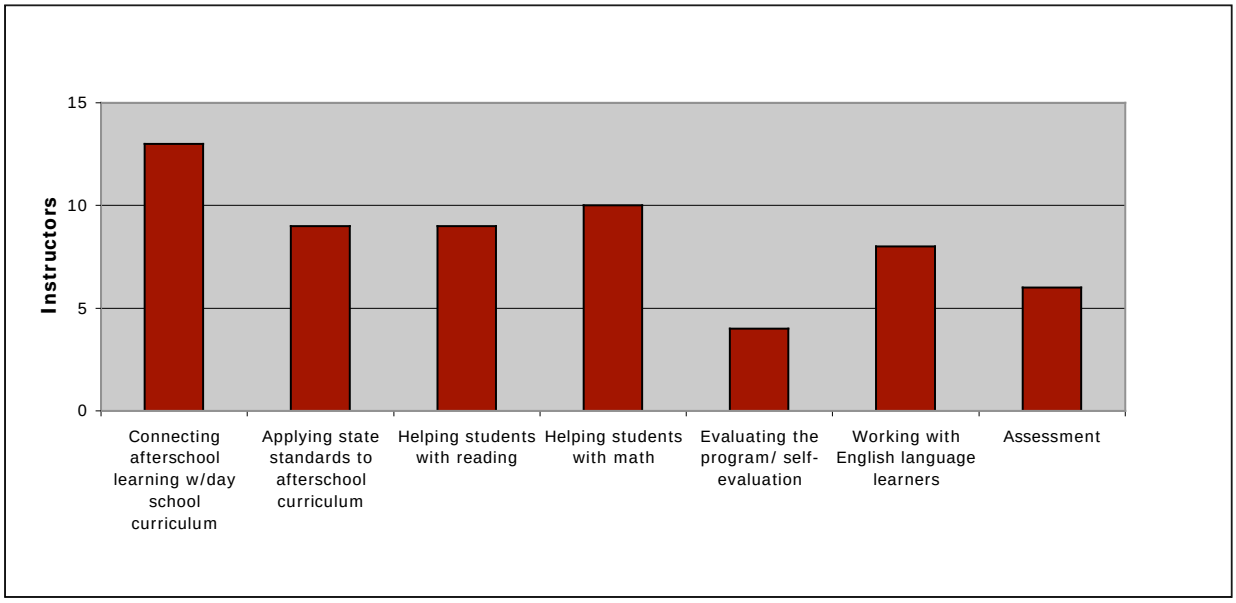
Program staff, students participating in the afterschool program, and parents of participating students completed surveys in the spring of 2006 regarding the afterschool program practices and impacts on students.

Staff Survey. Twenty-six program staff completed surveys. Two identified themselves as site coordinators, 22 as instructors, one as a counselor, and one as a tutor. The average time most have been working at their afterschool center has been 1–3 years. The majority of staff have also been working in afterschool programs in general (60%) and been teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher (66%) for that same 1–3 year period.

Professional Development. Twenty-two of the staff stated that between two and four professional development/trainings have been offered in the past year. Twenty-one of the staff reported to have participated in them. Of the participants who commented on the type(s) of professional development they attended, most mentioned reading.

Topics staff mentioned most often as areas for future professional development were connecting afterschool learning with day school curriculum, applying state standards to afterschool curriculum and practices, and helping students with reading and mathematics content. Figure 3 shows survey responses to these items.

Figure 3. Amarillo ISD: Number of Program Staff Indicating Various Interests in Professional Development



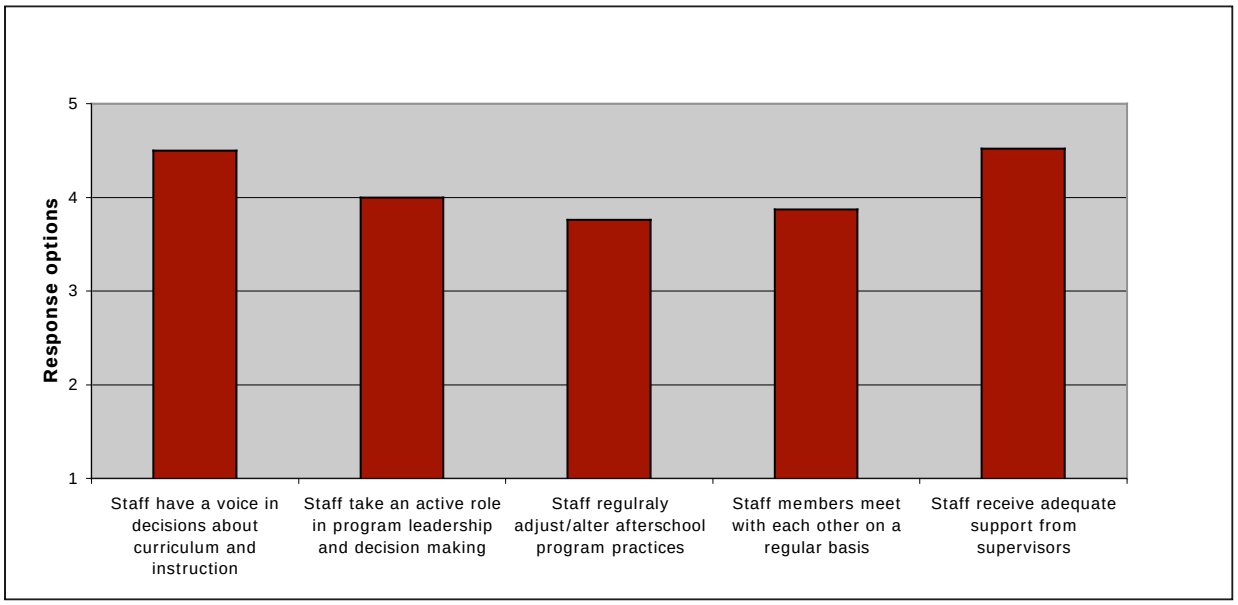
Note. N = 26; Rating options: Yes or No.

Organizational Structure. Twenty-one of the staff stated they knew whom to contact at their students' day school with questions on their progress or status. However, only 12 said they coordinate afterschool practices with their students' day school homework. Further, only 9 staff indicated that they knew, on a weekly basis, the content to be covered with their students during the school day, and 6 reported using assessment data from day school to plan students' work. On average, program staff reported that they speak with their students' day school teachers once a month or less about their students' homework, coordinating curriculum, or instructional issues.

Nineteen of the program staff reported that they do not have regular time set aside to meet with parents of their afterschool students or did not know if regular time was set aside. Twelve of the staff, however, indicated that they meet with their students' parents twice a month or more.

The decision making is reportedly decentralized, with staff taking an active role in program leadership and instructional decisions. Figure 4 below presents survey results for staff perceptions of overall program organization.

Figure 4. Amarillo ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Program Organization



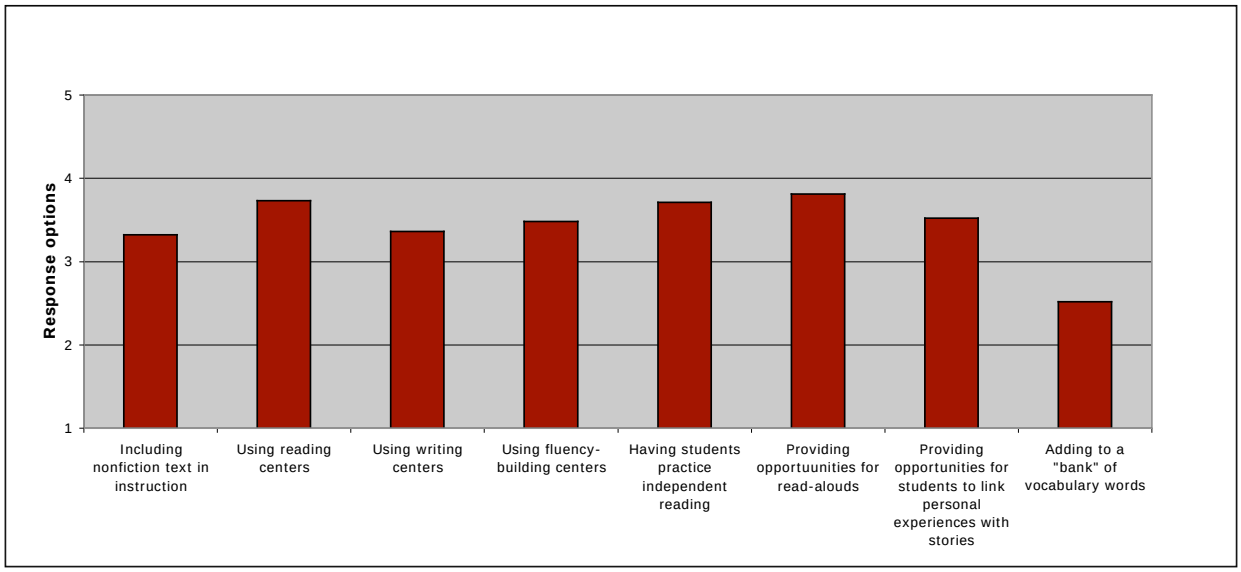
Note. N = 26; Ratings scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree

Educational Practices and Strategies. The types of instructional practices that program staff reported using *at least once per week* to *more than once per week* in the afterschool program were tutoring and homework help, having students work in teams or small groups, one-on-one tutoring, peer support, and computer-assisted instruction. They also mentioned providing direct feedback to students about their progress and letting students know their expectations and criteria for afterschool assignments. Least often used were linking instruction to community services and having students work on projects that spanned several days.

Regarding the assessment of students' progress on academic assignments, the majority of the project staff stated that they *never* used formal tests or quizzes or did so only rarely (*less than once per month)* (16 for reading assignments, 15 for mathematics, and 19 for science). They did, however, indicate that they spot-checked for student understanding at least *once per month* or *more than once per month* (23 for reading assignments, 21 for mathematics, and 16 for science).

Of reading, mathematics, and science, 21 of the afterschool staff focused mostly on reading, 20 focused on mathematics, and 9 focused on science. For those focused on reading, the most frequently used practices in the afterschool programs were providing opportunities for read-alouds, using reading centers, and independent reading using computers or tapes. Figure 5 illustrates survey results regarding various reading practices implemented at the centers.

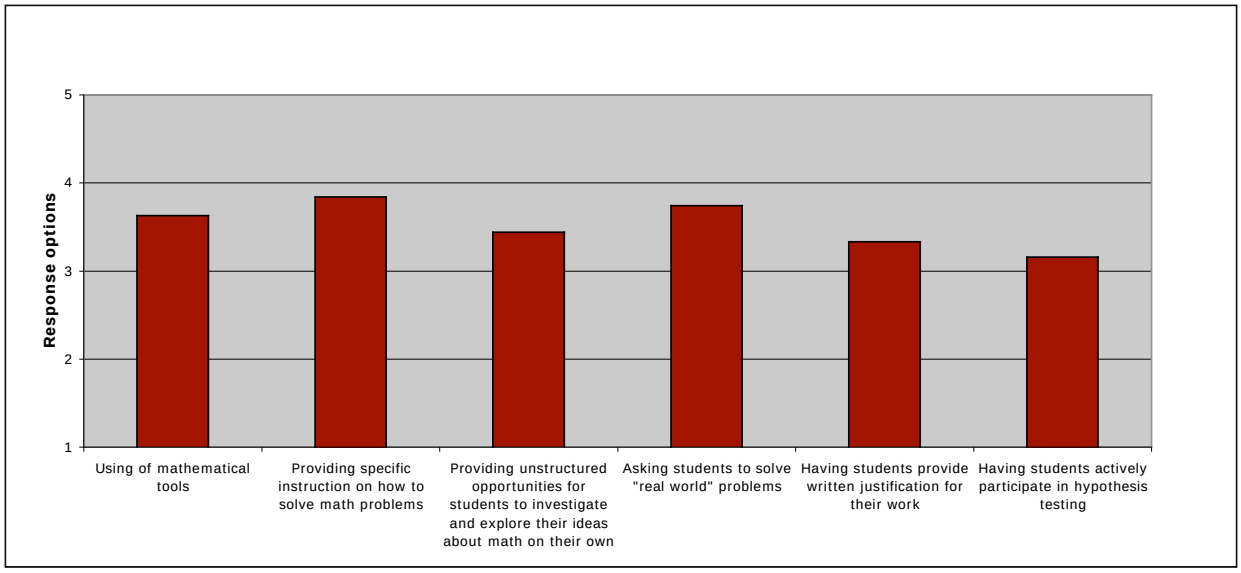
Figure 5. Amarillo ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on the Implementation of Reading Practices



Note. **N = 21; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always**

For the 20 program staff who indicated they focused on mathematics with students in their afterschool program, 15 of the 20 respondents stated that they *frequently* to *always* focused on providing specific instruction on how to solve mathematics problems, and 13 of the 20 used "real world" problems for students to solve. Figure 6 illustrates survey results regarding various mathematics practices implemented at the centers.

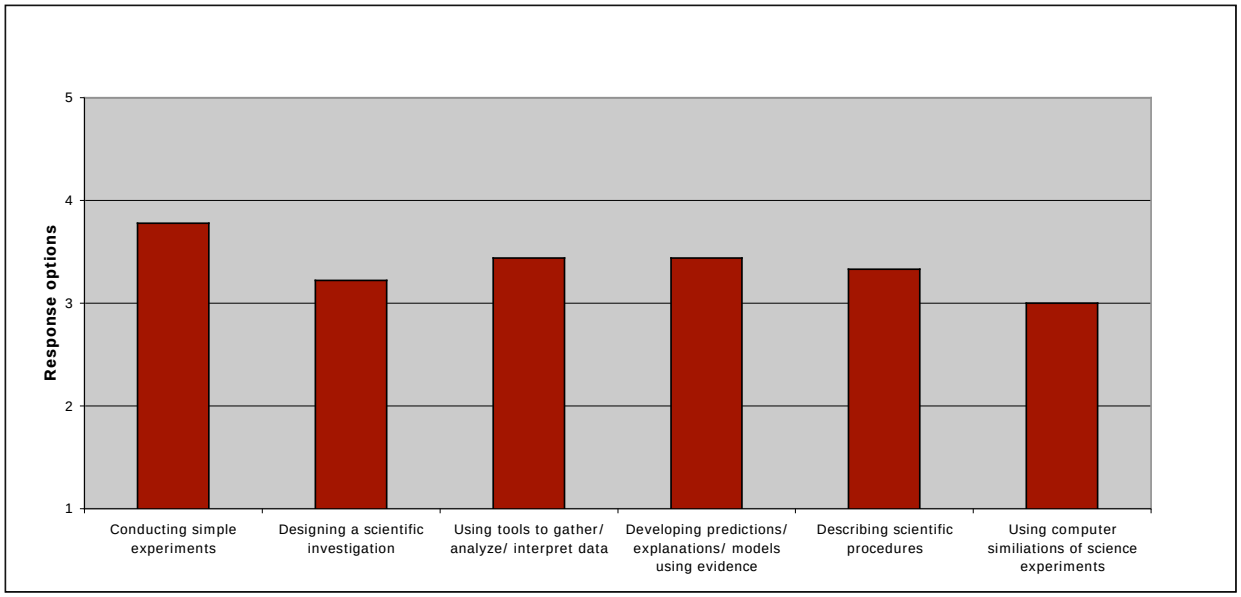
Figure 6. Amarillo ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on the Implementation of Mathematics Instructional Practices



Note. N = 20; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Science instruction was focused on by 9 of the program staff. Most commonly used science practices included conducting simple experiments; using tools to gather, analyze, and interpret data; and developing predictions, explanations, and models using evidence. Figure 7 illustrates survey results regarding the various science practices implemented at the centers.

Figure 7. Amarillo ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on the Implementation of Science Instructional Practices

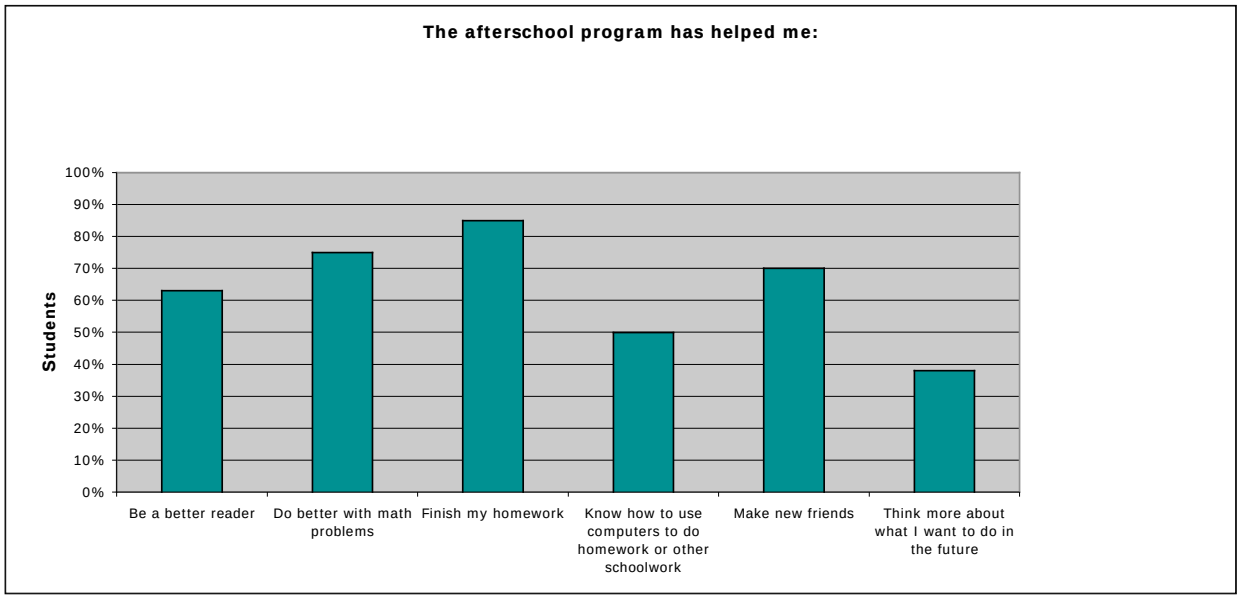


Note. N = 9; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Student Survey. Students attending the afterschool program from grades 3, 4, and 5 completed surveys (n = 94). Students rated 22 statements on a scale of 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Sometimes*, and 3 = *Always.* Fifty-five percent of the students indicated that they *always* practiced reading in the afterschool program. Approximately 31% indicated the same for mathematics, 27% for writing, and 17% for science.

In general, students reported that they liked the activities in their afterschool program (mean = 2.5), that the program staff listen when students have something to say (mean = 2.5), that they get along well with the program staff (mean = 2.6), that they feel safe while attending the program (mean = 2.6), and that much of their time is spent working on homework or schoolwork (mean = 2.7). As shown in Figure 8, the majority of the students also reported that the afterschool program has helped them be a better reader, do better with mathematics problems, finish their homework, build their skill using computers for schoolwork, and make new friends. They were less sure as to whether the program helped them think more about what they wanted to do in the future, however. Overall, 88% of the students felt the program is helping them become better students, and 61% reported that they "really like the program—it's great."

Figure 8. Amarillo ISD: Percent of Elementary School Students Indicating Various Program Outcomes

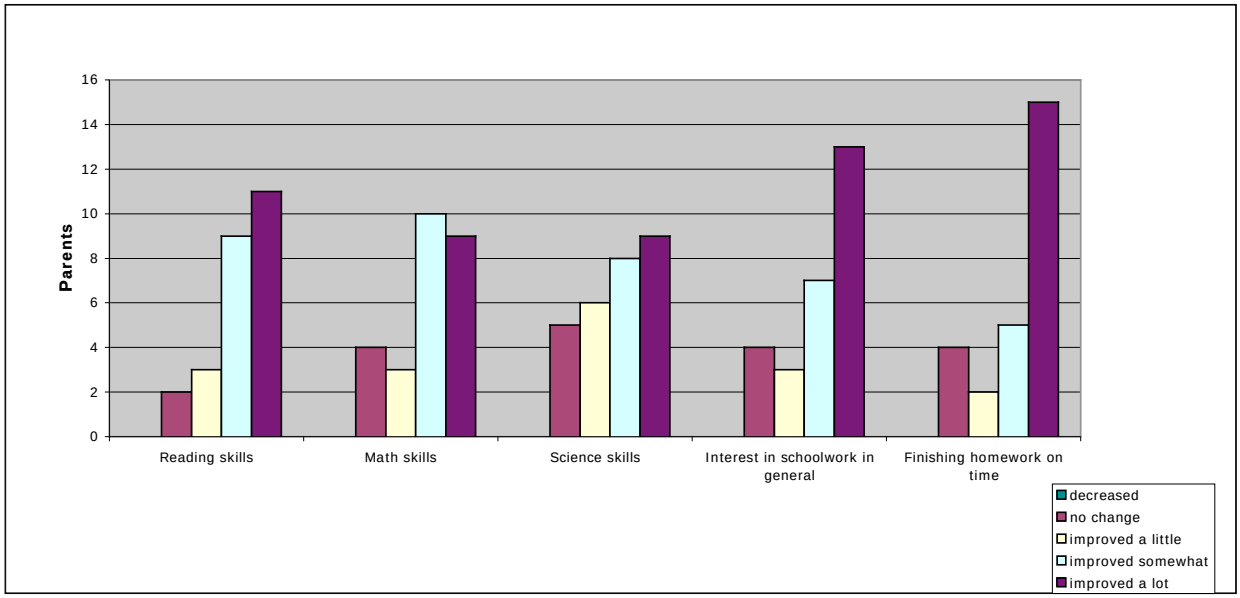


Note. N = 94; Ratings options: Yes, No, or Unsure

Parent Survey. Twenty-seven parents of students participating in the afterschool program completed surveys. On a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *Never* and 10 = *Always*, parents rated several statements about the program and program staff. Mean ratings for all nine statements ranged from 8.2 to 9.8. Items included parents' perceptions about feeling welcome to visit the afterschool program and having a staff member available to talk with them, helping parents understand school reports and paperwork, and dealing fairly with their children.

Fourteen of the parents also noted that they visited their children's afterschool program more than once a month. However, 18 stated that they never help out in the program. With respect to changes in their child's academic tasks, skills, and interest, parents primarily reported *a little improvement* to *somewhat improved*. Highest ratings were for their children finishing their homework on time and increases in reading skills. Overall, parents rated their happiness with the afterschool program activities, staff, materials and resources, and the progress their children have been making in learning very high (means ranged from 9.1 to 9.5 on a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *very unhappy* and 10 = *very happy*).

Figure 9. Amarillo ISD: Number of Parents Indicating Various Program Outcomes



Note. N = 27; Ratings scale: 1 = Decreased, 2 = No change, 3 = Improved a little, 4 = Improved somewhat, 5 = Improved a lot

Profile Summary

Amarillo Independent School District (AISD) was awarded a Cycle 3 grant in September 2004 to support four elementary centers and one community center. Site visits for the study occurred at the Oakdale Elementary School and Wesley Community Center. Students served at these centers are primarily Hispanic and from low-income homes.

Each center provides one hour of homework assistance, one hour of academics, and one-hour of enrichment activities. The grantee employs college students to serve as instructional tutors for the afterschool program. The overall climate of the afterschool program is energetic, caring, and supportive and students were described as engaged. The relationship between the school district afterschool program office and the individual centers is reportedly strong. The project director offers guidance and makes many of the organizational decisions in conjunction with the site coordinators and college tutors.

The AISD afterschool program uses a balance of academic and social learning with a strong emphasis on enhancing what the students learn at their grade level. Tutors work closely with site coordinators to develop lesson plans that are standards-based and linked to TEKS. A notebook of all lesson plans is maintained for tutors across centers to share. The majority of time in the AISD afterschool program is focused on academic work, through homework assistance and instruction. Less time is devoted to enrichment activities. Staff reported the most commonly used teaching practices in the core content areas include providing opportunities for read-alouds, providing specific instruction on how to solve math problems, and conducting simple science experiments.

The majority of students reported that the afterschool program has helped them to be better readers, do better with mathematics problems, and finish their homework. Finally, there has been an increase in student enrollment, low student turnover, and a waiting list.

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

21st Century Community Learning Centers at
Webb Middle School and Reagan High School
Site Visit: May 2, 2006

Overview

Background and History

- Austin Independent School District (AISD) was awarded a Cycle 2 grant in March 2004 to support five center sites including two middle school and two high school centers.
- Students served by the grant are primarily a mixture of Hispanic and African American ethnicities. Some centers have a large population of students who are English language learners.

Program Structure and Process

- The AISD 21st CCLC project is a partnership between the grantees, the school principals, the Austin Boys and Girls Club, and other local companies and community organizations.
- Program staff include coordinators, day school teachers, college students, community members, and other non-school or non-teaching staff.
- Decision making is described as decentralized made in conjunction with site coordinators and instructional staff.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- A broad variety of project-based courses are available. Many projects include a performance piece as the culmination that brings the afterschool program into the community.
- Each center offers tutoring and homework assistance Monday through Thursday. Study groups led by IBM volunteers for mathematics and science are available.
- The centers stress the social and emotional development of the students as well as fitness.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- The main recruitment tool is to offer project-based classes that are highly interesting to the students and hire staff with which the students easily build relationships.
- Partnerships with community-based organizations strengthen the afterschool program. Few parents volunteer.

Survey Results

- Staff reported the most commonly used teaching practices in the core content areas include providing students opportunities for read-alouds, to justify their mathematics work through writing, and to use tools to gather/analyze/interpret data.
- The majority of students reported that the afterschool program has helped them finish their homework, make new friends, and think more about what they want to do in the future.

Grantee Background and History

In March 2004, Austin Independent School District (AISD) received the 21st CCLC Cycle 2 grant to implement afterschool programs in five center sites including Travis High School, Pearce Middle School, Webb Middle School, Fulmore Middle School, and Reagan High School.

The Austin Boys and Girls Club is a contributing partner, and other local companies and universities, such as IBM and the University of Texas, provide technology, staff, and project ideas to support the afterschool program activities. Mentors and volunteers from several community organizations also contribute to the AISD afterschool program.

Site visits occurred at Webb Middle School and Reagan High School locations. The Webb afterschool program serves approximately 534 students who are primarily Hispanic (78%) and African American (17%). Approximately 39% of the students are English language learners (ELLs). The Reagan High School center serves approximately 355 students who are primarily a mixture of Hispanic (65%) and African American (14%) ethnicities. Approximately 59% of students at the Reagan High School center are from low-income households. Key student demographics for the centers are listed in Table 7.

Table 7. Center Student Demographics

Center Name	Total Students	Ethnicity					Gender		Category		
		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian	White	Male	Female	ELL	Econ Dis	Special Needs
Webb Middle School	534	92	415	2	6	19	300	234	208	40	91
Reagan High School	355	174	176	0	1	4	177	178	52	209	50

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

In Spring 2006, there were 36 paid workers at the Webb Middle School center and 37 at the Reagan High School center. These included coordinators, day school teachers, college students, community members, and other non-teaching or non-school staff. The staff at both centers are listed in Tables 8 and 9 below.

Table 8. Webb Middle School Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center administrators/coordinators	1	-	-	-
Day school teachers	9	-	-	-
College students	16	1	1	-
Parents	-	-	-	-
Youth development workers	6	-	-	-
Community members	-	-	1	-
Other non-teaching/non-school staff	4	-	2	-
High school students	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**36**	**1**	**4**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Table 9. Reagan High School Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center administrators/coordinators	1	-	-	-
School day teachers	19	-	-	-
College students	7	-	-	-
Parents	1	-	-	-
Youth development workers	1	-	-	-
Community members	1	17	-	-
Other non-teaching/non-school staff	7	-	-	-
High school students	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**37**	**17**	**-**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Program Structure and Process

The AISD 21st CCLC centers observed were Webb Middle School and Reagan High School. The afterschool programs located in these schools involve hands-on, project-based activities that integrate academics and also result in non-academic outcomes related to socialization, self-esteem, and creativity. A broad variety of course offerings for the students are available. These include Forensics, Hip Hop, Poetry Slam, Tutoring/Homework Help, Video Game Design, Computer Building, Cooking, Health and Beauty, African Drumming, Sports, Theater Arts, Art Studio, Radio, and Criminal Scene Investigations. Many include a performance piece as the culmination that brings the afterschool program to the community. The students select to participate in activities that interest them but are encouraged to participate in a well-rounded class selection instead of just one project.

The AISD afterschool program runs between 3:30–6 p.m. at the middle school and 4–6p.m. at the high schools. The classes alternate 1–2 days a week for 1.5 to 2 hours each. The project-based classes are located throughout each school in classrooms, labs, dance studios, or the cafeterias. The high school center has a separate building provided by the Boys and Girls Club. The middle school center has fewer resources, less space, and limited access to the outside fields and gym space that are frequently in use by the day school for practices. Overall, however, the accommodations at both centers were deemed appropriate. The programs have a small student-to-teacher ratio with no more than 10:1 in most classes.

The afterschool instruction is provided by a diverse group of instructors, including experienced teachers, graduate students, volunteers, and/or partners from the Boys and Girls Club. Many of the instructors are bilingual in Spanish and English. Staff turnover is reportedly low for the program. The instructors were selected to teach in the afterschool program because they are able to relate to and understand the students who enroll in the program. When bilingual instructors are not available, students are paired with students who are bilingual.

Management and Leadership. The AISD 21st CCLC project is a partnership between the grantees, the school principals, the Austin Boys and Girls Club, and other local companies and community organizations. The project director provides leadership and makes many of the organizational decisions in conjunction with the partners, site coordinators, and instructors. The project director

develops and maintains the relationships with the partners and the principals to make sure the centers run smoothly. Site coordinators hire the instructional staff, oversee curriculum, and meet regularly with instructional staff. The curriculum is defined by the individual projects, and decisions and planning are mostly left up to the instructional staff and partners. The instructional staff is involved in programmatic decision making, and an inclusive, "family atmosphere" is present among program staff, partners, and students.

Climate. The overall climate of the afterschool program is engaging, supportive, and respectful. Students at both centers were actively participating in their afterschool classes and were comfortable with the instructors. The teachers imbedded learning opportunities and asked the students to write and share often. This included journaling about feelings as well as creative writing. If there were problems that the students needed to share, several classes gave the students an opportunity to share them in a "safe" environment and fellow students tried to help come up with feasible solutions with the guidance of the instructors. Students treated one another with respect. Small groups of mixed gender and ethnicity seemed to have positive, supportive bonds. There were no behavior problems observed during the site visit.

Programmatic Goals. The goals of the AISD afterschool programs align to the goals of the 21st CCLC grant program. The afterschool program is designed to be an enrichment program that supports student development academically, socially, and physically.

The programs use project-based methods that are research-based and replicable. They attempt to align to day schools and provide imbedded opportunities for social development. There is a major emphasis on social development and developing English language skills. The project strives to increase and improve the community and parent involvement. The afterschool staff expects students to develop academic skills through fun, engaging experiences that stretch the students' horizons. Classes integrate and reinforce being positive, uplifting, and encouraging.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

The AISD 21st CCLC program uses project-based instruction to embed and integrate content in ways that students understand and relate to. Instructors integrate academics and purposely use groupings to instigate collaborations. Students sign up for classes that are offered 1–2 times a week for 1.5 to 2 hours each. A goal of the afterschool program is integrated curriculum. Instructors purposely try to make connections between subject areas. For example, a mathematics mural project connected subjects such as art, writing, and mathematics. The murals are permanent reminders in the school of the students' work and contributions. The Dark Tales project required students to create sound effects, write detailed, mood-setting story lines, and decorate their hands, arms, and faces with appropriate mood art.

During the site visit, the afterschool instructors used a combination of grouping strategies depending on the activity within the class. Sometimes the instructor purposely helped students get into groups, but often it was natural grouping by the students. Grouping strategies seemed to be appropriate especially because the goals of the project were social integration and collaboration.

The AISD afterschool program offers many service-learning opportunities. The students are encouraged to give back to their communities and present their projects to the communities when completed. The students also volunteer to assist across projects as needed. For example, students participating in the theater group project may volunteer to read scripts for the radio project or act for another class project. The programs also use peer mentor or teen teacher projects that support younger students from feeder schools. In some cases, the service-learning opportunities turned into paid summer camp employment for students as junior counselors.

Key Observations. Four of the afterschool project-based classes were observed across both centers. Observations of the different project-based activities revealed numerous real-world connections. Many of the classes provide opportunities for students to use multiple skills. The projects were hands-on and asked the students to reflect on what they were observing and draw conclusions. For example, in the project for the Health and Beauty class, students talked about body language, acted out their feelings, predicted what moods the others were acting out, and attempted to resolve personal problems that may have been revealed.

Another example of using multiple skills was observed during the Criminal Scene Investigations class. Students talked about finding blood, looked at what splatters may reveal, conducted experiments, and problem-solved when a solution they were using to reveal the fake blood mixture didn't work. This activity linked to the chemistry they were learning during day school instruction in a hands-on way that piqued the interest of the students. The students and instructor were cooperative, diligent, and determined to figure things out.

In the Radio Mixing class held in a computer lab, 12 ELL students worked independently at a computer researching materials. The instructor worked one-on-one with students for 5 to 10 minutes at a time to show them how to use technology to mix and bring their story to radio. The instructor spoke in both English and Spanish, and students answered in both English and Spanish. The main purpose of the class was to increase the students' communication skills. While the students worked individually, they often paired up to show each other what they had found or to ask questions.

In the Dark Tales class, which was run by a partnering organization, students created radio stories by writing monologues detailing the finding lost treasures in a dark cave. They performed their monologues at the end of the class adorned with hand and face body paint to set the mood. The students were focused and appeared to multitask (write, talk, and decorate).

Tutoring and Homework Help. Each center offers tutoring and homework assistance Monday through Thursday. During this time, the more formal assistance with content instruction occurs. Afterschool staff work individually with students to monitor and assist them with their homework. Study groups led by IBM volunteers for mathematics and science are also available. In the future, the AISD afterschool program intends to eliminate tutoring and focus this time entirely on homework help. This decision is a result of the difficulties associated with training and assessing tutor effectiveness.

Social/Development Practices. The centers stress the social and emotional development of the students as well as physical fitness. Fitness activities include sports, dance, karate, and

skateboarding. Social and emotional development are mostly embedded into the project-based instructional activities. However, students are purposely given opportunities to share and manage their feelings in positive ways during health-related classes at both centers.

Student Assessment Practices. Student assessment primarily occurs during and within the project-based instructional activities when teachers ask questions and students share their work. Instructors use informal ongoing assessment to help plan next steps. No other formal means of assessment was observed.

Alignment With and Ties to Day School. Many instructors are formally and informally connected to day school staff in ways that bridge the afterschool program with the day school instruction. Some afterschool instructors are day school staff. The middle school center prefers not to hire day school staff because they found they are often too tired by the end of the day to engage in the enrichment activities. The high school prefers to hire day school staff because they found the connection with day school instruction to be a strength. Some of the staff said they communicate with the day school staff regularly either by e-mail or in person. In addition, some day school teachers team with afterschool instructors to ensure alignment and strengthen the learning opportunities. The exception seems to be with partner staff members, who are less connected to the day school instruction.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

The main recruitment tool is to offer project-based classes that are highly interesting to the students and hire staff with which the students easily build relationships. There are kick-off events and incentives, but staff members view the caring and supportive nature of the afterschool program to be the main recruitment and retention strategy.

Parental and Community Involvement. There are many strategies involving community organizations and members that strengthen the afterschool program and secure self-sustainability as well as teach the students to give back to the community. The AISD project director stays connected to afterschool networks (i.e., Texas Afterschool Association) in order to increase program quality, advocacy, and partnerships. In addition, the program has partnerships with many community-based organizations such as Communities in Schools, AISD, Boys and Girls Club, Austin Partners in Education, IBM, the University of Texas, 4-H, and Life Changes. Families are invited to attend special events and to volunteer for enrichment activities. Few parents volunteer.

Program Evaluation. Internal evaluations are conducted yearly for the purpose of grant compliance and to strengthen the afterschool program. Each center site monitors student attendance patterns. Ongoing informal assessments are greatly valued and used by the program staff. An external evaluation is planned for the near future. At this point, the program is trying to implement a consistent process for compiling evaluation information so that it is easier to report to stakeholders. To date, stakeholders (parents and students) have not been provided evaluation information but staff and partners have received it as feedback.

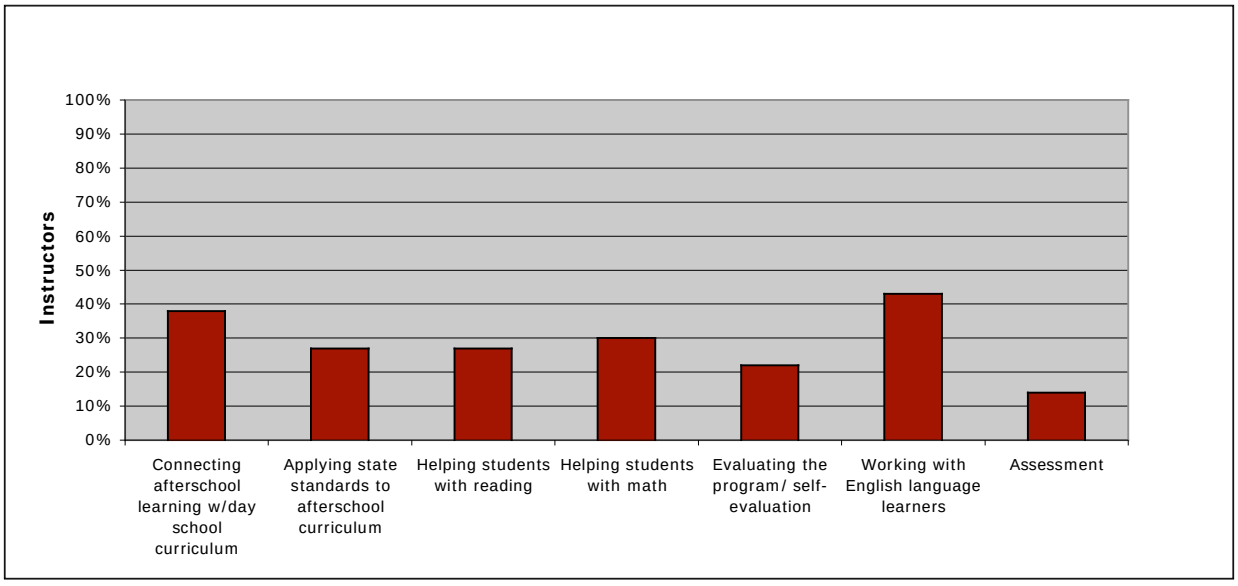
Survey Results

Program staff, students participating in the afterschool program, and parents of participating students completed surveys in the spring of 2006 regarding the afterschool program practices and impacts on students.

Staff Survey. Thirty-seven program staff completed surveys. Two identified themselves as site coordinators, 22 as instructors, two as partner organization staff, one as a volunteer, and 10 as non-teaching staff. Fifty-four percent of the staff have been working in the afterschool program for less than 1 year, and 38% for between 1 and 3 years. Only one staff member has been working in the afterschool program for more than 7 years and two for between 4 and 7 years. A majority of the staff have also been working in afterschool programs in general (51%) for that same 1–3 year period, and 53% have been teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher for between 1 and 7 years.

Professional Development. Staff varied in reporting the number of professional development/trainings they perceived as having been offered to them in the past year. Thirty percent stated that they had never heard about professional development being offered, while approximately another 30% of the staff reported being offered professional development 1–3 times in the last year. Slightly more than half of the staff stated they had not participated in any professional development in this past year, and another 46% responded that they had attended between one and three trainings. Participants who commented on the type(s) of professional development they attended mentioned various topics. Among those were science learning, student motivation, organizational strategies, social skills, arts, and problem solving. Topics staff indicated most often as areas they would like to have more or future professional development in were working with English language learners, connecting afterschool learning with day school curriculum, and helping students with mathematics content (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Austin ISD: Percent of Program Staff Indicating Various Interests in Professional Development



Note. N = 37; Rating options: Yes or No

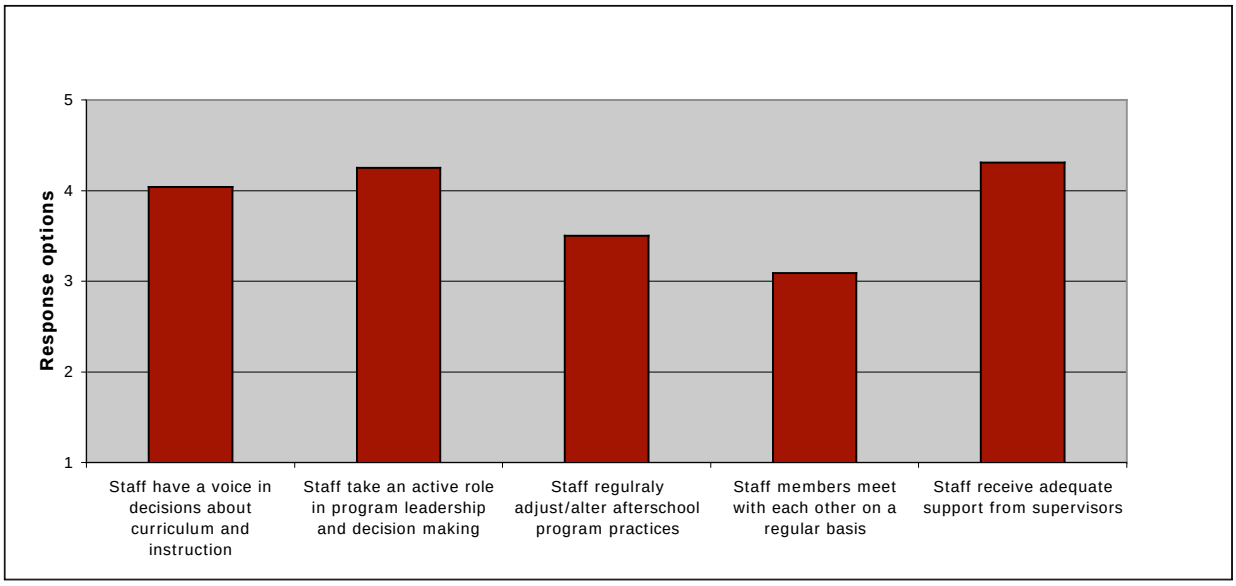
Organizational Structure. Sixty-seven percent of the staff stated they knew whom to contact at their students' day school with questions on their progress or status. However, only 34% said they coordinate afterschool practices with their students' day school homework. Further, only 44% indicated that they knew, on a weekly basis, the content to be covered with their students during

the school day, and only 33% use assessment data from the day school to plan students' work. On average, program staff reported that they speak with their students' day school teachers once a month or less about their students' homework, coordinating curriculum, or instructional issues.

Approximately 75% of program staff reported that they do not have regular time set aside to meet with parents of their afterschool students or did not know if regular time was set aside. Fifty-seven percent of the staff indicated that they never meet with their students' parents, while 11% reported meeting parents more than twice a month, 17% once a month, and 14% less than once per month.

The decision making is reportedly decentralized, with staff taking an active role in program leadership and instructional decisions. Figure 11 below presents survey results for staff perceptions of overall program organization.

Figure 11. Austin ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Program Organization



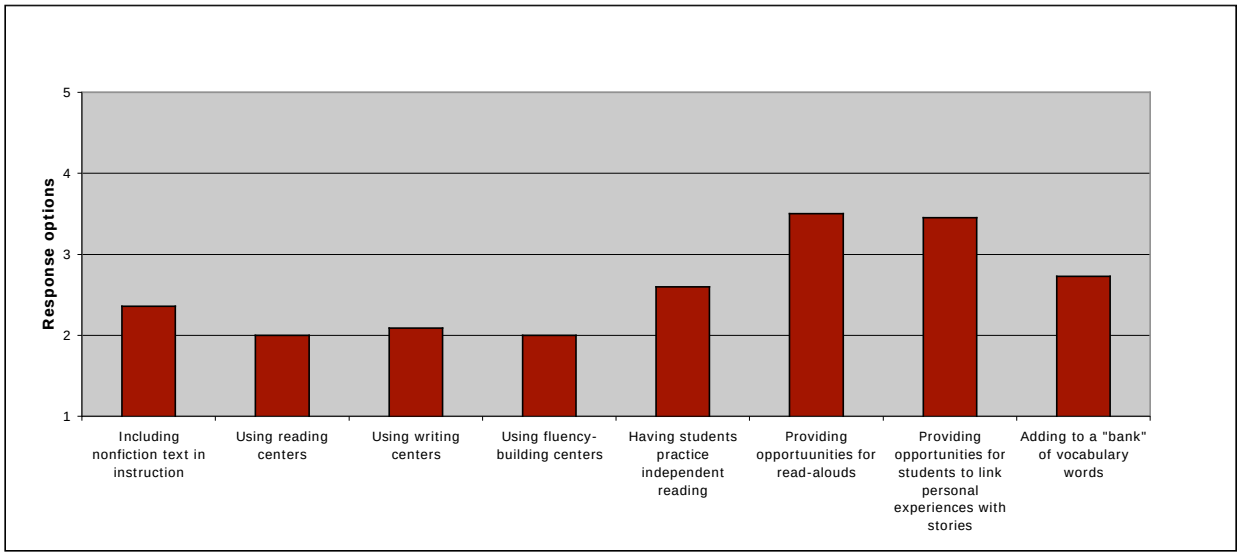
Note. N = 37; Ratings scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree

Educational Practices and Strategies. The types of instructional practices that two thirds to three quarters of the program staff reported using *at least once per week* to *more than once per week* in the afterschool program were tutoring and homework help, one-on-one tutoring, peer support, computer-assisted instruction, and providing different types of instruction to students based on their ability level. Approximately 60% of staff also mentioned having students work in small groups or teams and letting students know their expectations and criteria for afterschool assignments.

Regarding the assessment of students' progress on academic assignments, the vast majority of the project staff stated that they *never* used formal tests or quizzes or did so only rarely (*less than once per month)* (94% on reading assignments, 97% on mathematics, and 100% on science). Many did, however, indicate that they spot-checked for student understanding at least *once per week* or *more than once per week* (44% on reading assignments, 42% on mathematics, and 26% on science).

Of reading, mathematics, and science, 11 of the program staff stated that they focused primarily on reading in their afterschool programs, 10 focused on mathematics, and 7 focused on science. For those focused on reading, the most frequently used practices in the afterschool programs were providing opportunities for read-alouds and for students to link personal experiences with stories. Figure 12 illustrates survey results regarding the various reading practices implemented at the centers.

Figure 12. Austin ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Reading Practices

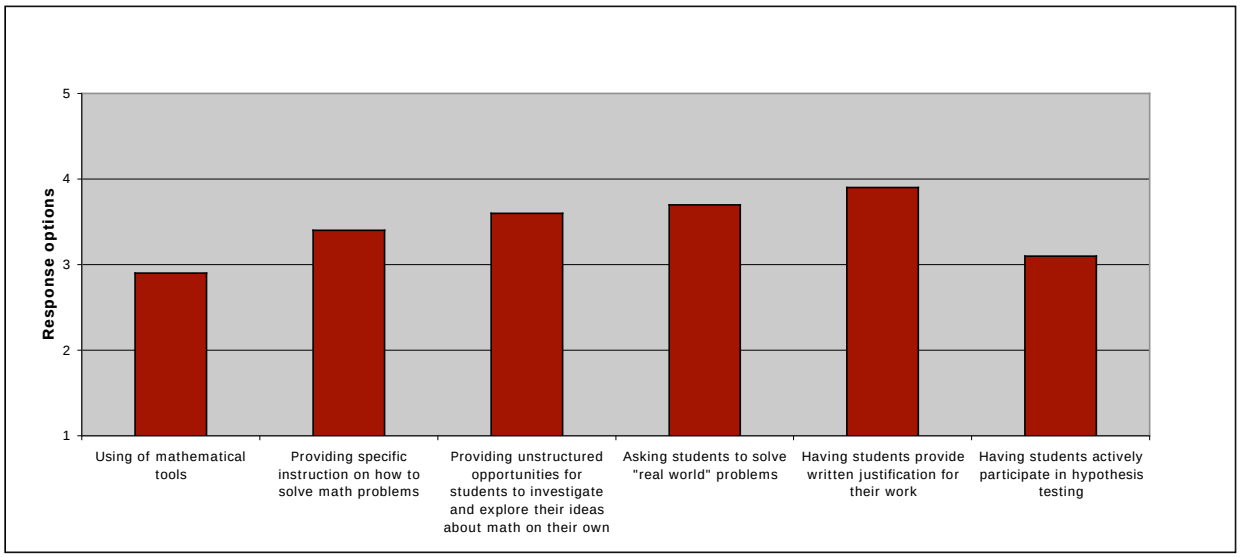


Note. N = 11; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

For the 10 program staff that indicated they focused on mathematics with students in their afterschool program, 8 stated that they *frequently* to *always* had students provide written justification for their work. Other practices used relatively frequently included providing unstructured opportunities for students to investigate and explore their ideas about mathematics on their own and asking students "real world" problems. Figure 13 illustrates survey results regarding the frequency ratings of various mathematics practices implemented at the centers.

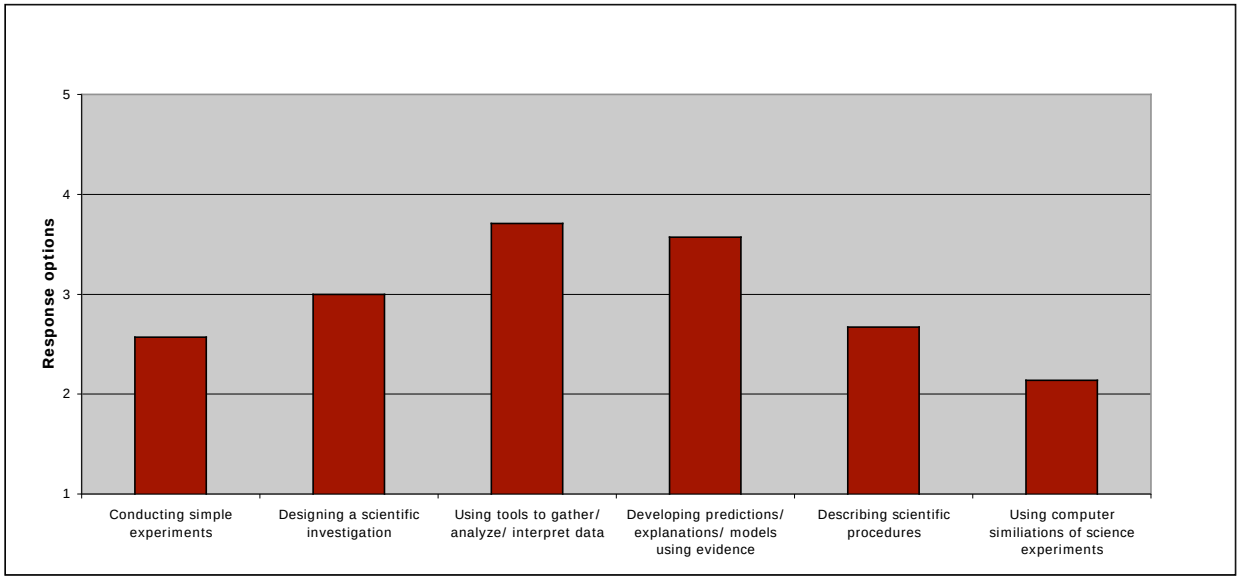
Science instruction was focused on by 7 of the program staff. Practices used *sometimes* to *frequently* included using tools to gather, analyze, and interpret data; developing predictions, explanations, and models using evidence; and designing scientific investigations. Figure 14 illustrates survey results regarding the frequency ratings of various science practices implemented at the centers.

Figure 13. Austin ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Mathematics Instructional Practices



Note. N = 10; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Figure 14. Austin ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Science Instructional Practices



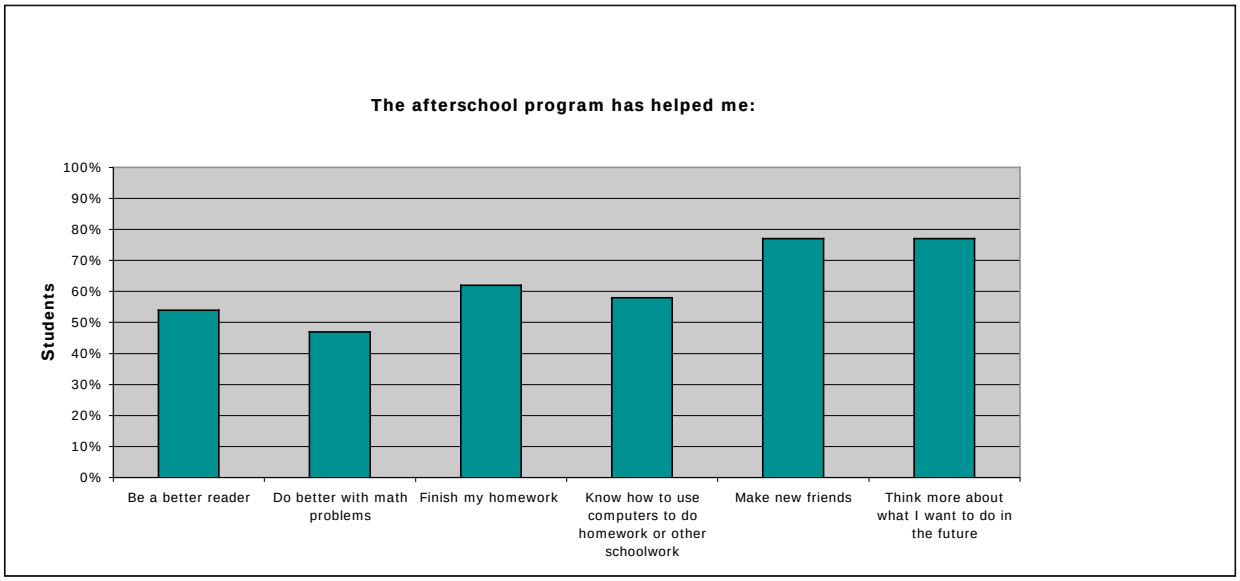
Note. N = 7; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Student Survey. Eighty-eight students attending the afterschool program from the middle and high school grades (6–12) completed surveys. Students rated 25 statements on a scale of 1 = *Never,* 2 = *Sometimes,* 3 = *Often,* and 4 = *Always.*

In general, students reported that they liked the activities in their afterschool program (mean = 3.3), that the program staff listen when students have something to say (mean = 3.1), that the staff and students treat each other with respect (mean = 3.2), the staff encourage students to try

new things (mean = 3.2), and that the afterschool program is a comfortable place to hang out (mean = 3.3). The students also stated that they spent much of their time in sports activities (mean = 3.0), arts activities (mean = 2.7), and working on homework or schoolwork (mean = 2.5). As shown in Figure 15, the majority of the students also reported that the afterschool program has helped them make new friends, learn about the kinds of careers they might want, and think more about their future. Slightly over half of the students (54%) said the program helped them understand what they read better, and slightly under half (47%) said the program helped them feel more comfortable solving mathematics problems.

Figure 15. Austin ISD: Percent of Middle/High School Students Indicating Various Program Outcomes



Note. **N = 88; Ratings options: Yes, No, or Unsure**

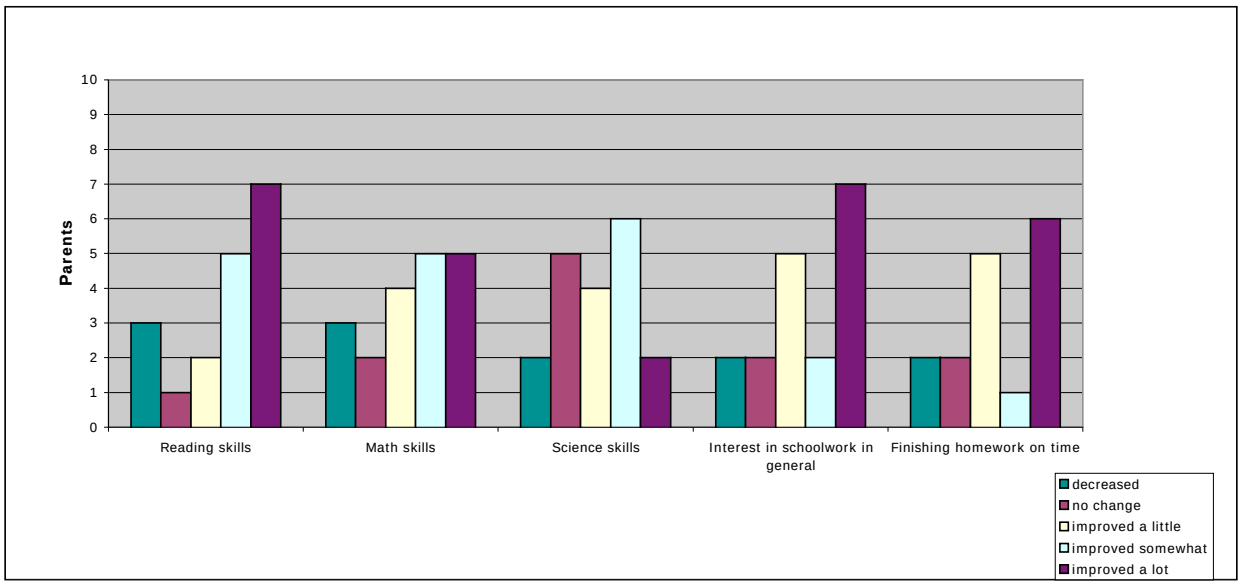
Regarding effects from attending the afterschool program, 66% of the students reported that they work in their classes even if they don't like them, 69% reported asking teachers or other adults when they are having difficulty understanding something, and 75% said that the afterschool program has made them feel that there are people who care if they do well in school. Overall, 78% of the students reported that they "really like the program—it's great."

Parent Survey. Twenty-one parents of students participating in the afterschool program completed surveys. On a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *Never* and 10 = *Always*, parents rated several statements about the program and program staff. Mean ratings for all nine statements ranged from 7.7 to 9.3. The highest-rated items were parents' perceptions about feeling welcome to visit the program and the availability of someone to talk with them from the program if they have questions or concerns (means = 9.3 and 8.8, respectively).

Ten of the parents also noted that they visited their children's afterschool program at least once a month and that they also helped out in the program at least once a month. With respect to changes in their child's academic skills, 12 of the parents reported seeing highest improvements (*somewhat* to *a lot*) in reading. Ten also reported increased interest by their children in mathematics and 12 noted an increased interest by their children in science. Figure 16 presents

the parents' perceptions of outcomes related to the afterschool program. Overall, parents rated their happiness with the afterschool program activities, staff, materials and resources, and the progress their children have been making in learning very high (means ranged from 8.5 to 8.9 on a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *very unhappy* and 10 = *very happy*).

Figure 16. Austin ISD: Number of Parents Indicating Various Program Outcomes



Note. N = 21; Ratings scale: 1 = Decreased, 2 = No Change, 3 = Improved a little, 4 = Improved somewhat, 5 = Improved a lot

Profile Summary

In March 2004, Austin Independent School District (AISD) received the 21st CCLC Cycle 2 grant to implement afterschool programs in five center sites. Site visits occurred at Webb Middle School and Reagan High School. The students served by the grant are primarily a mixture of Hispanic and African American ethnicities and some centers have a large population of students who are English language learners. The AISD 21st CCLC project is a partnership between the grantee, the school principals, the Austin Boys and Girls Club, and other local companies and community organizations. Program staff include site coordinators, day school teachers, college students, community members, and other non-school or non-teaching staff. Decision making for the program is made in conjunction with site coordinators and instructional staff.

The overall climate of the afterschool program is engaging, supportive, and respectful. Students at both center sites were actively participating in their afterschool classes and were comfortable with the instructors. AISD offers a broad variety of project-based courses for students in the afterschool program. These include Forensics, Hip Hop, Poetry Slam, Video Game Design, Computer Building, Cooking, Health and Beauty, African Drumming, Sports, Theater Arts, Art Studio, Radio, and Criminal Scene Investigations. Many of the projects include a performance piece for members of the community. In addition, each center offers tutoring and homework assistance Monday through Thursday. The afterschool programs stress the social and emotional development of the students as well as fitness.

The main recruitment tool is to offer project-based classes that are highly interesting to the students and hire staff with which the students easily build relationships. The Austin Boys and Girls Club is a contributing partner, and other local companies and universities, such as IBM and the University of Texas, provide technology, staff, and project ideas to support the afterschool program activities.

Survey results indicate that staff frequently provide students opportunities for read-alouds, to justify their mathematics work through writing, and to use tools to gather/analyze/interpret data. The majority of students reported that the afterschool program has helped them finish their homework, make new friends, and think more about what they want to do in the future.

CENTER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

21st Century Community Learning Centers at
Center Elementary School and Center Intermediate School
Site Visit: May 16–18, 2006

Overview

Background and History

- Center Independent School District (CISD) was awarded a Cycle 3 grant in February 2005 to support four center sites at a primary school, an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school.
- Students served by the programs are primarily a mixture of Hispanic and African American ethnicities.

Program Structure and Process

- The CISD afterschool program is focused on aligning the day school and afterschool programs and enhancing student success.
- Certified teachers provide academic instruction, and paraprofessionals oversee and facilitate the enrichment activities.
- Decision making is described as decentralized. The lead teachers (site coordinators) collaborate with their school principal and the afterschool project director for decisions regarding the curriculum.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- At CISD there is a strong emphasis on integrated curriculum, particularly regarding reading and writing and other subject areas.
- Each center offers structured academic instruction and flexible enrichment activities where students select what they want to attend.
- Teachers place a high priority on presenting lessons in a way that students enjoy, and the program purchases a number of tools (such as educational games, software packages, and other teaching aids) to encourage student engagement.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- Recruitment and retention are not viewed to be a challenge.
- Parents are offered ESL and technology classes through the afterschool program. Efforts to increase community involvement are underway.

Survey Results

- Staff reported frequently using a wide variety of teaching practices in the core content areas.
- The majority of the students reported that the afterschool program has helped them be a better reader, do better with mathematics problems, and finish their homework.

Grantee Background and History

Center Independent School District (CISD) received the 21st CCLC grant in February 2005 from TEA, and the afterschool program began in March of that year. The grant supports four centers: Moffett Primary (preK–1), Center Elementary (grades 2–3), Center Intermediate (grades 4–5), and Center Middle (grades 6–8).

Site visits occurred at the Center Elementary and Center Intermediate locations. The elementary center serves approximately 188 students who are primarily Hispanic (44%) and African American (30%). Approximately 32% of the students are English language learners (ELLs). The intermediate center serves approximately 284 students who are primarily Hispanic (35%), White (35%), and African American (29%). The majority of students at both centers are from low-income households. Key student demographics for the centers are listed in Table 10.

Table 10. Center Student Demographics

Center Name	Total Students	Ethnicity					Gender		Category		
		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian	White	Male	Female	ELL	Econ Dis	Special Needs
Center Elementary	188	57	82	0	0	49	89	99	61	115	9
Center Intermediate	284	81	100	2	1	100	124	160	48	152	15

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

In Spring 2006, there were 10 paid workers at the Center Elementary site and 26 at the Center Intermediate site. These include day school teachers, youth development workers, and other non-teaching or non-school staff. Neither center site listed administrators as staff supported by the grant. Neither center listed volunteers, in-kind contributions, or staff turnover for the semester. The staff at both centers are listed in Tables 11 and 12 below.

Table 11: Center Elementary Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center administrators/coordinators	-	-	-	-
Day school teachers	9	-	-	-
College students	-	-	-	-
Parents	-	-	-	-
Youth development workers	-	-	-	-
Community members	-	-	-	-
Other non-teaching/non-school staff	1	-	-	-
High school students	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**10**	**-**	**-**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Table 12: Center Intermediate Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center administrators/coordinators	-	-	-	-
School day teachers	22	-	-	-
College students	-	-	-	-
Parents	-	-	-	-
Youth development workers	1	-	-	-
Community members	-	-	-	-
Other non-teaching/non-school staff	3	-	-	-
High school students	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**26**	**-**	**-**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Program Structure and Process

Both the elementary and the intermediate center sites run for 2 hours after school for 4 days. The intermediate program also operates for 30 minutes each morning on all 5 school days. The programs have access to all school facilities, including classrooms, the library, and the outside grounds.

All academic activities are taught by certified, day school teachers. Paraprofessional aides teach the character education/youth development/wellness classes. At the elementary center, the student-to-teacher ratio is 13:1 in the academic classes, and the ratio in the social/developmental classes is 13:1. At the intermediate center, the student-to-teacher ratio is about 7:1 and the student to paraprofessional ratio is 13:1.

The largest percentage of ELL students is at the primary school with the percent decreasing as the grade levels increase. Bilingual teachers and paraprofessionals are available to work with students who have limited English proficiency.

Management and Leadership. There is a strong relationship and good communication between the project director, the lead teachers (site coordinators), and instructional staff. The project director meets with the lead teachers at least once a month. The principals at both schools are involved in decision making for the program. Because of the extreme rural nature of this area, transporting students and the time involved in this process are always considered when making decisions regarding scheduling, types of classes, parent involvement, supplies, and teacher time.

Climate. The overall atmosphere at the CISD afterschool program is supportive, relaxed, nurturing, and trusting. Teachers place a high priority on providing students with a safe environment, and their relationships with students are more relaxed than in the day school program. This creates a caring atmosphere where students feel comfortable talking with teachers about their home lives and other situations they want to discuss. Teachers describe the afterschool program as “one happy family” and say that their relationships with students are casual, which encourages students to approach them for assistance when needed. Students at both centers are very engaged, actively participating in classroom discussions and

communicating frequently with teachers. Teachers provide constant feedback, both individually and in group settings.

Programmatic Goals. The CISD afterschool program goals are very focused on aligning the day school and afterschool programs and enhancing student success. This is relatively easily achieved because the afterschool staff members are day school teachers as well. The staff expects students to increase their performance academically and socially. They work with a number of students who have failed TAKS, so they expect students to score at least at an adequate level, although most have higher expectations for their afterschool students. Other program goals include linking afterschool activities to student home life and the community, continuing staff development, and using research-based practices. The project director has a particular interest in ensuring that outcomes can be documented.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

There is a balance of academic instruction and character education/youth development activities across the afterschool centers in this district. The program uses flexible scheduling for the enrichment classes, where students can choose what they want to attend. The intermediate center offers mathematics and reading Monday–Thursday for at least 1 hour and 15 minutes per day using integrated enrichment activities. This center also provides 30 minutes of tutoring in mathematics and reading every morning. The elementary center rotates mathematics, science, and character education/youth development for 30 minutes each day during operation (Monday–Thursday), integrating reading into all content areas.

Afterschool staff members are certified day school teachers or trained paraprofessionals. There is little turnover in either group. Afterschool staff members have considerable input concerning curriculum, often in conjunction with their lead teacher. The lead teachers collaborate with their school principal and the afterschool project director for final authority over the curriculum. There is an effort made to follow the day school curriculum in the afterschool program, but staff also incorporate more hands-on and fun activities for the afterschool students.

At CISD there is a strong emphasis on integrated curriculum, particularly regarding reading and writing and other subject areas. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies, including whole-group and small-group instruction. Student-student pairings are also used in reading and mathematics classes. The varied instructional approaches keep the students more active in learning. Also, the student-student instruction provides a way for students to take increased responsibility for their own learning. The focus in teaching reading, mathematics, and science is on enhanced understanding and basic and advanced comprehension. In the science class, exploration and experimentation are also key features. Teachers place a high priority on presenting lessons in a way that students enjoy, and the program purchases a number of tools (such as educational games, software packages, and other teaching aids) to encourage student engagement. In general, the afterschool curriculum is closely aligned with the day school curriculum, which is described as research-based, and teachers use TEKS and National Council for Teaching Mathematics (NCTM) standards to develop their lessons.

Key Observations. Classroom observations were conducted at both the elementary and intermediate centers. In both cases, two themes were apparent: (1) strong student engagement

and (2) an emphasis on integrated instruction. In all of the classes observed, students were actively participating in group discussions and going to the instructors with questions or to show them their work. In a reading/mathematics class, the teacher read aloud and included students in the story by constantly asking questions and having them think ahead to what could happen. Students were provided constant feedback, both individually and in a group setting. In a science class, students participated in a quasi-experimental exercise and were proud to show their efforts. A number of the instructors' questions led to students using critical thinking and problem solving to find the answers they needed.

At the elementary school, a reading/mathematics class was observed in which the students used multiple skills, including answering questions on their comprehension of materials read aloud by the teacher, problem solving what could happen to characters in the stories, identifying shapes and colors in the story, and pronouncing and defining vocabulary from the story. The students then used art materials to construct a drawing relative to the mathematics shapes and concepts they had discussed in the reading material. The students' activities included a longer-term project where they would continue on this topic and have the opportunity to incorporate new information from other classes. Another example of the integrated approach was observed at the intermediate school, where students in a science class actively participated in an exercise where they described a number of rocks using scientific measures and story-telling and then distributed their sample to other groups to see if they had accurately depicted their rocks. The students related their rocks to those encountered in their environments outside of school and made connections to weather issues that could impact how the rocks looked.

Tutoring and Homework Help. Homework assistance is part of the time allotted for character education/youth development activities at both CISD centers. Homework help is provided to students as needed at the elementary center but has been incorporated more intentionally at the intermediate center, where 30 minutes twice a week is used for this purpose. A room specifically designated for homework help is provided and always staffed with a paraprofessional.

Social/Development Practices. Non-academic goals mentioned by grantee staff included increasing student self-esteem and ownership and decreasing discipline referrals. Both centers offer character education/youth development/wellness classes, balanced with academics. Examples of enrichment classes include cooking, money management, and sports. The staff act as role models for behaviors and communication. There is also an effort to integrate social and developmental activities with core academic content in mathematics, reading, and science. For instance, in nutrition classes, students learn about mathematics and science aspects, such as chemical interactions of foods, counting calories, and reading labels.

Student Assessment Practices. Teachers and paraprofessional aides informally assess student progress and needs related to the learning tasks. In classrooms observed, the teachers went around to each student to see how he or she was progressing and offered assistance and feedback as needed or requested. Teachers also reported using their planning periods and informal interactions to discuss classroom and individual student assessments based on observations, student feedback, and performance data.

Alignment With and Ties to Day School. Since the afterschool teachers at this center are all day school teachers, there is extensive bridging between the programs. Many of the paraprofessional aides also work in the day school program. School staff have common meetings weekly by grade level and content level, which enables afterschool teachers to work with day school teachers that are not part of the afterschool program. They also have staff meetings and professional development together, where they collaborate and discuss organizational issues as well as student progress.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

Recruitment and retention are not viewed to be a challenge. There has been an increase in student enrollment, low student turnover, and a waiting list.

Parental and Community Involvement. Parent involvement is one area where staff would like to see improvements. Staff at both centers mentioned an open door policy for parents, although they do not have many parents who volunteer in the classroom and only about one third attend events held at night. Parents are offered ESL and technology classes through the afterschool program. Most notices are sent home with students to communicate with parents; sometimes calls are made. The intermediate center distributes a monthly newsletter to parents, offers a bilingual brochure of their program, and surveys parents to assess their opinion about the program.

In an effort to increase community involvement, the afterschool program has established a collaborative relationship with the Piney Woods Health Center, where speakers come to talk with students and provide professional development for staff. They have also begun to work on getting volunteers from the local Ministerial Alliance to help in the afterschool program. Panola Junior College assists with the provision of the ESL classes for parents, and some of their college students volunteer to read with afterschool students. The project director is also working with the local Chamber of Commerce to determine which contacts would be the most beneficial.

Program Evaluation. Several means to evaluate CISD's afterschool program have been implemented. Parents of afterschool students are surveyed about their child's progress and the program offered, and teachers are surveyed about the professional development they receive. The project director performs ongoing observations, using a classroom observation and self-assessment rating system form, and also gathers academic and tracking data. The program has also had a limited, formative evaluation performed by Dr. McCune, a professor at the College of Education at Stephen F. Austin State University. The project director expressed a strong desire to develop a more formal, rigorous evaluation system to add to the existing evaluation efforts. Findings from current evaluation components are shared with district staff, day school and afterschool staff, and parents.

Survey Results

Program staff, students participating in the afterschool program, and parents of participating students completed surveys in the spring of 2006 regarding the afterschool program practices and impacts on students.

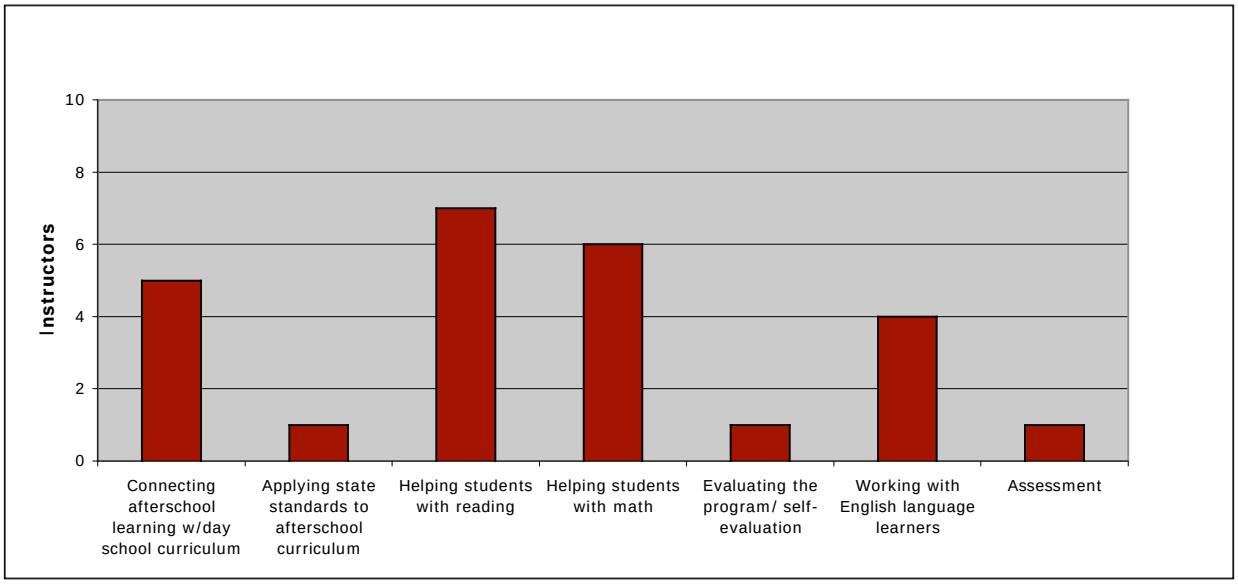
Staff Survey. Ten program staff completed surveys. One reported being a site coordinator, and nine identified themselves as instructors. One person reported working with the afterschool program

for less than 1 year, six for between 1 and 3 years, and three for more than 7 years. All have also been working in afterschool programs in general for at least 1 year and as much as more than 7 years and have been teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher for that same time period.

Professional Development. All of the staff stated that between two and four professional development/trainings have been offered in the past year and that they have participated in them. Of the participants who commented on the type(s) of professional development they attended, most mentioned reading content.

Topics staff mentioned most often as areas for future professional development were helping students with reading and mathematics and connecting afterschool learning with day school curriculum. Figure 17 shows survey responses to these items.

Figure 17. Center ISD: Number of Program Staff Indicating Various Interests in Professional Development



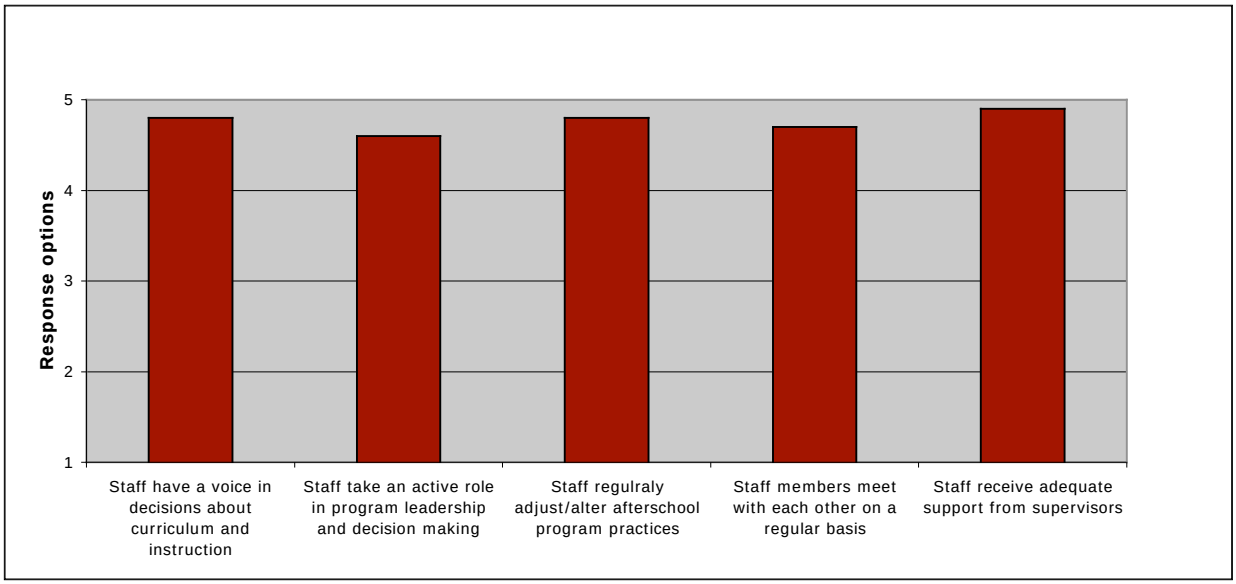
Note. N = 10; Rating options: Yes or No

Organizational Structure. All of the staff stated they knew whom to contact at their students' day school with questions on their progress or status. Seven also said they coordinate afterschool practices with their students' day school homework. Further, all staff indicated that they knew, on a weekly basis, the content to be covered with their students during the school day, and all reported that they use assessment data from the day school to plan students' work. On average, program staff reported that they speak with their students' day school teachers twice a month or more about their students' homework, coordinating curriculum, or instructional issues.

Seven of the program staff reported that they do not have regular time set aside to meet with parents of their afterschool students or did not know if regular time was set aside. Five indicated that they meet with their students' parents less than once a month, 2 reported meeting parents at least once a month, and 1 stated they meet with parents more than twice per month.

The decision making is reportedly highly decentralized, with staff taking an active role in program leadership and instructional decisions. Figure 18 below presents survey results for staff perceptions of overall program organization.

Figure 18. Center ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Program Organization



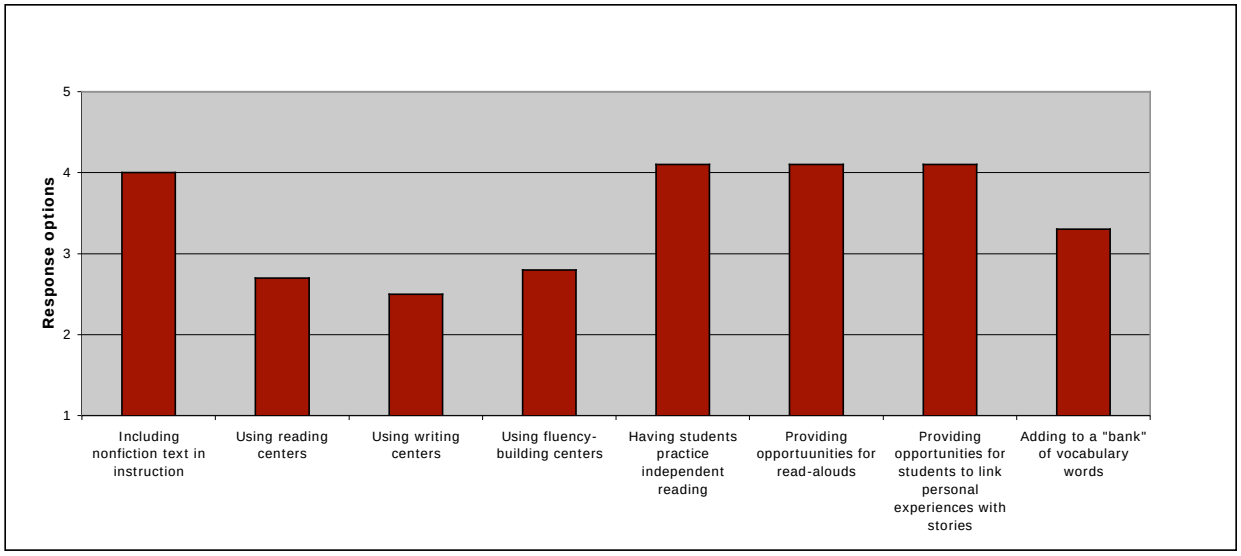
Note. N = 10; Ratings scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree

Educational Practices and Strategies. The types of instructional practices that program staff reported using *at least once per week* to *more than once per week* in the afterschool program were providing direct feedback to students about their progress, having students work in small groups or teams, one-on-tutoring, peer support, and computer-assisted instruction. They also mentioned integrating content instruction with other disciplines such as reading with art or science with technology, providing additional support for students who do not speak English as their first language, and letting students know their expectations and criteria for afterschool assignments. Least often used were linking instruction to community services and having students work on projects that spanned several days.

Regarding the assessment of students' progress on academic assignments, the majority of the program staff stated that they rarely used formal tests or quizzes (6 for reading assignments, 6 for math assignments, and 5 for science). All, however, indicated that they spot-checked for student understanding at least *once per week* on reading and mathematics assignments, and 7 of the 10 program staff indicated the same for science assignments.

Of reading, mathematics, and science, 7 of the program staff reported focusing mostly on reading, 6 focused on mathematics, and 4 focused on science. For those focused on reading content, the most frequently used practices in the afterschool programs were providing opportunities for read-alouds, independent reading using computers or tapes, linking students' experiences with stories, and including nonfiction text in instruction. Figure 19 illustrates survey results of the various reading practices implemented at the centers.

Figure 19. Center ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Reading Instructional Practices



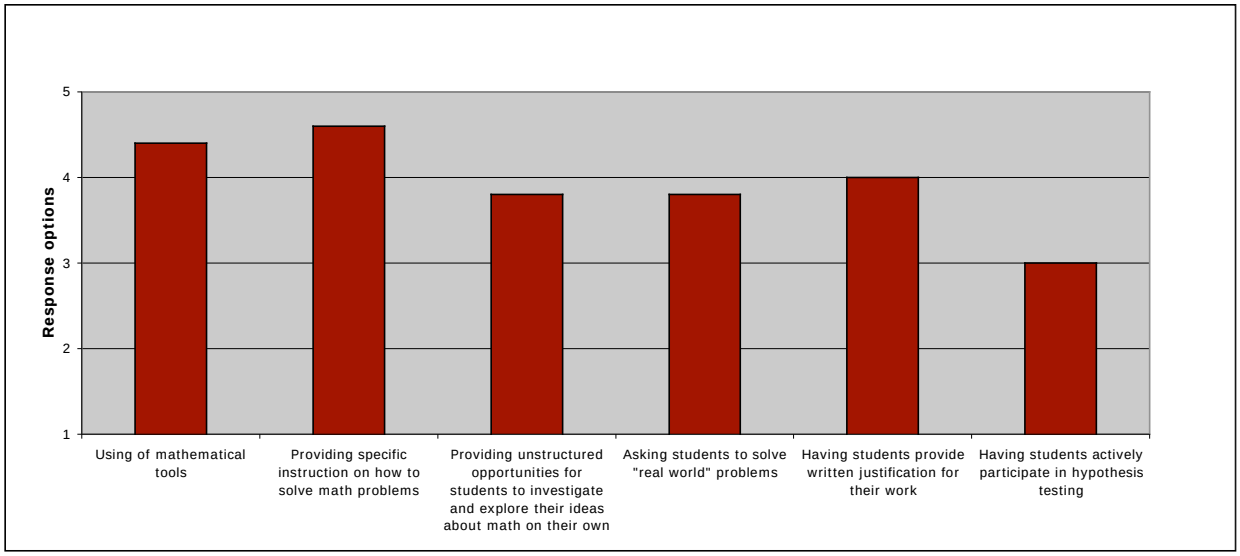
Note. N = 7; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

For the 6 program staff who indicated they focused on mathematics with students in their afterschool program, all of the respondents stated that they *frequently* to *always* focused on providing specific instruction on how to solve mathematics problems and used mathematical tools for learning experiences that included manipulatives, calculators, and computer-based tools. Figure 20 illustrates mean survey ratings of various mathematics practices implemented at the centers.

The staff focusing on mathematics content instructed students in the primary grades. On a *daily* to *weekly* basis, the staff most frequently concentrated on the application/understanding of fractions, decimals, percentages, multiplication and division, and using equations to express relationships between numbers.

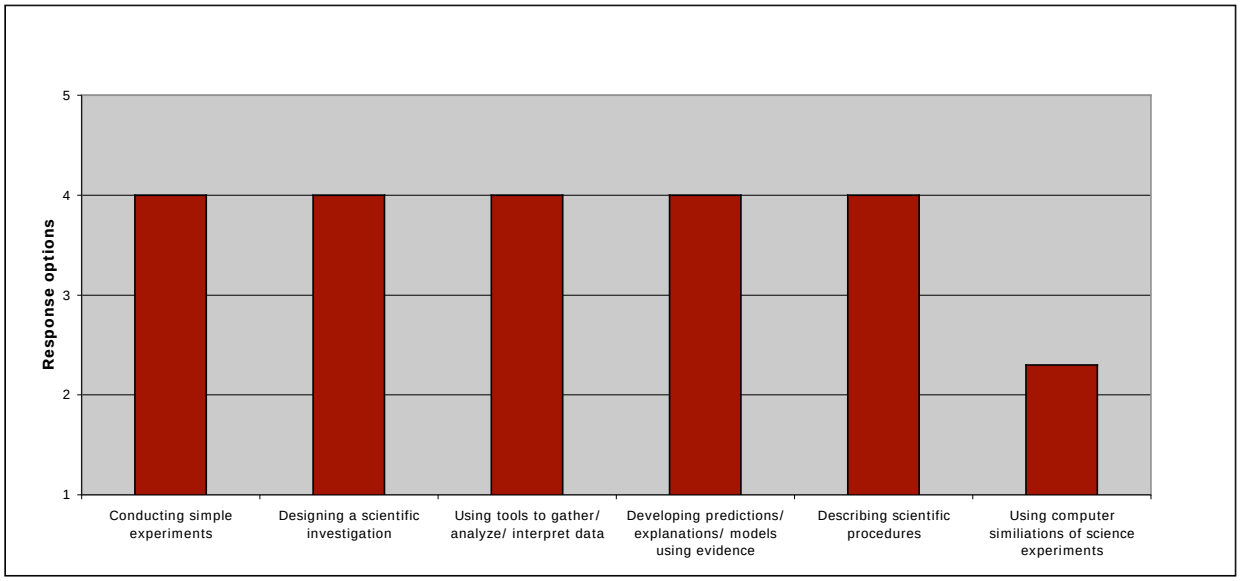
Science instruction was focused on by three of the program staff. As shown in Figure 21, all 4 instructors frequently used simple experiments, scientific investigation, gathering/analyzing/interpreting data, developing predictions/explanation/models, and describing scientific procedures.

Figure 20. Center ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Mathematics Instructional Practices



Note. N = 6; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Figure 21. Center ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Science Instructional Practices



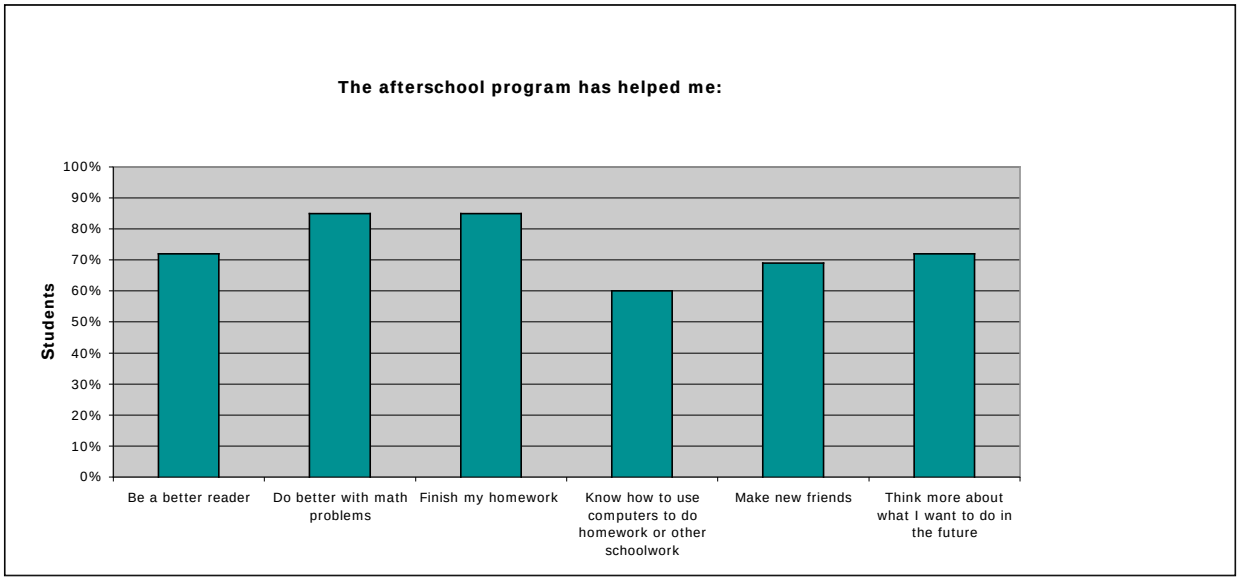
Note. N = 4; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Student Survey. Students attending the afterschool program from grades 3, 4, and 5 completed surveys (n = 61). Students rated 22 statements on a scale of 1–3 where 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Sometimes*, and 3 = *Always*. Thirty-one percent of the students indicated that they *always* practiced reading in the afterschool program. Fifty-three percent indicated the same for mathematics, 20% for writing, and 29% for science.

In general, students reported that they liked going to the afterschool program (mean = 2.7), that they liked the activities in their afterschool program (mean = 2.7), that the program staff listen when students have something to say (mean = 2.5), that they get along well with the program staff (mean = 2.7), and that they feel safe while attending the program (mean = 2.7). They also indicated that the time they spend in the afterschool program was primarily on sports/games (mean = 2.6) or doing homework or schoolwork (mean = 2.6).

As shown in Figure 22, the majority of the students also reported that the afterschool program has helped them be a better reader, do better with mathematics problems, finish their homework, and think more about what they want to do in the future. Seventy-seven percent of the students reported that they "really like the program—it's great," and 95% thought the program was helping them become better students.

Figure 22. Center ISD: Percent of Elementary School Students Indicating Various Program Outcomes



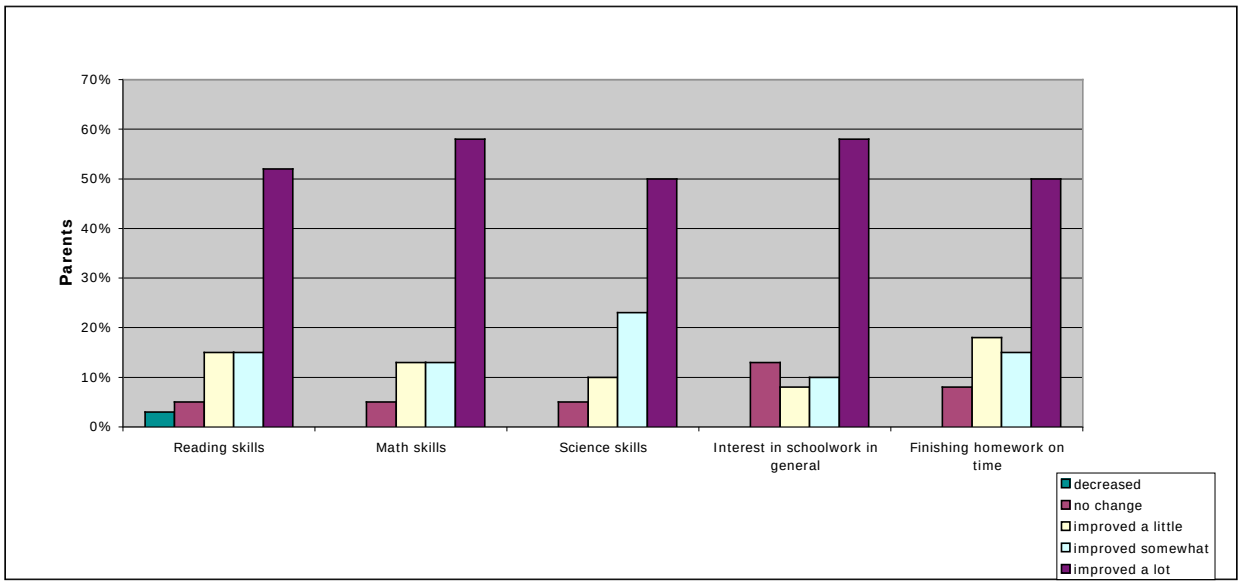
Note. N = 61; Ratings options: Yes, No, or Unsure

Parent Survey. Forty parents of students participating in the afterschool program completed surveys. On a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *Never* and 10 = *Always*, parents rated several statements about the program and program staff. Mean ratings for all nine statements ranged from 9.0 to 9.5. Items included parents' perceptions about feeling welcome to visit the program and about having a staff member available to talk with them, to help them understand school reports and paperwork, and to deal fairly with their children.

The majority of parents also noted that they visited their children's afterschool program once every few months to once a month. Almost three fourths of parents reported that they never, or only once or twice a year, help out in the program. With respect to changes in their children's academic tasks, skills, and interest, parents primarily reported *somewhat* to *a lot* of improvement in most areas. While all items were rated highly, children's mathematics skills and interest in mathematics and science received the top ratings. Overall, parents rated their happiness with the afterschool program activities, staff, materials and resources, and the progress their children have

been making in learning very high (means ranged from 8.8 to 9.5 on a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *very unhappy* and 10 = *very happy*).

Figure 23. Center ISD: Percent of Parents Indicating Various Program Outcomes



Note. N = 40; Ratings scale: 1 = Decreased, 2 = No change, 3 = Improved a little, 4 = Improved somewhat, 5 = Improved a lot

Profile Summary

Center Independent School District (CISD) was awarded a Cycle 3 grant in February 2005 to support four center sites at a primary school, an elementary school, a intermediate school, and a high school. Site visits occurred at the Center Elementary and Center Intermediate locations. Students served by the programs are primarily a mixture of Hispanic and African American ethnicities and the majority are from low-income households. Certified teachers provide academic instruction, and paraprofessionals oversee and facilitate the enrichment activities. Decision making is described as decentralized. The lead teachers (site coordinators) collaborate with their school principal and the afterschool project director on decisions regarding the curriculum.

The CISD afterschool program is focused on aligning the day school and afterschool programs and enhancing student success. There is a strong emphasis on integrated curriculum, particularly regarding reading and writing and other subject areas. Each center offers structured academic instruction and flexible enrichment activities where students select what they want to attend. The overall atmosphere at the CISD afterschool program is supportive, relaxed, nurturing, and trusting. Teachers place a high priority on providing students with a safe environment, and their relationships with students are more relaxed than in the day school program.

Recruitment and retention are not viewed to be a challenge as exhibited by an increase in student enrollment, low student turnover, and a waiting list. Parents are offered ESL and technology

classes through the afterschool program and efforts to increase community involvement are underway.

In surveys, staff reported frequently using a wide variety of teaching practices in the core content areas. The most frequently used instructional practices were providing opportunities for read-alouds, for specific instruction on how to solve mathematics problems, and for using simple experiments and describing scientific procedures.
The majority of the students reported that the afterschool program has helped them be better readers, do better with mathematics problems, and finish their homework.

HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

21st Century Community Learning Centers at
Elrod Elementary School and Las Americas Middle School
Site Visit: May 2–3, 2006

Overview

Background and History

- Houston Independent School District (HISD) was awarded a 21st CCLC Cycle 3 grant in September 2004 to support four center sites at three elementary schools and one middle school.
- The students served by the grant are primarily African American or Hispanic. The students in the middle school program are mostly immigrant students who have been in the United States for fewer than 2 years and are English language learners.

Program Structure and Process

- The primary goal of the HISD afterschool program is to provide a safe and secure environment for the children after school.
- The first hour of the program is devoted to tutoring and homework help followed by enrichment activities.
- The program uses site-based management in which each center develops its own activities to accommodate the unique cultural and community differences.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- Teachers from the day school and volunteer tutors provide individualized and small-group instruction. The reading curriculum is primarily focused on developing the students' English conversational skills.
- Enrichment activities are the main method for providing students with social opportunities.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- Recruitment and retention are not viewed to be a challenge. There has been an increase in student enrollment, low student turnover, and a waiting list.
- Community involvement is a key component of the afterschool program, which relies on volunteers and staff from organizations such as the YMCA, the University of Houston, and local church groups to provide the majority of the enrichment activities.

Survey Results

- Staff reported the most commonly used teaching practices in the core content areas include providing opportunities for read-alouds, to solve "real world" math problems, and to develop predictions/explanations/models using scientific evidence.
- The majority of the students reported that the afterschool program helped them finish their homework, do better with mathematics problems, and make new friends.

Grantee Background and History

Houston Independent School District (HISD) received the 21st CCLC grant in September 2004 from TEA. The Cycle 3 grant supports four afterschool centers at Kate Bell Elementary School, Roy Benavidez Elementary School, Elrod Elementary School, and Las Americas Middle School. Site visits occurred at Elrod Elementary School and Las Americas Middle School. Elrod Elementary School serves approximately 241 students. The middle school enrolls about 136 students. The students in the elementary afterschool program are primarily African American (49%) or Hispanic (51%). Eighty-five percent of the Hispanic students are English language learners (ELL). In addition, there are also approximately 15–20 students who were evacuated from New Orleans as a result of Hurricane Katrina. The students in the middle school program are mostly immigrant students who have been in the United States for fewer than 2 years and are English language learners (ELLs). The students at both centers are from low-income households. Key student demographics for each center are listed in Table 13 below.

Table 13. Center Student Demographics

Center Name	Total Students	Ethnicity					Gender		Category		
		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian	White	Male	Female	ELL	Econ Dis	Special Needs
Elrod Elementary	241	118	123	0	0	0	133	108	105	213	16
Las Americas	136	7	128	1	0	0	70	66	82	118	7

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

The HISD's 21st CCLC grant supports a variety of staff that work directly with the students participating in activities at the center. In Spring 2006, there were 28 paid workers at the elementary center and 10 paid workers at the middle school center. These included coordinators, day school teachers, college students, youth development workers, community members, and other non-teaching staff or non-school staff. The staff and volunteers at each center are listed in Tables 14 and 15 below. Both schools reported zero in-kind support or staff turnover for Spring 2006.

Table 14. Elrod Elementary School Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center administrators/coordinators	1	-	-	-
Day school teachers	16	-	-	-
College students	1	-	-	-
Parents	-	2	-	-
Youth development workers	2	-	-	-
Community members	2	-	-	-
Other non-teaching staff	6	-	-	-
High school students	-	1	-	-
TOTAL	**28**	**3**	**-**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Table 15. Las Americas Middle School Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center administrators/coordinators	1	-	-	-
School day teachers	5	-	-	-
College students	1	-	-	-
Parents	-	2	-	-
Youth development workers	-	2	-	-
Community members	-	-	-	-
Other non-teaching staff	3	-	-	-
High school students	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**10**	**4**	**-**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Program Structure and Process

The HISD 21st CCLC center sites observed are both located in southwest Houston in the Braeswood and Gulfton communities. Both centers provide students with on-campus afterschool activities until 6:30 p.m. The primary goal of the afterschool program is to provide a safe and secure environment for the children after school. Content instruction in reading, mathematics, and science is available mostly through tutoring and homework assistance. During the first hour, all students must attend tutoring sessions or receive homework assistance. A variety of tutorials are available for different grade levels. Students decide what they want to attend daily. Afterward, students select the enrichment activities they want to participate in and can move from one activity to another when they desire.

The afterschool tutoring and homework assistance is provided by a variety of people, including teachers, librarians, teacher aides, and college students. Many of the teachers also work in the day school and are certified in teaching students of other languages. The enrichment activities such as character education, sports, cheerleading, music, and arts and crafts are primarily provided by outside vendors and include staff and/or volunteers from the YMCA and other community organizations such as local churches and the Boy Scouts. On average, the student-to-teacher ratio is no more than 20:1. Many of the afterschool teachers at the middle school center are from other countries and were selected because of their bilingual status and ability to understand the needs of immigrant students.

Management and Leadership. The HISD 21st CCLC program uses site-based management in which each center develops its own activities to accommodate the unique cultural and community differences. The project director manages the administrative functions from the district level and meets with regional managers and site coordinators in monthly meetings. The project director rarely visits the centers. Regional managers oversee and supervise up to five centers. The site coordinators are hired by and report to the school principals. The site coordinator at the elementary center was previously employed by the school as a teacher. He and three other teachers serve on a steering committee to help guide curriculum decisions for the center. At the time of the visit, the site coordinator at the middle school center had been in the position less than a year. Staff development is provided through the district office and is required for afterschool staff. The training topics vary depending on the needs of the staff. Many are 1-day

workshops that occur between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. so that staff can return to the afterschool programs in time.

Climate. The Las Americas Middle School is situated on the second floor of a three-story building that houses three different schools run by one principal. The first floor provides space for an ELL early childhood and kindergarten program with approximately 100 students enrolled. The second floor houses the Las Americas Middle School with approximately 100 non-English-speaking students who are recent immigrants to the United States. The third floor is another middle school that serves approximately 100 low-income, but academically achieving, students. The elementary center is located in a traditional one-story building built in the 1960s.

The overall climate of the afterschool program is nurturing, safe, and supportive. Because both schools are located in high crime areas of Houston, both programs emphasize student safety and security. The site coordinators closely monitor the arrival and departure of students and their transportation from the afterschool program.

Programmatic Goals. The HISD afterschool program provides a safe, secure, and nurturing environment for children to engage in academic and enrichment activities. The program relies on the support of the community. Program goals include linking afterschool activities to real-world settings. The instructional staff expect students to increase their performance in core subjects and increase passing rates on the TAKS. The afterschool staff also expect students to develop stronger English communication skills.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

Among some of the content practices at the HISD afterschool program is a Mathematics Achiever program, developed in partnership between the day school and afterschool staff. While the day school component of the program focuses on traditional mathematics curriculum aligned with TAKS, the afterschool component of Mathematics Achiever focuses on applying mathematics to real-world settings such as personal finance. The program includes field trips to other high schools, university programs, and special events like ice cream socials. The reading curriculum at both centers focuses on developing the students' English conversational skills. The instructors develop academic lessons. Teaching strategies include hands-on instruction using manipulatives with students in small-group settings.

Key Observations. Tutoring and homework sessions were observed at the elementary afterschool center. In a social studies map-reading activity, 24 students were present and the instruction was whole-group, instructor-led. The site coordinator reported that this teacher's afterschool sessions are always well-attended by students. Another session was facilitated for the younger students and consisted of silent reading and worksheet papers. A YMCA volunteer assisted the day school teacher.

The primary activities observed in the middle school afterschool program were enrichment activities that included arts and crafts, music, sports, and character development. One short session teaching students how to be a disc jockey was observed during enrichment time. A volunteer, who also provided music for special school functions, conducted the class. In general, students participated in an activity for awhile and then moved to another activity. By the end of

the afternoon, about 12 boys had migrated to the area where guitars lessons were being conducted. The students who were engaged in the outside activities checked out and went home for the day. Twelve girls sat at tables making and painting small fruits from modeling clay. They then glued the small pieces to a strip of cloth, a traditional item made by Central American women. Bilingual YMCA staff worked with the students during these activities; however, no specific instruction was observed.

Tutoring and Homework Help. The first hour of the HISD afterschool program is devoted to tutoring and homework help with an emphasis on improving TAKS skills in reading, mathematics, and science. All students are required to participate in this part of the program before moving on to the enrichment activities. Teachers from the day school and volunteer tutors provide individualized and small-group instruction. In the elementary center, volunteers from the YMCA assist teachers in providing subject-area lessons and homework assistance using the HISD's Clarify Learning to Enhance Achievement Results (CLEAR) curriculum. In the middle school center, a tutor from the University of Houston's Upward Bound program is available. At both centers, the reading curriculum is primarily focused on developing the students' English conversational skills.

Social/Development Practices. Social/developmental goals include providing a safe and secure environment away from drugs and gang violence. The Las Americas afterschool program strives to teach the students how to adapt to U.S. culture. At both centers, enrichment activities, especially sports and enrichment activities, are the main method for providing students with social opportunities.

Student Assessment Practices Tutor observation and questioning were used to assess student progress on task. No other formal means of assessment was observed.

Alignment With and Ties to Day School. The HISD afterschool program is connected to the day school because many of the instructors work in both settings. The principals of the schools oversee afterschool site coordinators and have input on curricular decisions. Both centers have a heavy emphasis on homework assistance, which is viewed as the main vehicle to align day school and afterschool efforts. The Mathematics Achiever program is an example of a program that bridges both day school and afterschool efforts.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

Students are referred to the afterschool program by the school principal. Target enrollment is approximately 50% of the middle school population. Every student who enrolls in the day school receives an application for the afterschool program.

The site coordinator at the elementary center sent fliers home to the parents of the students and posted them around the neighborhood. There has been an increase in student enrollment at both centers, and currently there are waiting lists. The site coordinator at the elementary center explained that because many of the students came from low-income households, parents had limited options for afterschool care and jumped at the opportunity to enroll their children in the afterschool program.

Parental and Community Involvement. The elementary center offers parents opportunities for ESL classes and hosts parent nights with a large percentage of parents attending. They also allow parents opportunities to work in the school's community gardens. Currently, no parental involvement programs were observed at the middle school center. However, the center has plans for developing such programs as ESL and technology classes. Community involvement is a key component at both centers, which rely on volunteers and staff from organizations such as the YMCA, the University of Houston, and local church groups to provide the majority of the enrichment activities.

Program Evaluation. The primary purpose of internal evaluation is to determine the types and numbers of activities to offer the students. Both centers monitor student enrollment and conduct interviews with and/or surveys of program staff. At the time of the site visit, the district had not assigned evaluation staff to conduct more formal evaluations. Both centers reported being reviewed by their ESC nurturers.

Survey Results

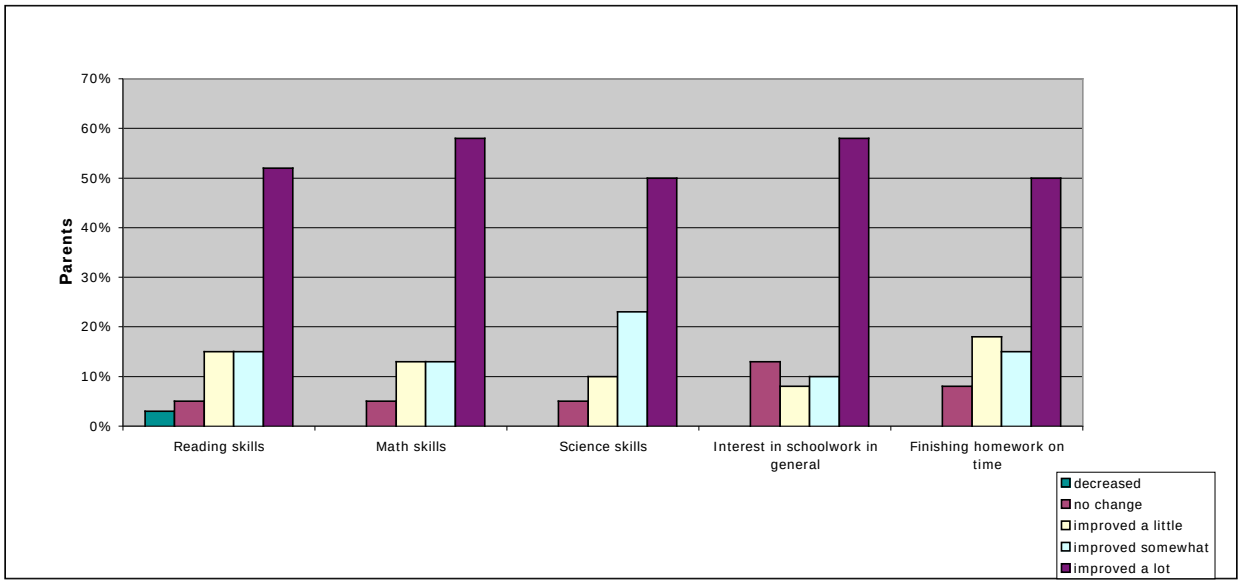
Program staff, students participating in the afterschool program, and parents of participating students completed surveys in the spring of 2006 regarding the afterschool program practices and impacts on students.

Staff Survey. Twelve program staff completed surveys. Eleven identified themselves as instructors, and one left this item blank. Seven of the staff indicated that they had been working at their afterschool center for 1 to 3 years, another four stated they have been working at the center between 4 and 7 years, and one staff member reported working at the center for more than 7 years. Eleven of the 12 respondents reported that they have been in the field of afterschool programs between 1 and 7 years and have been teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher for approximately the same time period.

Professional Development. Staff varied in reporting the number of professional development/trainings they perceived as having been offered to them in the past year. Three of the staff stated that they had never heard about professional development being offered, two marked unsure, and the remaining were aware of professional development being offered 2–3 times or 4 or more times in the past year. Five of the program staff stated they had not participated in any professional development in this past year, and another five responded that they had attended between 1 and 4 or more trainings. Topics reported included mathematics, reading, and science.

As shown in Figure 24, topics staff indicated most often as areas they would like to have further professional development in were helping students with reading content and connecting afterschool learning with day school curriculum.

Figure 24. Houston ISD: Number of Program Staff Indicating Various Interests in Professional Development



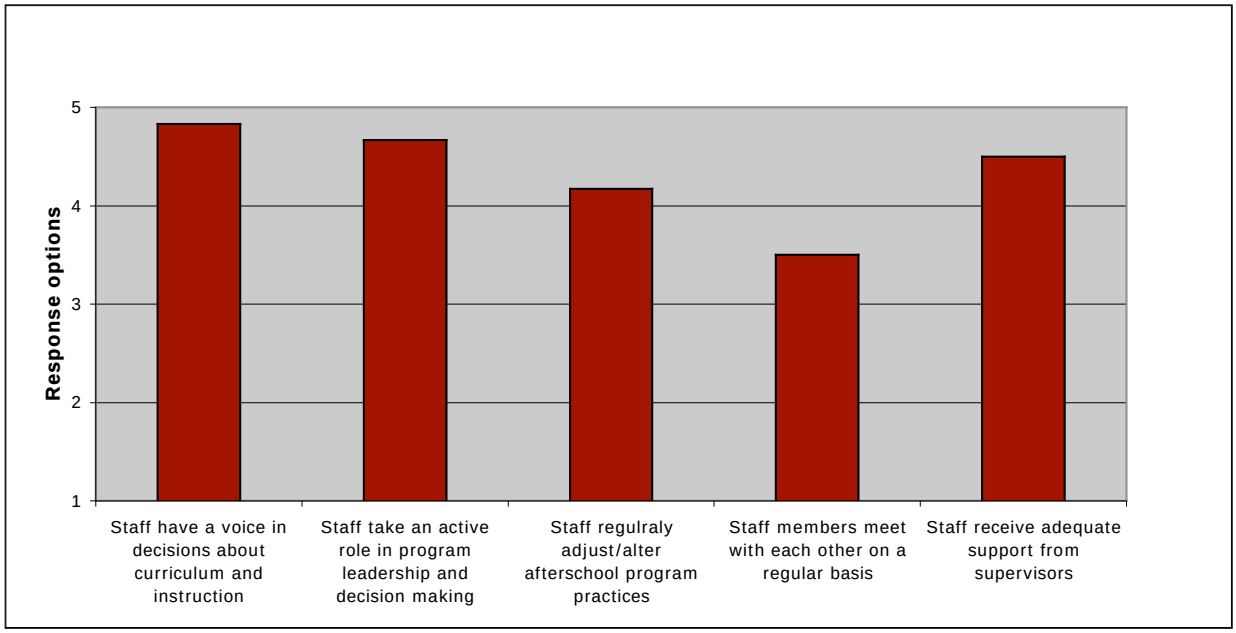
Note. N = 12; Rating options: Yes or No

Organizational Structure. Eleven of the 12 staff stated they knew whom to contact at their students' day school with questions on their progress, and 10 of the staff said that they coordinate afterschool practices with their students' day school homework. Further, 9 of the staff indicated that they knew, on a weekly basis, the content to be covered with their students during the school day, and eight of the 12 respondents reported using assessment data from day school to plan students' work. On average, program staff reported that they speak with their students' day school teachers once a month about their students' homework, coordinating curriculum, or instructional issues.

Eight of the 12 program staff reported that they did not have regular time set aside to meet with parents of their afterschool students. Five of the staff indicated that they never meet with their students' parents, while one reported meeting parents more than twice a month, three once a month, and three less than once per month.

The decision making is reportedly decentralized, with staff taking an active role in program leadership and instructional decisions. Figure 25 below presents survey results for staff perceptions of overall program organization.

Figure 25. Houston ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Program Organization



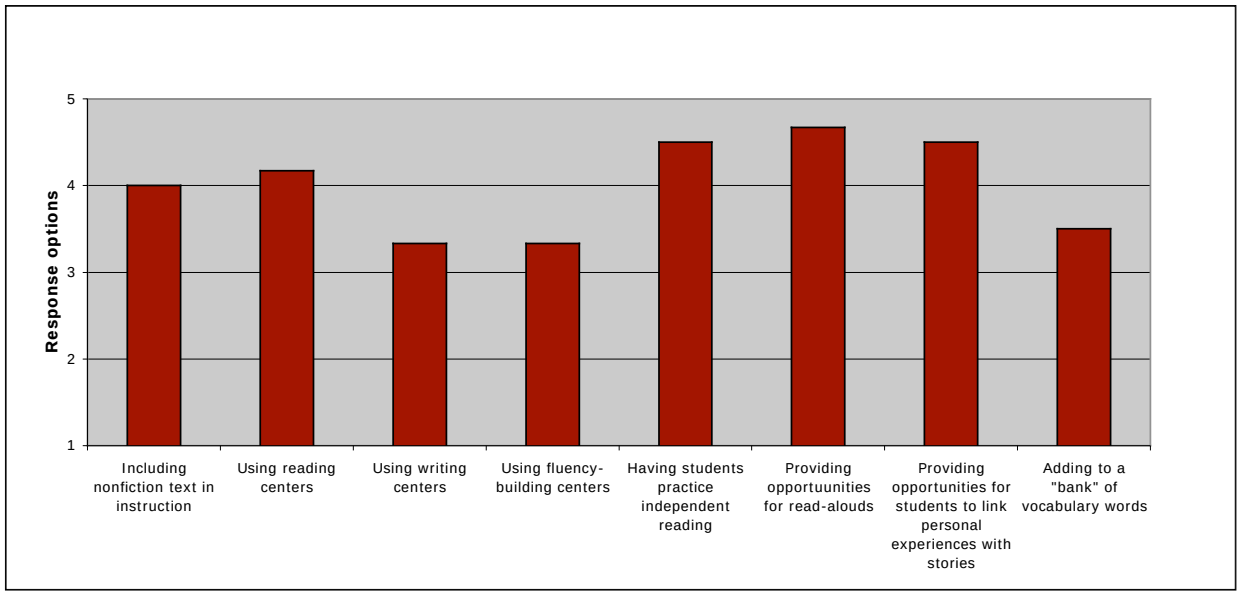
Note. N = 12; Ratings scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree

Educational Practices and Strategies. The types of instructional practices most frequently used in the afterschool program included providing direct feedback to individual students about progress, having students work in smaller groups or teams, and providing additional support for students who do not speak English as their first language. Program staff also let students know about their expectations and criteria for their afterschool assignments.

Regarding the assessment of students' progress on academic assignments, the majority of the program staff stated that they *never* used formal tests or quizzes or did so only rarely (*less than once per month)*. Many did, however, indicate that they spot-checked for student understanding at least *once per week* or *more than once per week* (8 for reading assignments, 8 for mathematics, and 5 for science).

Of reading, mathematics, and science, six staff members reported focusing mostly on reading, nine focused on mathematics, and four focused on science. For those who focus on reading content, the most frequently used practices in the afterschool programs were providing opportunities for read-alouds, practicing independent reading, and linking personal experiences with stories. Figure 26 illustrates survey results regarding the various reading practices implemented at the centers.

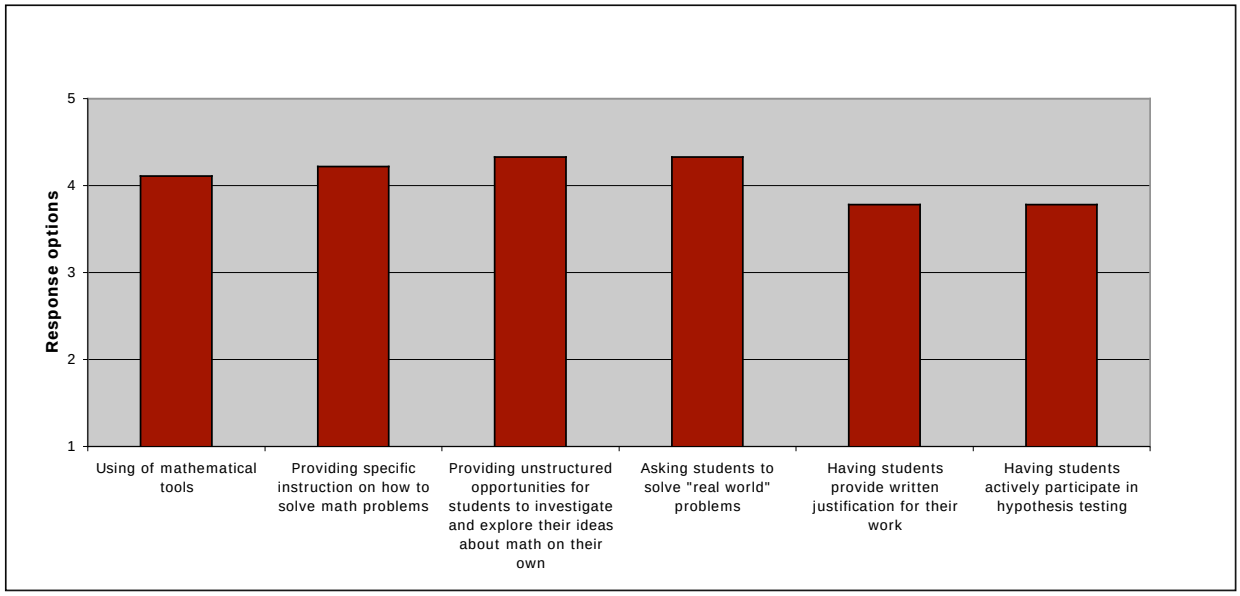
Figure 26. Houston ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Reading Instructional Practices



Note. N = 6; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

For those who focus on mathematics content, all of the practices asked about were used frequently by program staff. Figure 27 illustrates survey results regarding the various mathematics practices implemented at the centers.

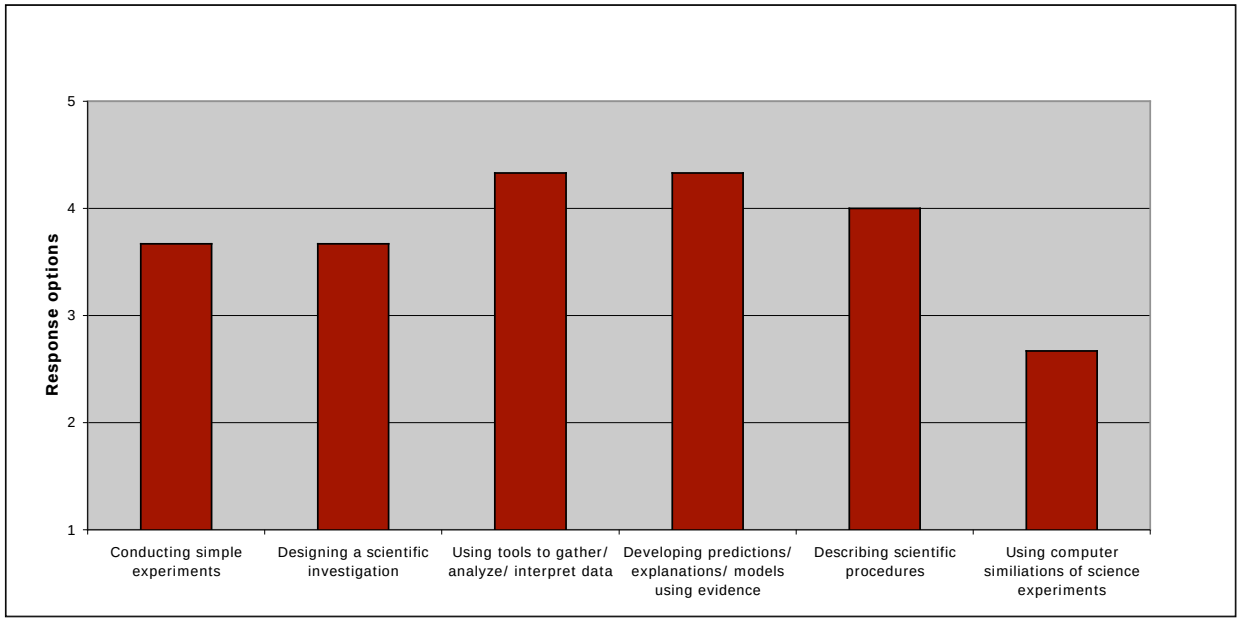
Figure 27. Houston ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Mathematics Instructional Practices



Note. N = 9; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Science instruction was focused on by four of the program staff. Most commonly used science practices included using tools to gather, analyze, and interpret data; developing predictions, explanations, and models using evidence; designing scientific investigations; and conducting simple experiments. Figure 28 illustrates survey results regarding the various science practices implemented at the centers.

Figure 28. Houston ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Science Instructional Practices

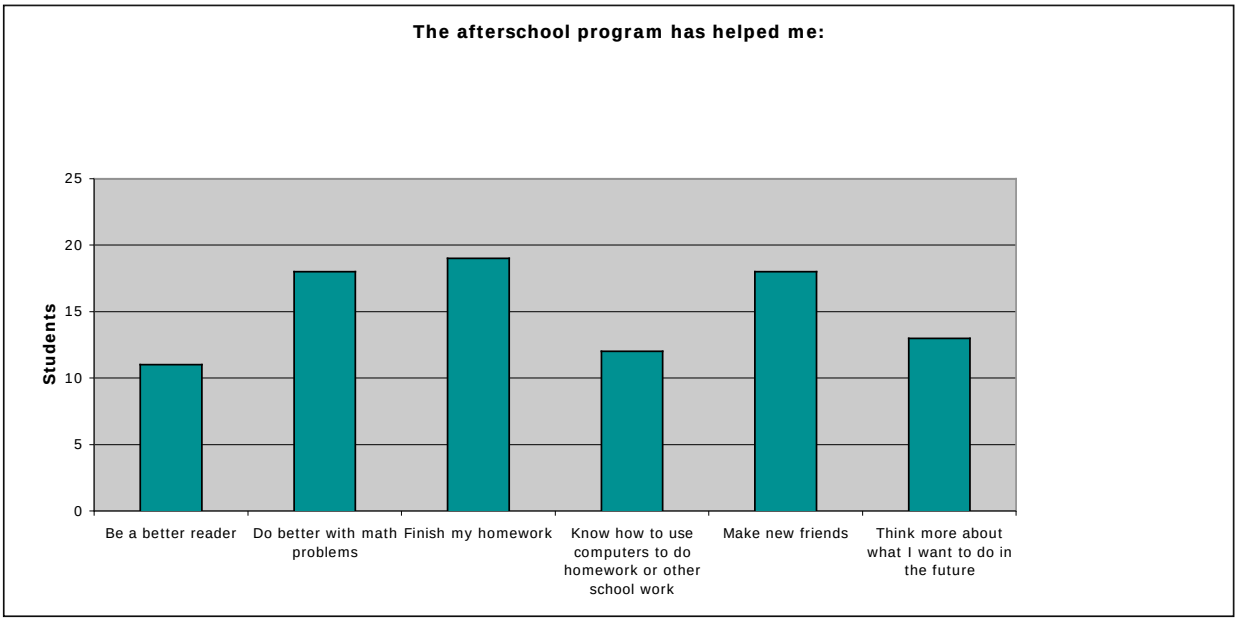


Note. N = 4; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Student Survey. Twenty-six students attending the afterschool program from grades 4 and 5 completed surveys. Students rated 22 statements on a scale of 1–3 where 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Sometimes*, and 3 = *Always.*

In general, students reported that they liked the activities in their afterschool program (mean = 2.5), that they feel safe when they are at the afterschool program (mean = 2.6), that they get along with grown-ups at the afterschool program (mean = 2.5) and other kids in the program (mean = 2.4), and that the program staff listen when students have something to say (mean = 2.3). Many of the students also stated that they spent much of their time in sports activities (mean = 2.7) and working on homework or schoolwork (mean = 2.5). As shown in Figure 29, the majority of the students also reported that the afterschool program helped them finish their homework, do better with mathematics problems, and make new friends. Overall, 22 of the students reported that the program helps them be better students, and 18 reported that they "really like the program—it's great."

Figure 29. Number of Elementary School Students Indicating Various Program Outcomes



Note. N = 26; Ratings options: Yes, No, or Unsure

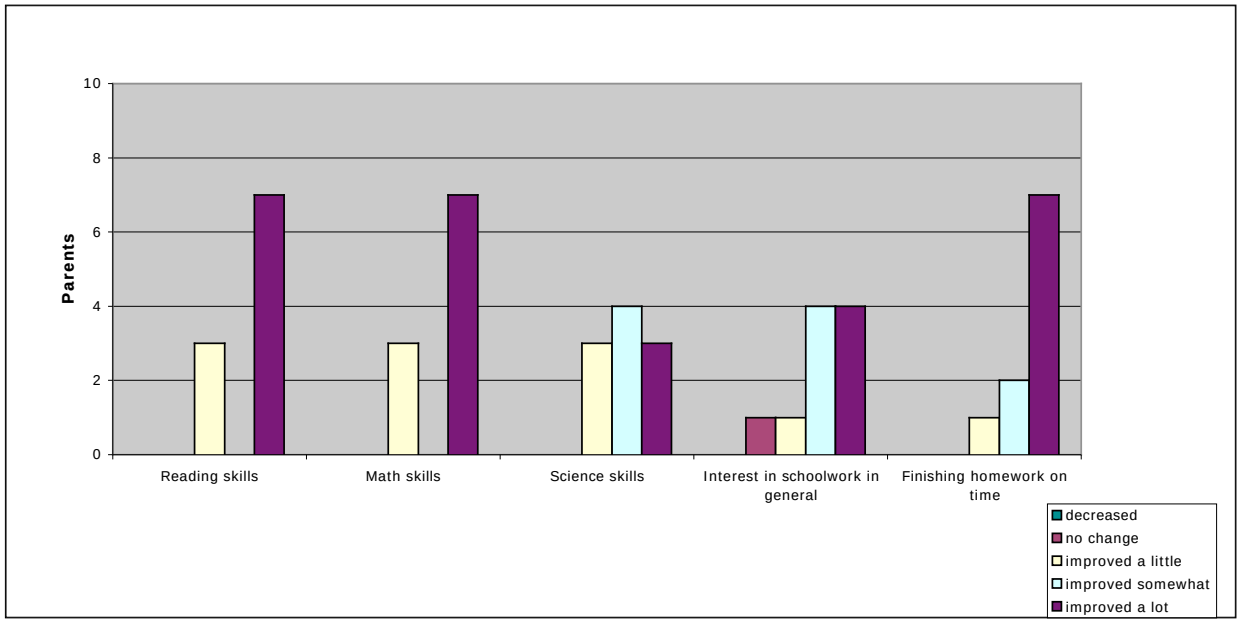
Parent Survey. Ten parents of students participating in the afterschool program completed surveys. On a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *Never* and 10 = *Always*, parents rated several statements about the program and program staff. Mean ratings for all nine statements ranged from 8.3 to 9.5. The highest-rated items were parents' perception that there is someone available who can speak with them in their home language, that staff will let them know immediately if their children are not paying attention to their work, and that the afterschool program is fair to all students.

For the most part, parents reported low participation in the afterschool program. Only four of the 10 respondents noted that they visited their child's afterschool program at least once a month. Five also indicated that they helped out in the afterschool program only once every few months, and four stated they never helped in the program.

With respect to changes in their children's academic skills, seven parents reported seeing *somewhat* to *a lot* of improvement in their children's reading, mathematics, and science skills. Figure 30 presents the parents' perceptions of outcomes related to the afterschool program.

Overall, parents rated their happiness with the afterschool program activities, staff, materials and resources, and the progress their children have been making in learning very high (means ranged from 8.0 to 8.5 on a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *very unhappy* and 10 = *very happy*).

Figure 30. Houston ISD: Number of Parents Indicating Various Program Outcomes



Note. N = 10; Ratings scale: 1 = Decreased, 2 = No change, 3 = Improved a little, 4 = Improved somewhat, 5 = Improved a lot

Profile Summary

Houston Independent School District (HISD) was awarded a 21st CCLC Cycle 3 grant in September 2004 to support four center sites at three elementary schools and one middle school. Site visits occurred at Elrod Elementary School and Las Americas Middle School. The students served by the grant are primarily African American or Hispanic and from low-income households. The students in the middle school program are mostly immigrant students who have been in the United States for fewer than 2 years and are English language learners.

The afterschool staff includes site coordinators, day school teachers, college students, youth development workers, community members, and other non-teaching staff or non-school staff. The program uses site-based management in which each center develops its own activities to accommodate the unique cultural and community differences.

The primary goal of the HISD afterschool program is to provide a safe and secure environment for the children after school. The first hour of the program is devoted to tutoring and homework help followed by enrichment activities such as character education, sports, cheerleading, music, and arts and crafts. Teachers from the day school and volunteer tutors provide individualized and small-group instruction. The reading curriculum is primarily focused on developing the students' English conversational skills. The enrichment activities are the main method for providing students with social opportunities. They are generally provided by outside vendors and include staff and/or volunteers from the YMCA and other community organizations such as local churches and the Boy Scouts. The overall climate of the afterschool program is nurturing, safe, and supportive.

Recruitment and retention are not viewed to be a challenge because many of the students come from low-income households and parents had limited options for afterschool care. There has been an increase in student enrollment, low student turnover, and a waiting list. Staff reported the most commonly used teaching practices in the core content areas include providing opportunities for read-alouds, to solve "real world" math problems, and to develop predictions/explanations/models using scientific evidence. The majority of the students reported that the afterschool program helped them finish their homework, do better with mathematics problems, and make new friends.

IDEA ACADEMY

21st Century Community Learning Center at
IDEA Academy Charter School
Site Visit: April 26–27, 2006

Overview

Background and History

- The IDEA Academy is a charter school that was awarded a 21st CCLC Cycle 3 grant in September 2004 to support one center site.
- The students in the program are primarily Hispanic and from low-income households.
- Afterschool staff include coordinators, day school teachers, college students, and other non-teaching or non-school staff.

Program Structure and Process

- The afterschool program operates for an hour a day, 4 days a week. In addition, it is open on select Saturdays.
- Decision making is a collaborative process shared between the project director, site coordinator, school principal, and instructional staff.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- The afterschool program and the day school share common goals to improve academic and social skills and knowledge. The afterschool program's academic focus is driven by the high academic standards of the day school.
- Enrichment activities are developed in response to staff, student, and parent interest, and these groups are regularly surveyed to identify new potential classes.
- Teaching strategies used in the classes incorporate hands-on activities and exploration. The use of specific projects and experiments to illustrate concepts is common.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- Although no formal student recruitment strategies were evident, parents and students receive constant reminders of the options available in the afterschool program.
- IDEA utilizes community resources such as the local Boys and Girls Club.

Survey Results

- Staff reported the most commonly used teaching practices in the core content areas include providing students opportunities for both read-alouds and independent reading and providing specific instruction on how to solve math problems. Science instruction was not reportedly a focus of the program.
- The majority of the students reported that the afterschool program helped them finish their homework, make new friends, and feel more confident about their schoolwork.

Grantee Background and History

The IDEA Academy is a charter school in south Texas serving over 900 students in grades K–11. The charter plans to add the 12th grade and preK in the next school year and open two new campuses in surrounding towns. The day school program began in 2000, and an afterschool program started shortly thereafter without any external funding. IDEA received a 21st CCLC Cycle 3 award in September 2004 that supports the one center site. The students served by the afterschool program are primarily Hispanic (94%) and from low-income households (68%). Key student demographics for the center are listed in Table 16 below.

Table 16. IDEA Academy Student Demographics

Center Name	Total Students	Ethnicity					Gender		Category		
		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian	White	Male	Female	ELL	Econ Dis	Special Needs
IDEA Academy	522	0	493	0	4	25	233	279	147	356	36

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

The IDEA Academy's 21st CCLC grant supports a variety of staff that work directly with the students participating in activities at the center. In Spring 2006, there were 37 paid workers in the afterschool program. These included coordinators, day school teachers, college students, and other non-teaching staff or non-school staff. The staff at the IDEA Academy afterschool program are listed in Table 17 below. The center reported no volunteer staff or staff turnover for Spring 2006.

Table 17: IDEA Academy Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center administrators/coordinators	1	-	1	-
Day school teachers	24	-	-	-
College students	11	-	-	-
Parents	-	-	-	-
Youth development workers	-	-	-	-
Community members	-	-	-	-
Other non-school staff	1	-	-	-
High school students	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**37**	**-**	**1**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Program Structure and Process

IDEA Academy is located in a small, mostly impoverished area just east of McAllen, Texas. The students are from the immediate community, Donna, and many of the surrounding areas. The school is growing and is in the midst of a building boom. The afterschool program uses virtually all of the regular day school space and operates for an hour a day, 4 days a week. In addition, it is open for 4 hours on select Saturdays.

The overwhelming majority of the instructors and paraprofessional assistants at the afterschool program are day school employees. Twelve college-age academic tutors are the only non-day school staff. Student-to-teacher ratios in observed tutoring-homework groups ranged from 8:1 to

20+:1. The ratio varied based on specific topics or grades involved. The student-to-teacher ratio in enrichment offerings was approximately 12:1. Teachers obviously expect their students to improve academically through participation in the afterschool program, but they are also interested in helping them develop leadership abilities and increase their self-esteem and confidence.

Management and Leadership. The person currently overseeing the afterschool program is the school support services director. The school support services director, the site coordinator, and the assistant are very active in the day-to-day events at the school. They meet weekly to discuss specific issues that arise and ways to improve the program more generally. The decision making is collaborative, with all staff participating in discussions that influence decisions. Interactions between staff at different levels in the organization are positive, and the general approach to decision making seems effective. Of particular note is the cooperative and supportive relationship between the leaders of the day school and the afterschool program.

Climate. Staff seem genuinely interested and involved in the success of all students. Positive interactions were observed between both day and afterschool adults and students. The day school at this center is highly structured, and both day school and afterschool staff use a set of 55 basic "rules," which are prominently displayed. However, the afterschool program is described as more flexible than the day school program. Behavioral expectations are basically the same, but afterschool students are allowed to take more responsibility for how their time is spent. They can request tutoring in a certain area and choose which elective courses they want to take at the beginning of each 9-week quarter.

Programmatic Goals. The academic focus in the afterschool program is driven by the high academic standards of the day school. For example, as a requirement for graduation, all students must apply to and be accepted by a 4-year college or university. Academic assistance in the afterschool program is a primary means for bringing students up to the level that will make this possible. Much of the afterschool work is directed through the tutoring and homework programs. College-age tutors, working in conjunction with day school staff, receive training intended to improve their skills in student discipline and tutoring.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

Class offerings at the school are classified as "electives" or "enrichment activities." Electives are academically oriented sessions, and enrichment activities are intended to meet the non-academic goals of the program. Classes are scheduled in 9-week sessions, and students have the chance to sign up for the classes they wish to attend during each session.

A significant amount of afterschool time is dedicated to homework and tutoring. Attendees self-select or are directed to participate in sessions by day school staff and college-level instructors in specific subjects based on the academic needs of each attendee. In all of the sessions observed, attendees appeared to receive significant amounts of individual assistance, including some peer help.

Teaching strategies used in the classes incorporate hands-on activities and exploration. The use of specific projects and experiments to illustrate concepts is common. Student grouping varies from one-on-one instruction to small and large groups, depending on student needs.

Key Observations. Formal observations conducted at this center included a high school mathematics tutoring session, an elementary-level reading class, and two enrichment activities.

The instructor in the mathematics session was one of the day school mathematics instructors and was assisted by a college student tutor. Students were well-behaved during the session. Both the instructor and the tutor were knowledgeable about mathematics concepts and skills and used direct instruction as well as a questioning approach in working with the students.

In the reading class, the instructor began work with the entire group and conducted a few minutes of a modified read-aloud, having both students and herself read short segments of material and checking for ability to recall and make inferences. A parent assistant then spent time moving among the students while the instructor worked with two different students, one at a time. The room's walls had pictures, posters, word boards, and student work as well as many different genres of texts.

The Dream Project enrichment class was based on a service-learning model intended to strengthen ties between the school and the community. Activities also tied into science, the arts, and literacy. Students had specifically requested the dance class, Participants had been able to influence the direction of the class over the 9 weeks they met. An end-of-the-year performance was being planned to share what had been learned with parents and others. All students in these classes were very engaged and focused, in spite of the fact that it was the final session for both enrichment offerings.

Tutoring and Homework Help. As stated earlier, there is a high priority placed on tutoring and homework assistance in IDEA's afterschool program. Individual and small-group tutoring is the primary approach used to improve student performance in reading, mathematics, and science. Because the great majority of the adults involved in the afterschool program are also day school staff, they have knowledge about the academic position of each student and the assistance is directed at addressing individual student needs. College students from a nearby university are recruited to assist in tutoring and homework sessions, and this arrangement seems to work well.

Social/Development Practices. Enrichment classes are a strong component in this program. There are many offerings, ranging from art and dance classes to sports, chess, and karate training. Enrichment activities are developed in response to staff, student, and parent interest, and these groups are regularly surveyed to identify new potential classes. Students have the opportunity to choose which enrichment classes they want to be involved in and commit to attending a different class every 9 weeks. There is a strong service-learning component built into enrichment class options.

Student Assessment Practices. Results from TAKS and other standardized tests used by the school are disaggregated and shared with afterschool staff to determine individual student needs.

Alignment With and Ties to Day School. The afterschool staff and day school staff are virtually the same (except for the college-age tutors), so the bridging between the day school and the afterschool program occurs naturally. The two programs share common goals, and the afterschool curriculum is closely tied to the standards that govern day school classroom teaching and learning. Day school teachers share information about their individual students with other teachers and tutors who might be working with them in the afterschool program.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

Although no formal student recruitment strategies were evident, both parents and students receive constant reminders of the options available in the afterschool program. The afterschool administrators would eventually like to see *all* day school students involved in the afterschool program. Recruitment of afterschool staff is perhaps the bigger challenge in this program. Many of the day school staff (who are also employed in the afterschool program) work from 7:30 a.m. until after 6 p.m., and some have voiced the desire for a shorter workday.

Parental and Community Involvement. Parental involvement is clearly a priority at IDEA Academy. Regular written communications are shared with parents, including surveys and other contacts about the quality and direction of the afterschool program. A weekly newsletter is prepared and distributed to parents, which keeps them up-to-date with what's happening in both the day and afterschool programs. Parents are involved in fundraising activities and also volunteer as assistants in some classes. Technology classes have also been offered to parents.

The afterschool program at IDEA utilizes community resources. For instance, some service-learning classes place students out in the community, where they interact directly with local residents. Community members teach some afterschool classes (e.g., karate), and tutors are recruited from a local university. The school has developed a partnership with the local Boys and Girls Club and collaborates with it on some activities. There are also efforts to establish a partnership with the local museum so that collaborative activities can be developed and museum space can be used for some afterschool electives.

Program Evaluation. Afterschool planning and assessment are guided by an overall strategic plan for the program. The plan defines the goals for the program and is regularly referred to throughout the year to maintain the desired focus. The project director and her assistant assess teacher performance, conduct regular classroom observations, and provided feedback to the teachers following the classroom visits. Internal evaluation efforts include regular surveys to parents, students, and staff, as well as the assessment of student progress from day school data sources. Data on student academic performance is collected in the day school. No mention was made of an external evaluation of the IDEA Academy afterschool program.

Survey Results

Program staff, students participating in the afterschool program, and parents of participating students completed surveys in the spring of 2006 regarding the afterschool program practices and impacts on students.

Staff Survey. Eighteen program staff completed surveys. Two identified themselves as tutors and 16 as instructors. Eight of the staff reported that they have been working at their afterschool

center for less than 1 year. Another eight of the staff members have been working at the center for between 1 and 3 years, and two reported working at the center for between 4 and 7 years. Staff varied in their years of afterschool program experience and regarding their experience teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher. Seventeen of the 18 program staff responded to these items, as displayed in Table 18 below.

Table 18. IDEA Academy: Number of Staff Reporting Experience in Afterschool Teaching

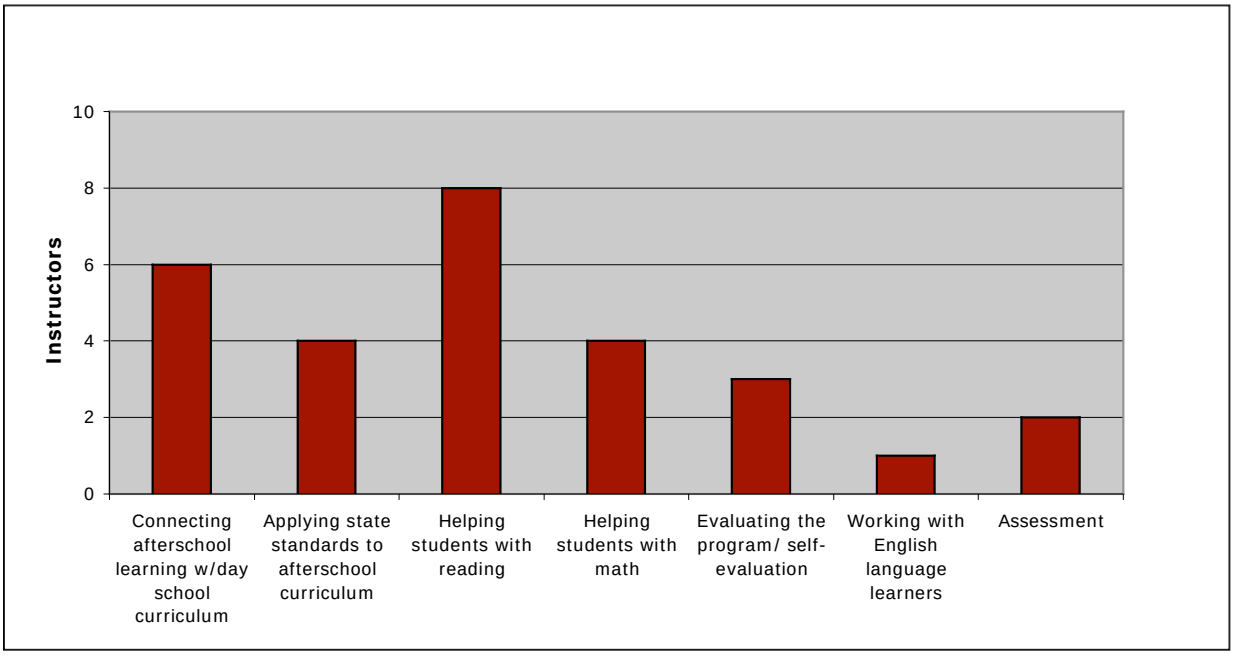
Working in afterschool programs in general	No. of Staff	Teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher	No. of Staff
Less than 1 year	5	Less than 1 year	4
Between 1 and 3 years	6	Between 1 and 3 years	4
Between 4 and 7 years	3	Between 4 and 7 years	4
More than 7 years	3	More than 7 years	5

Source: Program Staff Survey

Professional Development. Approximately five of the program staff reported that they were not aware of their afterschool program having ever offered professional development/training for staff, while eight staff reported that the program had offered it at least once and up to more than four times. When asked about their participation in professional development/training offered by the program, 12 stated they had never participated. Participants who commented on the type(s) of professional development they attended mentioned mathematics, reading/language arts, science, and "everything in general."

Topics staff mentioned most often as areas for future professional development included helping students with reading and mathematics, connecting afterschool learning with day school curriculum, and applying state standards to afterschool curriculum/practices. Figure 31 shows survey responses to these items.

Figure 31. IDEA Academy: Number of Program Staff Indicating Various Interests in Professional Development



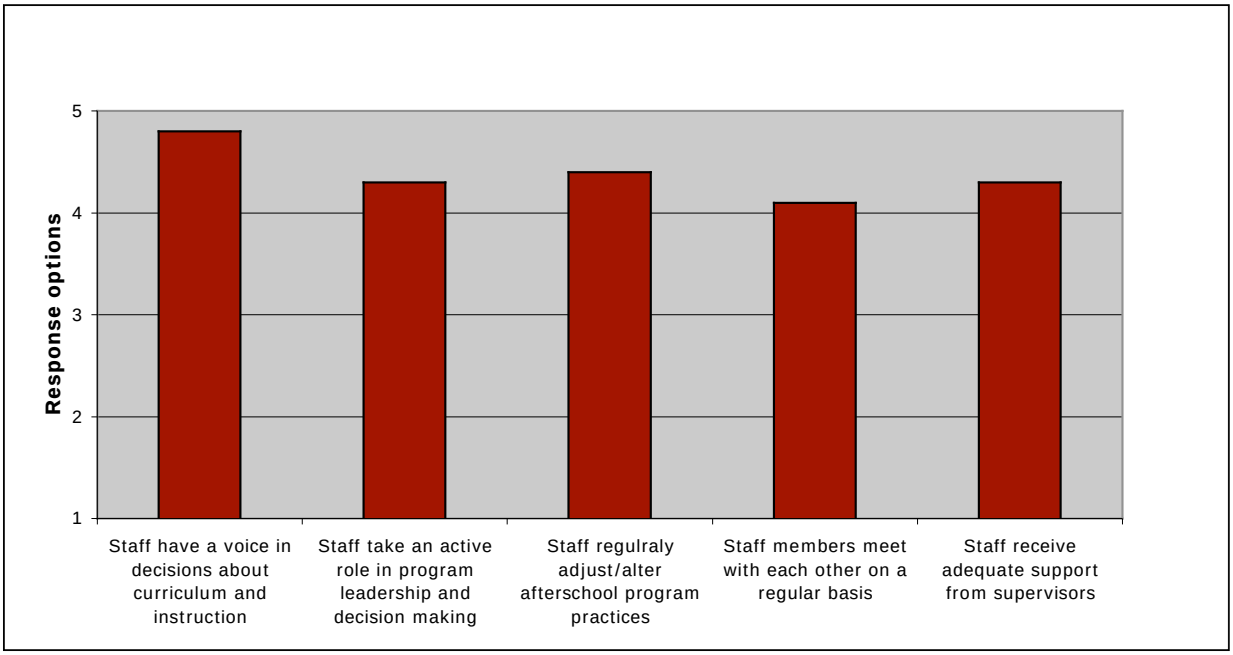
Note. N = 18; Rating options: Yes or No

Organizational Structure. All of the staff reported to know who to contact at their students' day school with questions on their progress or status, and 12 said that they coordinate afterschool practices with their students' day school homework. Further, 14 indicated that they knew, on a weekly basis, the content to be covered with their students during the school day, and 11 of the staff reported using assessment data from the day school to plan students' work. On average, program staff reported that they speak with their students' day school teachers approximately twice per month about their students' homework, coordinating curriculum, or instructional issues.

Twelve of the program staff reported that they do not have regular time set aside to meet with parents of their afterschool students or did not know if regular time was set aside. Thirteen of the staff also indicated that they meet with their students' parents less than once per month or not at all.

The decision making is reportedly decentralized, with staff having a voice in decisions about curriculum and instruction and taking an active role in those areas. Figure 32 below presents survey results for staff perceptions of overall program organization.

Figure 32. IDEA Academy: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Program Organization



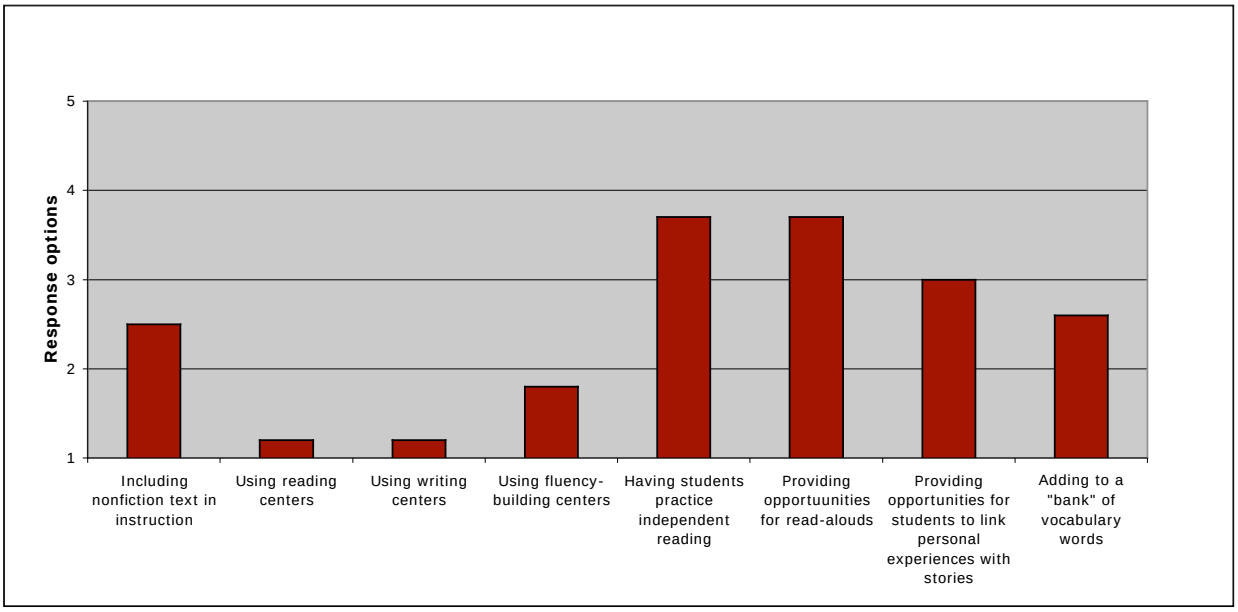
Note. N = 18; Ratings scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree

Educational Practices and Strategies. The types of instructional practices that program staff reported using *at least once per week* to *more than once per week* in the afterschool program were providing direct feedback to students about their progress, having students work in teams or small groups, one-on-one tutoring, peer support, computer-assisted instruction, and providing different types of instruction to students based on ability level. Staff also indicated that they let students know their expectations and criteria for afterschool assignments. Least often used were linking instruction to community services and having students work on projects that spanned several days.

Regarding the assessment of students' progress on academic assignments, over three fourths of the project staff stated that they *never* used formal tests or quizzes or did so only rarely (*less than once per month)* (12 for reading assignments, 13 for mathematics, and 11 for science). They did, however, indicate that they spot-checked for student understanding at least *once per week* to *more than once a week* (8 for reading assignments, 6 for mathematics, and 4 for science).

Of reading, mathematics, and science, six of the project staff reported that they focused mostly on reading, five focused on mathematics, and two focused on science. For those focused on reading content, the most frequently used practices in the afterschool programs were providing opportunities for read-alouds, allowing independent reading using computers or tapes, and providing opportunities for students to link personal experiences with stories. Figure 33 illustrates survey results regarding the frequency ratings of various reading practices implemented at the centers.

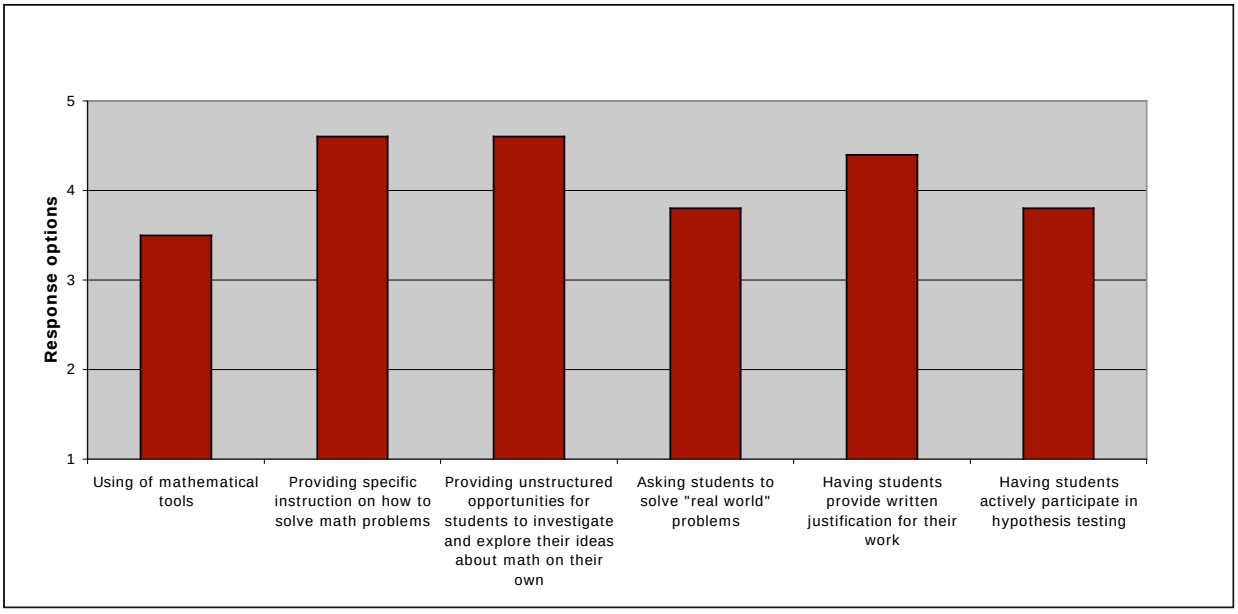
Figure 33. IDEA Academy: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Reading Instructional Practices



Note. N = 6; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

For the five program staff who indicated they focused on mathematics with students in their afterschool program, all stated that they *frequently* to *always* provided specific instruction on how to solve mathematics problems, unstructured opportunities for students to investigate and explore their ideas on their own, and written justification for their work. Figure 34 illustrates survey results regarding various mathematics practices implemented at the centers.

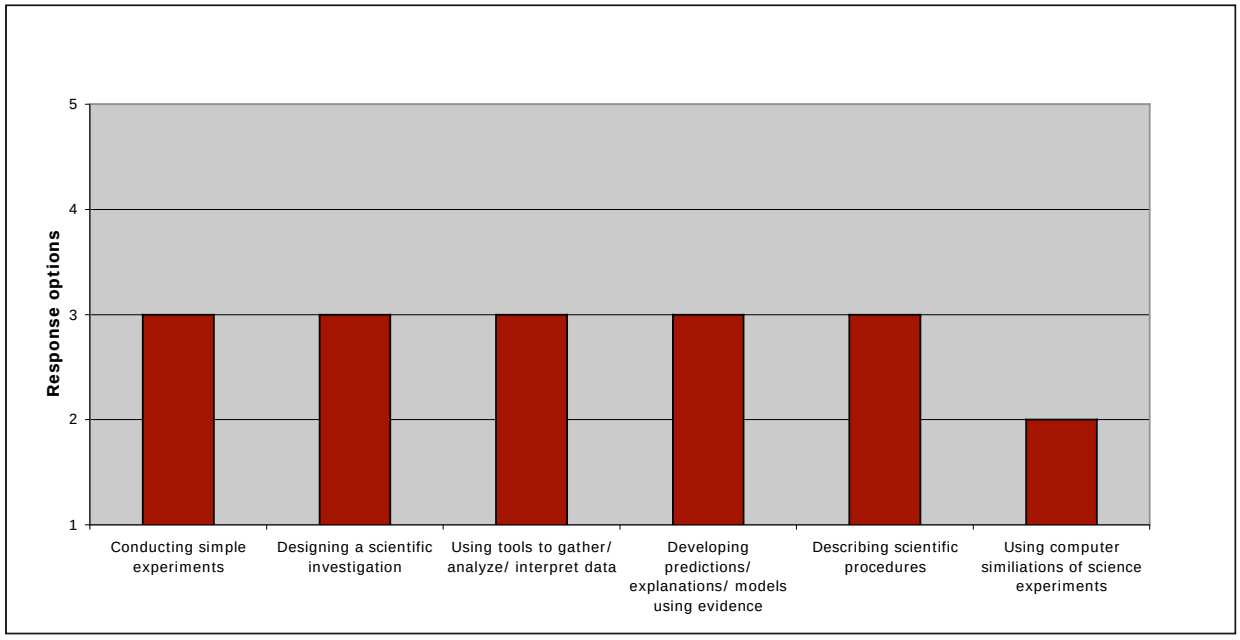
Figure 34. IDEA Academy: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Mathematics Instructional Practices



Note. N = 5; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Science instruction was focused on by only two of the program staff. With the exception of using computer simulations of science experiments, all other strategies were used at least *sometimes* by both. Figure 35 illustrates survey responses regarding the implementation of various science practices used at the centers.

Figure 35. IDEA Academy: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Science Instructional Practices



Note. N = 2; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

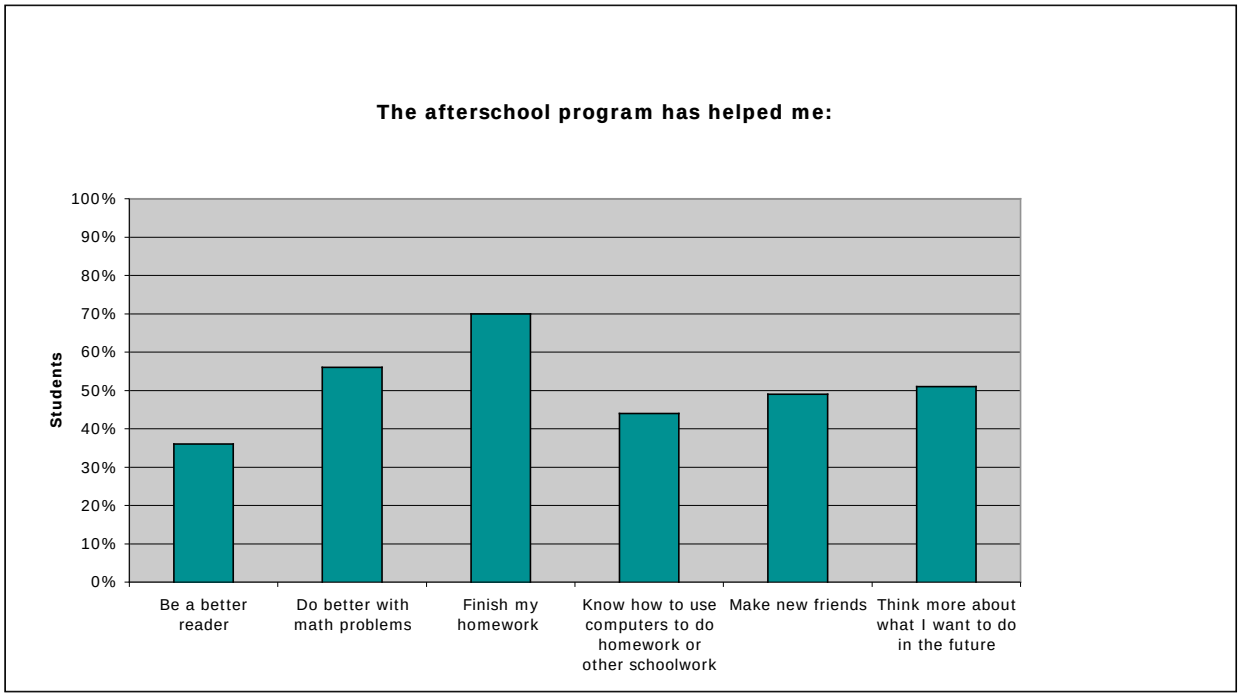
Student Survey. Students attending the afterschool program in grades 5–11 completed surveys (n = 135). An elementary and a middle/high school survey were provided for students. Some of the elementary school students completed the middle/high school version, and some of the middle/high school students completed the elementary school version. Both essentially probed for similar information and differed only in the wording of items to be more age-appropriate.

Students completing the elementary school survey (n = 70) rated 22 statements on a scale of 1–3 where 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Sometimes*, and 3 = *Always.* Twenty-six percent of the students indicated that they *always* practiced reading in the afterschool program. Forty-three percent indicated the same for mathematics, 6% for writing, and 5% for science.

In general, students reported that they like the activities in their afterschool program (mean = 2.1), that they get along with the adults in the program (mean = 2.4), that they get along with the other students in the program (mean = 2.5), that their friends also attend the afterschool program (mean = 2.3), that they feel safe while attending the program (mean = 2.4), and that much of their time is spent working on homework or schoolwork (mean = 2.5). As shown in Figure 36, the majority of the students also reported that the afterschool program has helped them do better with mathematics problems, finish their homework, make new friends, and think more about what they want for their future. Overall, 72% of the students perceived the program as helping

them become better students, and half of the students reported that they "they sort of like the program—it's okay."

Figure 36. IDEA Academy: Percent of Elementary School Students Indicating Various Program Outcomes



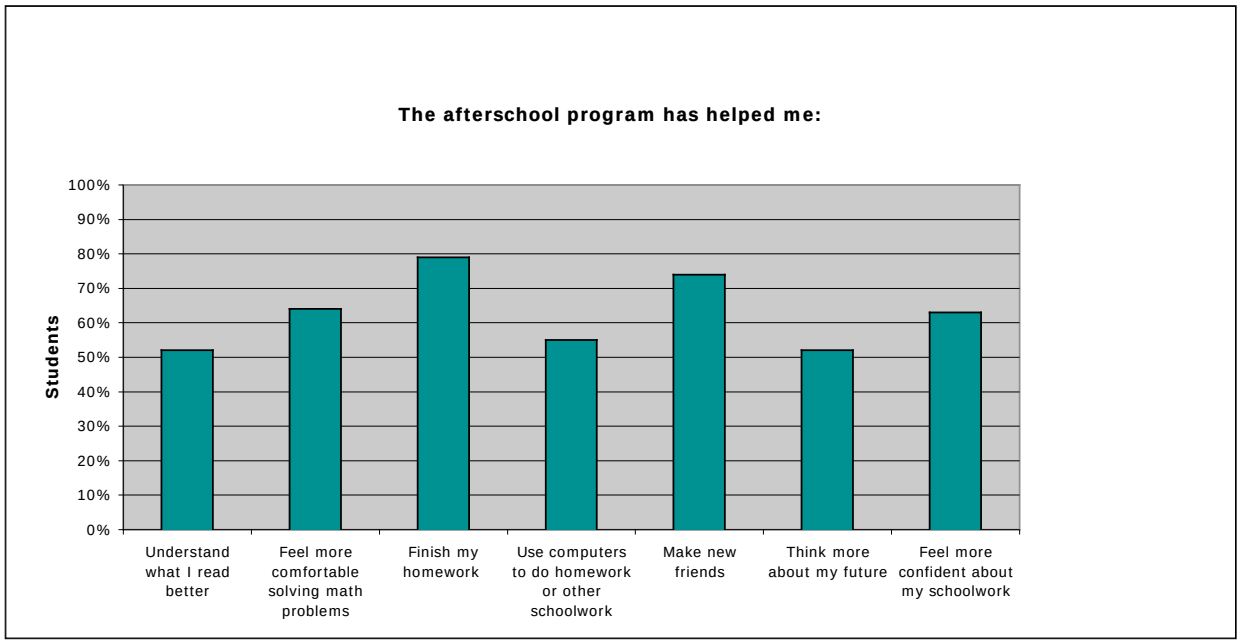
Note. N = 70; Ratings options: Yes, No, or Unsure

Students completing the middle/high school survey (n = 65) rated 24 statements on a scale of 1–4 where 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Sometimes*, 3 = *Often*, and 4 = *Always.*

In general, students reported that they liked the activities in their afterschool program (mean = 2.8), that the staff listen to what they have to say (mean = 3.1), that the staff encourage them to try new things (mean = 2.8), that they feel their ideas count (mean = 2.9), and that they feel that the afterschool program is a comfortable place to hang out (mean = 2.8). They report that a good portion of their time is spent working on homework help or tutoring (mean = 2.7) with the next-largest portion devoted to sports and/or games (mean = 2.1).

As shown in Figure 37, 79% of the students also reported that they are able to finish their homework while there, 74% reported that they have made new friends, and 63% indicated that they feel more confident about their schoolwork. In addition, approximately three fourths of the students reported that since they have been attending the afterschool program, they complete and turn in more assignments on time, they work in their classes even if they don't like them, and they try harder to solve problems with their schoolwork. Overall, 57% of the students reported that they "really like the program—it's great."

Figure 37. IDEA Academy: Percent of Middle/High School Students Indicating Various Program Outcomes

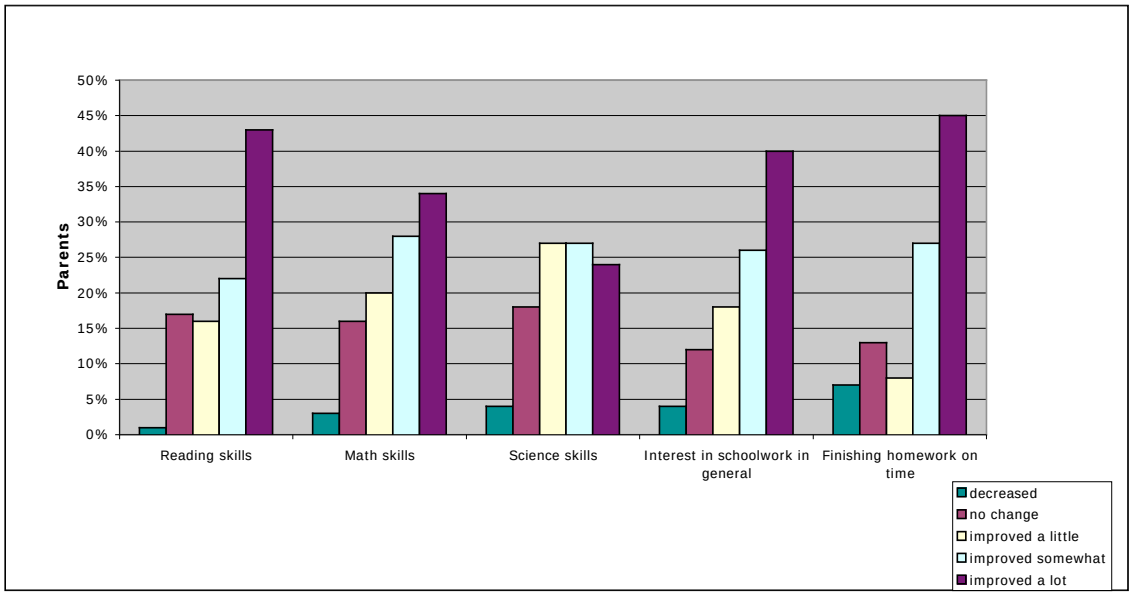


Note. N = 65; Ratings options: Yes, No, or Not Sure

Parent Survey. Eighty-four parents of students participating in the afterschool program completed surveys. On a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *Never* and 10 = *Always*, parents rated several statements about the program and program staff. Mean ratings for all nine statements ranged from 7.3 to 8.3. Highest-rated was the perception by parents that program staff is available to them who can speak with them in their home language. Other items included parents' perceptions about feeling welcome to visit the program, having a staff member available to talk with them, helping parents understand school reports and paperwork, and dealing fairly with their children.

The majority of parents also noted that they visited their children's afterschool program once every few months to more than once a month. However, 57% stated that they never help out in the program. With respect to changes in their children's academic tasks, skills, and interest, parents primarily reported *a little improvement* to *somewhat improved*. Highest ratings were for their children finishing their homework on time, increases in reading skills, and an increased interest in schoolwork in general. Overall, parents rated their happiness with the afterschool program activities, staff, materials and resources, and the progress their children have been making in learning relatively high (means ranged from 7.4 to 8.1 on a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *very unhappy* to 10 = *very happy*, with between 60 and 68% of parents indicating that they were very happy with the program and the results they were seeing in their children).

Figure 38. IDEA Academy: Percent of Parents Indicating Various Program Outcomes



Note. N = 84; Ratings scale: 1 = Decreased, 2 = No change, 3 = Improved a little, 4 = Improved somewhat, 5 = Improved a lot

Profile Summary

The IDEA Academy is a charter school located just east of McAllen, Texas and was awarded a 21st CCLC Cycle 3 grant in September 2004 to support one center site. The afterschool program operates for an hour a day, 4 days a week and is open on select Saturdays. The students in the program are primarily Hispanic and from low-income households. The majority of the instructors and paraprofessional assistants at the afterschool program are day school employees. Twelve college-age tutors, working in conjunction with day school staff, receive training intended to improve their skills in student discipline and tutoring. Decision making is a collaborative process shared between the project director, site coordinator, school principal, and instructional staff.

The afterschool program and the day school share common goals to improve academic and social skills and knowledge. Much of the afterschool work is directed through the tutoring and homework programs. The enrichment activities are developed in response to staff, student, and parent interest, and these groups are regularly surveyed to identify new potential classes. Common teaching strategies used in the classes include hands-on activities, exploration, and the use of specific projects and experiments to illustrate concepts. Although no formal student recruitment strategies were evident, parents and students receive constant reminders of the options available in the afterschool program. IDEA utilizes community resources such as the local Boys and Girls Club.

Survey findings indicated that staff frequently provide students opportunities for read-alouds, independent reading time, and specific instruction on how to solve math problems. Science instruction was not reportedly a focus of the program. The majority of the students reported that the afterschool program helped them finish their homework, make new friends, and feel more confident about their schoolwork.

KERMIT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

21st Century Community Learning Centers at
East Primary School and Purple Sage Elementary School
Site Visit: May 1–2, 2006

Overview

Background and History

- Kermit Independent School District (KISD) received the 21st CCLC, Cycle 3 grant in September 2004. The grant supports four centers at a primary, elementary, junior high, and high school location.
- The students in the afterschool program vary by center site but are generally a mixture of African American, Hispanic, and White ethnicities. The majority of students are from low-income households.

Program Structure and Process

- The project director is also the assistant superintendent for instruction for KISD. She is actively involved with the site coordinators and places a high priority on communication between centers.
- Paid and volunteer staff includes coordinators, day school teachers, college students, parents, high school students, and other non-teaching or non-school staff.
- The teachers make most decisions regarding the curriculum used in the program.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- The strongest emphasis in the afterschool program has been on improving academic skills by focusing on homework help and tutoring.
- Enrichment activities have not been as completely developed.
- The use of specific projects and experiments to illustrate concepts is common.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- No formal recruitment strategies exist. Enrollment targets were surpassed every semester.
- Administrators have worked to overcome a negative reaction to the program by parents and the community, and it is apparent that the program now receives strong support.

Survey Results

- Staff reported the most commonly used teaching practices in the core content areas include providing students opportunities to practice independent reading and providing specific instruction on how to solve math problems.
- The majority of the students reported that the afterschool program helped them be better readers, do better with mathematics problems, finish their homework, and make new friends.

Grantee Background and History

Kermit Independent School District (KISD) received the 21st CCLC, Cycle 3 grant in September 2004 and started the afterschool program in January 2005. The primary motivation to apply for the grant was the fact that there are very few opportunities for afterschool activities for children in the community, and district administrators wanted to offer "latch-key kids" a safe place to go after school as well as implement a program aimed at improving student performance in the district. The grant supports four centers: East Primary School, Purple Sage Elementary School, Kermit Junior High School, and Kermit High School.

Site visits occurred at the East Primary and Purple Sage Elementary locations. The primary afterschool program serves approximately 188 students who are mostly a mixture of Hispanic (44%) and African American (30%) ethnicities. Approximately 32% of the students are English language learners (ELLs). The intermediate center serves 284 students who are primarily a mixture of Hispanic (35%), White (35%) and African American (29%) ethnicities. The majority of students at both centers are from low-income households. Key student demographics for the centers are listed in Table 19.

Table 19. Center Student Demographics

Center Name	Total Students	Ethnicity					Gender		Category		
		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian	White	Male	Female	ELL	Econ Dis	Special Needs
East Primary	261	9	183	0	0	69	133	128	49	147	19
Purple Sage Elementary	297	5	18	0	0	103	164	133	43	166	24

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

In Spring 2006, there were 31 paid workers at the East Primary center and 30 at the Purple Sage Elementary center. Both centers also include a large volunteer staff. The entire staff includes coordinators, day school teachers, college students, parents, high school students, and other non-teaching or non-school staff. Neither center listed staff turnover for the semester. The staff at both centers are listed in Tables 20 and 21 below.

Table 20. East Primary Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center Administrators/coordinators	1	-	2	-
Day school teachers	18	-	8	-
College students	-	-	-	-
Parents	-	11	-	-
Youth development workers	-	-	-	-
Community members	-	-	-	-
Other non-teaching/non-school staff	12	2	1	-
High school students	-	12	-	-
TOTAL	**31**	**25**	**11**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Table 21. Purple Sage Elementary Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center Administrators/coordinators	1	-	2	-
Day school teachers	18	-	-	-
College students	2	-	-	-
Parents	-	8	-	-
Youth development workers	-	-	-	-
Community members	-	6	-	-
Other non-teaching/non-school staff	8	-	1	-
High school students	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**30**	**14**	**4**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Program Structure and Process

Kermit's afterschool program operates in all four schools in the district (two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school). All afterschool activities take place in the day school buildings and rooms, where there is adequate space provided for the afterschool program. Afterschool activities are provided 4 days a week (Monday–Thursday) from 3:30 to 6 p.m.

Day school teachers teach afterschool classes, and the student-to-teacher ratio is approximately 11: 1 In some classes, paraprofessionals and student assistants from the middle and high schools provide support during the learning activities. At the high school, afterschool activities include a tutorial/homework program and physical development activities such as weight training, both of which attract students involved in school athletic activities.

Management and Leadership. The project director is also the assistant superintendent for instruction for KISD. She is actively involved with the site coordinators and places a high priority on communication between centers. While the project director is available when problems arise and assists with center decisions, site-based decision making is encouraged. Site coordinators have control over day-to-day decisions and staffing at their centers. The teachers make most decisions regarding the curriculum used in the afterschool program. The structures for decision making seem to be effective.

Climate. The overall climate at the KISD afterschool program is positive, with students actively engaged in both academic and enrichment classes and teachers supportive of and knowledgeable about their students' needs and progress. The staff are caring and committed to increasing students' personal self-confidence as well as their academic performance. Staff understand the culture and socioeconomic position of their students, as well as some specific problems that they experience in this small, rural, rather isolated community. Interactions between staff and students are generally very positive and slightly more relaxed than those in the day school.

Programmatic Goals. The stated goals of the program are to increase student academic performance and to provide a safe and enriching place for students to go at the end of the school day. Other goals mentioned included giving students some basic non-academic skills (e.g., cooking,

etiquette, piano keyboarding) and balancing academics with fun activities that the students might not otherwise have an opportunity to enjoy. Program administrators also stress the goal of using research-based practices in the afterschool program and aligning its activities with the day school.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

All of the afterschool teachers in KISD also teach in the day school, so they are very familiar with the afterschool students and their individual needs. There is a strong priority placed on integrating day school and afterschool learning, and bridging between the two programs is easily achieved because of common staff serving students in both environments. A variety of teaching strategies are used, including whole-group, small-group, and individual instruction. All of the afterschool academic activities are linked to state standards, tied directly to the day school curriculum, and frequently tailored to individual student needs. Teaching staff expect all students to achieve at higher-than-current levels and are very willing to adapt the afterschool program to achieve this goal.

The strongest emphasis in the afterschool program to this point has been on improving academic skills by focusing on homework help and tutoring. Enrichment activities have not been as completely developed, and those that do exist are not necessarily tied to "real world" situations. The staff are aware of the need to add new and better enrichment activities and are working together to improve the program in this way. They are also aware of the need for feedback from students and make an effort to provide enrichment classes based on student interest.

Key Observations. Observations were conducted at both of the KISD elementary schools. Individual classrooms had some center-based activities, including computer-based academic programs being used in the afterschool program. The centers were used as an extension of the day school. Homework/tutoring sessions involved grouping students according to grade level and/or specific learning needs. Staff appeared to be knowledgeable about individual students' academic needs. This knowledge was based on specific assessment results from the day school and from teachers' experiences with particular students during the school day.

Observed classroom activities were appropriate for the students involved, and staff did a good job of keeping them engaged. For example, in one preK class, 18 students gathered around a teacher (who had an aide to assist) to read a story. Using a good model of a read-aloud, the instructor worked her way through the story, using a variety of reading techniques such as voice changes, asking many questions, and successfully settling 18 4-year-olds into a learning activity while keeping them excited and involved. In another class, a group of fourth graders was actively engaged in a competitive mathematics game called Round the World. It had been mentioned that the group was struggling with multiplication issues, so this activity was directed at reinforcing how to multiply. The students all clearly understood the rules of the game, seemed to enjoy the activity, and were proud when they demonstrated knowledge of multipliers.

Tutoring and Homework Help. Tutoring and homework help are a significant component of this afterschool program. The program originally began in January, and at that time of the school year, there was a strong focus on upcoming student testing during the spring semester. As a result of this timing, the afterschool program was developed to specifically support and reinforce

day school academic learning. The type of homework help and tutoring observed in the afterschool program included small groups of students, usually grouped by grade level, being guided by one or two staff. The adults monitored student work by moving around or having students come to them to ask questions about their specific homework assignments.

Social/Development Practices. Non-academic offerings in the afterschool program are currently being expanded. As stated above, the biggest focus in this relatively new program thus far has been on homework help to extend day school learning. However, staff members are working on developing more enrichment opportunities for the students. Non-academic classes being offered at this time (in response to student requests) include karate, keyboarding, and dance. Social development activities are limited, but staff were observed constantly and consistently reinforcing expectations for good manners, proper speech, etc.

Student Assessment Practices. Assessment of student progress in afterschool classes is largely informal. Teachers were observed monitoring individual students, especially during the tutoring and homework help periods, adjusting the work to student needs. Assessment information from the day school is used in the afterschool program. For instance, the direction of academic work in the afterschool program is largely determined by specific assessment results obtained in the day school.

Alignment With and Ties to Day School. There is an open, positive relationship between the day school and the afterschool program at KISD. Academic learning during the day is reinforced in the afterschool program through homework assistance and tutoring when necessary. Because all of the afterschool staff members are also day school teachers, there is continual bridging between the two programs, and the teachers regularly communicate about issues that affect their students.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

No special recruitment strategies are used or required. The predicted number of student participants has been achieved or surpassed every semester that the program has operated.

Parental and Community Involvement. Little was mentioned or observed at this center regarding specific parent involvement in the afterschool program. Originally, the general concept of the afterschool program was not well-received by many parents in the community, who thought that afterschool care should be their responsibility. The teachers and administrators involved in the program at KISD have worked hard to overcome this negative reaction, and it is apparent that the program now receives strong support from parents and the community. Direct parental involvement, however, is still minimal. No specific goals for community involvement were observed, but project leaders at both the district and campus levels placed a priority on developing stronger ties with the community.

Program Evaluation. For the most part, evaluation has been limited to informal information gathered by the instructors, site coordinators, and the project director in areas such as attendance and academic improvement. Some feedback is obtained from the students about the various classes offered, and this information is used to plan future activities. There was mention of an external evaluation being conducted by a local university.

Survey Results

Program staff, students participating in the afterschool program, and parents of participating students completed surveys in the spring of 2006 regarding the afterschool program practices and impacts on students.

Staff Survey. Thirty-four program staff completed surveys. Four identified themselves as site coordinators, 24 as instructors, one as a staff member of a partner organization, and two as regular volunteers. Three marked "other" but did not state their role. Staff varied in their years of afterschool experience, both at their current center as well as in general, and regarding their teaching experience either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher. Their experience is shown in Table 22 below for those staff who responded to these items.

Table 22. Kermit ISD: Number of Staff Reporting Experience in Afterschool Teaching

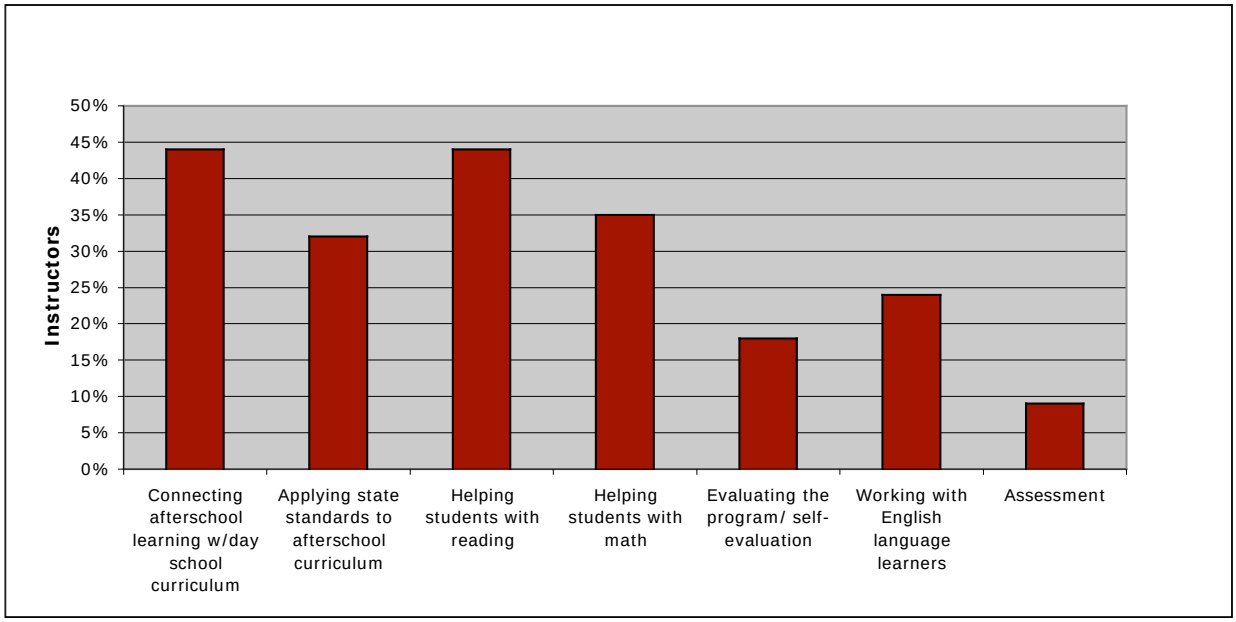
Working in afterschool programs in general	No. of Staff	Teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher	No. of Staff
Less than 1 year	17	Less than 1 year	8
Between 1 and 3 years	14	Between 1 and 3 years	7
Between 4 and 7 years	0	Between 4 and 7 years	3
More than 7 years	1	More than 7 years	13

Source: Program Staff Survey

Professional Development. Approximately 30% of program staff reported that their afterschool program had *never* offered professional development/training for staff, while slightly over 50% reported that the program had offered at least one to three such trainings. When asked about their participation in professional development/training offered by the program, 46% stated they had never participated. Participants who commented on the type(s) of professional development they attended most often mentioned reading and mathematics.

Topics staff mentioned most often as areas for future professional development included helping students with reading and mathematics, connecting afterschool learning with day school curriculum, and applying state standards to afterschool curriculum/practices. Figure 39 shows survey responses to these items.

Figure 39. Kermit ISD: Percent of Program Staff Indicating Various Interests in Professional Development



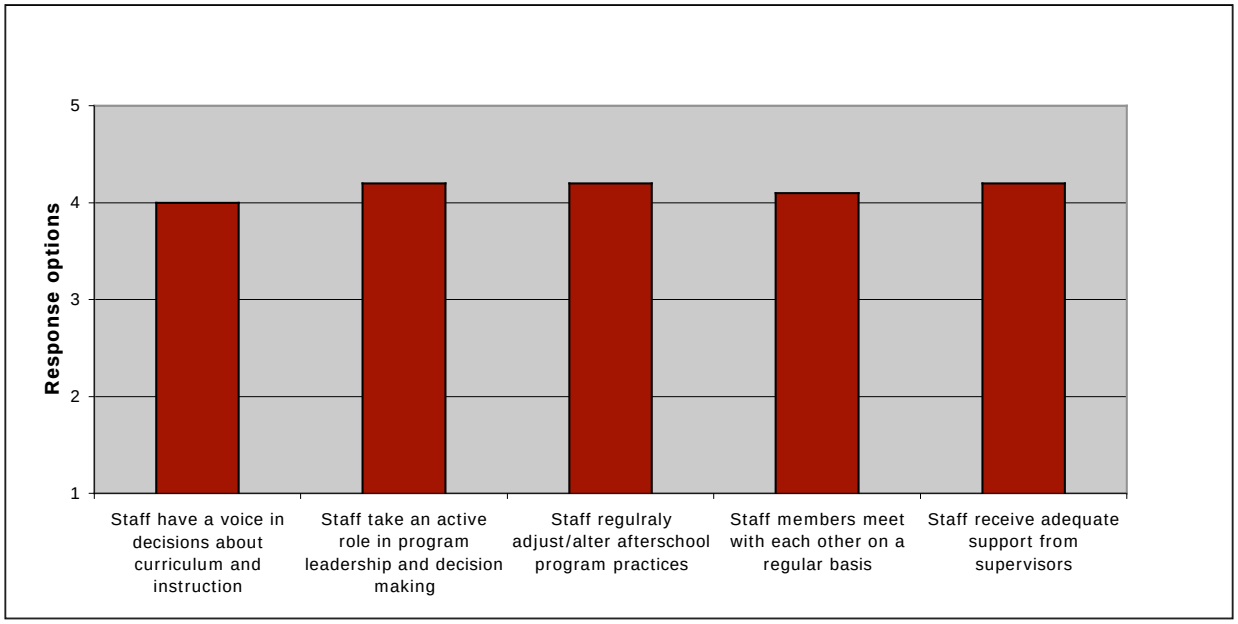
Note. N = 34; Rating options: Yes or No

Organizational Structure. Almost all of the staff stated they knew whom to contact at their students' day school with questions on their progress or status (91%); however only 63% said that they coordinate afterschool practices with their students' day school homework. Further, 83% indicated that they knew, on a weekly basis, the content to be covered with their students during the school day, with 84% of the staff reporting using assessment data from the day school to plan students' work. On average, program staff reported that they speak with their students' day school teachers once or twice per month about their students' homework, coordinating curriculum, or instructional issues.

Approximately three fourths of program staff reported that they do not have regular time set aside to meet with parents of their afterschool students or did not know if regular time was set aside. Close to 65% of the staff also indicated that they meet with their students' parents less than once per month or not at all.

The decision making is reportedly decentralized, with staff having a voice in decisions about curriculum and instruction and taking an active role in those areas. Figure 40 below presents survey results for staff perceptions of overall program organization.

Figure 40. Kermit ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Program Organization



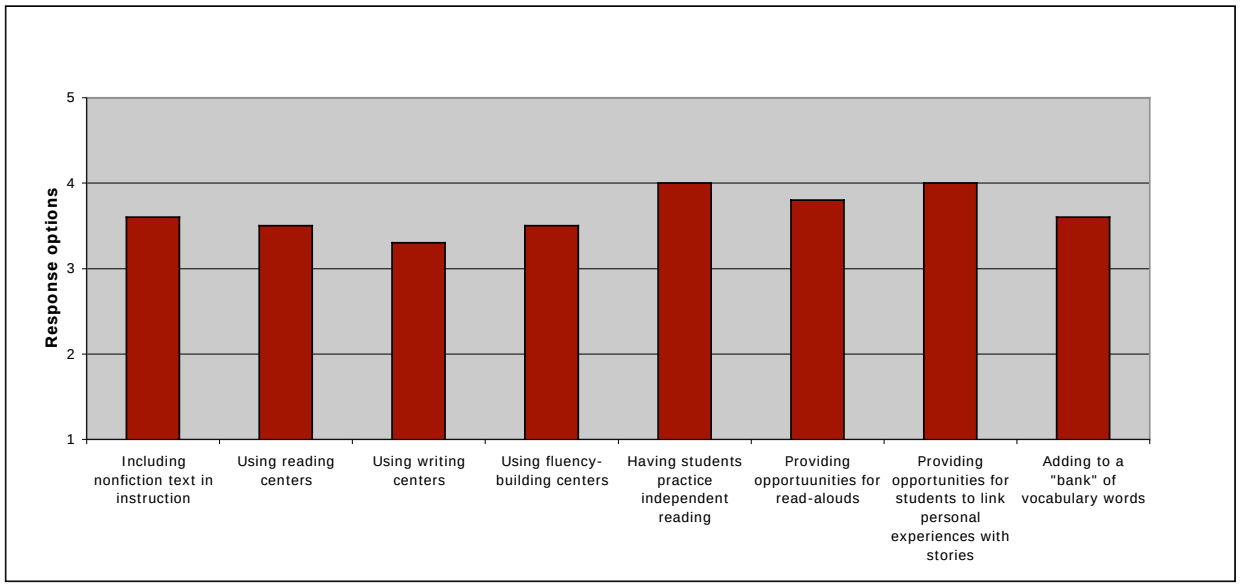
Note. N = 34; Ratings scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree

Educational Practices and Strategies. The types of instructional practices that program staff reported using *at least once per week* to *more than once per week* in the afterschool program included providing direct feedback to students about their progress, having students work in teams or small groups, one-on-one tutoring, peer support, computer-assisted instruction, tutoring and homework help, and providing different types of instruction to students based on ability level. They also indicated that they let students know their expectations and criteria for afterschool assignments. Least often used were linking instruction to community services and having students work on projects that spanned several days.

Regarding the assessment of students' progress on academic assignments, the majority of the project staff stated that they never used formal tests or quizzes or did so only rarely (*less than once per month)* (55% on reading assignments, 61% on mathematics, and 67% on science). They did, however, indicate that they spot-checked for student understanding at least *once per week* to *more than once a week* (86% on reading assignments, 89% on mathematics, and 67% on science).

Of reading, mathematics, and science, 56% of the project staff reported that they focused mostly on reading, 38% focused on mathematics, and 20% focused on science. For those focused on reading, the most frequently used practices in the afterschool programs were providing opportunities for read-alouds, allowing independent reading using computers or tapes, and providing opportunities for students to link personal experiences with stories. Figure 41 illustrates survey results of various reading practices implemented at the centers.

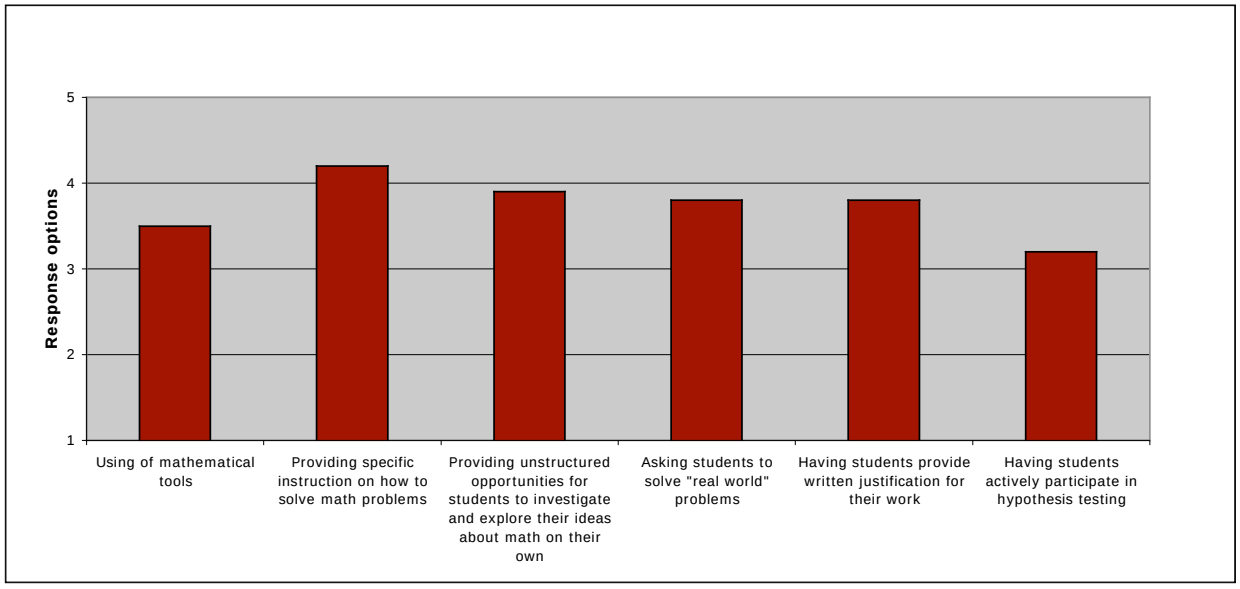
Figure 41. Kermit ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Reading Instructional Practices



Note. N = 19; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

For the 38% of program staff who indicated they focused on mathematics with students in the afterschool program, the most often used strategies included providing specific instruction on how to solve mathematics problems, unstructured opportunities for students to investigate and explore their ideas on their own, and written justification for their work. Figure 42 illustrates survey results regarding the frequency ratings of various mathematics practices implemented at the centers.

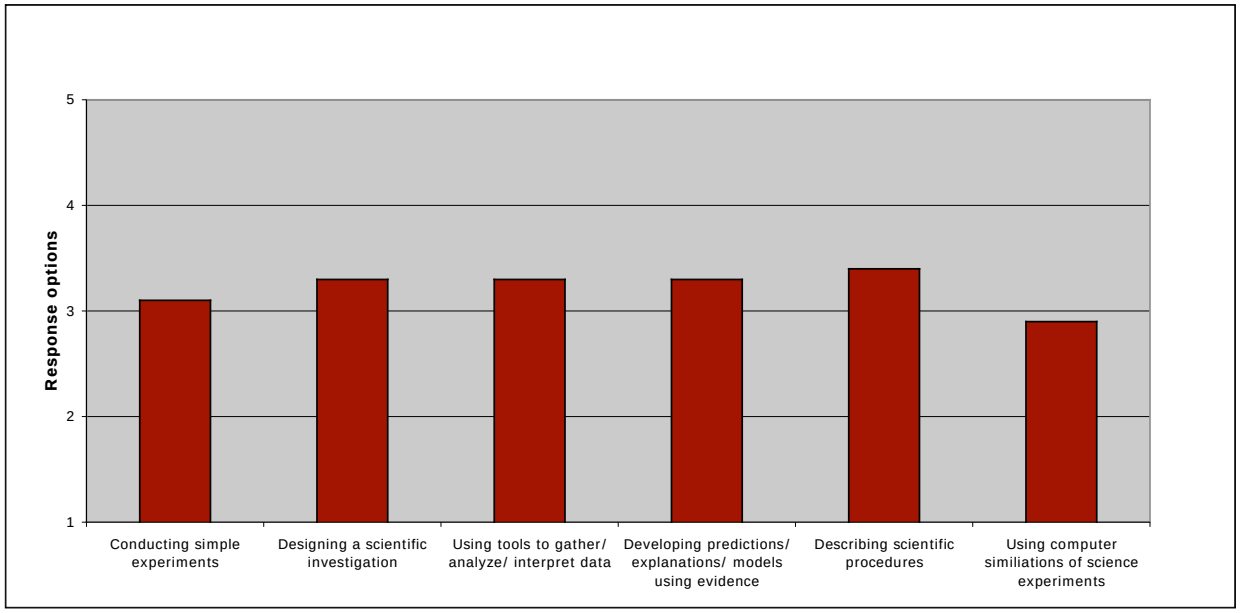
Figure 42. Kermit ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Mathematics Instructional Practices



Note. N = 13; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Program staff focused primarily on science instruction indicated that, with the exception of using computer simulations of science experiments, all other strategies were used at least *sometimes* by the staff. Figure 43 illustrates survey responses regarding the implementation of various science practices used at the centers.

Figure 43. Kermit ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Science Instructional Practices

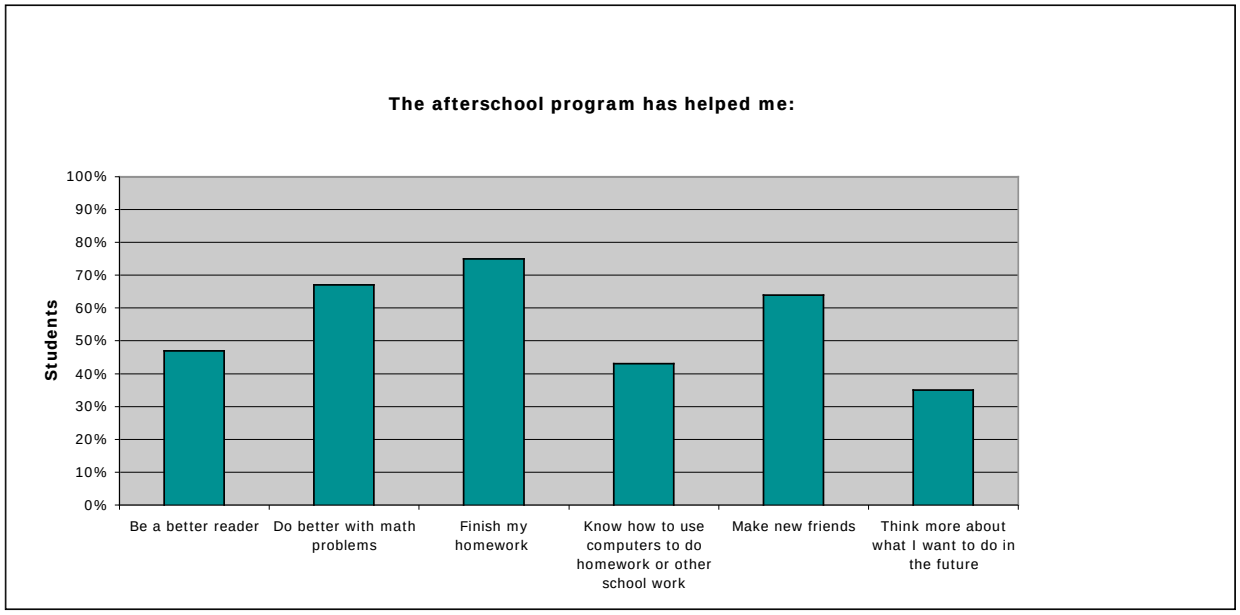


Note. N = 7; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Student Survey. Students attending the afterschool program in grades 3, 4, and 5 completed surveys. One first grader also submitted a survey (n = 198). Students rated 22 statements on a scale of 1–3 where 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Sometimes*, and 3 = *Always.* Twenty-two percent of the students indicated that they *always* practiced reading in the afterschool program. Eighteen percent indicated the same for mathematics, 3% for writing, and 6% for science.

In general, students reported that they liked the activities in their afterschool program (mean = 2.3), that the program staff listen when students have something to say (mean = 2.3), that they get along well with the program staff (mean = 2.5), that they feel safe while attending the program (mean = 2.2), and that much of their time is spent working on homework or schoolwork (mean = 2.3). As shown in Figure 44, one half to three fourths of the students also reported that the afterschool program has helped them be a better reader, do better with mathematics problems, finish their homework, and make new friends. They were less sure as to whether the program helped them think more about what they wanted to do in the future, however. Overall, 78% of the students reported that the program is helping them become a better student, and 44% reported that they "really like the program—it's great."

Figure 44. Kermit ISD: Percent of Elementary School Students Indicating Various Program Outcomes

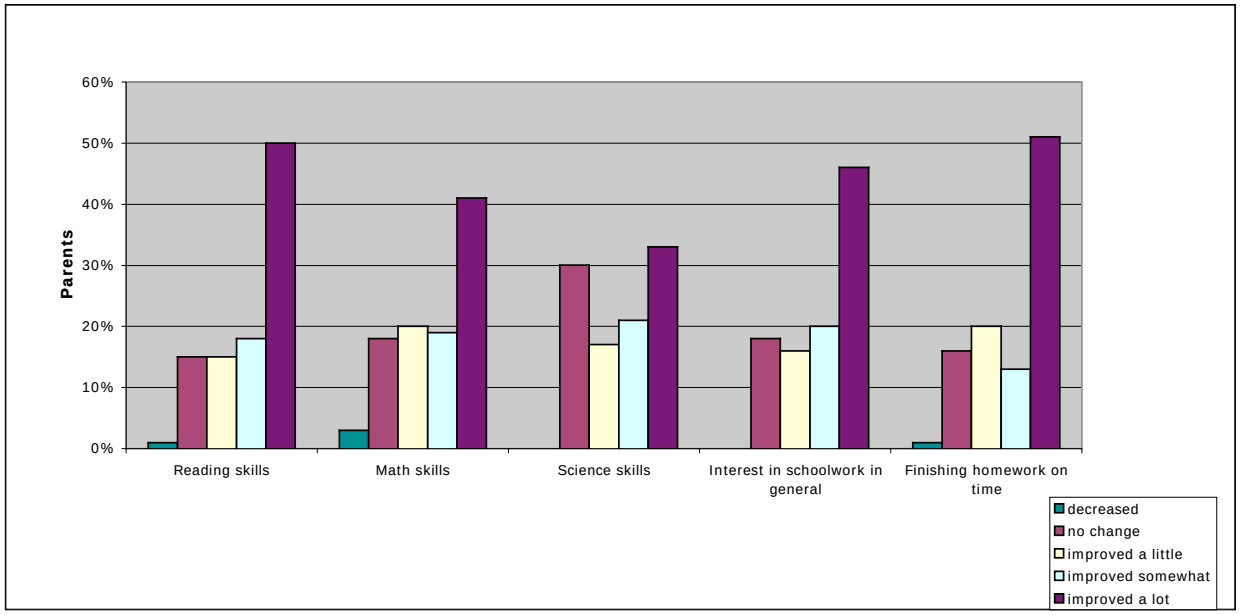


Note. N = 198; Ratings options: Yes, No, or Unsure

Parent Survey. One hundred and twelve parents of students participating in the afterschool program completed surveys. On a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *Never* and 10 = *Always*, parents rated several statements about the program and program staff. Mean ratings for all nine statements ranged from 8.2 to 9.3. Highest-rated was the perception by parents that program staff are available who can speak with them in their home language. Other items included parents' perceptions about feeling welcome to visit the program, having staff available to talk with them, and asking staff about what their children are learning and their behavior at the afterschool program.

Sixty percent of the parents noted that they never visited their children's afterschool program or only once or twice a year. Further, 85% stated that they never help out in the program. As shown in Figure 45, with respect to changes in their child's academic tasks, skills, and interest, parents primarily reported *a little improvement* to *somewhat improved* except for in reading and in finishing homework on time, where parents indicated that these had *improved somewhat to a lot*. Overall, parents rated their happiness with the afterschool program activities, staff, materials and resources, and the progress their children have been making in learning relatively high (means ranged from 7.9 to 8.5 on a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *very unhappy* to 10 = *very happy*, with between 67 and 80% of parents indicating that they were very happy with the program and the results they were seeing in their children).

Figure 45. Kermit ISD: Percent of Parents Indicating Various Program Outcomes



Note. N = 112; Ratings scale: 1 = Decreased, 2 = No change, 3 = Improved a little, 4 = Improved somewhat, 5 = Improved a lot

Profile Summary

Kermit Independent School District (KISD) received the 21st CCLC, Cycle 3 grant in September 2004. The grant supports four centers at a primary, elementary, junior high, and high school location. Site visits occurred at the East Primary and Purple Sage Elementary locations. The students in the afterschool programs vary by center but are generally a mixture of African American, Hispanic, and White ethnicities. The majority of students are from low-income households.

The project director is also the assistant superintendent for instruction for KISD. She is actively involved with the site coordinators and places a high priority on communication between centers. Paid and volunteer staff include site coordinators, day school teachers, college students, parents, high school students, and other non-teaching or non-school staff. Site coordinators have control over day-to-day decisions and staffing at their centers, however, the teachers make most decisions regarding the curriculum used in the afterschool program.

The overall climate at the KISD afterschool program is positive. The staff are caring and committed to increasing students' personal self-confidence as well as their academic performance. Students are actively engaged in both academic and enrichment classes. The strongest emphasis in the afterschool program has been on improving academic skills by focusing on homework help and tutoring. Enrichment activities have not been as completely developed, however, the staff are aware of the need and non-academic offerings in the afterschool program are currently being expanded. No formal recruitment strategies exist. Enrollment targets were surpassed every semester. Administrators have worked to overcome a negative reaction to the program by parents and the community, and it is apparent that the program now receives strong community support.

Survey results indicate that instructors frequently provide students opportunities to practice independent reading and specific instruction on how to solve math problems. In addition, the majority of the students reported that the afterschool program helped them be better readers, do better with mathematics problems, finish their homework, and make new friends.

LUBBOCK-COOPER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

21st Century Community Learning Centers at
South Elementary School and Cooper Junior High School
Site Visit: April 4–5, 2006

Overview

Background and History

- Lubbock-Cooper Independent School District (LCISD) received the 21st CCLC, Cycle 3 grant in September 2004. The grant is shared by five different school districts spread over a significant area of west Texas.
- The students served by the afterschool program vary by center but are primarily Hispanic, with some African American and White students.

Program Structure and Process

- The project director oversees centers in the five districts. He is actively involved with the site coordinators and places a high priority on communication between center sites.
- The site coordinators at the centers observed were also the principals of the day schools that host the afterschool programs.
- Centers observed used experienced, well-trained day school teachers to provide the academic instruction. Education majors from two local universities provided tutoring, mentoring, and homework assistance.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- The program is largely focused on academic work through tutoring/mentoring sessions.
- Less time is devoted to enrichment activities, although there are indications that this aspect of the program is receiving increased attention and development.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- Students are referred to the program by day school teachers based on academic performance on TAKS tests and classroom assessments.
- A local educational foundation was formed to support the afterschool program and has successfully obtained additional funding from external sources in the community.

Survey Results

- Staff reported the most commonly used teaching practices in the core content areas include providing students opportunities for read-alouds, providing them opportunities to link personal experiences with stories, and providing specific instruction on how to solve math problems.
- The majority of the students reported that the afterschool program has helped them be better readers, do better with mathematics problems, and finish their homework.

Grantee Background and History

The 21st CCLC in Lubbock-Cooper Independent School District (LCISD) has been operational for the past 2 years. The grant is shared by five different school districts, the largest of which is Lubbock-Cooper, where observations for this report took place. The four smaller districts are all in less-populated rural areas, and each has at least one afterschool center under the direction of the grant holder. Site visits occurred at South Elementary School and Cooper Junior High School (data on student demographics and staffing from annual performance reports were not available for these centers).

Program Structure and Process

The two afterschool centers visited in Lubbock-Cooper were at the district's only junior high school and at one elementary school. Both programs have access to plenty of space in the schools to serve their needs. In addition to classrooms, they use libraries, gymnasiums, and computer labs for various activities.

Afterschool instruction is provided by experienced and well-trained day school teachers, and tutoring, mentoring, and homework assistance are provided by education majors from two local universities. The student-to-teacher ratio ranges from one-on-one tutoring to 20:1 in some of the enrichment activities. In general, the ratio is about 10:1. At the present time, the afterschool programs in LCISD offer 1 hour of tutoring or other activities 4 days a week (Monday–Thursday).

The ethnicity of students attending the afterschool programs across the five districts served by the 21st CCLC grant is described by the project director as being approximately 60% Hispanic, 40% White, and 10% African American, with the percentage of Hispanics higher in the more rural schools. At least 40% of the students across all five districts involved are from low-income households, with the percentages again higher in the smaller, more rural districts.

Management and Leadership. The grantee oversees centers in five school districts spread over a significant area of west Texas. Each of the centers appears to have some individual freedom within the structure of the grant, but the five districts are making a strong attempt to work collaboratively to achieve common goals. This collaborative/cooperative approach appears to be working effectively, and numerous individuals (from the project director down to the afterschool staff) are involved in making decisions about the program. The site coordinators and instructors control the academic focus at each center. The project director is very involved in the program but does not practice a top-down leadership style. He has a vision for the program and is constantly pushing centers to adapt and adopt a range of afterschool goals.

One interesting thing about the LCISD program is that the site coordinators in both districts visited are the principals of the schools that host the afterschool programs. This arrangement has both positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, the afterschool programs at these schools benefit from strong administrative support and involvement. On the other hand, the principals interviewed at these centers articulated a desire to have their afterschool programs serve more as a continuation of the school day rather than as more independent (and different) endeavors. They see tutoring as the primary answer to academics in afterschool, serving as a reinforcement and extension of day school classes. Enrichment activities have not been a priority

for these site coordinators—they primarily want the afterschool activities to continue and support the work done in the day school. This has limited the expansion of afterschool activities (both academic and social/enrichment classes). The project director, through the leadership group consisting of members from all five school districts, is working diligently to develop and implement increasing amounts of non-tutoring activities directed at improving academics in creative and interesting ways. The observed enrichment activities appeared to be highly supported by staff and attendees and were acknowledged as meeting both interest and academic needs.

Climate. The afterschool staff are very involved with the students and understand the need to relieve some school-day stress during the time attendees spend in the afterschool program. There is a more relaxed atmosphere than during the school day, and behavior expectations are somewhat looser. Afterschool instructors seem to have an open and personal tie with most students. There is also a special and positive relationship between the tutors (brought in from local universities) and the students they work with. In addition to academic tutoring, they provide some mentoring and serve as positive role models for afterschool attendees.

Programmatic Goals. Thus far, the LCISD afterschool program has focused most strongly on the goal of supporting academic improvement in the day school. Some site coordinators (who are also school principals) express support for the broader goals of the program but are determined to have the afterschool program act as a continuation of the school day. As one person put it, "dosage" is the answer—the best use of the afterschool program is to simply provide more of what is already done during the day. There was some evidence, however, of a desire on the part of some staff members to expand afterschool offerings to include more enrichment and social development activities, as well as academic classes in addition to tutoring.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

The majority of time in the LCISD afterschool program is focused on academic work through tutoring/mentoring sessions. The day school curriculum was reported to be research-based, so the afterschool "curriculum" that supports it is, by extension, also based on research about best practices. Afterschool work is also linked to standards in this way. Less time is devoted to enrichment activities, although there are indications that this aspect of the program is receiving increased attention and development.

A variety of instructional strategies were observed, including whole-group, small-group, and individual instruction. Observed tutoring sessions focused on general comprehension and fluency, and the Science Club enrichment activity provided opportunities for analysis and synthesis of materials and the development of multiple skills. While tutoring sessions are structured and directed at improving academic performance, embedded mentoring by university students is supportive of the social, emotional, and physical needs of attendees. Although the relatively short time allotted to the afterschool program (only 1 hour per day) limits the program somewhat, students are actively engaged in the activities offered and especially enjoy the enrichment classes, which tend to be more project-/activity-based.

Key Observations. Observations were conducted during three separate activities at the junior high afterschool program in Lubbock-Cooper: tutoring sessions and two enrichment classes. Tutoring

sessions were held simultaneously in four different classrooms. Certified day school staff supervised the university students, who provided the tutoring assistance along with mentoring on a variety of issues. This was done both in small groups and one-on-one with students. Much of the tutoring observed appeared to build or reinforce fluency and knowledge comprehension rather than move toward analysis or synthesis of information. More analyzing and higher-order learning was provided through mentoring. The focus of the tutoring sessions was partially a product of the timing of the site visit, as it was just prior to scheduled TAKS testing in the day school. There was a strong emphasis on vocabulary and question structures typical on the standardized test.

The enrichment activities observed generated a great deal of excitement among the students, who were very interested and engaged in these sessions. One was a Science Club project, which had very clear and intentional ties to the day school curriculum. Students worked on building a structure using heavy black plastic, duct tape, garbage sacks, and a fan that would eventually resemble a planetarium. Developing hypotheses and a knowledge of astronomy were goals of the activity. The other observed activity was a class in ballroom dancing, conducted by two volunteers from a community dance program. Over 30 students participated and appeared to enjoy learning the different dance steps being taught.

Tutoring and Homework Help. Tutoring is the primary way that the afterschool programs in LCISD deal with academic issues. The Lubbock-Cooper centers use about 100 college students from two local universities to work with afterschool attendees as tutor/mentors. They meet with students individually and in small groups, supervised by both day school and afterschool teachers. There is a positive relationship between tutors and the students they assist, and tutors have access to information about each student's particular needs.

Social/Development Practices. Enrichment and social development sessions are offered 1 day per week, with different activity choices available on different days. One observation during the site visits was that at least some of the students are given the opportunity to participate in the enrichment activities only after showing improvement in the tutoring sessions. This confirms the strong focus on a continuation of day school academic priorities during the time students spend in this afterschool program. In a more general way, both day school and afterschool activities include and support character education and the social development of students.

Student Assessment Practices. Classroom assessment is largely informal. The district provides instructors with disaggregated data on student achievement, and this information is used to guide afterschool curriculum and activities. Afterschool staff are very aware of individual student needs, as they also teach in the day school, and students consistently receive the assistance they need.

Alignment With and Ties to Day School. Common goals and staff ensure constant alignment of day school and afterschool activities. As previously mentioned, the site coordinators interviewed view the afterschool program as a continuation of the day school and see it primarily as a way to improve student performance during the day. Because the afterschool and day school staff are the same, there is constant bridging between the two programs, and day school curriculum is reinforced in tutoring activities.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

Attendance in the afterschool program for specific students is suggested by day school teachers based on academic performance on TAKS tests and classroom assessments. In some instances, parents are contacted to reinforce the recommended involvement of their children in the afterschool program. Enrichment activities are open to volunteer attendees as well as to students needing extra academic assistance.

Parental and Community Involvement. Significant efforts to increase community involvement at the afterschool centers in Lubbock-Cooper have been successful. The use of local university students for tutoring and members of the community to teach some enrichment classes has strengthened ties with the community (e.g., the ballroom dancing class is taught by volunteers from a local for-profit dance studio, which offers discounted rates for students who want to continue classes outside of the afterschool program). The project director and grant coordinator both have strong ties with many individuals and groups within the district and in the broader community. They have developed an area-wide educational foundation that supports the afterschool program and have successfully obtained additional funding for the program from external sources in the community. Increasing parental involvement has been less of a priority; although there are apparently some learning opportunities offered to parents (e.g., technology classes) and contact is maintained through some evening activities and regular newsletters. Individuals are also contacted at times when parental knowledge or support for afterschool attendance is needed.

Program Evaluation. There was mention by the project director of an external program assessment, but no details were provided. The afterschool program relies heavily on day school-based data (i.e., student performance) to measure success. Surveys are periodically distributed to students, teachers, school administrators, and volunteers to obtain feedback on the program. Information from the surveys is primarily used internally but is also shared when it seems helpful to sustain the program and secure potential funding.

Survey Results

Program staff, students participating in the afterschool program, and parents of participating students completed surveys in the spring of 2006 regarding the afterschool program practices and impacts on students.

Staff Survey. Twenty-eight program staff completed surveys. Twenty-seven identified themselves as instructors and one as a staff member of a partner organization. Staff varied in the time they reported working in their current afterschool program. Their responses also varied as to the length of time of general experience in afterschool programs and regarding their experience teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher. Staff experience is shown in Table 23 below for those who responded to these items.

Table 23. Lubbock-Cooper CISD: Number of Staff Reporting Experience in Afterschool Teaching

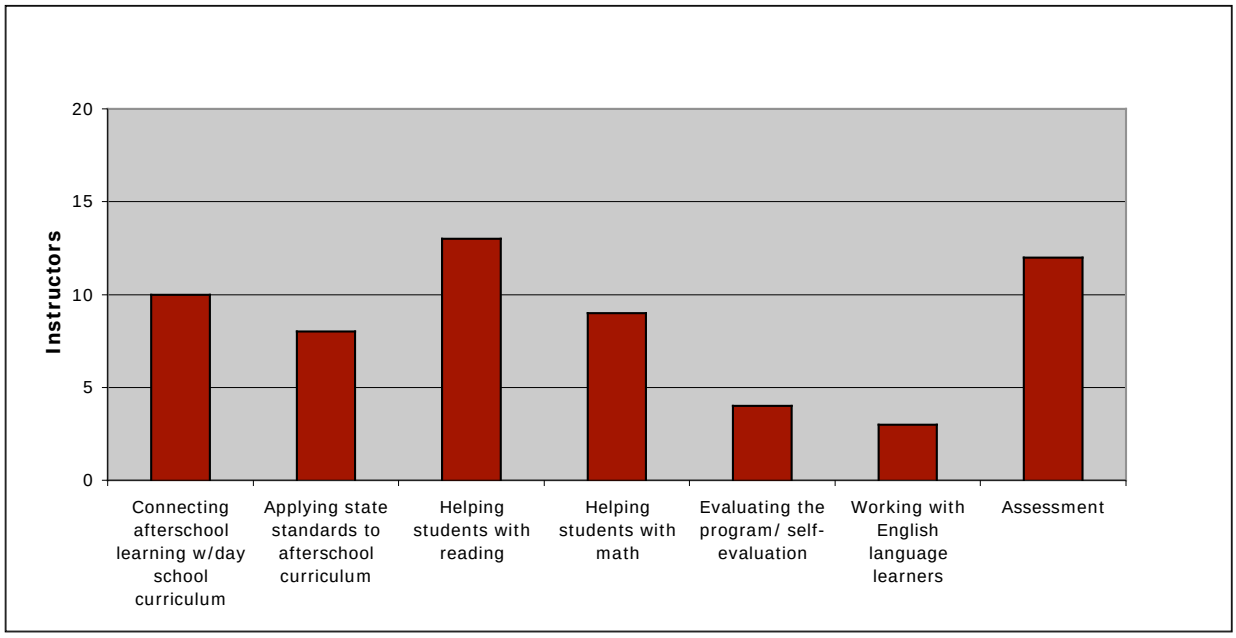
Working in afterschool programs in general	No. of Staff	Teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher	No. of Staff
Less than 1 year	3	Less than 1 year	2
Between 1 and 3 years	15	Between 1 and 3 years	9
Between 4 and 7 years	5	Between 4 and 7 years	2
More than 7 years	2	More than 7 years	12

Source: Program Staff Survey

Professional Development. Thirteen program staff reported that their afterschool program had *never* offered professional development/training for staff, while 10 reported that the program had offered it at least one to three times. When asked about their participation in professional development/training offered by the program, 17 staff stated they had never participated. Participants who commented on the type(s) of professional development they attended most often mentioned mathematics, reading/language arts, and science.

Topics staff mentioned most often as areas for future professional development included assessment, helping students with reading and mathematics, and connecting afterschool learning with day school curriculum. Figure 46 shows survey responses to these items.

Figure 46. Lubbock-Cooper CISD: Number of Program Staff Indicating Various Interests in Professional Development



Note. N = 28; Rating options: Yes or No

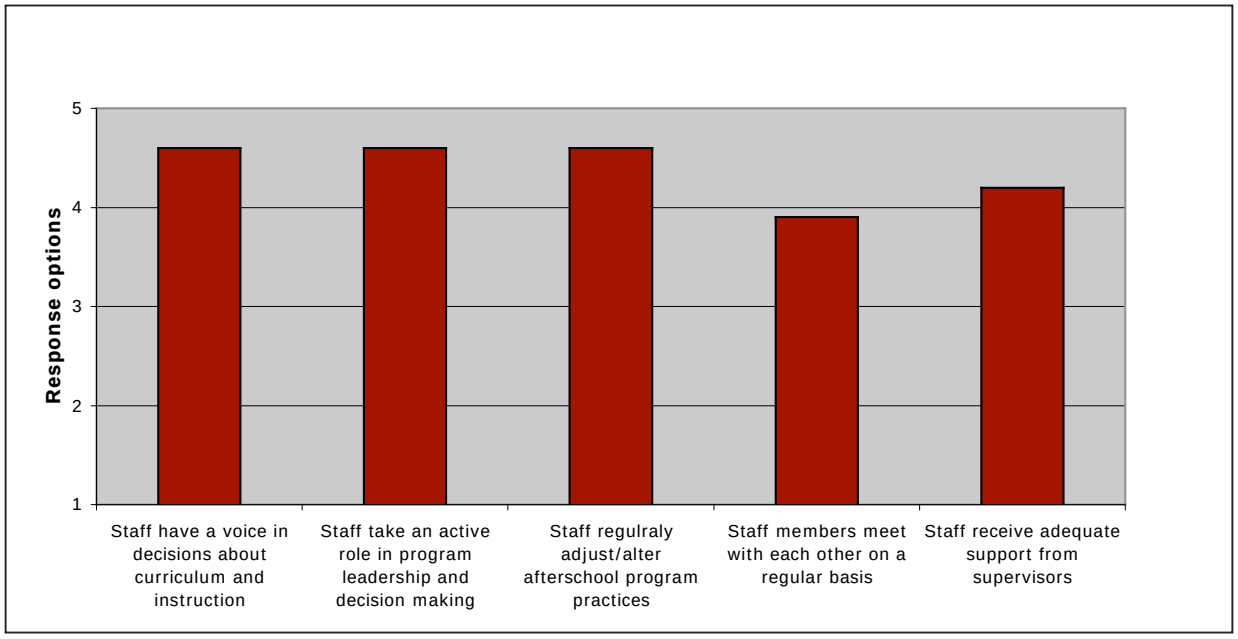
Organizational Structure. All of the staff reported to know who to contact at their students' day school with questions on their progress or status, and 20 said that they coordinate afterschool practices with their students' day school homework. Further, 18 indicated that they knew, on a

weekly basis, the content to be covered with their students during the school day, with 22 of the staff reporting using assessment data from the day school to plan students' work. On average, program staff reported that they speak with their students' day school teachers about twice per month to discuss their students' homework, coordinate curriculum, or address instructional issues.

Twenty-three of the program staff reported that they do not have regular time set aside to meet with parents of their afterschool students or did not know if regular time was set aside. Further, 22 of the staff also indicated that they meet with their students' parents less than once per month or not at all.

The decision making is reportedly decentralized, with staff having a voice in decisions about curriculum and instruction and taking an active role in those areas. Figure 47 below presents survey results for staff perceptions of overall program organization.

Figure 47. Lubbock-Cooper CISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Program Organization



Note. N = 28; Ratings scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree

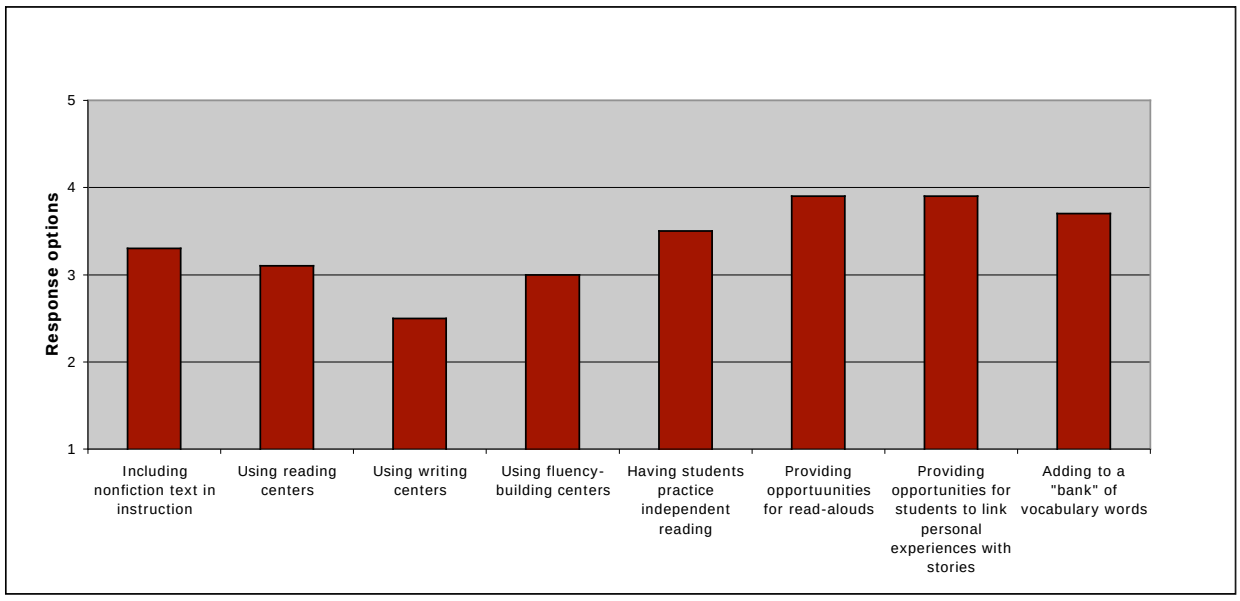
Educational Practices and Strategies. The types of instructional practices that program staff reported using *at least once per week* to *more than once per week* in the afterschool program were providing tutoring and homework help, one-on-one tutoring, peer support, computer-assisted instruction, providing different types of instruction to students based on ability level, providing direct feedback to students about their progress, and having students work in teams or small groups. They also indicated that they let students know their expectations and criteria for afterschool assignments. Least often used were linking instruction to community services and having students work on projects that spanned several days.

Regarding the assessment of students' progress on academic assignments, approximately half of the project staff stated that they *never* used formal tests or quizzes or did so only rarely (*less than*

once per month) (14 for reading assignments, 14 for mathematics, and 12 for science). They did, however, indicate that they spot-checked for student understanding at least *once per week* to *more than once a week* (17 for reading assignments, 17 for mathematics, and 8 for science).

Of reading, mathematics, and science, 15 of the staff reported that they focused mostly on reading, 10 focused on mathematics, and 5 focused on science. For those focused on reading, the most frequently used practices in the afterschool programs were providing opportunities for read-alouds, providing opportunities for students to link personal experiences with stories, adding to a "bank" of vocabulary words, and having students practice independent reading. Figure 48 illustrates survey results regarding the frequency ratings of various reading practices implemented at the centers.

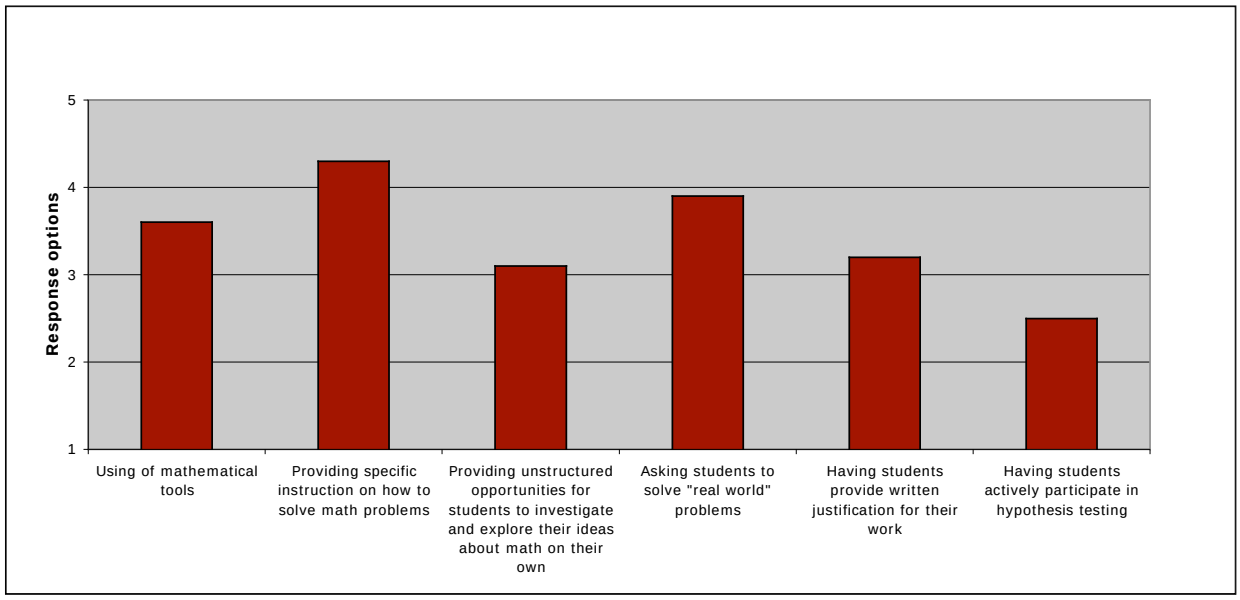
Figure 48. Lubbock-Cooper CISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Reading Instructional Practices



Note. N = 15; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

For the 10 program staff who indicated they focused on mathematics with students in their afterschool program, 8 indicated that they *frequently* to *always* focused on providing specific instruction on how to solve mathematics problems, while only 1 reported having students actively participate in hypothesis testing with the same frequency. Figure 49 illustrates survey results of various mathematics practices implemented at the centers.

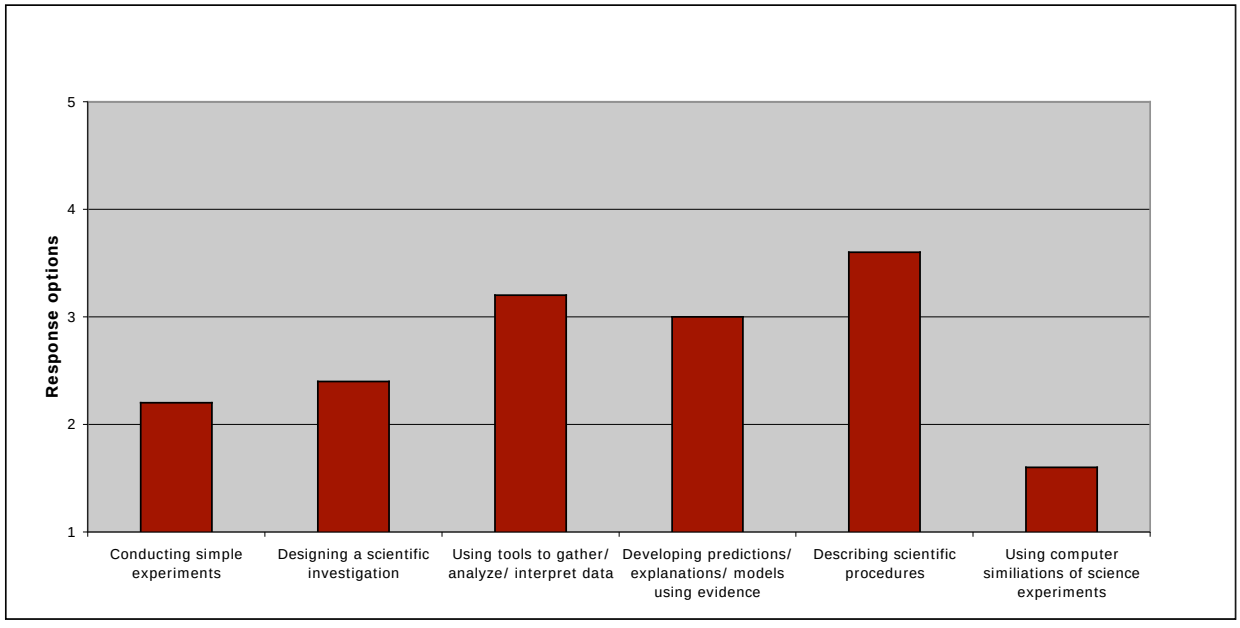
Figure 49. Lubbock-Cooper CISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Mathematics Instructional Practices



Note. N = 10; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Science instruction was focused on by only five of the program staff. Strategies that were used at least *sometimes* by these staff were describing scientific procedures; using tools to gather, analyze, and interpret data; and developing predictions, explanations, and/or models using evidence. Figure 50 illustrates survey responses regarding the implementation of various science practices used at the centers.

Figure 50. Lubbock-Cooper CISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Science Instructional Practices



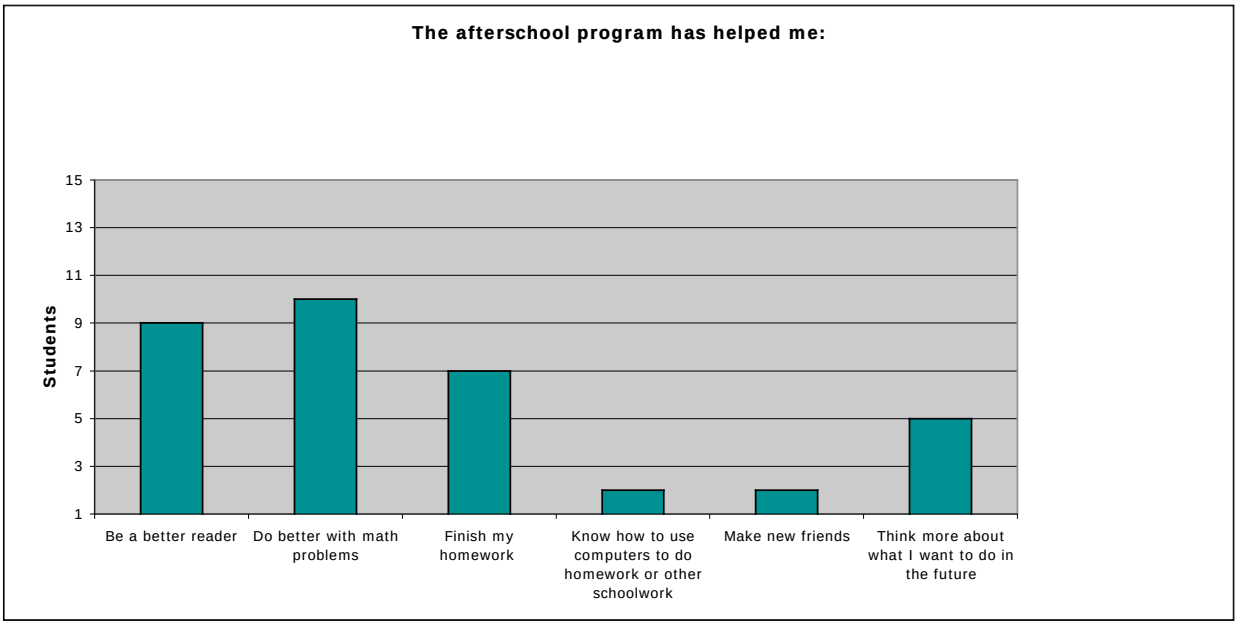
Note. N = 5; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Student Survey. Students attending the afterschool program from grades 4–7 completed surveys (n = 17). An elementary school and a middle/high school survey were provided for students. Some of the elementary school students completed the middle/high school version of the survey; however, both essentially probed for similar information and differed only in the wording of items to be more age-appropriate.

Students from the fourth grade completed the elementary school survey (n = 11), rating 22 statements on a scale of 1–3 where 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Sometimes*, and 3 = *Always.* Four of the students indicated that they *always* practiced reading in the afterschool program and four reported *frequently* practicing reading. Seven indicated the same for mathematics, 1 for writing, and none reported always focusing on science.

In general, students reported that they liked the activities in their afterschool program (mean = 2.9), that they get along with the adults in the program (mean = 2.9), that the program staff listen when they have something to say (mean = 2.9), that the program staff teach them test-studying strategies (mean = 2.8), that they get along with the other students in the program (mean = 2.6), that they feel safe while attending the program (mean = 2.8), and that much of their time is spent working on homework or schoolwork (mean = 2.5). As shown in Figure 51, the majority of the students also reported that the afterschool program has helped them be better readers, do better with mathematics problems, and finish their homework. All of the students reported that the program is helping them become better students, and approximately three fourths reported that they "they really of like the program—it's great."

Figure 51. Lubbock-Cooper CISD: Number of Elementary School Students Indicating Various Program Outcomes



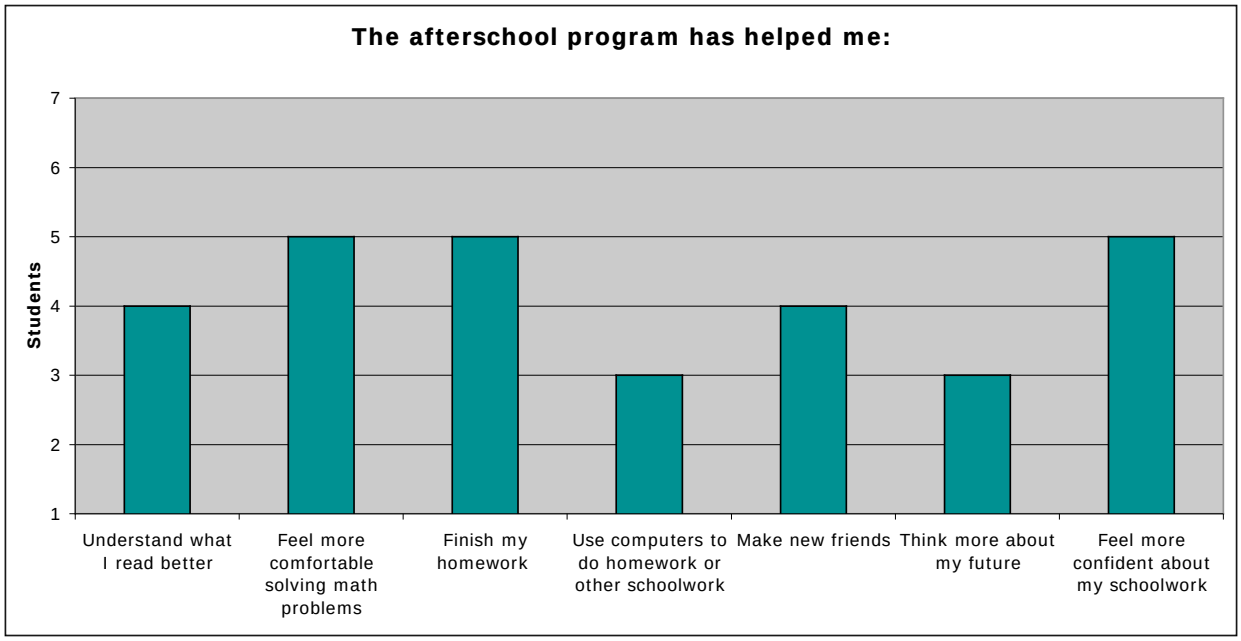
Note. N = 11; Ratings options: Yes, No, or Unsure

Students completing the middle/high school survey (n = 6) were from the grades 4, 5, and 7. The students rated 24 statements on a scale of 1–4, where 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Sometimes,* 3 = *Often,* and 4 = *Always.*

In general, students reported that they liked the activities in their afterschool program (mean = 3.7), that the staff listen to what they have to say (mean = 3.8), that the staff help them learn ways of studying for tests (mean = 3.3), that the students feel their ideas count (mean = 3.3), and that they feel that the afterschool program is a comfortable place to hang out (mean = 3.5). They report that a good portion of their time is spent working on homework help or tutoring (mean = 3.5) with the next largest portion devoted to reading activities that are not directly related to their schoolwork (mean = 2.5).

As shown in Figure 52, all six of the students reported that they are able to finish their homework while attending the afterschool program, that they feel more comfortable solving mathematics problems, and that they feel more confident about their schoolwork. In addition, all of the students reported that since they have been attending the afterschool program, they try harder to solve problems with schoolwork and ask teachers/other adults when they don't understand something. Further, four of the students reported that they work harder in their classes even if they don't like them, that they complete and turn in more assignments on time, and that they are more interested in school since participating in the afterschool program. Overall, three of the four students responding to the item reported that they "really like the program—it's great."

Figure 52. Lubbock-Cooper CISD: Number of Middle School Students Indicating Various Program Outcomes



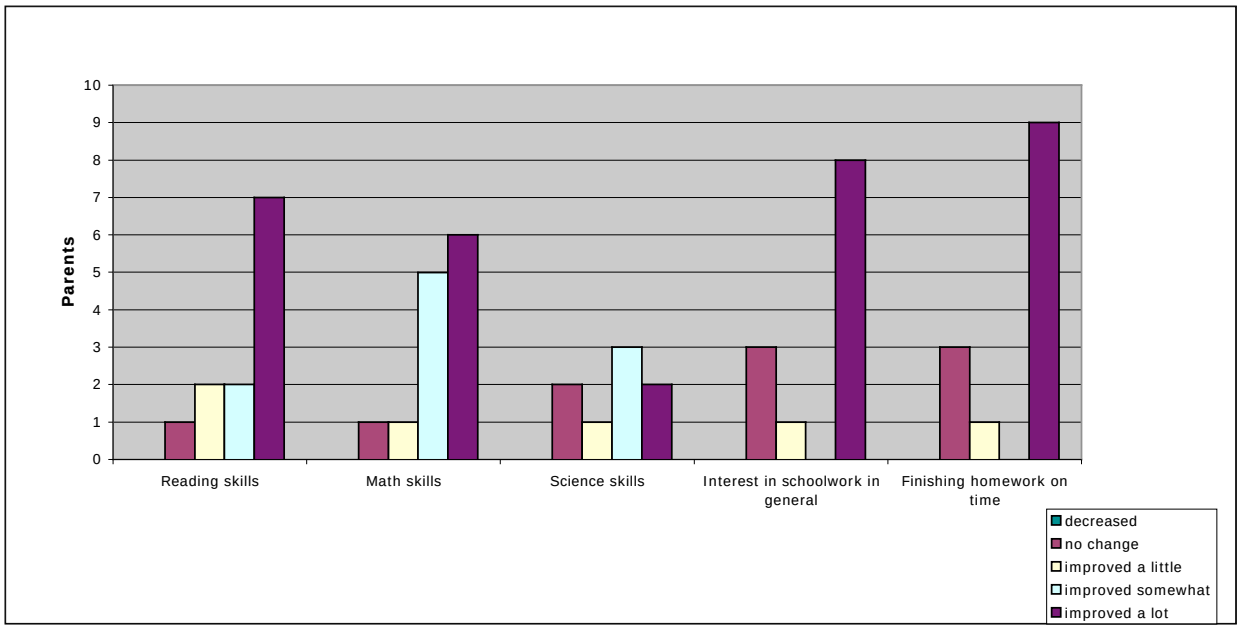
Note. N = 6; Ratings options: Yes, No, or Not sure

Parent Survey. Fourteen parents of students participating in the afterschool program completed surveys. On a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *Never* and 10 = *Always*, parents rated several statements about the program and program staff. Mean ratings for all nine statements ranged from 6.9 to 8.8.

Highest-rated was the perception by parents that program staff will let them know immediately if their child is not paying attention to his/her schoolwork and that they will deal with behavior problems quickly and fairly.

Eleven of the parents reported that they have never visited their children's afterschool program or have visited only once or twice a year. They also indicated that they have never helped out in the afterschool program. With respect to changes in their children's academic tasks, skills, and interest, parents primarily reported that there was *somewhat* to *a lot* of improvement for most items. Highest ratings were for increases in reading and mathematics skills and an increased interest in mathematics, science, and writing (see Figure 53). Overall, parents rated their happiness with the afterschool program activities, staff, materials and resources, and the progress their children have been making in learning relatively high (means ranged from 8.2 to 8.8 on a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *very unhappy* to 10 = *very happy*, with between 67 and 75% of parents indicating that they were very happy with the program and the results they were seeing in their children).

Figure 53. Lubbock-Cooper CISD: Number of Parents Indicating Various Program Outcomes



Note. N = 14; Ratings scale: 1 = Decreased, 2 = No change, 3 = Improved a little, 4 = Improved somewhat, 5 = Improved a lot

Profile Summary

Lubbock-Cooper Consolidated Independent School District (CISD) received the 21st CCLC, Cycle 3 grant in September 2004. The grant is shared by five different school districts spread over a significant area of west Texas. Site visits occurred at South Elementary School and Cooper Junior High School. The students served by the afterschool programs vary by center but are primarily Hispanic, with some African American and White students.

The project director oversees centers in the five districts and is actively involved with the site coordinators, placing a high priority on communication between center sites. The site

coordinators at the centers observed were also the principals of the day schools that host the afterschool programs. Experienced, well-trained day school teachers provide the academic instruction. Education majors from two local universities provide tutoring, mentoring, and homework assistance.

The program is largely focused on academic work through tutoring/mentoring sessions. Less time is devoted to enrichment activities, although there are indications that this aspect of the program is receiving increased attention and development. A variety of instructional strategies were observed, including whole-group, small-group, and individual instruction. Tutoring sessions focused on general comprehension and fluency, and the Science Club enrichment activity provided opportunities for analysis and synthesis of materials and the development of multiple skills. Mentoring by university students is intended to support the social, emotional, and physical needs of attendees. Students are referred to the program by day school teachers based on academic performance on TAKS tests and classroom assessments. A local educational foundation was formed to support the afterschool program and has successfully obtained additional funding from external sources in the community.

Survey results show that staff frequently provides students opportunities for read-alouds, opportunities to link personal experiences with stories, and specific instruction on how to solve math problems. In addition, the majority of the students reported that the afterschool program has helped them be better readers, do better with mathematics problems, and finish their homework.

MASON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

21st Century Community Learning Centers at
Mason Elementary/Junior High School
Site Visit: April 26–27, 2006

Overview

Background and History

- Mason Independent School District (MISD) received the 21st CCLC, Cycle 3 grant in September 2004. The grant supports one center site for students in grades 3–8.
- The students served by the afterschool program are primarily a mixture of Hispanic and White ethnicities and from low-income households.

Program Structure and Process

- The project director and the site coordinator oversee the program.
- Four certified retired teachers provide the academic instruction. Paraprofessionals assist with tutoring and special classes (e.g., technology classes).
- Teachers have input on curricular decisions and meet weekly to plan program activities.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- The program is focused on improving academic skills via homework help and tutoring.
- Enrichment activities are focused on social development and include enhancing students' self-esteem, leadership, and teamwork skills.
- Afterschool teachers meet with their day school counterparts for about 15 minutes at the end of the school day to get information about individual students' progress.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- Students are referred to the program by day school teachers, and there are waiting lists for students in some age groups. Retention has been an issue due to the mobile population.
- There are two parent liaisons that work hard to keep parents (especially Spanish speakers) informed and engaged.
- The program receives support from community members and businesses in the form of guest speakers, supplies, discounts, and publicity.

Survey Results

- Staff reported the most commonly used teaching practices in the core content areas include providing students with opportunities to practice independent reading, to use mathematical tools, and to design and conduct simple science experiments.
- Overall, students and parents indicated that they were very happy with the program and reported improvements in completing homework on time.

Grantee Background and History

Mason Independent School District (MISD) received the 21st CCLC, Cycle 3 grant in September 2004 from TEA. The afterschool program was conceived specifically as a means to assist students in at-risk situations, provide a recreational safe haven for students, and extend learning opportunities to the community. The district has a single preK–12 campus. The grant supports one center site for students in grades 3–8. The MISD afterschool program serves approximately 122 students who are primarily Hispanic (55%) and White (44%). Approximately 41% of the students are from low-income families. Key student demographics for the center are listed in Table 24.

Table 24. Center Student Demographics

Center Name	Total Students	Ethnicity					Gender		Category		
		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian	White	Male	Female	ELL	Econ Dis	Special Needs
Mason Elementary/ Junior High	122	1	67	0	0	54	63	49	4	50	3

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

In Spring 2006, there were 13 paid workers at the MISD center. The staff for the program consists of the project director, four certified retired teachers, two parent liaisons (one of whom also serves as the site coordinator), and paraprofessionals who assist with tutoring and special classes (e.g., technology classes). Volunteers include two high school students. No in-kind contributions or staff turnover were reported for the semester. The staff is listed in Table 25 below.

Table 25. Mason Elementary/Junior High Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center administrators/coordinators	1	-	-	-
Teachers	4	-	-	-
College students	-	-	-	-
Parents	1	-	-	-
Youth development workers	-	-	-	-
Community members	-	-	-	-
Other non-teaching or non-school staff	7	-	-	-
High school students	-	2	-	-
TOTAL	**13**	**2**	**-**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Program Structure and Process

MISD is in a small rural community northwest of Austin. The district has a single preK–12 campus, and it is a Title 1 school. The afterschool program is open 5 days a week. Each day begins with 45 minutes of homework completion, followed by two 45-minute academic enrichment sessions. Club Day, which focuses the academic enrichment on a program-wide theme, is held once a month. Some recent themes have been tied to cultural celebrations and community service. The afterschool program is strongly supported by the district and uses nearly

all of the available room and facilities on the day school campus. The student-to-teacher ratio is a maximum of 10:1.

Management and Leadership. All decisions about the management of the program are made by the project director and grant coordinator. Teachers have input, but the project director and the site coordinator/parent liaison hold final authority in all decisions about curriculum and instruction. Teachers and administrative staff (but not paraprofessional staff) meet once a week to discuss and plan school activities. Current decision-making structures appear to be effective.

Climate. The quality of student/staff interactions in the afterschool program appeared to be very positive. Staff seem to care about the students and truly want to help them improve both academically and socially. Personal relationships between staff and students are encouraged, and teachers focus on trying to create a relaxed and supportive environment. Because the afterschool staff are all retired teachers, they bring both energy and experience to the program. One particular positive influence on the climate in this afterschool program is the priority placed on communication with parents. There are two parent liaisons on staff who work hard to keep parents (especially those who only speak Spanish) informed and engaged, which in turn lends more support to the program.

Programmatic Goals. The stated goal of the afterschool program is to improve students' academic performance. Efforts to increase TAKS proficiency and grade-level passing and to develop mastery in literacy, mathematics, and science for each student drive program organization and planning.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

The afterschool curriculum is internally designed by staff and is linked both to the day school and (reportedly) to state standards. There is a focus on mathematics, science, and literacy that is consistent across all sessions and grade levels, and all three subjects are embedded in enrichment class lessons. There is no apparent student input into program design or curriculum—these decisions are largely based on staff's perceptions of what students need. Students are selected to participate based on their TAKS performance, and all activities are intended to improve student test scores, either directly through specific content focus or indirectly through personal development in enrichment activities.

There is a very strong focus on homework completion and academic assistance for students who need it (which most do, as afterschool is primarily seen as a way to help students who are not performing well in day school). Ultimately, success is measured by an improvement in day school test scores. Afterschool teachers use a variety of teaching styles and strategies, and observed classes were very interactive. Students who need special attention or help get it, for the most part, and instructors are able to keep nearly all students very engaged in classroom activities. Student grouping for all activities seems appropriate. It is determined by grade level, with some levels combined due to the lower participation of students in some grades. The general atmosphere is more relaxed than in the day school, and students are given more opportunity for hands-on and "real world" learning. Members of the community with special knowledge or experiences are often invited in to talk with afterschool students.

Key Observations. All four classes observed focused on the common theme of "travel in the 50 states," so there was a great deal of continuity in the curriculum used during the week of the site visit. In the first class, students studied Texas geography and state symbols. In the second class, students worked on state research projects, focusing on specific states previously chosen. Students in the third class worked on computers to access travel information on various states, and the fourth class was devoted to cooking Texas cornbread. Students engaged in individual, paired, and whole-group activities, and staff were very conscious of those who needed extra help to complete their assignments. Mathematics and science were clearly embedded in the cooking class, where students were asked how ingredients would change if the recipe were doubled or halved. They also discussed the chemistry of ingredient mixtures, such as the reaction caused by leavening agents. In the technology class, students used the Internet to do research on their states and were then guided to a Web site where they could apply the knowledge they had learned about various states in an online game. Students in all of the classes observed were very engaged, and instructors used a variety of teaching strategies to both convey information and encourage interactive discussions.

Tutoring and Homework Help. Tutoring and homework completion are given a high priority in the afterschool design and comprise the most direct link to day school activities. The first 45 minutes of every day are devoted to these activities, and students are given incentives to complete their assignments. Day school teachers provide daily assignment sheets to afterschool staff denoting what homework students have to work on. Homework help and tutoring are provided by teachers, paraprofessionals, and, on occasion, high school student volunteers.

Social/Development Practices. Enrichment activities at the MISD afterschool program are focused on social as well as academic development. Among the specific classes/activities observed or mentioned were cooking, cultural celebrations (e.g., Martin Luther King Day, Cinco de Mayo), bringing people in from the community to discuss specific topics, and community service projects (e.g., visiting with residents at a nursing home, a local creek clean-up). One of the goals of these classes is to help students learn in a different way, using "real world" examples to illustrate concepts that they are exposed to during the school day. Specific social/developmental skills mentioned as being goals in the afterschool program included enhancing students' self-esteem and leadership and teamwork skills.

Student Assessment Practices. No structures are in place for analyzing or using classroom assessment data to guide practice, although a core group of instructors meet weekly with the site coordinator to discuss programming. During these meetings, the success and shortcomings of the classes taught over the past week are discussed, as well as ways to improve the sessions based on student engagement and performance. Classroom assessment observed was largely informal and varied with the content of class sessions.

Alignment With and Ties to Day School. There is good communication between the afterschool and day school staff at the MISD center. Afterschool teachers meet with their day school counterparts for about 15 minutes at the end of the school day to get information about individual students' progress and what students need to focus on during homework and tutoring sessions. Day school teachers also communicate regularly with the site coordinator. Afterschool curriculum is designed to extend and amplify what students are working on during the day. For

instance, when members of the Texas Tech University outdoor science group were planning to come and conduct afterschool sessions, they were asked to focus on topics that were being covered in the day school at that time.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

The primary method of recruiting students into the afterschool program is by working with the day school teachers and getting their recommendations about which of their students need to attend. The teacher and/or a representative from the afterschool program will then solicit cooperation from the parents of these students. Slots are held for students who participated in the afterschool program the previous year, and the program depends somewhat on word-of-mouth recommendations from these students to their friends. Occasionally the school principal will require that a student attend the afterschool program. Current recruitment strategies seem sufficient as the afterschool program is operating at capacity and there are waiting lists for students in some age groups. Retention has been a bit more of a problem, but this is primarily due to the mobile population in the local area.

Parental and Community Involvement. The MISD afterschool program has strong ties to both parents and the community. As mentioned, the program employs two parent liaisons, who are dedicated to keeping parents involved and informed. The primary mode of communication is via telephone, but staff also share information with parents through brief "car conferences" at dismissal each day, a weekly newsletter sent home with students, and more organized meetings. One example of the latter was that prior to TAKS testing, a meeting for Spanish-speaking parents was scheduled to explain what the test was and how they could help their children do well on it. After the scores are in, they plan to reconvene to discuss results. These meetings and other communications are conducted in Spanish because there is an emphasis on engaging parents who are usually unable to communicate with school personnel because of language barriers. About half of the afterschool students' parents are estimated to be involved in classes and enrichment opportunities, volunteer work for the afterschool program, and/or afterschool night activities.

The afterschool program has reached out to the community and receives support from various individuals and businesses in the form of guest speakers, supplies, discounts, and publicity. The program has incorporated some community service projects into its enrichment activities, such as students visiting residents in the local nursing home and organizing an activity to clean up a local creek. The afterschool program also has an arrangement with a local branch of Texas Tech University. On select days during the semester, outreach personnel from the college come and work with students on science themes.

Program Evaluation. The afterschool program at MISD has not been independently evaluated. This option was originally planned, but program administrators decided that the data gathered for required reporting to TEA would provide sufficient information about the progress of the program. No mention was made of gathering evaluative data from students, parents, or staff.

Survey Results

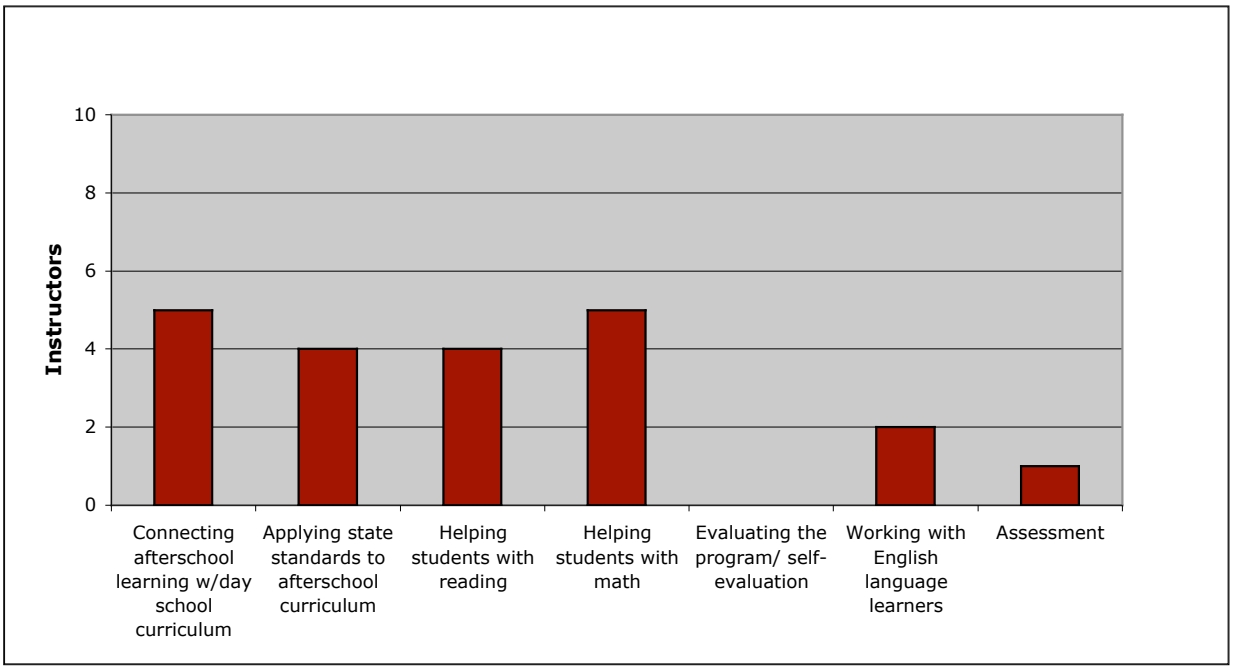
Program staff, students participating in the afterschool program, and parents of participating students completed surveys in the spring of 2006 regarding the afterschool program practices and impacts on students.

Staff Survey. Ten program staff completed surveys. Seven identified themselves as instructors, two as substitutes, and one as providing homework help. Two of the staff reported working in their current afterschool program for less than 1 year, while eight stated they had worked in the program for between 1 and 3 years. Of the eight responses as to the length of time program staff had general experience in afterschool programs, six reported 1 to 3 years of experience and two reported 4 or more years. Regarding their experience teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher, three stated they had from 1 to 3 years of experience and five had more than 7 years of experience.

Professional Development. Five of the program staff reported that their afterschool program had never offered professional development/training for staff, one said it had been offered 2–3 times, and two stated it was offered four or more times. When asked about their participation in professional development/training offered by the program, five stated they had never participated, three that they had participated 2–3 times, and one stated four or more times. Participants who commented on the type(s) of professional development they attended mentioned mathematics, reading, TAKS, and attendance at afterschool conferences.

Topics staff mentioned most often as areas for future professional development included helping students with reading and mathematics, connecting afterschool learning with day school curriculum, and applying state standards to afterschool curriculum/practices. Figure 54 shows survey responses to these items.

Figure 54. Mason ISD: Number of Program Staff Indicating Various Interests in Professional Development



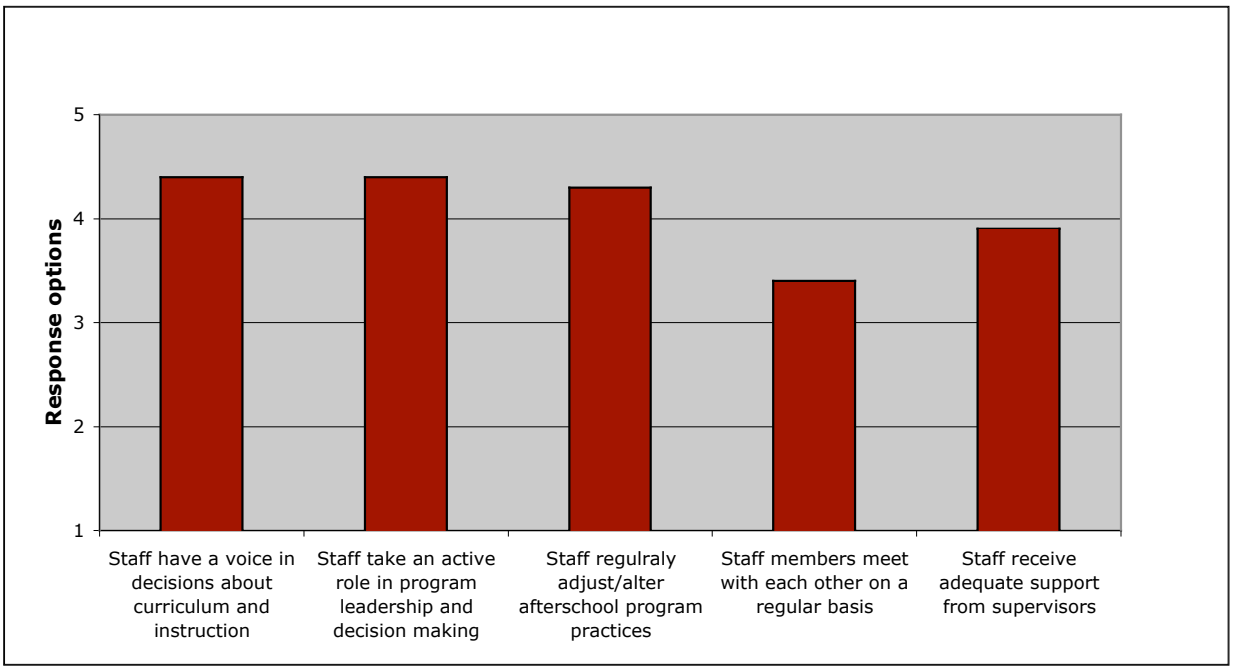
Note. N = 10; Rating options: Yes or No

Organizational Structure. On a scale of 1–5 where 1 = *Strongly disagree* and 5 = *Strongly agree,* all of the staff reported knowing whom to contact at their students' day school with questions on their progress or status. Eight of the 10 staff reported that they coordinated afterschool practices with their students' day school homework, with seven indicating that they knew, on a weekly basis, the content to be covered with their students during the school day. Further, seven staff members also reported using assessment data from the day school to plan students' work. On average, program staff reported that they speak with their students' day school teachers at least once per month about students' homework, coordinating curriculum, or instructional issues.

Nine of the 10 program staff reported that they do not have regular time set aside to meet with parents of their afterschool students or did not know if regular time was set aside. Further, eight of the 10 staff indicated that they meet with their students' parents less than once per month or not at all.

The decision making is reportedly decentralized, with staff having a voice in decisions about curriculum and instruction and taking an active role in those areas. Figure 55 below presents survey results for staff perceptions of overall program organization.

Figure 55. Mason ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Program Organization



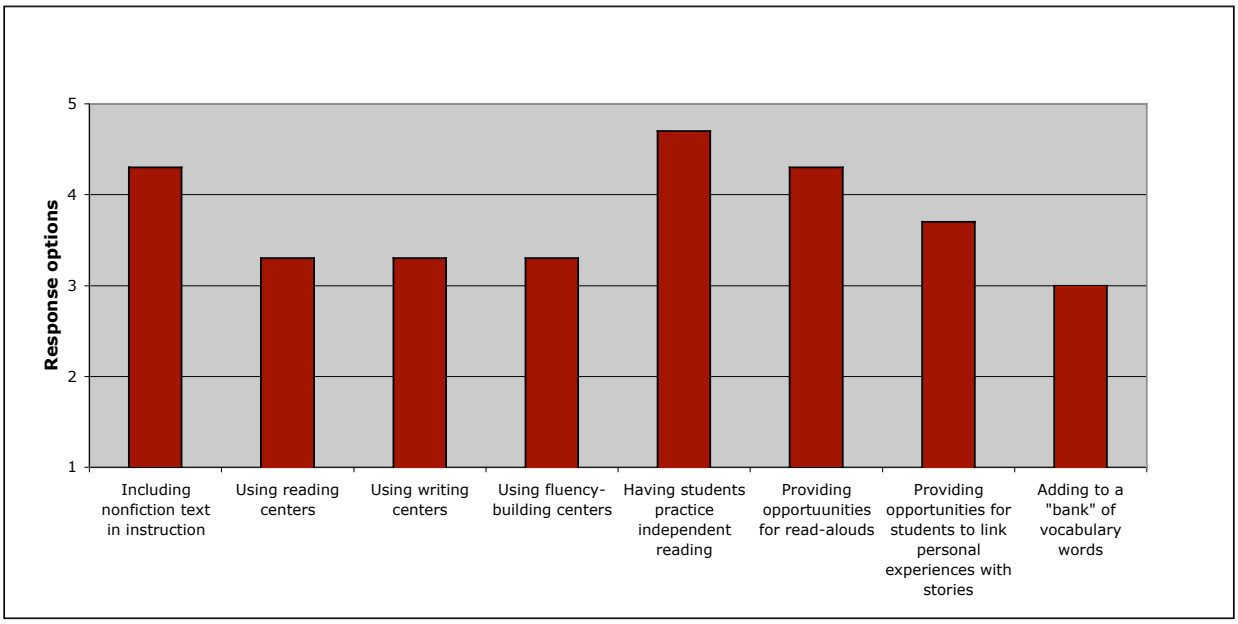
Note. N = 10; Ratings scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree

Educational Practices and Strategies. The types of instructional practices that program staff reported using *at least once per week* to *more than once per week* in the afterschool program were tutoring and homework help, providing different types of instruction to students based on ability level, providing direct feedback to students about their progress, one-on-one tutoring, peer support, and computer-assisted instruction. They also indicated that they let students know their expectations and criteria for afterschool assignments. Least often used were linking instruction to community services and having students work on projects that spanned several days.

Regarding the assessment of students' progress on academic assignments, the majority of the project staff stated that they never used formal tests or quizzes or did so only rarely (*less than once per month)*. Most, however, indicated that they spot-checked for student understanding at least *once per week* to *more than once a week*.

Of reading, mathematics, and science, three of the program staff reported that they focused mostly on reading, four on mathematics, and three on science. For those focused on reading, the most frequently used practices in the afterschool program were providing opportunities for read-alouds, having students practice independent reading, and including nonfiction text in instruction. Figure 56 illustrates survey results regarding the frequency with which staff members used various reading practices implemented at the centers.

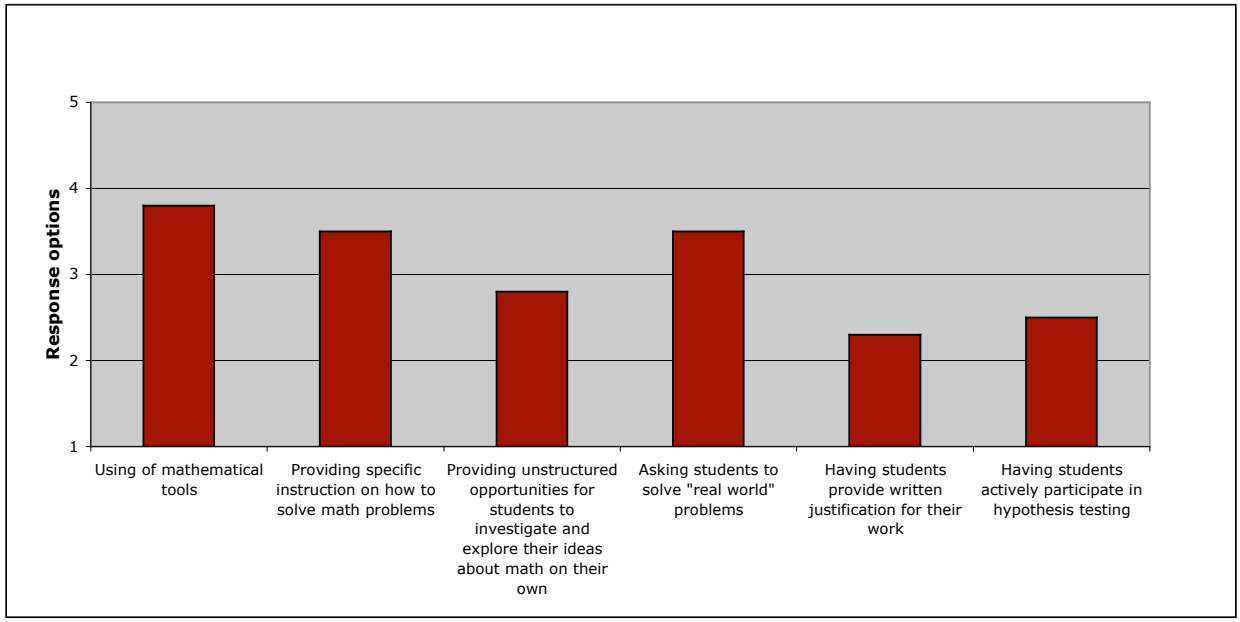
Figure 56. Mason ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Reading Instructional Practices



Note. N = 3; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

For the four program staff who indicated they focused primarily on mathematics with students in their afterschool program, the instructional strategies used most frequently were mathematical tools (e.g., manipulatives, calculators, computer-based tools), specific instruction on solving mathematics problems, and having students solve "real world" problems. Figure 57 illustrates survey results for various mathematics practices implemented at the centers.

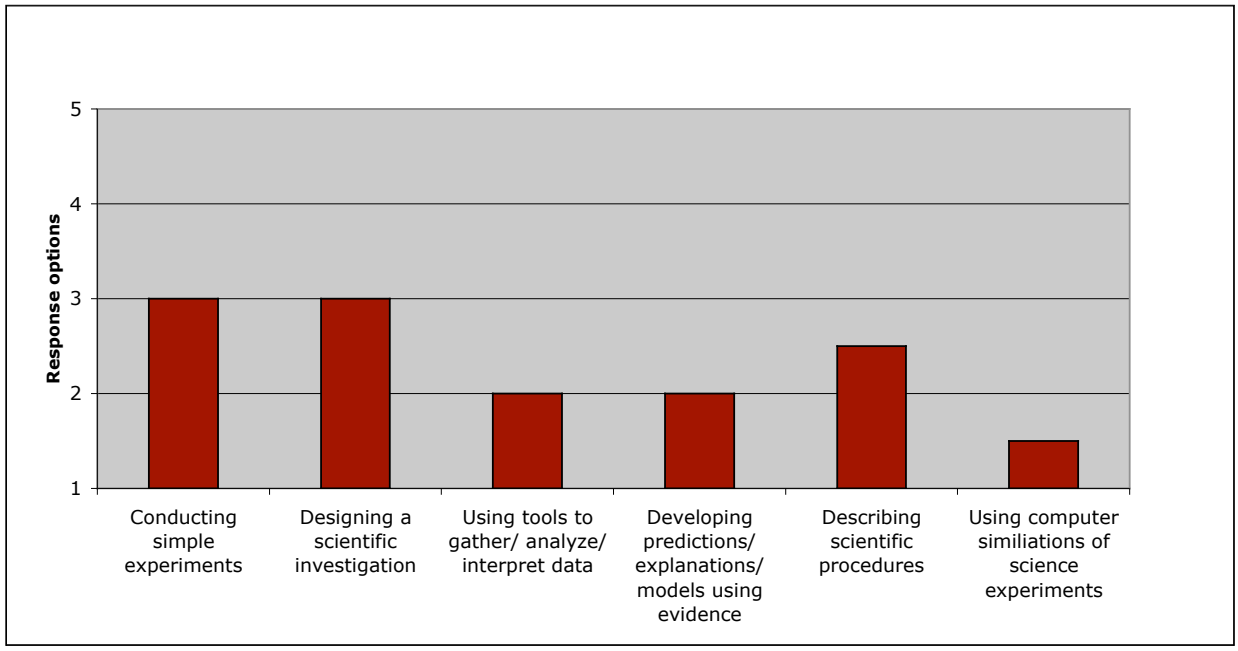
Figure 57. Mason ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Mathematics Instructional Practices



Note. N = 4; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Science instruction was focused on by only two of the program staff. Strategies that were used at least *sometimes* by these staff were conducting simple experiments and designing scientific investigations. Figure 58 illustrates survey responses for various science practices used at the centers.

Figure 58. Mason ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Science Instructional Practices



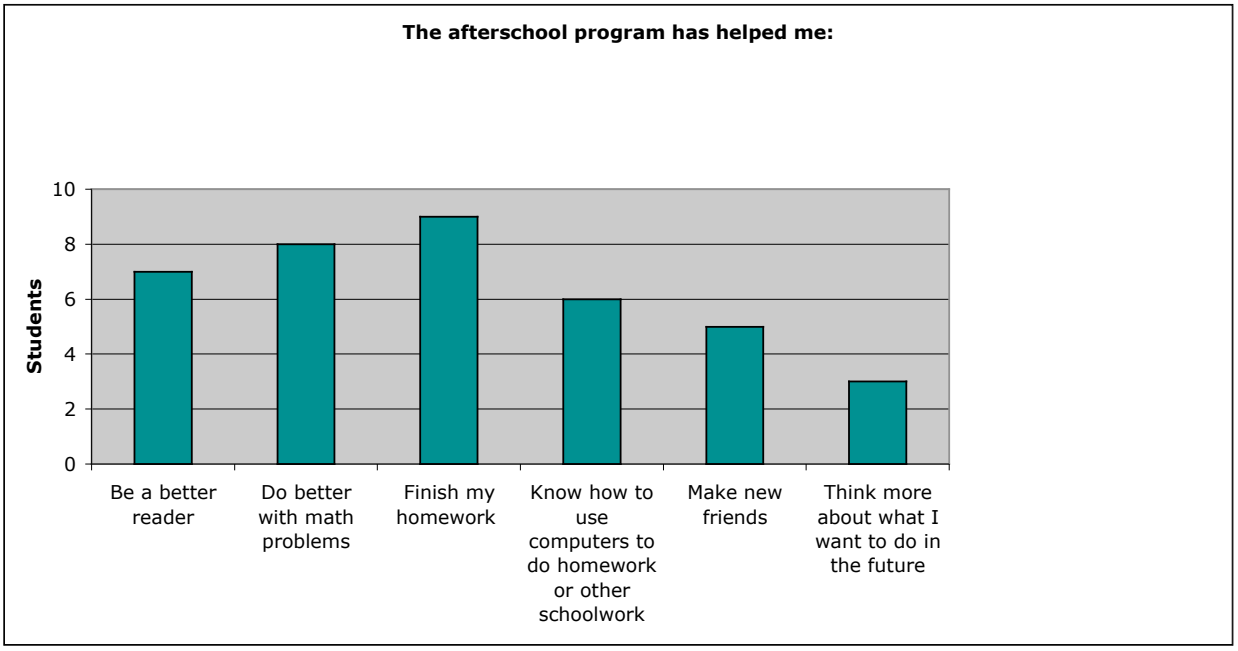
Note. N = 3; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Student Survey. Ten students attending the afterschool program from grades 4 and 5 completed an elementary school version of the student survey, and four students from grades 7 and 8 completed a middle/high school version. Both versions of the student survey essentially probed for similar information and differed only in the wording of items to be more age-appropriate.

Students completing the elementary school survey (n = 10) rated 22 statements on a scale of 1–3 where 1 = *Never,* 2 = *Sometimes,* and 3 = *Always.* Three of the students indicated that they *always* practiced reading in the afterschool program. Five indicated the same for mathematics, three for writing, and four for science.

In general, students reported that they liked the activities in their afterschool program (mean = 2.5), that they get along with the adults in the program (mean = 2.6), that the program staff listen when they have something to say (mean = 2.6), that they get along with the other students in the program (mean = 2.7), that they feel safe while attending the program (mean = 2.6), and that much of their time is spent working on homework or schoolwork (mean = 2.9). As shown in Figure 59, the majority of the students also reported that the afterschool program has helped them be better readers, do better with mathematics problems, and finish their homework. All of the students reported that the program is helping them become a better student, and eight of the 10 elementary school students reported that "they really like the program—it's great."

Figure 59. Mason ISD: Number of Elementary School Student Indicating Various Program Outcomes



Note. N = 10; Ratings options: Yes, No, or Unsure

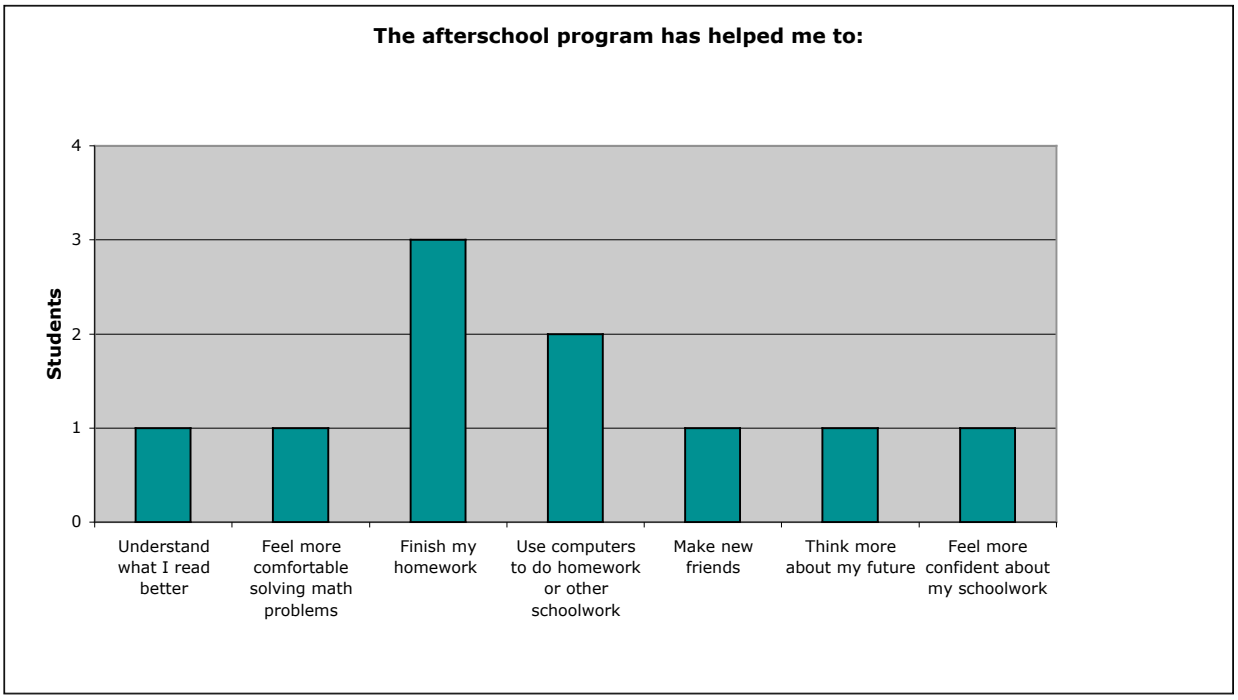
Students completing the middle/high school survey (n = 4) rated 24 statements on a scale of 1–4 where 1 = *Never,* 2 = *Sometimes,* 3 = *Often,* and 4 = *Always.* In general, these students reported that they liked the activities in their afterschool program, that the staff listen to what they have to say and encourage the students to try new things, and that they feel that the afterschool program

is a comfortable place to hang out. Two of these students reported that they never participated in homework help or tutoring, while one said he or she did so sometimes and one said always. The largest portion of time was reportedly devoted to arts activities.

As shown in Figure 60, three of the four students reported that they are able to finish their homework while attending the afterschool program. One (of three students that responded to the following two items) reported that he or she understands what he or she reads better and feels more comfortable solving mathematics problems. Two of the four students also reported that they complete and turn in more assignments on time since attending the afterschool program.

In response to how they like the afterschool program overall, two students stated that they "sort of like the program—it's okay," and two rated it as "I don't like the program at all—I wish I didn't have to come."

Figure 60. Mason ISD: Number of Middle School Students Indicating Various Program Outcomes



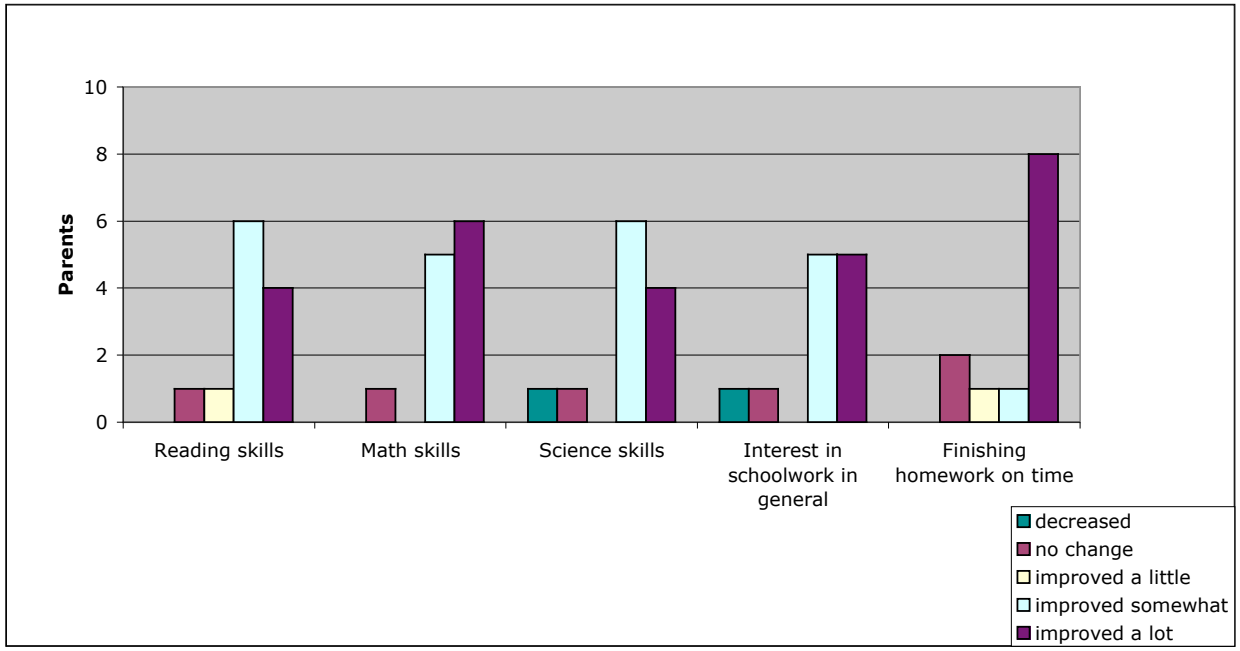
Note. N = 4; Rating options: Yes, No, or Not sure

Parent Survey. Twelve parents of students participating in the afterschool program completed surveys. On a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *Never* and 10 = *Always*, parents rated several statements about the program and program staff. Mean ratings for all nine statements ranged from 8.9 to 9.4. Highest-rated was feeling comfortable asking the program staff about what their children are learning in the program.

The majority of the parents reported that they visited their children's afterschool program at least once a month to more than once a month. Seven also reported that they have never helped out in the afterschool program. With respect to changes in their children's academic tasks, skills, and interest, parents primarily reported *somewhat improved* to *improved a lot* for most items. Highest

ratings were for increases in mathematics skills and finishing homework on time (see Figure 61). Overall, parents rated their happiness with the afterschool program activities, staff, materials and resources, and the progress their children have been making in learning relatively high (means ranged from 8.4 to 8.9 on a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *very unhappy* and 10 = *very happy,* with between 8 to 10 of the parents indicating that they were very happy with the program and the results they were seeing in their children).

Figure 61. Mason ISD: Number of Parents Indicating Various Program Outcomes



Note. N = 12; Ratings scale: 1 = Decreased, 2 = No change, 3 = Improved a little, 4 = Improved a lot, 5 = Improved a lot

Profile Summary

Mason Independent School District (MISD) received the 21st CCLC, Cycle 3 grant in September 2004. The district has a single preK–12 campus and the grant supports one center site for approximately 122 students in grades 3–8 who are primarily a mixture of Hispanic and White ethnicities and from low-income households. The staff for the program consists of the project director, four certified retired teachers, two parent liaisons (one of whom also serves as the site coordinator), and paraprofessionals who assist with tutoring and special classes (e.g., technology classes). All decisions about the management of the program are made by the project director and grant coordinator, however teachers have input on curricular decisions and meet weekly to plan program activities.

The afterschool program is open 5 days a week and each day begins with 45 minutes of homework completion, followed by two 45-minute academic enrichment sessions. Enrichment activities are focused on social development and include enhancing students' self-esteem, leadership, and teamwork skills. Afterschool teachers meet with their day school counterparts for about 15 minutes at the end of the school day to get information about individual students' progress. The quality of student/staff interactions in the afterschool program is very

positive. Personal relationships between staff and students are encouraged, and teachers focus on trying to create a relaxed and supportive environment.

Students are referred to the program by day school teachers, and there are waiting lists for students in some age groups. Retention has been an issue due to the mobile population. There are two parent liaisons that work hard to keep parents (especially Spanish speakers) informed and engaged. The program receives support from community members and businesses in the form of guest speakers, supplies, discounts, and publicity.
Survey results indicate that staff frequently provides students with opportunities to practice independent reading, to use mathematical tools, and to design and conduct simple science experiments. Overall, students and parents indicated that they were very happy with the program and reported improvements in completing homework on time.

MERCEDES INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

21st Century Community Learning Centers at
Travis Elementary School and Mercedes High School
Site Visit: May 3–5, 2006

Overview

Background and History

- In Fall 2004, the Mercedes Independent School District (MISD) received two 21st CCLC grants to support the afterschool programs at seven centers: four at the elementary level and three at the secondary level.
- The students served by the afterschool program are primarily Hispanic and from low-income households. Most are English-speaking; however, there are a number of English language learners (ELL).

Program Structure and Process

- The afterschool program is staffed by day school certified teachers who are assisted by college tutors.
- The relationship between the MISD afterschool program office and the individual centers is strong. Teachers have input, but much of the decision making regarding curriculum lies with the site coordinator.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- All centers offer 1.5 hours of academics focused on reading, mathematics, and science each day. For additional intensive academic assistance, the afterschool program has "camps" for mathematics, reading, and science on Saturdays.
- The afterschool program offers research-based Sylvan Learning classes in mathematics and reading with a packaged curriculum and assessment tools.
- Little time is devoted to homework help.
- The use of balanced academic and social learning is evident, with a strong emphasis on student engagement and advancement.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- Recruitment is not viewed to be an issue for the program.
- Administrators hope to increase parental and community involvement.

Survey Results

- Staff reported the most commonly used teaching practices in the core content areas include providing students with opportunities to link personal experiences with stories, to use mathematical tools, and to conduct simple science experiments.
- Parents indicated that they were very happy with the program and reported improvements in students' mathematics skills and completing homework on time.

Grantee Background and History

In 1999, Mercedes Independent School District (MISD) started an afterschool program entitled "Project Allegria" using Title V money. In Fall 2004, the district received two 21st CCLC grants to support the afterschool programs at seven centers: four at the elementary level (one early childhood center and four elementary schools) and three at the secondary level (one junior high school, one high school, and the alternative learning center).

Site visits were made to the Travis Elementary School and Mercedes High School locations. The elementary afterschool program serves approximately 272 students who are predominantly Hispanic (99%). Approximately 33% of these students are English language learners (ELLs). The high school center serves approximately 655 students who also are primarily Hispanic (97%). The majority of students at both centers are from low-income households. Key student demographics for the centers are listed in Table 26.

Table 26. Center Student Demographics

Center Name	Total Students	Ethnicity					Gender		Category		
		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian	White	Male	Female	ELL	Econ Dis	Special Needs
Travis Elementary	272	1	271	0	0	0	132	150	89	235	18
Mercedes High School	655	3	640	0	0	12	334	321	50	415	27

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

In Spring 2006, there were 31 paid workers at the elementary center and 32 at the high school center. These include coordinators, day school teachers, college students, and other non-school staff. The high school center reported volunteer support from teachers, parents, and community members. The staff and volunteers at both centers are listed in Tables 27 and 28 below.

Table 27. Travis Elementary Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center administrators/coordinators	1	-	2	-
Day school teachers	20	-	-	3
College students	4	-	-	-
Parents	-	-	-	-
Youth development workers	-	-	-	-
Community members	-	-	-	-
Other non-teaching or non-school staff	6	-	-	-
High school students	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**31**	**-**	**2**	**3**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Table 28. Mercedes High School Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center administrators/coordinators	2	-	-	-
Day school teachers	21	3	-	-
College students	5	-	-	-
Parents	1	4	-	-
Youth development workers	-	-	6	-
Community members	-	5	-	-
Other non-teaching or non-school staff	3	-	16	-
High school students	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**32**	**12**	**22**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Program Structure and Process

MISD's afterschool program is located in the schools and is open 4 days during the school week, on Saturday mornings, and during the summer. The schools provide an open door for the afterschool program, allowing all classrooms, the library, and the media center to be used. The MISD has elected to use the Sylvan Learning approach in its day school classes, and this is extended to many of the afterschool reading and mathematics classes. On average, afterschool classrooms have from 8–15 students, with the Sylvan classrooms having around 8–10.

The afterschool program is staffed by day school certified teachers, with some assistance from college tutors. Most of the teachers have more than 10 years' experience and are teaching in their field or interest area. The program has seen an increase in the number of students attending, with little student turnover, and has large numbers of teachers wanting to work in the program. At the elementary center, the student-to-teacher ratio is about 12–18 students for every one certified teacher and one college mentor for mathematics and reading. At the high school, the student-to-teacher ratio is about 10–15 students for every one certified teacher in both mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA). The ratios decrease for the Saturday and summer classes.

Management and Leadership. The relationship between the MISD afterschool program office and the individual centers is strong. There are regular meetings and constant collaboration between site coordinators and the project director. Teachers have input, but much of the decision making regarding curriculum lies with the site coordinator. The site coordinator works with the school principals and sometimes with the project director. Teachers seem to appreciate that the afterschool program follows the course that the day schools take and that the decision making and organizational structure is similar to their work during the school day.

Climate. The afterschool program at MISD operates within a caring, respectful, safe, and relaxed atmosphere. Students feel comfortable communicating with teachers about classroom issues as well as about their home life and personal interests. The teachers know all of the students, even those who are not in their classes, and describe the program as having the "feeling of family." The teachers and students have similar cultural, ethnic, and neighborhood backgrounds in many

cases, and the teachers seem to have a good understanding of the low socioeconomic communities in which the centers exist.

Students are very engaged in both academic and enrichment activities, and their successes are recognized and celebrated at events that include family and community members several times each year. Examples of such events include a fashion show, a jewelry show (featuring student work), a talent show, and family nights. Students were observed communicating frequently and openly with staff in the classroom, often going to instructors with questions or to show them their work. There is also some flexibility in scheduling that allows students to choose activities that interest them. For instance, there is an open-door policy that allows students to decide what academic assistance they need, go to that class first, and then move to another class after about 30 minutes. Teachers retain control over how much academic class time students need and must approve class changes, but the system allows students to pick the enrichment classes that most interest them once their academic requirements are fulfilled.

Programmatic Goals. Each center has goals that are specific to its environment and population, and there are also central goals in place that are more generally appropriate for all centers. Program goals are very focused on aligning the day school and afterschool programs. The use of balanced academic and social learning is evident, with a strong emphasis on student engagement and advancement. The staff expects students to increase their performance in core subjects to at least an adequate level but push them to excel beyond. They are eager to teach advanced courses to students and encourage them to set college as a goal. The program goals include linking afterschool activities to student home life and, for the older students, where they plan to go in their future learning or career. There are some program goals related to staff development and the use of research-based practices, and the project director constantly keeps abreast of what is new and possible for this setting. The program also has goals for improvement regarding parent and community involvement.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

There is a balance of academic instruction and enrichment activities across the afterschool centers in this district. All centers offer 1.5 hours of reading, mathematics, and science each day for the 4 days they are open. For additional intensive academic assistance, the MISD afterschool program has "camps" for mathematics, reading, and science on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Certified day school teachers teach all classes. As part of the extension of the day school program, the afterschool program offers Sylvan Learning classes in mathematics and reading with a packaged curriculum and assessment tools. This has provided some additional structure to the afterschool program, and it has helped staff understand and begin to use assessments in decision making. The Sylvan approach is also research-based, so the afterschool curriculum is influenced positively in this way. Classes offered in core academics are supplemented by career-oriented and creative classes, such as jewelry-making, fashion design, and nutrition and wellness.

All observed teachers use a combination of instructional strategies, including whole-group, small-group, and individual instruction. The varied instructional approaches work to keep the students more active in the learning process. In some classes, student pairings were observed, and this approach gives students the opportunity to develop initiative and leadership skills. Students receive constant feedback on their work, both individually and in group settings.

Key Observations. Students were so engaged in some classes that they did not notice an observer present. All of the classes observed included whole-group instruction, small-group instruction, and individual work time. Students were actively participating in group discussions and going to the instructors with questions or to show them their work. At the elementary school, students in a reading class used multiple skills, including reading out loud and to themselves, answering questions on their comprehension of materials read, and problem-solving what could happen to characters in the stories. The students also drew pictures and created scrapbooks relative to their reading material. The classroom activities indicated a longer-term project where students used a number of books, which were circulated across all of the students over time. At the high school, students engaged in jewelry-making, computer technology, and other classes that were more project-based and service-learning. In the jewelry-making class, students were creating pieces to sell or wear to their prom. In a computer technology class, students worked on individual projects involving academic subjects as well as creating art (such as Mother's Day cards).

Tutoring and Homework Help. Little time is devoted to homework help. It was not offered at all during the first semester of this year, but 15 minutes were included in the second semester at the elementary school. In the Sylvan program, a small amount of time is devoted to homework help at the beginning of the class, according to the teachers. Most of the tutoring occurs during the academic camps held on Saturdays for those students needing additional assistance.

Social/Development Practices. Non-academic goals mentioned by grantee staff include increasing student day school attendance, self-esteem, motivation, and cooperation; increasing family and student togetherness; cutting down crime; and preparing students for decisions about careers. The centers offer a large number of enrichment classes, with heavy emphasis on fun, hands-on activities. They encourage relationship-building between staff and students, and staff act as role models for behaviors and communication. There are also efforts to integrate enrichment activities with core academic content. In a jewelry-making class observed, mathematics was incorporated into the lesson (there were measurements taken and size discussions with the instructor). This was also true in a sewing class. Teachers use manuals and other reading materials in these classes and guide students to help them have an understanding of the content and apply this to their work.

Student Assessment Practices. Classes that are structured around the Sylvan model incorporate the pretest, posttest, and 6-week assessments that are a part of that approach, but no consistent classroom assessment practices were observed in other classes. More informal assessment techniques (e.g., teachers meeting individually with students to discuss progress and needs) are used. Teachers also use their planning periods to discuss classroom and individual student assessments, based on observation, student feedback, and school-based and state performance data.

Alignment With and Ties to Day School. The afterschool teachers in almost every class are also day school teachers, so there is easy bridging between the programs. There are both planned and spontaneous meetings between afterschool staff and those day school staff who do not participate in the afterschool program. All staff have common planning time three times a week by grade level (and subject area at the secondary level). They also have staff meetings and professional

development together in which they collaborate and discuss organizational issues, as well as student progress.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

There is little need for specific student recruitment strategies in the MISD afterschool program. The program provides services for its targeted population, and there is a waiting list of students wanting to participate.

Parental and Community Involvement. The afterschool program is currently establishing an advisory board to oversee its operations, and administrators are hoping the new board will increase community involvement, especially in relation to sustainability. Another strategy for increasing community involvement strategies is to bring instructors in from the community for some enrichment courses (e.g., guitar). The program has also established a relationship with local colleges and wants to increase their involvement by introducing joint classes for students in the afterschool program.

Parent involvement is one area that staff would like to improve. Parents attend events that celebrate and recognize student accomplishments in enrichment classes (e.g., music, art), but there is less parent involvement in classrooms or in volunteering activities. There is an open-door policy at both observed centers for parents, offering training in literacy and mathematics. Most notices are sent home with students to communicate with parents. The high school has a newsletter and uses a parent recruiter to help maintain student attendance. If a student misses several days and the teachers are not aware of any reason why, the parent recruiter contacts the parent to find out the reasons for the absence.

Program Evaluation. The MISD afterschool program has not actively used formal evaluation to assess its program and currently only uses some review of student test scores and Sylvan assessment tools related to student outcomes to determine academic progress. The project director and site coordinators do informal evaluations through observations but not on a regularly scheduled basis. Site coordinators also meet with their teachers to informally evaluate the center's progress and needs. The staff note increased student achievement, social/personal skills, and less disciplinary infractions as outcomes of the program; however, they have not looked at this in any rigorous way. This is an area that could be strengthened for this program. There are plans to have an external evaluation of the entire afterschool program next year.

Survey Results

Program staff, students participating in the afterschool program, and parents of participating students completed surveys in the spring of 2006 regarding the afterschool program practices and impacts on students.

Staff Survey. Twenty-seven program staff completed surveys. Twenty-four identified themselves as instructors, two as counselors, and one as a college tutor. Forty-one percent of the staff reported working at their current afterschool center for less than 1 year, and another 37% for between 1 and 3 years. Staff varied in the time they reported working in afterschool programs and regarding their experience teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school

teacher. Twenty-four of the 27 program staff responded to the first of these items, and 23 to the second, as displayed in Table 29 below.

Table 29. Mercedes ISD: Number of Staff Reporting Experience in Afterschool Teaching

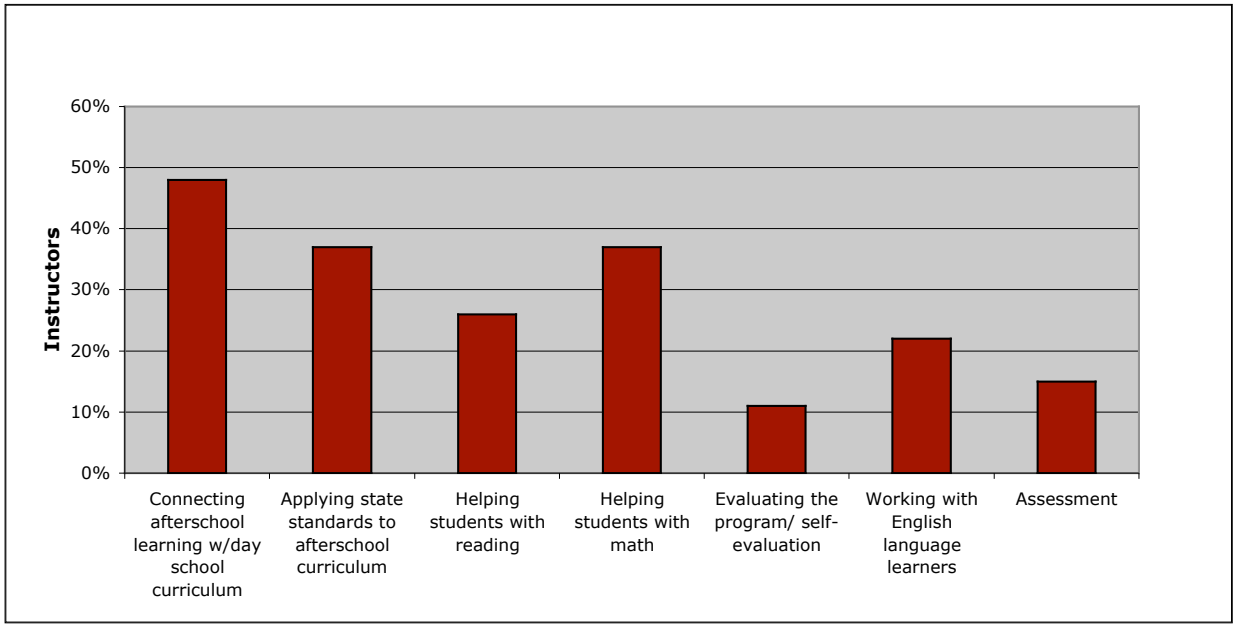
Working in afterschool programs in general	No. of Staff	Teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher	No. of Staff
Less than 1 year	7	Less than 1 year	5
Between 1 and 3 years	10	Between 1 and 3 years	6
Between 4 and 7 years	4	Between 4 and 7 years	4
More than 7 years	3	More than 7 years	8

Source: Program Staff Survey

Professional Development. Five of the program staff reported that they were not aware that their afterschool program had ever offered professional development/training for staff, while another 13 reported that the program had offered it at least once and up to three times. When asked about their participation in professional development/training offered by the program, 10 stated they had never participated. Participants who commented on the type(s) of professional development they attended mentioned mathematics, reading, ESL, SIOP, and financial aid.

Topics staff mentioned most often as areas for future professional development included helping students with mathematics, connecting afterschool learning with day school curriculum, and applying state standards to afterschool curriculum/practices. Figure 62 shows survey responses to these items.

Figure 62. Mercedes ISD: Number of Program Staff Indicating Various Interests in Professional Development



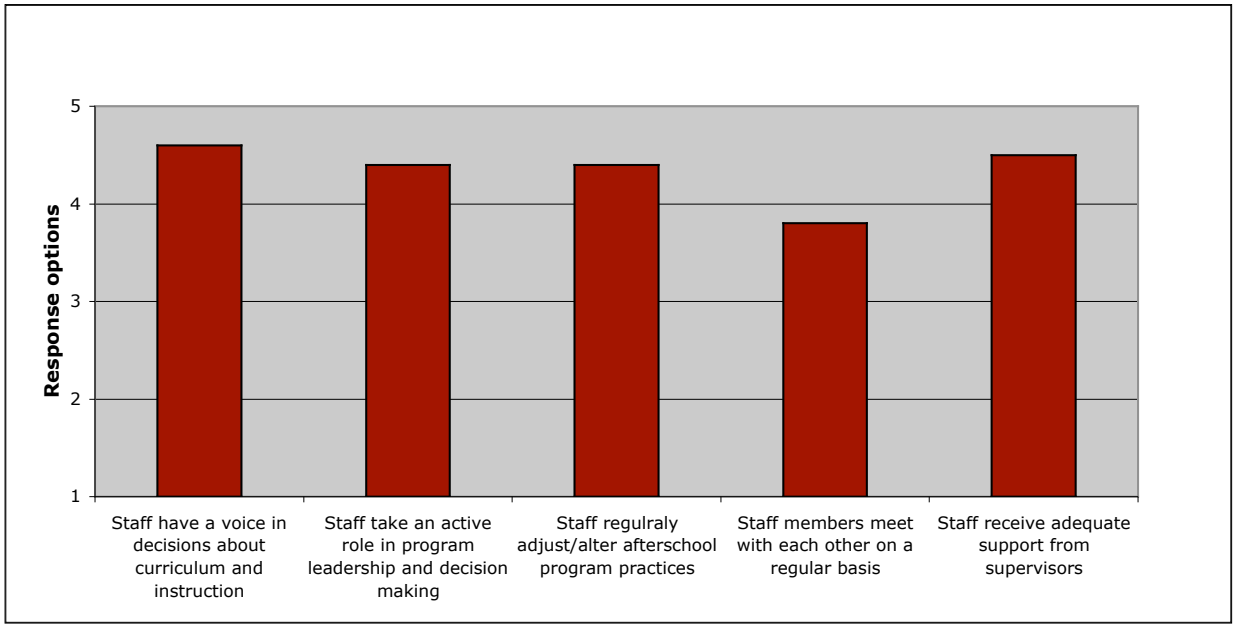
Note. N = 27; Rating options: Yes or No

Organizational Structure. Most of the staff reported to know whom to contact at their students' day school with questions on their progress or status (n = 19). Fifteen said they coordinate afterschool practices with their students' day school homework and 17 indicated that they knew, on a weekly basis, the content to be covered with their students during the school day. Further, 16 of the staff reported that they use assessment data from day school to plan students' work. On average, program staff reported that they speak with their students' day school teachers about once per month about their students' homework, coordinating curriculum, or instructional issues.

Twenty-one of the program staff reported that they do not have regular time set aside to meet with parents of their afterschool students or did not know if regular time was set aside. In addition, 20 of the staff indicated that they meet with their students' parents less than once per month or not at all.

The decision making is reportedly decentralized, with staff having a voice in decisions about curriculum and instruction and taking an active role in those areas. Figure 63 below presents survey results for staff perceptions of overall program organization.

Figure 63. Mercedes ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff of Program Organization



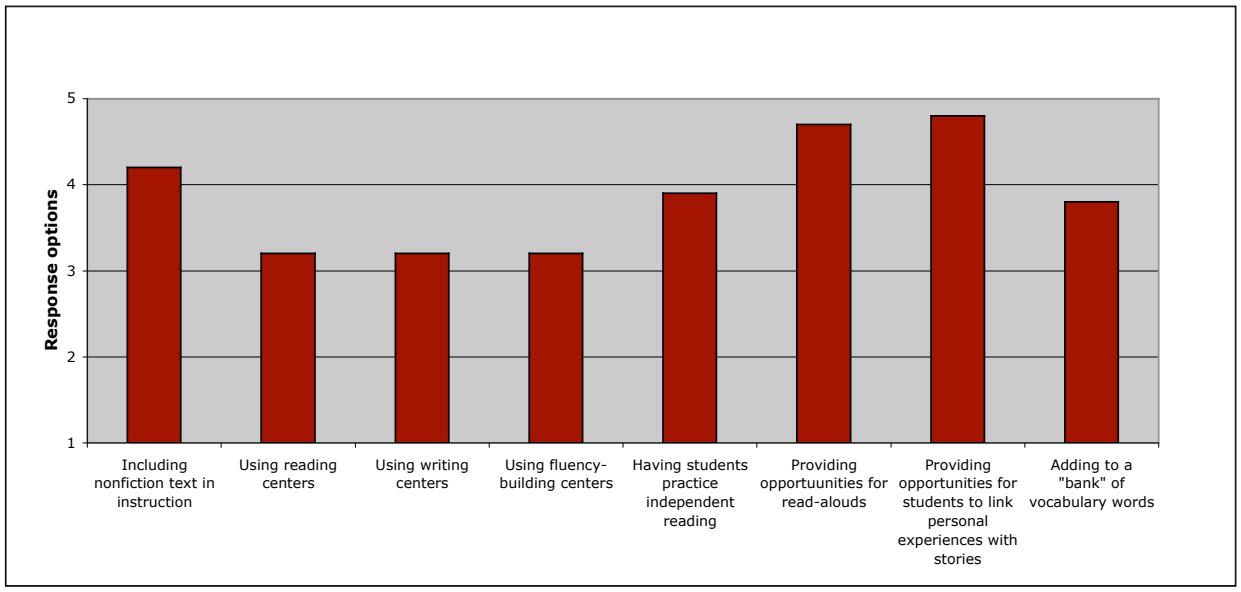
Note. N = 27; Ratings scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree

Educational Practices and Strategies. The types of instructional practices that program staff reported using *at least once per week* to *more than once per week* in the afterschool program were providing direct feedback to students about their progress, having students work in teams or small groups, one-on-one tutoring, peer support, computer-assisted instruction, and providing different types of instruction to students based on ability level. They also indicated that they let students know their expectations and criteria for afterschool assignments. Least often used were linking instruction to community services and having students work on projects that spanned several days.

Regarding the assessment of students' progress on academic assignments, the majority of the project staff stated that they never used formal tests or quizzes or did so only rarely (*less than once per month)* (14 for reading assignments, 15 for mathematics, and 14 for science). They did, however, indicate that they spot-checked for student understanding at least *once per week* to *more than once a week* in reading and mathematics (13 for reading assignments, 13 for mathematics). Only three of the staff checked for students' understanding in science.

Of reading, mathematics, and science, six of the project staff reported that they focused mostly on reading, 11 focused on mathematics, and 3 focused on science. For those focused on reading, the most frequently used practices in the afterschool programs were providing opportunities for read-alouds, providing opportunities for students to link personal experiences with stories, and including nonfiction text in instruction. Figure 64 illustrates survey results regarding the frequency ratings of various reading practices implemented at the centers.

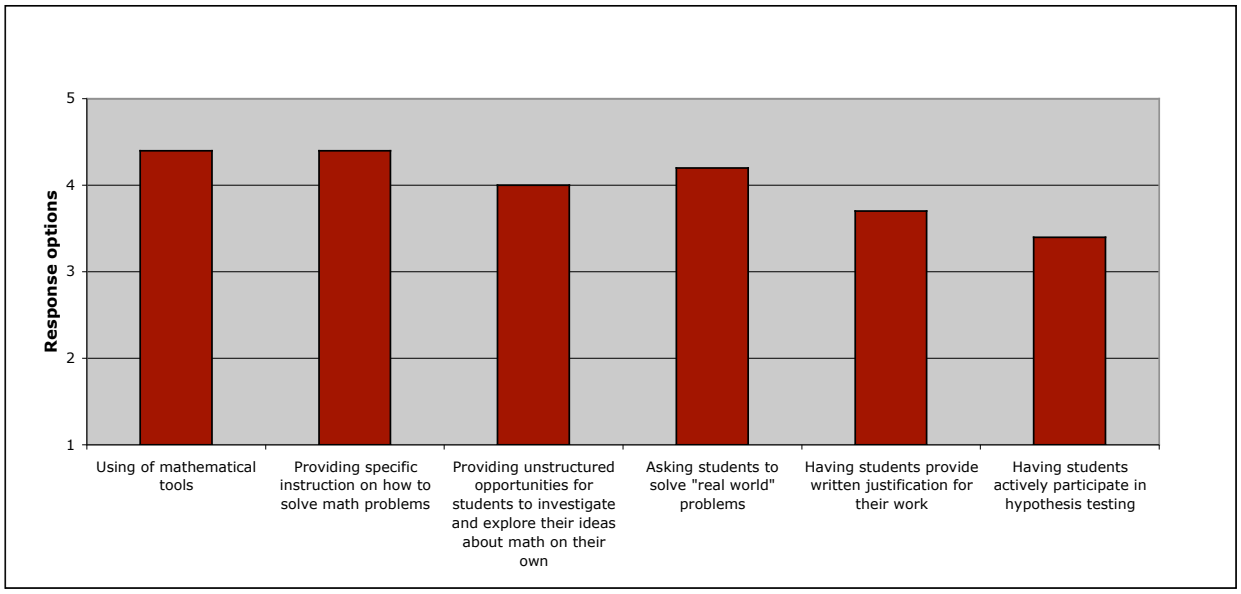
Figure 64. Mercedes ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Reading Instructional Practices



Note. N = 6; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

For the 11 program staff who indicated they worked with students on mathematics in their afterschool program, all stated that they *frequently* to *always* focused on providing specific instruction on how to solve mathematics problems, providing unstructured opportunities for students to investigate and explore their ideas on their own, asking students to solve "real world" problems, and including the use of mathematical tools such as calculators and computer-based tools. Figure 65 illustrates survey results regarding the frequency ratings of various mathematics practices implemented at the centers.

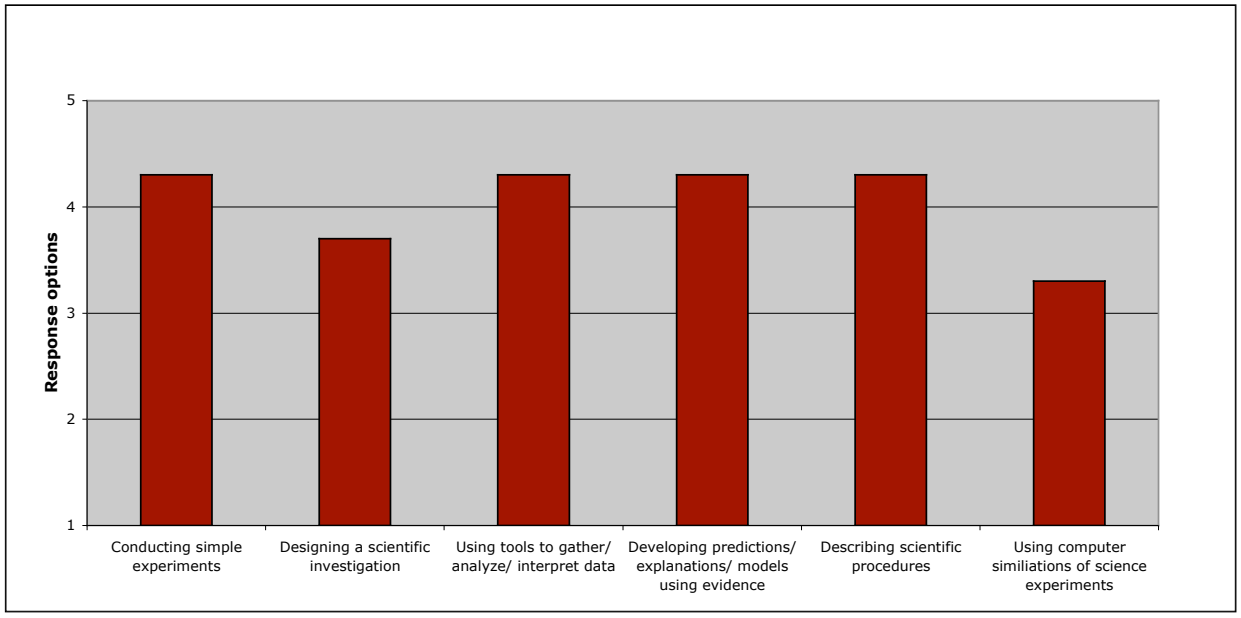
Figure 65. Mercedes ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Mathematics Instructional Practices



Note. N = 11; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Science instruction was focused on by only three of the program staff. With the exception of using computer simulations of science experiments and designing scientific investigations, all other strategies were used at least *frequently* to *always* by the staff. Figure 66 illustrates survey responses regarding the implementation of various science practices used at the centers.

Figure 66. Mercedes ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Science Instructional Practices



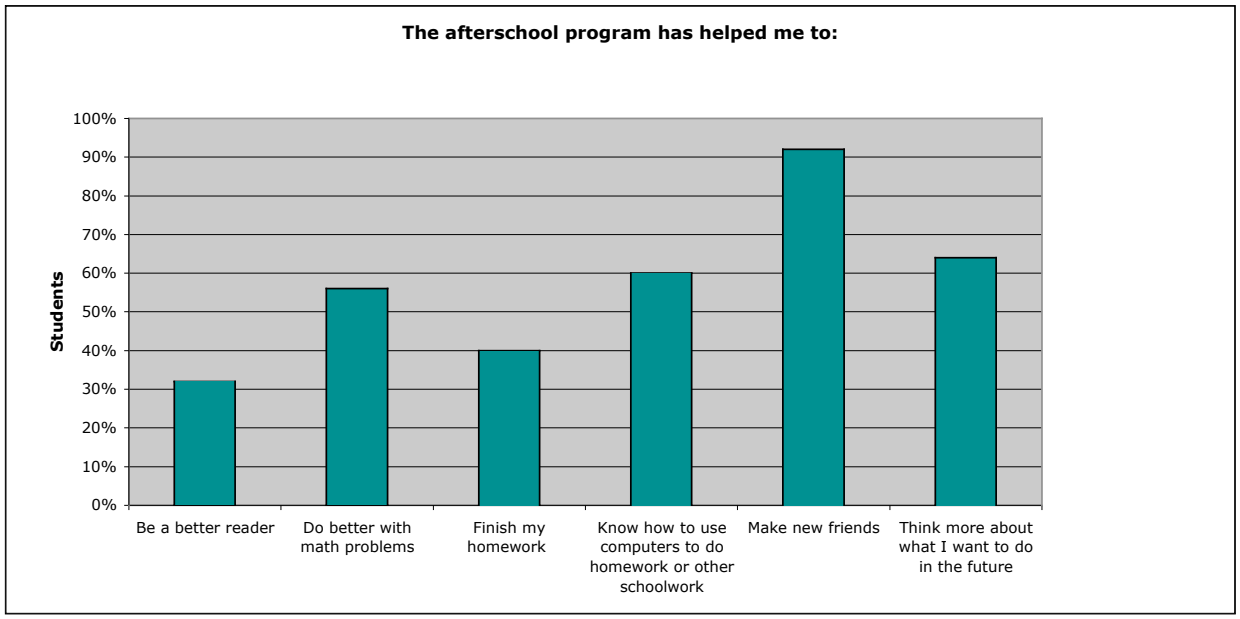
Note. N = 3; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Student Survey. Twenty-five students attending the afterschool program from the fourth grade completed an elementary school version of the student survey, and 102 students from grades 9–12 completed a middle/high school version. Both versions of the student survey essentially probed for similar information and differed only in the wording of items to be more age-appropriate.

Students completing the elementary school survey (n = 25) rated 22 statements on a scale of 1–3 where 1 = *Never,* 2 = *Sometimes,* and 3 = *Always.* Thirty-three percent of the students indicated that they *always* practiced reading in the afterschool program. Forty-two percent indicated the same for mathematics, 14% for writing, and 12% for science.

In general, students reported that they liked the activities in their afterschool program (mean = 2.9), that they get along with the adults in the program (mean = 2.8), that they get along with the other students in the program (mean = 2.7), that their friends also attend the afterschool program (mean = 2.6), that they feel safe while attending the program (mean = 2.8), and that they get to choose what they want to do in the program (mean = 2.6). As shown in Figure 67, the majority of the students also reported that the afterschool program has helped them do better with mathematics problems, learn to use computers for homework/schoolwork, make new friends, and think more about what they want for their future. All 25 of the students felt the program is helping them become better students and reported that they "they really like the program—it's great."

Figure 67. Mercedes ISD: Number of Elementary School Students Indicating Various Program Outcomes



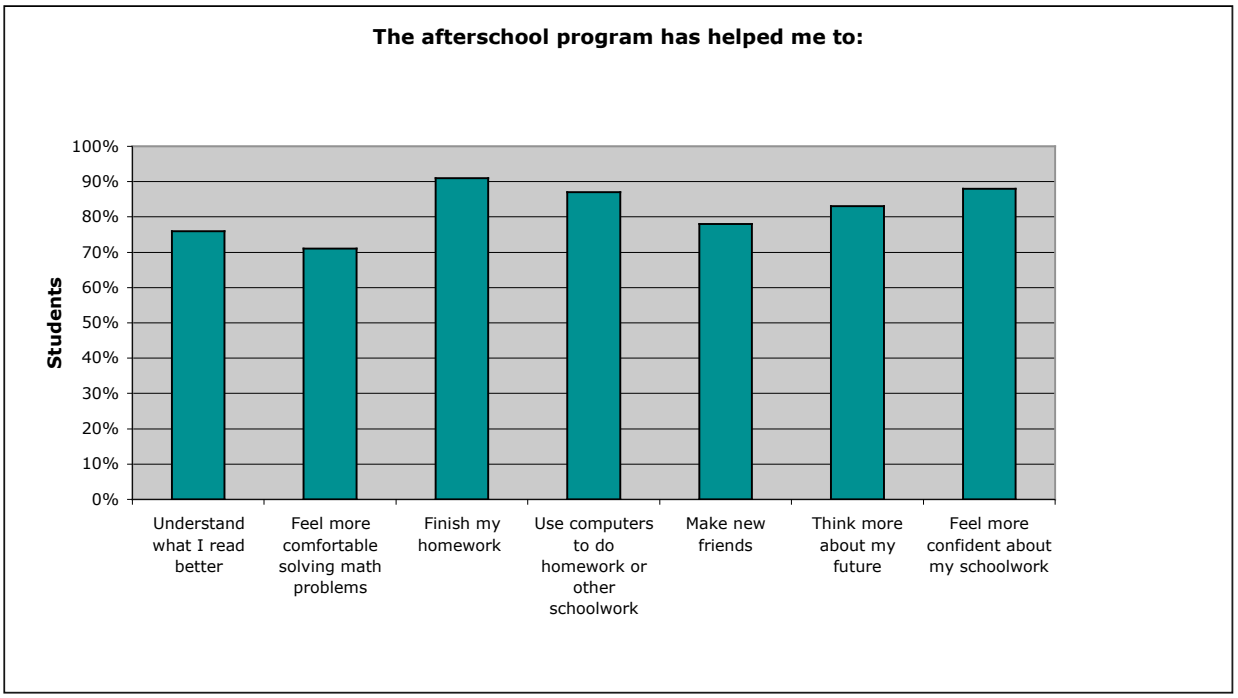
Note. N = 25; Ratings options: Yes, No, or Unsure

Students completing the middle/high school survey (n = 102) rated 24 statements on a scale of 1–4 where 1 = *Never,* 2 = *Sometimes,* 3 = *Often,* and 4 = *Always.* In general, students reported that they liked the activities in their afterschool program (mean = 3.3), that the staff listen to

what they have to say (mean = 3.4), that the staff encourage them to try new things (mean = 3.3), that the adults and students treat each other with respect (mean = 3.6), and that they feel that the afterschool program is a comfortable place to hang out (mean = 3.2). They report that a good portion of their time is spent working on homework help or tutoring (mean = 2.8) and devoted to sports and/or games (mean = 2.8).

As shown in Figure 68, 91% of the students reported that they are able to finish their homework while there. The also reported getting to work together with other students (88%), using computers for homework/schoolwork (87%), and feeling more confident about their schoolwork (88%). In addition, the students reported that since they have been attending the afterschool program, they complete and turn in more assignments on time (84%), they try harder to solve problems with their schoolwork (88%), and they work in their classes even if they don't like them (90%). Overall, 75% of the students reported that they "really like the program—it's great."

Figure 68. Mercedes ISD: Percent of Middle/High School Students Indicating Various Program Outcomes

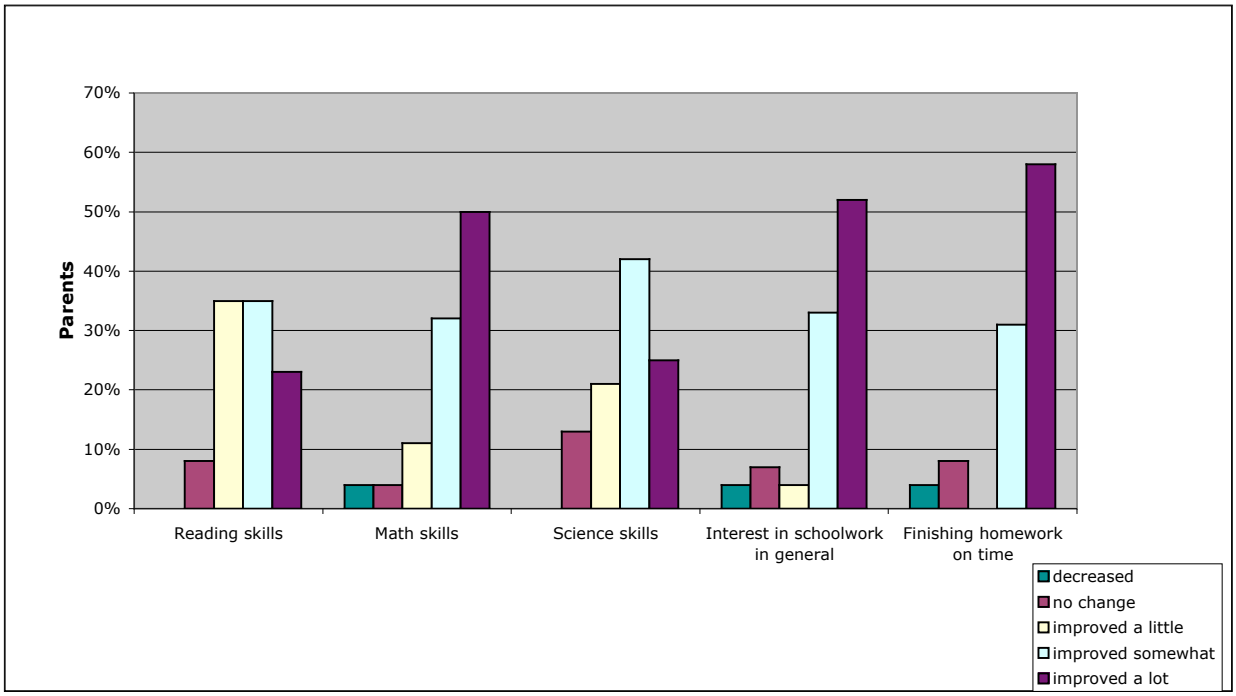


Note. N = 102; Ratings options: Yes, No, or Not sure

Parent Survey. Twenty-nine parents of students participating in the afterschool program completed surveys. On a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *Never* and 10 = *Always*, parents rated several statements about the program and program staff. Mean ratings for all nine statements ranged from 7.5 to 9.1. Highest-rated was the perception by parents that program staff are available to them that can speak with them in their home language. Other highly rated items included parents' perceptions about feeling welcome to visit the program, having a staff member available to talk with them, and trusting staff to deal fairly with their children.

Ten of the parents reported that they never visit the afterschool program and 11 said that they visited only once or twice a year to once every few months. Twenty-two parents also stated that they never help out in the program or do so only once or twice a year. With respect to changes in their children's academic tasks, skills, and interest, parents primarily reported *somewhat improved* to *improved a lot* for mathematics skills, interest in schoolwork generally, and finishing homework on time (see Figure 69). Overall, parents rated their happiness with the afterschool program activities, staff, materials and resources, and the progress their children have been making in learning relatively high (means ranged from 7.5 to 9.0 on a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *very unhappy* and 10 = *very happy,* with the majority of parents indicating that they were very happy with the program and the results they were seeing in their children).

Figure 69. Mercedes ISD: Number of Parents Indicating Various Program Outcomes



Note. N = 29; Ratings scale: 1 = Decreased, 2 = No change, 3 = Improved a little, 4 = Improve somewhat, 5 = Improved a lot

Profile Summary

In Fall 2004, the Mercedes Independent School District (MISD) received two 21st CCLC grants to support the afterschool programs at seven centers: four at the elementary level and three at the secondary level. Site visits were made to the Travis Elementary School and Mercedes High School locations. The students served by the afterschool program are primarily Hispanic and from low-income households. Most are English-speaking; however, there are a number of English language learners.

The afterschool program is staffed by day school certified teachers who are assisted by college tutors. The relationship between the MISD afterschool program office and the individual centers is strong. Teachers have input, but much of the decision making regarding curriculum lies with

the site coordinator and the school principals. The teachers seem to appreciate that the decision making and organizational structure is similar to their work during the school day.

The afterschool program at MISD operates within a caring, respectful, safe, and relaxed atmosphere. Students feel comfortable communicating with teachers about classroom issues as well as about their home life and personal interests. The program uses a balance of academic and social learning opportunities. The afterschool program offers Sylvan Learning classes in mathematics and reading. There is also some flexibility in scheduling that allows students to choose activities that interest them. Little time is devoted to homework help. However, Saturday "camps" for mathematics, reading, and science are available. The afterschool program is currently establishing an advisory board to oversee its operations, and administrators are hoping the new board will increase community and parent involvement, especially in relation to sustainability.

Survey results indicate that staff frequently provides students with opportunities to link personal experiences with stories, to use mathematical tools, and to conduct simple science experiments. Parents indicated that they were very happy with the program and reported improvements in students' mathematics skills and completing homework on time. In addition, the students reported that since they have been attending the afterschool program, they complete and turn in more assignments on time, they try harder to solve problems with their schoolwork, and they work in their classes even if they don't like them.

NORTHSIDE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

21st Century Community Learning Centers at
Valley High Elementary School and Meadow Village Elementary School
Site Visit: April 26–27, 2006

Overview

Background and History

- In July 2003, Northside Independent School District (NISD) received the 21st CCLC, Cycle 1 grant to implement the Northside Learning Tree afterschool project in five center sites. In March 2004, NISD received a Cycle 2 grant to support five additional centers.
- The students served by the afterschool program are primarily Hispanic and from low-income households.

Program Structure and Process

- Paid instructional staff, college students, and community volunteers provide the afterschool instruction.
- An advisory council comprising parents, students, staff, school administrators, and community members makes many of the curricular decisions.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- The afterschool program begins with tutoring and homework help followed by enrichment activities.
- Instructors submit proposals for 8 weeks' worth of lessons linked to a theme and standards. The site coordinators assess the curricular plans and make recommendations as necessary.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- The program is promoted districtwide through the distribution of fliers and registration materials via mailings and during orientations and the kindergarten roundup.
- Community partnerships include the University of Texas at San Antonio, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Urban Ministries, Girls, Inc., and Junior Achievement.

Survey Results

- Staff reported the most commonly used teaching practices in the core content areas include providing students with opportunities to link personal experiences with stories, providing specific instruction on how to solve math problems, and giving students opportunities to conduct simple science experiments.
- Students reported that the afterschool program has helped them be a better reader, do better with mathematics problems, finish their homework, and make new friends.

Grantee Background and History

In July 2003, Northside Independent School District (NISD) received the 21st CCLC, Cycle 1 grant to implement the Northside Learning Tree afterschool project in five center sites. In March 2004, NISD received Cycle 2 grant funds to support five additional afterschool centers. Site visits occurred at Valley High Elementary School, a Cycle 1 grantee, and Meadow Village Elementary School, a Cycle 2 grantee. The Valley High afterschool program serves approximately 178 students. The Meadow Village afterschool program serves approximately 172 students. The students in the both centers are primarily Hispanic, and the majority of students are from low-income households. Key student demographics for the centers are listed in Table 30 below.

Table 30. Center Student Demographics

Center Name	Total Students	Ethnicity					Gender		Category		
		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian	White	Male	Female	ELL	Econ Dis	Special Needs
Valley High	178	5	156	1	1	15	89	89	4	105	16
Meadow Village	172	16	141	1	2	12	85	87	4	125	17

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

The NISD's 21st CCLC grant supports a variety of staff that work directly with the students participating in activities at the centers. In Spring 2006, there were 14 paid workers at the Valley High center and 13 at the Meadow Village center. These included coordinators, day school teachers, college students, and other non-teaching staff or non-school staff. The staff and volunteers at each center are listed in Tables 31 and 32 below. Both schools reported zero staff turnover for Spring 2006.

Table 31. Valley High Elementary Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center administrators/coordinators	1	-	-	-
Day school teachers	1	-	-	-
College students	1	3	-	-
Parents	1	-	-	-
Youth development workers	1	-	-	-
Community members	-	4	-	-
Other non-teaching/non-school staff	9	-	-	-
High school students	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**14**	**7**	**-**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Table 32. Meadow Village Elementary Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center administrators/coordinators	1	-	-	-
Day school teachers	0	-	-	-
College students	8	4	-	-
Parents	1	-	-	-
Youth development workers	-	-	-	-
Community members	-	2	3	-
Other non-teaching/non-school staff	3	-	-	-
High school students	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**13**	**6**	**-**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Program Structure and Process

NISD is a large urban district in San Antonio in which Spanish is widely spoken at home and in schools. The 21st CCLC grant serves 10 centers in all; the two cycles of funding serve five centers each. Cycle 1 grant funds support approximately 125 students at two elementary centers and 200 students at three middle school centers. Cycle 2 grant funds support approximately 125 students at five elementary centers.

The Learning Tree program is open from 2:45 to 5:30 p.m. and offers tutoring or homework help followed by enrichment activities 4 days a week (Monday–Thursday). Enrichment activities include youth development, drug and violence prevention, counseling, art, music, physical education and fitness, character education, and technology. Fridays are set aside for electives where students get a break from homework and select to participate in thematic instructional activities and projects. Paid instructional staff, college students, and community volunteers provide the afterschool instruction. The student-to-teacher ratio is approximately 15:1. In both centers, approximately 80% of students served are low-income and Hispanic. Of these students, approximately 5% are English language learners (ELL).

Management and Leadership. The project director oversees all of the centers in NISD and supervises budgets, personnel, procedures, and grant reporting. A site coordinator who is primarily responsible for hiring instructors, overseeing day-to-day operations, purchasing materials, and making curricular decisions runs each of the center sites. Both centers have established an advisory council comprising parents, students, staff, school administrators, and community members to assist with decision making. The instructional staff report being well-trained but want more staff development, particularly in coaching and classroom management.

Climate. The overall climate of both centers is organized, energetic, and focused. The afterschool staff are described as passionate, dedicated, and very involved with the students. The students observed were actively engaged in learning opportunities.

Programmatic Goals. The NISD Learning Tree program strives to expand academic enrichment to help children meet state and local student academic standards in core areas of reading,

mathematics, and science. There is a consistent focus on character development and team-building skills. The program seeks to collaborate with the day school staff and the local community to provide a balanced approach to learning. The theme of the program is "Right Choice." Both centers reported an intentional focus on celebrating and demonstrating learning via student performance.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

Monday through Thursday, the NISD Learning Tree program provides students with tutoring and enrichment activities, which integrate content instruction in the core areas of reading, mathematics, and science. Friday is set aside as a special day for students to choose engaging hands-on project activities.

The afterschool program begins with tutoring and homework help. Afterschool instructors help students in completing grade-level homework packets prepared by the day school teachers. Tutoring and enrichment activities are primarily planned and developed by the center instructional staff, who use a thematic, curricular framework provided by the site coordinators and project directors. Instructors are trained in the use of the framework and other district resources, which help instructors create and implement lessons that are aligned with the district standards and competencies. Instructors submit proposals for 8 weeks' worth of lessons linked to a theme and standards. The site coordinators assess the curricular plans and make recommendations as necessary. A variety of instructional practices were observed at the NISD centers, including project-based activities, integrated curriculum across contents, "real-world" curriculum, and opportunities for students to use multiple skills.

Key Observations. Observations of instructional practices occurred at both center sites. At both centers, students were actively engaged in learning opportunities to demonstrate understanding and received individual and group feedback from the instructors.

Meadow Village. As students were released from the school day, an afterschool instructor served as greeter to meet students and welcome them to the cafeteria by shaking each student's hand and calling him or her by name. By 2:45 p.m., all students are seated in the cafeteria awaiting their snack. After snack, instructors helped students complete homework packets provided by the day school teachers. Fitness and recreation sessions occurred at the end of the homework help time, followed by enrichment activities, which are provided twice each week for an hour.

In one enrichment session, students were engaged in a music lesson that integrated literacy activities related to poetry and measures of music or rhythm patterns. Another session integrated mathematics and physical fitness and recreation opportunities as students competed in a basketball throw based on their knowledge of mathematics facts presented by the instructor. Another session offered students an exploration of cultural celebrations of Easter under the guidance of the instructor. A read-aloud of *The Golden Egg* by Maggie Kennedy was accompanied by students placing cotton balls (bunny cotton tails) into a paper cup each time the bunny in the story summoned help.

Valley High. Students reviewed major events of the Vietnam War era in a session called Time Travelers. The instructor praised the fifth-grade students when they responded correctly to his review questions. Individual students volunteered to read aloud to the class from teacher-produced, downloaded information from the Internet about space exploration. In a science session on the study of bats, fourth-grade students were asked to read the story of Stellaluna. The instructor used a KWL chart (K = what I know, W = what I want to know, L = what I learned) on the board to post what students knew and wanted to learn about bats. Students confirmed their knowledge by circling the facts they listed on the board as they read about them in the story. There were many science activities for students in the older grades. The activities were tied to the day school curriculum. Some included Crime Scene Investigation and Life Cycles of Nature. Butterflies were a recent focus of this thematic study.

Tutoring and Homework Help. The Learning Tree program provides tutoring/homework help 4 days a week for at least 1 hour. Day school teachers send students to the afterschool program with packets of homework to be completed. Afterschool staff used the packets to provided grade-level instruction to groups of students.

Social/Development Practices. Both centers address social developmental goals by focusing on character development through service-learning projects with Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Girls, Inc. Many of the academic and enrichment activities integrate social development practices. In addition, Fridays are dedicated to social development electives in which students select thematic hands-on projects for participation in social and character development.

Student Assessment Practices. Classroom assessment strategies included read-alouds and KWL charts. No other formal assessment techniques were observed at the centers.

Alignment With and Ties to Day School. The Learning Tree afterschool program collaborates with the day school to provide a balanced approach to learning. The afterschool program is connected to and aligned with day school activities in many ways. To begin with, the site coordinators and principals use school-level data to make curricular decisions for the afterschool program. Instructional staff members develop 8-week units that are tied to the district's standards using the district's curriculum framework. In addition, day school teachers send homework packets with the students to be completed in the afterschool program.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

The Learning Tree program is promoted districtwide through the distribution of fliers and registration materials via mailings and during orientations and the kindergarten roundup. Both centers use a first-come, first-served approach to enrollment, and both have waiting lists. The project director reported that recruiting efforts at the middle school level include visiting each class to advertise the program's themes and activities. Site coordinators and instructors make announcements over the school's public address system about the program's activities and special events. Centers also provide and distribute fliers advertising afterschool activities to the students in the day school and their parents. Centers monitor student attendance and submit parent letters to students with more than three unexcused absences. Possible removal from the program is used as a deterrent. Instructors also use phone calls to parents as a retention strategy.

Parental and Community Involvement. Both centers involve parents and the community in the Learning Tree program via the advisory councils. Efforts to involve parents also include volunteerism and participation in afterschool nights. Both centers reported regular communication with parents via monthly newsletters as well as information sent about special events. One center reported hosting a Parent University and parent involvement in the Young Authors Conference. The other center reported parent involvement via student mentoring, homework help, and serving as teachers' aides. Both centers sent frequent memos to parents regarding afterschool issues and called parents to address student concerns as needed. Community partnerships associated with the Learning Tree program include the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Urban Ministries, Girls, Inc., and Junior Achievement.

Program Evaluation. District evaluators conduct all evaluations, and afterschool staff did not know the details of these evaluations. TEA nurturers who provide support and recommendations to improve the program regularly conduct regular site observations. The afterschool program relies on day school-based data (i.e., student performance) to plan the afterschool curriculum; however, the data are not used to measure the success of the program.

Survey Results

Program staff, students participating in the afterschool program, and parents of participating students completed surveys in the spring of 2006 regarding the afterschool program practices and impacts on students.

Staff Survey. Twenty-four program staff completed surveys. Two identified themselves as site coordinators, 19 as instructors, one as a staff member of a partner organization, and two as "other," with one identifying himself or herself as a teacher's aide and the other not stating a role. Thirteen percent of the program staff reported working at their current afterschool center for less than 1 year, and 83% reported working at their center for between 1 and 3 years. Staff varied in their general experience with afterschool programs and in their reported experience teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher. Twenty-three of the 24 program staff responded to the first of these items, and 22 responded to the second, as displayed in Table 33 below.

Table 33. Northside ISD: Number of Staff Reporting Experience in Afterschool Teaching

Working in afterschool programs in general	No. of Staff	Teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher	No. of Staff
Less than 1 year	2	Less than 1 year	3
Between 1 and 3 years	12	Between 1 and 3 years	12
Between 4 and 7 years	4	Between 4 and 7 years	5
More than 7 years	5	More than 7 years	2

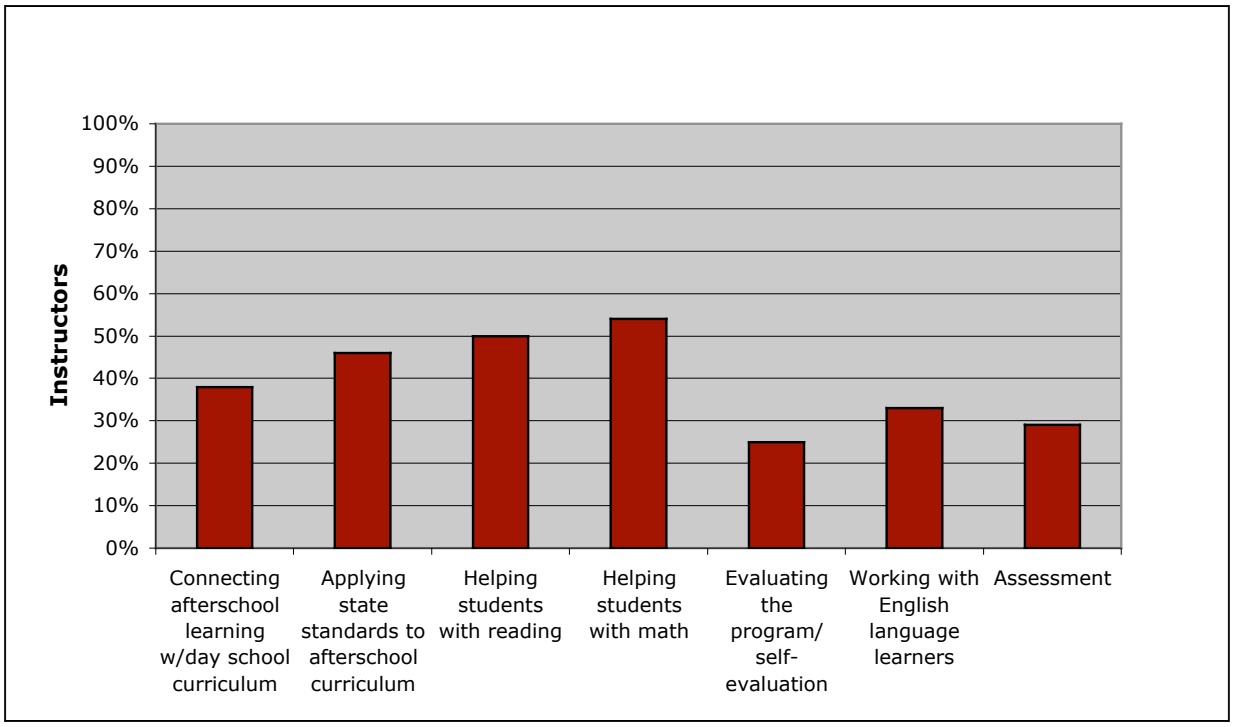
Source: Program Staff Survey

Professional Development. Thirteen of the program staff reported that their afterschool program had offered professional development/training for staff four or more times in the past year, and nine stated they had participated in four or more of the professional developments/trainings.

Participants who commented on the type(s) of professional development they attended mentioned reading, arts, science, mathematics, and TAKS.

Topics staff mentioned most often as areas for future professional development included helping students with reading and mathematics, connecting afterschool learning with day school curriculum, and applying state standards to afterschool curriculum/practices. Figure 70 shows survey responses to these items.

Figure 70. Northside ISD: Number of Program Staff Indicating Various Interests in Professional Development



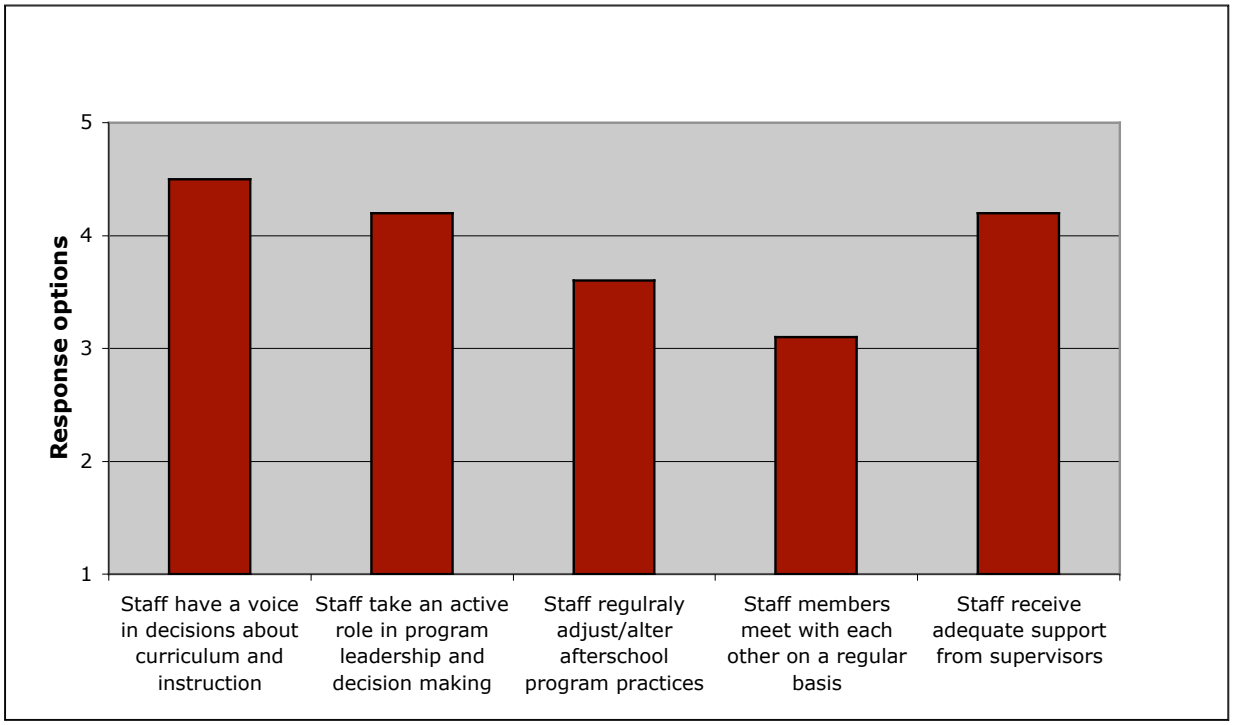
Note. N = 24; Rating options: Yes or No

Organizational Structure. Nineteen of the staff reported to know whom to contact at their students' day school with questions on their students' progress or status, with 14 stating that they coordinate their afterschool practices with their students' day school homework. Further, 12 indicated that they knew, on a weekly basis, the content to be covered with their students during the school day and, similarly, reported to use assessment data from the day school to plan students' work. On average, program staff reported that they speak with their students' day school teachers once or twice per month about their students' homework, coordinating curriculum, or instructional issues.

Fourteen of the program staff reported that they do not have regular time set aside to meet with parents of their afterschool students or did not know if regular time was set aside. Eighteen of the staff also indicated that they meet with their students' parents once per month or less.

The decision making is reportedly decentralized, with staff having a voice in decisions about curriculum and instruction and taking an active role in those areas. Figure 71 below presents survey results for staff perceptions of overall program organization.

Figure 71. Northside ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Program Organization



Note. N = 24; Ratings scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree

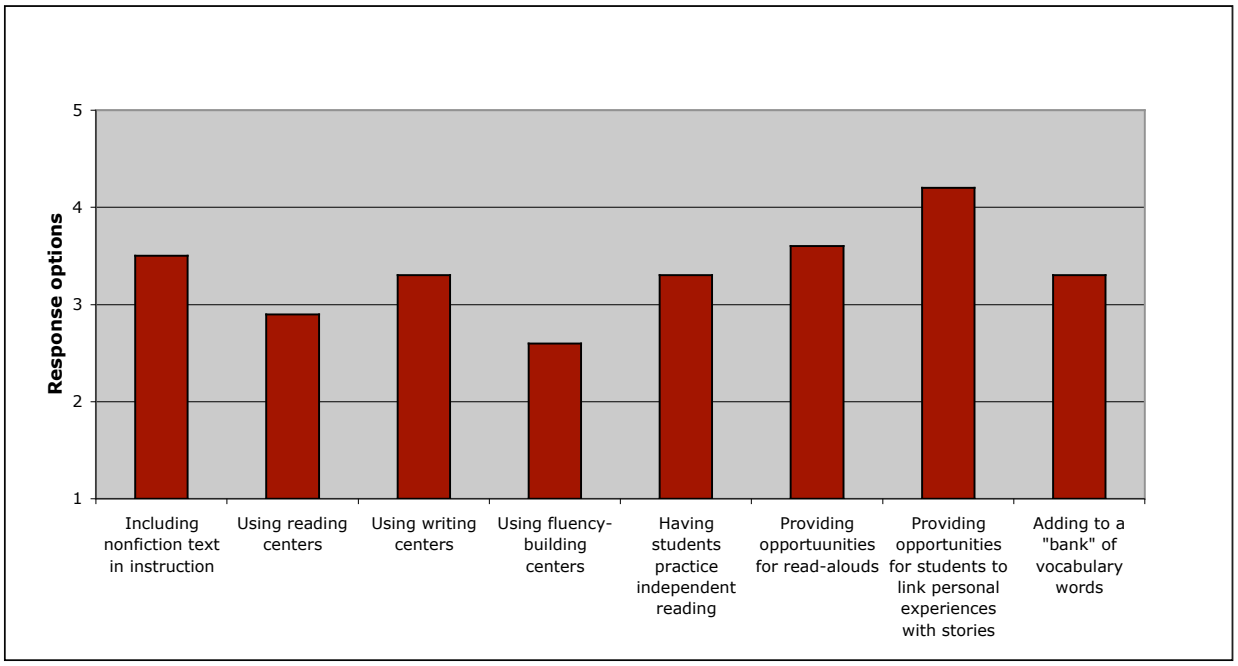
Educational Practices and Strategies. The types of instructional practices that program staff reported using *at least once per week* to *more than once per week* in the afterschool program were tutoring and homework help, having students work in teams or small groups, and providing different types of instruction to students based on ability level. They also indicated that they let students know their expectations and criteria for afterschool assignments. Least often used were providing additional support to students who do not speak English as their first language and linking instruction to community services.

Regarding the assessment of students' progress on academic assignments, the majority of the staff stated that they never used formal tests or quizzes or did so only rarely (*less than once per month)* (16 for reading, mathematics, and science assignments). They did, however, indicate that they spot-checked for student understanding at least *once per week* to *more than once a week* on reading (19) and mathematics assignments (17), but not nearly as many did so on science assignments (9).

Of reading, mathematics, and science, 15 of the staff reported that they focused mostly on reading, 11 focused on mathematics, and 8 focused on science. For those focused on reading, the most frequently used practices in the afterschool programs were providing opportunities for read-alouds, providing opportunities for students to link personal experiences with stories, and

including nonfiction text in instruction. Figure 72 illustrates survey results for various reading practices implemented at the centers.

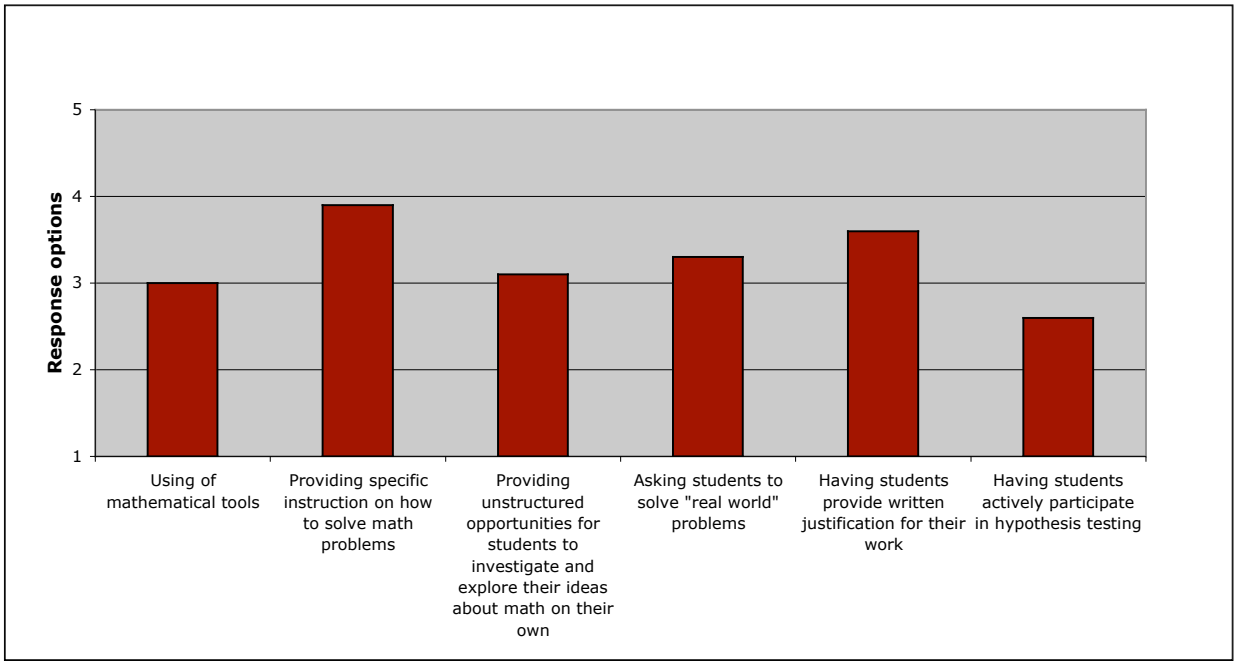
Figure 72. Northside ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Reading Instructional Practices



Note. N = 15; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

For the 11 of the program staff who indicated they focused on mathematics with students in their afterschool program, the most often used instructional strategies included providing specific instruction on how to solve mathematics problems and having students provide written justification for their work. Figure 73 illustrates survey results for various mathematics practices implemented at the centers.

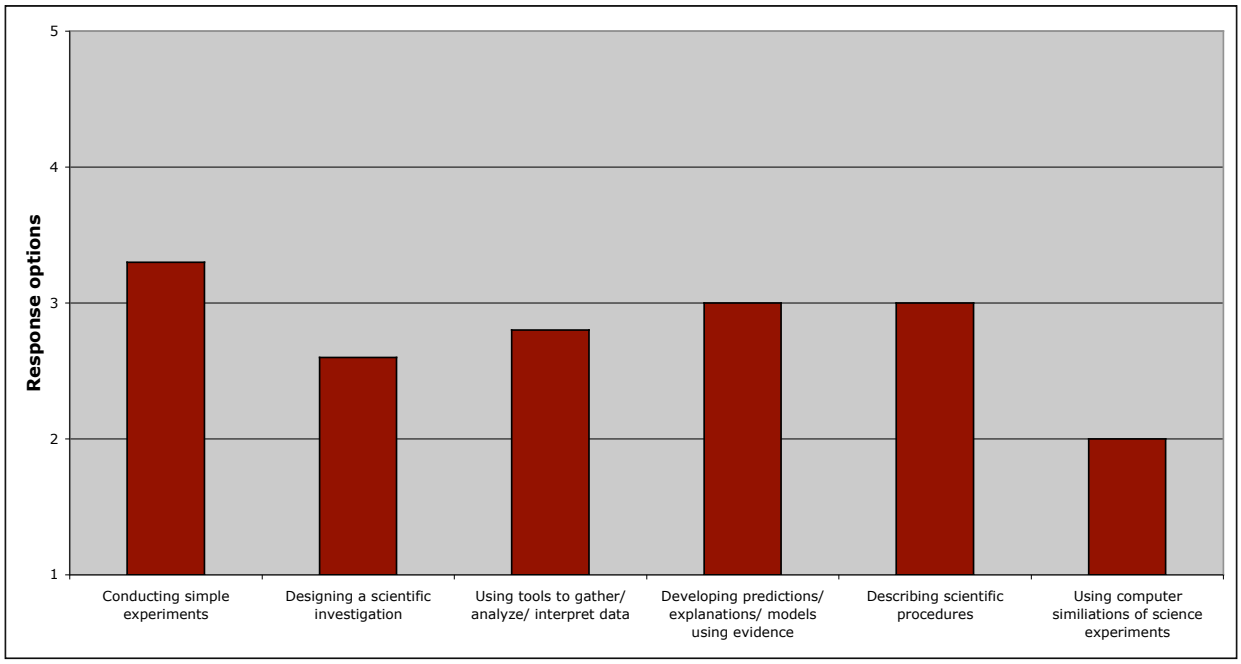
Figure 73. Northside ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Mathematics Instructional Practices



Note. N = 11; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

The eight program staff that focused on science instruction indicated that they more frequently worked with students using instructional strategies such as conducting simple experiments, describing scientific procedures, and developing predictions, explanations, and/or models using evidence. Figure 74 illustrates survey responses regarding the implementation of various science practices used at the centers.

Figure 74. Northside ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Science Instructional Practices

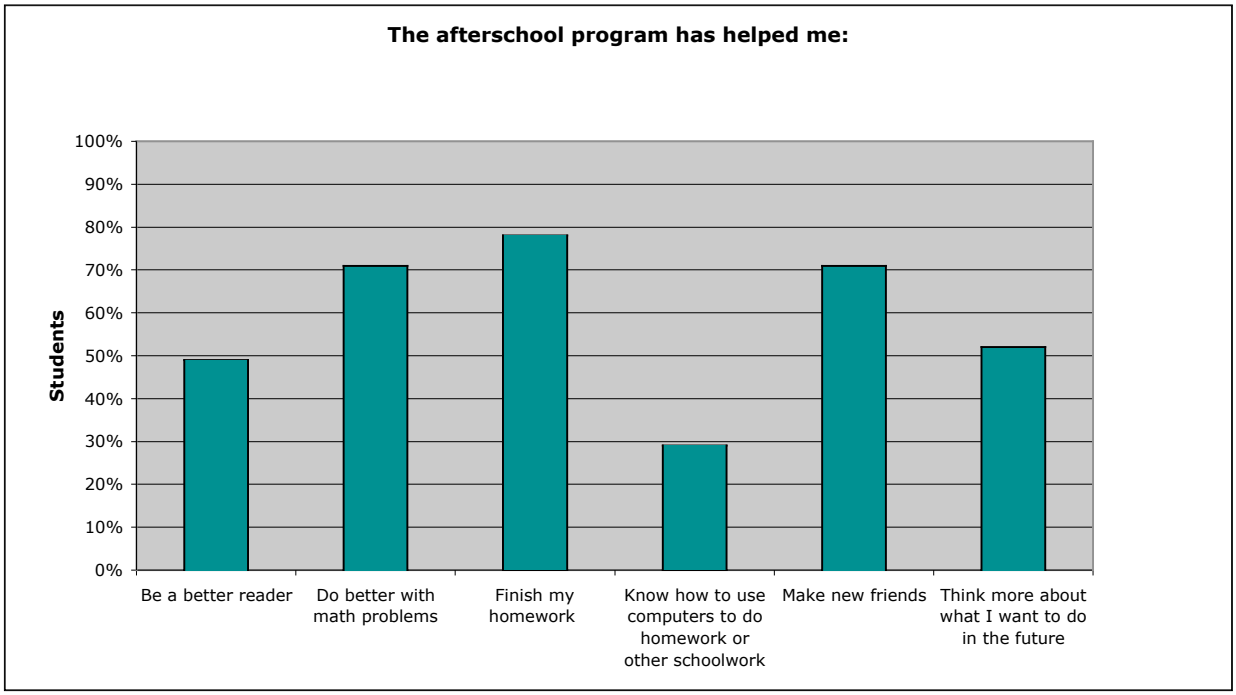


Note. N = 8; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Student Survey. Students attending the afterschool program from grades 4 and 5 completed surveys (n = 69). Students rated 22 statements on a scale of 1–3 where 1 = *Never,* 2 = *Sometimes,* and 3 = *Always.* Forty-one percent of the students indicated that they *always* practiced reading in the afterschool program. Fifty-seven percent indicated the same for mathematics, 49% for writing, and 22% for science.

In general, students reported that they liked the activities in their afterschool program (mean = 2.5), that the program staff listen when students have something to say (mean = 2.6), that they get along well with the program staff (mean = 2.8), that they feel safe while attending the program (mean = 2.7), and that much of their time is spent working on homework or schoolwork (mean = 2.8). As shown in Figure 75, slightly less than half of the students also reported that the afterschool program has helped them be a better reader, almost three fourths reported the program has helped them do better with mathematics problems and finish their homework, and approximately 70% reported that the program has helped them make new friends. Overall, 85% of the students reported that the program is helping them become a better student, and 63% reported that they "really like the program—it's great."

Figure 75. Northside ISD: Percent of Elementary School Students Indicating Various Program Outcomes

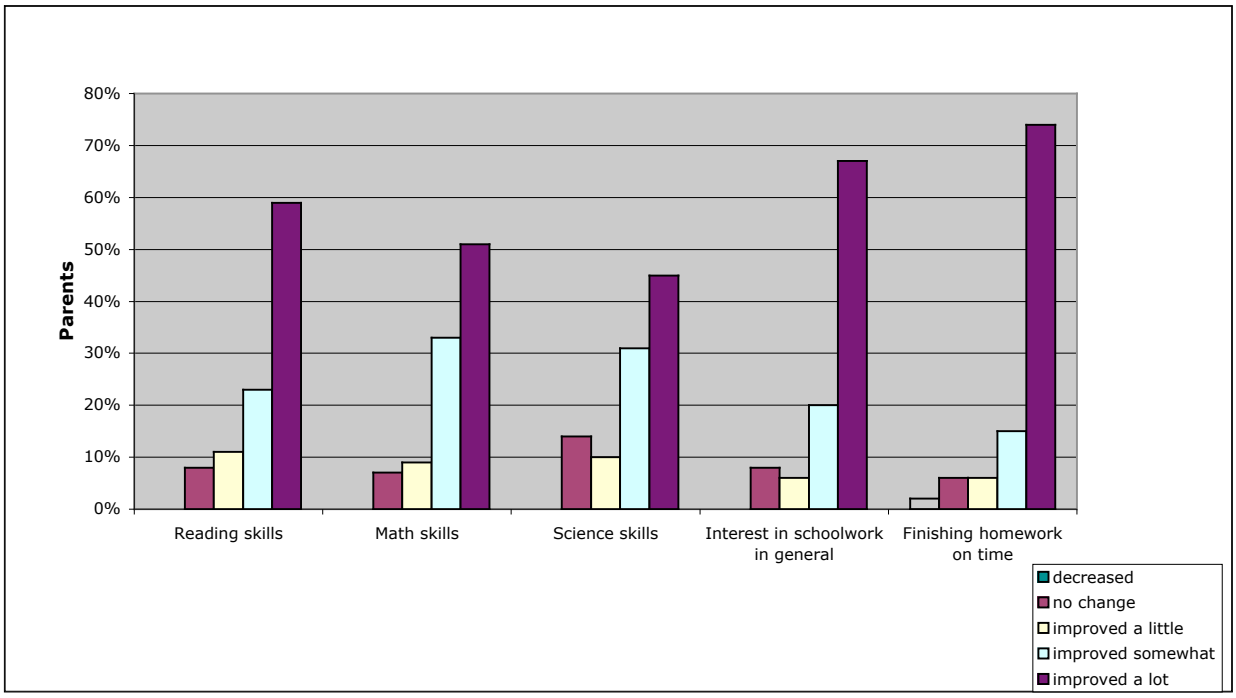


Note. N = 69; Ratings options: Yes, No, or Unsure

Parent Survey. Sixty parents of students participating in the afterschool program completed surveys. On a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *Never* and 10 = *Always*, parents rated several statements about the program and program staff. Mean ratings for all nine statements ranged from 8.5 to 9.7. Highest-rated was the perception by parents that program staff are available to talk with them about questions or concerns. Other highly rated items included parents being comfortable asking program staff what their children are learning in the afterschool program, feeling welcome to visit the program, and knowing that there are staff who can speak with the parents in their home language.

Sixty-five percent of the parents reported that they visited their children's afterschool program at least once a month or more. However, only 22% stated that they help out in the program at least once a month or more. As shown in Figure 76, with respect to changes in their children's academic tasks, skills, and interest, parents primarily reported that their children had *somewhat improved* to *improved a lot* in reading, mathematics, and science skills, in their interest in schoolwork generally, and in finishing homework on time. Overall, parents rated their happiness with the afterschool program activities, staff, materials and resources, and the progress their children have been making in learning quite high (means ranged from 9.4 to 9.5 on a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *very unhappy* and 10 = *very happy,* with between 91 and 95% of parents indicating that they were very happy with the program and the results they were seeing in their children).

Figure 76. Northside ISD: Percent of Parents Indicating Various Program Outcomes



Note. N = 60; Ratings scale: 1 = Decreased, 2 = No change, 3 = Improved a little, 4 = Improved somewhat, 5 = Improved a lot

Profile Summary

In July 2003, Northside Independent School District (NISD) received the 21st CCLC, Cycle 1 grant to implement the Northside Learning Tree afterschool project in five center sites. In March 2004, NISD received a Cycle 2 grant to support five additional centers. Site visits occurred at Valley High Elementary School, a Cycle 1 grantee, and Meadow Village Elementary School, a Cycle 2 grantee. The students served by the afterschool programs are primarily Hispanic and from low-income households. Paid instructional staff, college students, and community volunteers provide the afterschool instruction. The project director oversees all of the centers and supervises budgets, personnel, procedures, and grant reporting. The site coordinators are responsible for hiring instructors, overseeing day-to-day operations, purchasing materials, and making curricular decisions at each of the center sites. An advisory council, comprising parents, students, staff, school administrators, and community members, makes many of the curricular decisions.

The afterschool program provides students with tutoring and enrichment activities, which integrate content instruction in the core areas of reading, mathematics, and science. Friday is set aside as a special day for students to choose engaging hands-on project activities. Instructors submit proposals for 8 weeks' worth of lessons linked to a theme and standards. The site coordinators assess the curricular plans and make recommendations as necessary. The afterschool staff is described as passionate, dedicated, and very involved with the students. The students observed were actively engaged in learning opportunities.

The program is promoted district wide through the distribution of fliers and registration materials via mailings, during orientations, and during the kindergarten roundup. Program staff reported regular communication with parents via monthly newsletters as well as information sent about special events. Community partnerships include the University of Texas at San Antonio, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Urban Ministries, Girls, Inc., and Junior Achievement.

Survey results demonstrated that staff frequently provides students with opportunities to link personal experiences with stories, specific instruction on how to solve math problems, and opportunities to conduct simple science experiments. Students reported that the afterschool program has helped them be better readers, do better with mathematics problems, finish their homework, and make new friends.

ROUND ROCK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

21st Century Community Learning Centers at
Anderson Mill Elementary School and Bluebonnet Elementary School
Site Visit: May 1–2, 2006

Overview

Background and History

- In March 2004, Round Rock Independent School District (RRISD) received the 21st CCLC, Cycle 2 grant to implement the After School Promoting Intensive Remediation & Enrichment (ASPIRE) Program in five center sites, including four elementary school programs and one middle school program.
- The students served are primarily a mixture of Hispanic, African American, and White ethnicities and from low-income households.

Program Structure and Process

- ASPIRE provides snack time, homework and academic learning activities led by certified teachers, and enrichment activities provided by trained volunteers from the YMCA.
- The project director provides leadership and makes many of the organizational decisions in conjunction with the partners, site coordinators, and instructors.
- An advisory council comprising parents, staff, school administrators, and community members assists with decision making.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- Individual centers determine the center's academic focus based on student performance.
- A curriculum director was hired to plan and develop the program's academic lessons.
- Enrichment activities focus on character development and skill practice.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- Day school teachers nominate potential afterschool participants, and letters are sent out to the parents. Enrollment slots are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.
- The YMCA is the community partner. It recruits, trains, and supplies staff to conduct the enrichment activities.

Survey Results

- Staff reported the most commonly used teaching practices in the core content areas include providing students with opportunities for read-alouds, providing specific instruction on how to solve math problems, and giving students opportunities to describe scientific procedures.
- Students reported that the afterschool program has helped them do better with mathematics problems, finish their homework, and make new friends.

Grantee Background and History

In March 2004, Round Rock Independent School District (RRISD) received the 21st CCLC, Cycle 2 grant to implement the After School Promoting Intensive Remediation & Enrichment

(ASPIRE) Program in five center sites, including Bluebonnet Elementary School, Robertson Elementary School, Berkman Elementary School, Anderson Mill Elementary School, and CD Fulkes Middle School. Site visits occurred at the Anderson Mill and Bluebonnet locations. The Anderson Mill program serves approximately 133 students who are primarily Hispanic (41%) and White (44%). The Bluebonnet center serves approximately 190 students who are a mixture of Hispanic (65%), African American (14%), and White (17%) ethnicities. The majority of students in both programs are from low-income households. Key student demographics for the centers are listed in Table 34.

Table 34. Center Student Demographics

Center Name	Total Students	Ethnicity					Gender		Category		
		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian	White	Male	Female	ELL	Econ Dis	Special Needs
Anderson Mill Elementary	133	12	54	0	9	58	72	61	23	65	16
Blue Bonnet Elementary	190	27	125	1	4	33	93	99	46	124	12

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

In Spring 2006, there were 22 paid workers at the Anderson Mill center and 23 at the Bluebonnet center. These included coordinators, day school teachers, and other non-school staff. The staff at both centers are listed in Tables 35 and 36 below.

Table 35. Anderson Mill Elementary Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center administrators/coordinators	1	-	-	-
Day school teachers	9	-	-	-
College students	-	-	-	-
Parents	-	-	-	-
Youth development workers	-	-	-	-
Community members	5	-	-	-
Other non-teaching/non-school staff	7	-	-	-
High school students	-	5	-	-
TOTAL	**22**	**-**	**-**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Table 36. Bluebonnet Elementary Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center administrators/coordinators	1	-	-	-
Day school teachers	11	-	-	-
College students	-	-	-	-
Parents	-	2	-	-
Youth development workers	2	-	-	-
Community members	-	-	-	-
Other non-teaching/non-school staff	9	-	2	-
High school students	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**23**	**-**	**-**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Program Structure and Process

RRISD is a suburban district located just north of Austin. RRISD's ASPIRE program seeks to expand afterschool programs throughout the district in partnership with the YMCA of Greater Williamson County and the Round Rock community. The program operates daily after school until 6 p.m. with extended hours on early-release days. The program begins with 15 minutes of snack time followed by 30 minutes of homework help and another 45 minutes of academic learning activities with certified teachers. The remaining time is devoted to enrichment activities provided by ASPIRE counselors from the YMCA. Enrichment activities include karate, art, computer classes, and dance.

Participating students are grouped by grade level with no more than 20 students per grade and at least one certified teacher and one teaching assistant for each grade level. Many of the instructors at the Bluebonnet center are bilingual. Individual centers determine the center's academic focus based on student assessment scores. Both the Anderson Mill and Bluebonnet centers focus the academic instruction on mathematics and science.

Management and Leadership. The RRISD 21st CCLC project is a partnership between the grantees, the YMCA of Greater Williamson County, the school principals, and the local community. The project director provides leadership and makes many of the organizational decisions in conjunction with the partners, site coordinators, and instructors. Both centers have established an advisory council comprising parents, staff, school administrators, and community members to assist with decision making. Site coordinators hire the instructional staff, oversee curriculum, and meet regularly with instructional staff. The school principal evaluates the site coordinator and approves all curricular decisions. The instructional staff who oversee homework assistance and the academic lessons are all day school professionals working as afterschool instructors. Turnover among the instructors is reportedly not an issue. Trained staff and volunteers from the YMCA lead the enrichment activities as ASPIRE counselors. Site coordinators reported turnover in their respective positions. The instructional staff reported that many of the YMCA counselors need training in classroom management.

At the Bluebonnet center, a curriculum director has been hired to plan and develop all the program's academic lessons with consultation from the teachers and instructional staff. The

instructional staff at the Anderson Mill center develop their own lessons in alignment with their day school curriculum. The afterschool site coordinator and the school principal make routine observations. Both observe instruction and give feedback or assistance on the spot, if needed. Staff report feeling supported and appreciate the leadership and guidance.

Climate. The overall climate of the afterschool program is focused, engaging, and supporting. Students at both centers were actively participating in the learning opportunities and were comfortable with the instructors. Disciplinary problems were an issue at one of the centers.

Programmatic Goals. The ASPIRE Program is designed to increase students' academic success on TAKS. Both centers aim to improve student proficiency in the content areas of mathematics and science. The program seeks to make the afterschool center a community learning center for parents and students. In addition, there is a focus on promoting student expectations for entering and completing higher education. The afterschool staff expect students to perform as proficient on the TAKS test and express the need for students to graduate high school and go on to college.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

The ASPIRE Program is primarily focused on academic work through homework assistance and academic instruction. Certified day school teachers teach mathematics and science lessons in the afterschool program. YMCA counselors run the enrichment activities, which include karate, music, arts, and physical education. Instructors purposely try to make connections between subject areas.

During the site visit, the afterschool instructors used a combination of instructional strategies depending on the activity within the class. Observed strategies included integrating curriculum across content areas, applying "real world" connections to the lessons, providing students with opportunities to apply multiple skills, using project-based activities, and assigning long-term projects.

Key Observations. Observations of four academic lessons were conducted. During the first observation, the instructor led a culminating demonstration of students' participation in a project on graphing. The first graders categorized a random assortment of gummy bears by color, drew a graph to represent each color, and correctly labeled the graph components, including the colors and the title. It was clear that the students had delved deeply into the concept of graphing over several afterschool sessions. Two other adults supported the instructor during this activity. They worked with individual students who they perceived needed or requested help. Both the instructor and assistant spoke Spanish to the students who spoke and understood Spanish.

Literacy was integrated into the second observed lesson as students designed and completed certificates of appreciation for their teachers. Students decided which of their teachers were their favorites, found the teacher's name on a list provided by the instructor, printed the teacher's name on the certificate, and colored the certificate with map colors. One instructor guided students' work on the certificates while another instructor monitored student behavior. This instructor called two or three individual students to his desk for private behavior counseling during the certificate work. He also praised the group and individuals in the group for on-task work.

The third observed lesson focused on the concept of using operations to solve problems. The instructor drew a colored box (the "number muncher") on a tablet in front of the students as they were seated on the floor before her. She explained the process of number munching by inserting a number 4 into the muncher and pulling out a number 6. She asked students what the rule was to get 6 as an output. The students caught on that the rule was "+ 2." The next example was 7 in, 9 out, and the students decided the rule was "skip one number." The next example was 17 in, 19 out; then 6 in, 10 out; and then 2 in, 6 out. Each time, the students were able to name the correct rule without teacher intervention. At the end of 15 minutes, two students who needed to complete homework moved to the table with the instructor to work on a worksheet with number muncher problems. These students used cuisenaire rods to determine the answers to their number muncher problems while the instructor monitored their work. The other six students moved to individual student desks to compose a piece of writing of their choosing. They each worked from a wireless computer linked to the Internet. They used a word processing program to write their individual works. They were reminded to use two hands in keyboarding.

The fourth lesson was on inclined planes and incorporated concepts of science, mathematics, and literacy. The inclined plane lesson was clearly a continuation of a project, as students applied problem-based learning to determine how much force or work it would require to pull a bag of marbles up two inclined planes they had built in the previous week. One plane was more inclined than the other. In a grouping of all the students on the floor, the instructor guided students through a review of the inquiry process of setting up their experiment. Students used spring scales provided by the teacher to first determine the weight of their bag of marbles. Next they measured the height of each inclined plane and then pulled the bag of marbles with the spring scales to the top of the incline on each plane. They recorded their results on a table of their own creation. They then determined that more force was required to move the bag of marbles up the steeper inclined plane, but it required less force than moving the bag from a flat surface such as the desk to the height of the inclined plane. They determined that the inclined plane made moving objects easier overall.

Tutoring and Homework Help. Homework/tutoring sessions are held at each center for 30 minutes to an hour daily. Additionally, 45 minutes of academic learning in mathematics and science is provided for students daily. Instructors tutor children individually and conduct large-group instruction during these two scheduled times each day.

Social/Development Practices. YMCA counselors spend up to 90 minutes per day with students at both centers. The focus of their work is on character development and skill practice through project-based learning. Some of the reported projects included science, mathematics, arts and crafts, and health. One site coordinator reported that the first month of the program focused on teamwork and anger management.

Student Assessment Practices. Student assessment primarily occurs during and within the instructional activities when teachers asked questions and students shared their work. Instructors as well as site coordinators and the project director described the use of a pre-post test given in the afterschool program, in addition to standardized/benchmark test scores. Instructors also reported reviewing day school report cards as an assessment technique.

Alignment With and Ties to Day School. In the ASPIRE Program, the instructional staff responsible for overseeing homework help and the academic content lessons are certified teachers, many of whom are teachers in the day school. All lessons are reportedly tied to the TEKS and are intended to bridge the afterschool program with the day school instruction

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

Students are recommended by the day school staff, primarily by a referral process, based on TAKS mastery/need in literacy, mathematics, or science. Day school teachers nominate potential afterschool participants, and letters are sent out to the parents. Enrollment slots are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Instructors report a large waiting list of over 30 students.

Parental and Community Involvement. Parent involvement is a self-confessed weakness in this program. The project director and site coordinators are working to improve and increase parent involvement in upcoming years. Currently, parents of participating students commit to volunteer a minimum of 1 hour a month in the program. The program also hosts a monthly Parent University, which provides instruction on a variety of parenting issues and techniques. Communication with parents occurs primarily through newsletters, telephone calls, and letters home to parents through student folders about upcoming events.

The YMCA is the community partner in the ASPIRE Program. The YMCA recruits, trains, and supplies staff to conduct the ASPIRE enrichment activities.

Program Evaluation. The project director reported that an external evaluator visits individual centers twice a year. The evaluation includes staff, parent, and student surveys. Campus principals conduct instructor walk-throughs and complete a one-page evaluation form on each teacher. Attendance and activity data are collected for grant compliance reports three times a year. Stakeholders (parents and students) have not been provided evaluation information, but staff and partners have received it as feedback.

Survey Results

Program staff, students participating in the afterschool program, and parents of participating students completed surveys in the spring of 2006 regarding the afterschool program practices and impacts on students.

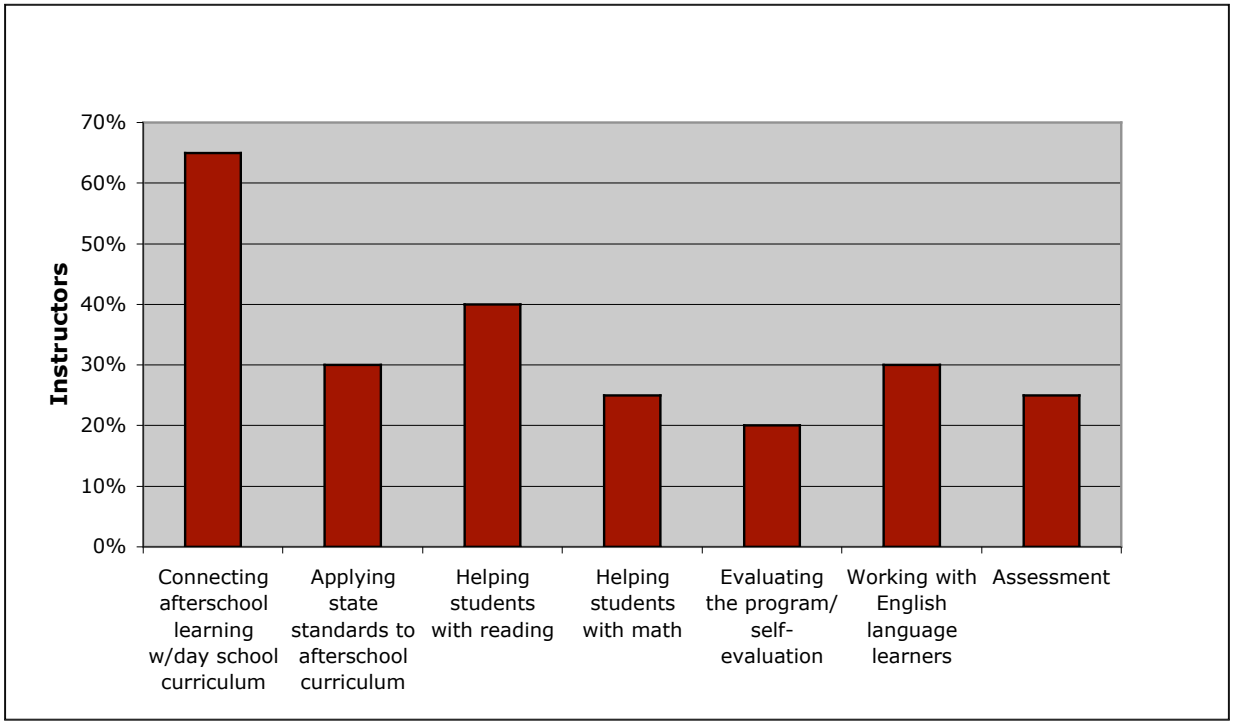
Staff Survey. Twenty program staff completed surveys. Two identified themselves as site coordinators, nine as instructors, four as staff members of partner organizations, and five as counselors. Nine of the program staff reported working at their afterschool center for less than 1 year, with another 9 working from between 1 and 3 years. Seven of the staff reported that their general experience working with afterschool programs was less than 1 year and eight had experience ranging from between 1 and 3 years. Five reported experience teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher as less than 1 year and seven had experience from between 1 and 3 years.

Professional Development. Seven of the program staff reported that they were no aware that their afterschool center had ever offered professional development/training for the staff. However,

eight of the program staff reported that it had been offered four more times in the past year. Six stated they had participated in four or more of the professional developments/trainings, while eight stated they never have participated. Participants who commented on the type(s) of professional development they attended mentioned reading, mathematics, bilingual education, CPR training, and games and songs.

Topics staff mentioned by most staff as areas for future professional development included connecting afterschool learning with day school curriculum, helping students with reading, applying state standards to afterschool curriculum/practices, and working with English language learners. Figure 77 shows survey responses to these items.

Figure 77. Round Rock ISD: Number of Program Staff Indicating Various Interests In Professional Development



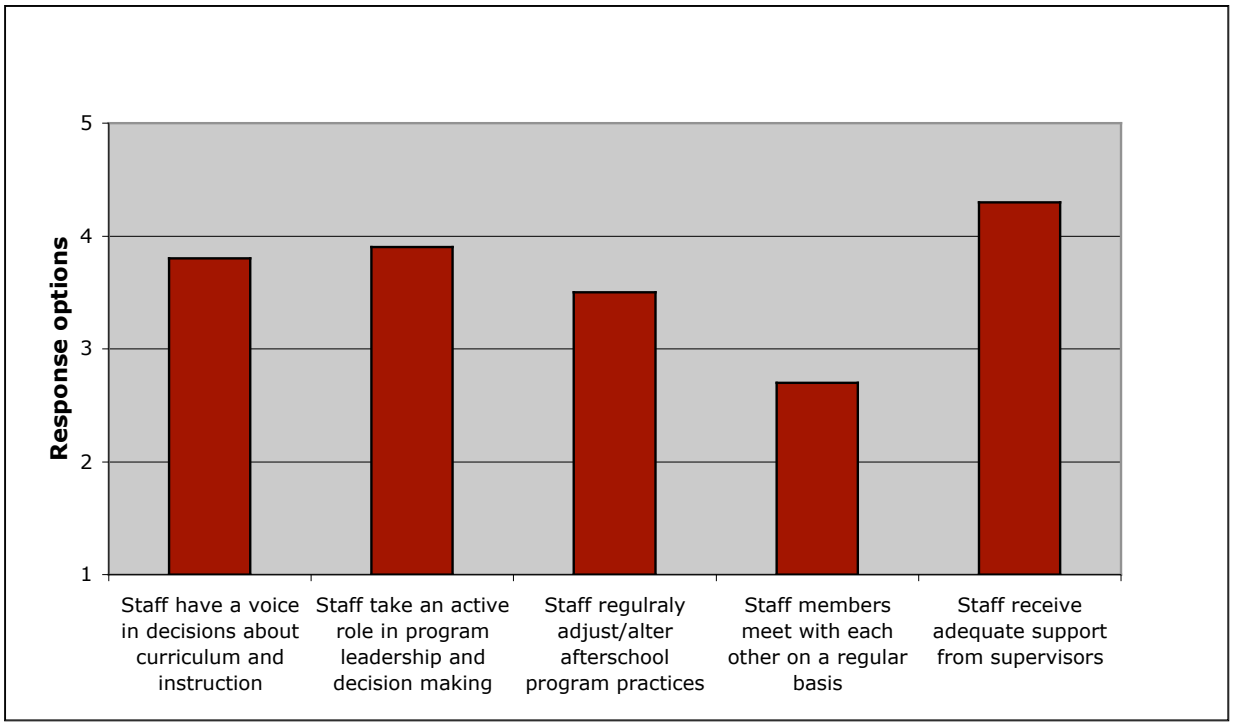
Note. N = 20; Rating options: Yes or No

Organizational Structure. Seventeen of the staff reported to know whom to contact at their students' day school with questions on their students' progress or status, and 12 said that they coordinate afterschool practices with their students' day school homework. Further, 11 indicated that they knew, on a weekly basis, the content to be covered with their students during the school day, with 9 reporting that they use assessment data from the day school to plan their students' work. On average, program staff reported that they speak with their students' day school teachers once to twice per month about their students' homework, coordinating curriculum, or instructional issues.

Fifteen of the program staff reported that they do not have regular time set aside to meet with parents of their afterschool students or did not know if regular time was set aside. Fifteen staff also indicated that they meet with their students' parents less than once per month or never.

The decision making is reportedly decentralized, with staff having a voice in decisions about curriculum and instruction and taking an active role in those areas. Figure 78 below presents survey results for staff perceptions of overall program organization.

Figure 78. Round Rock ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Program Organization



Note. N = 20; Ratings scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree

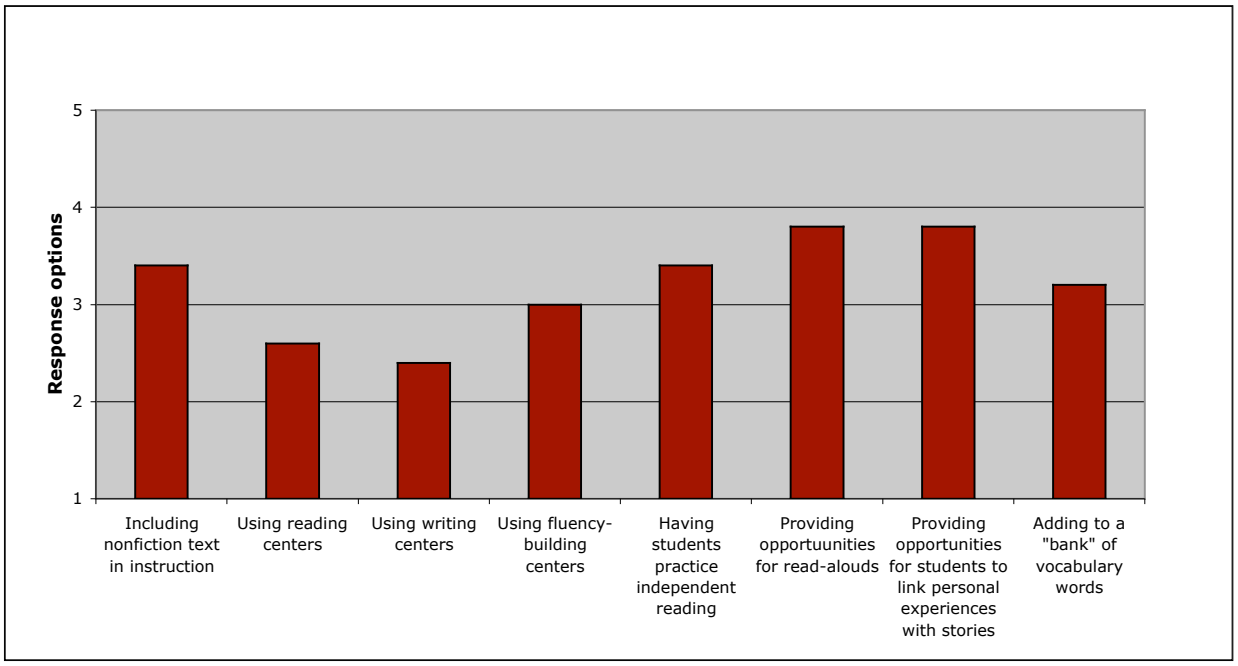
Educational Practices and Strategies. The types of instructional practices that program staff reported using *at least once per week* to *more than once per week* in the afterschool program were tutoring and homework help, having students work in teams or small groups, and providing individualized instruction to students such as one-on-one tutoring, peer support, and computer-assisted instruction. They also indicated that they let students know their expectations and criteria for afterschool assignments. Least often used were linking instruction to community service and having students work on projects spanning several days.

Regarding the assessment of students' progress on academic assignments, the majority of the staff stated that they never used formal tests or quizzes or did so only rarely (*less than once per month* to *once a month)* (14 for reading and mathematics assignments, and 13 on science). They did, however, indicate that they spot-checked for student understanding at least once a week or more on reading (14), mathematics assignments (18), and science assignments (13).

Of reading, mathematics, and science, nine staff reported that they focused mostly on reading, 14 focused on mathematics, and 14 focused on science. For those focused on reading, the most frequently used practices in the afterschool programs were providing opportunities for read-

alouds and providing opportunities for students to link personal experiences with stories. Figure 79 illustrates survey results for various reading practices implemented at the centers.

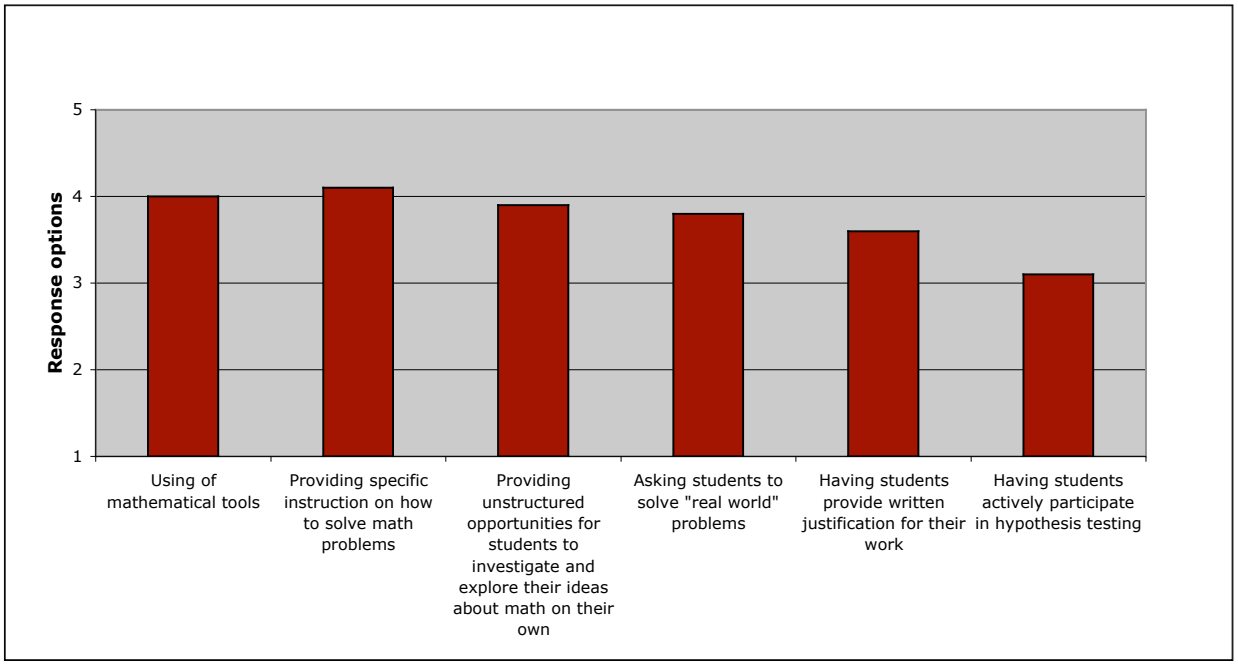
Figure 79. Round Rock ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Reading Instructional Practices



Note. N = 9; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

For the 14 of the program staff who indicated they focused on mathematics with students in their afterschool program, the most often used instructional strategies used included providing specific instruction on how to solve mathematics problems and using mathematical tools in learning experiences such as manipulatives, calculators, and computer-based tools. Figure 80 illustrates survey results for various mathematics practices implemented at the centers.

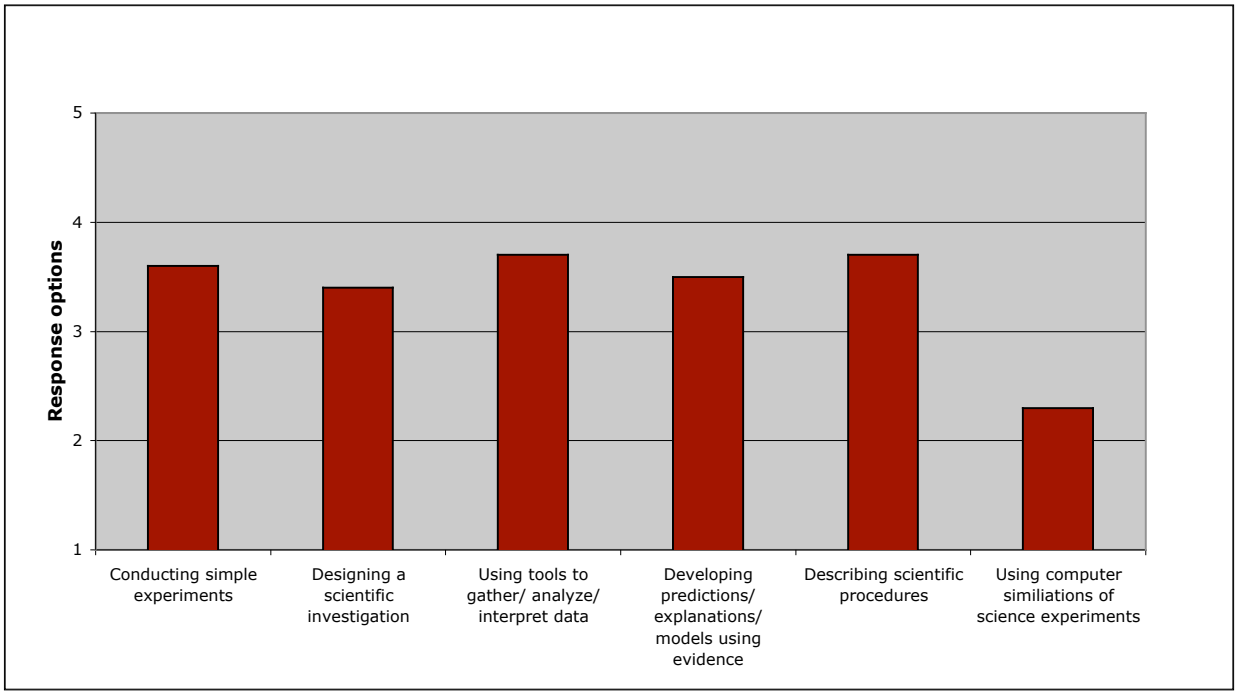
Figure 80. Round Rock ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Mathematics Instructional Practices



Note. N = 14; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Science instruction was focused on by 14 of the program staff. With the exception of using computer simulations of science experiments and designing scientific investigations, all other strategies were used at least *sometimes* to *frequently* by the staff. Figure 81 illustrates survey responses regarding the implementation of various science practices used at the centers.

Figure 81. Round Rock ISD: Mean Ratings by Program Staff on Implementation of Science Instructional Practices

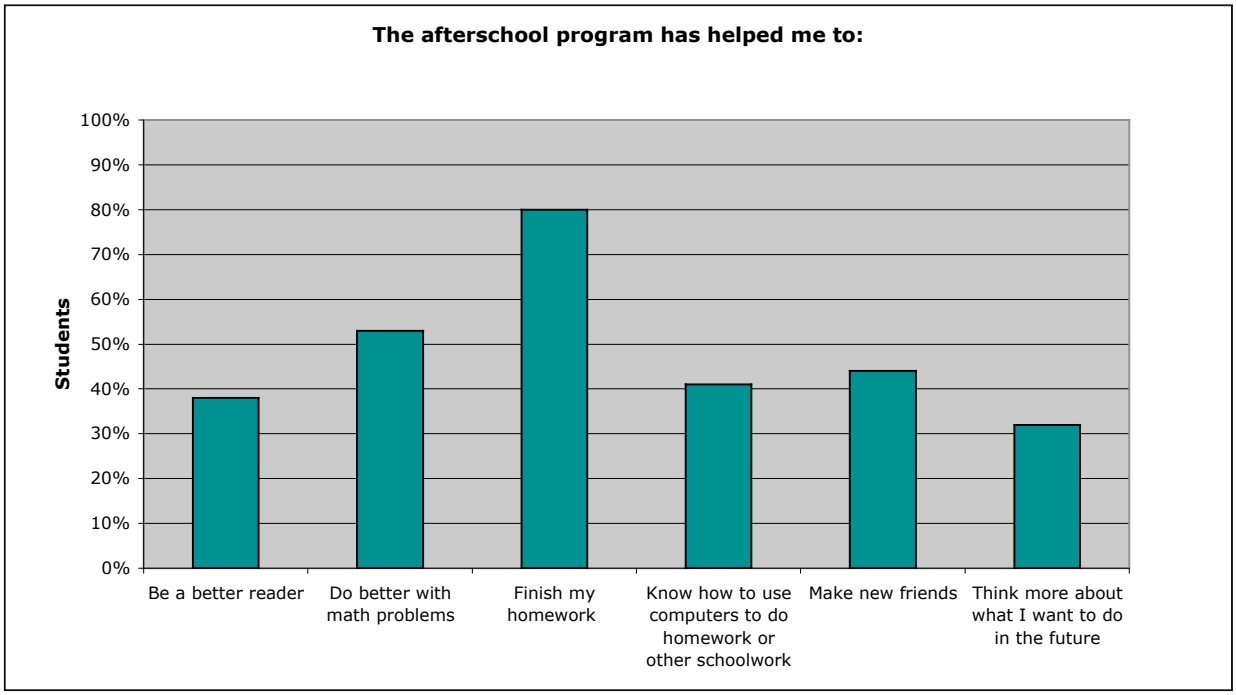


Note. N = 14; Ratings scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always

Student Survey. Students attending the afterschool program from the grades 4 and 5 completed surveys (n = 48). Students rated 22 statements on a scale of 1–3 where 1 = *Never,* 2 = *Sometimes,* and 3 = *Always.* Twenty-five percent of the students indicated that they *always* practiced reading in the afterschool program. Fifty-one percent indicated the same for mathematics, 13% for writing, and 27% for science.

In general, students reported that they liked the activities in their afterschool program (mean = 2.1), that the program staff listen when students have something to say (mean = 2.0), that they get along well with the program staff (mean = 2.3), that they feel safe while attending the program (mean = 2.0), and that much of their time is spent working on homework or schoolwork (mean = 2.7). As shown in Figure 82, 38% of the students also reported that the afterschool program has helped them be a better reader, slightly more than half reported that they do better with mathematics problems, and 80% indicated that they finish their homework at the program. Overall, 68% of the students reported that the program is helping them become better students, and close to half of the students (47%) reported that they "sort of like the program—it's okay" and another 27% indicating that they "really like the program—it's great."

Figure 82. Round Rock ISD: Percent of Elementary School Students Indicating Various Program Outcomes

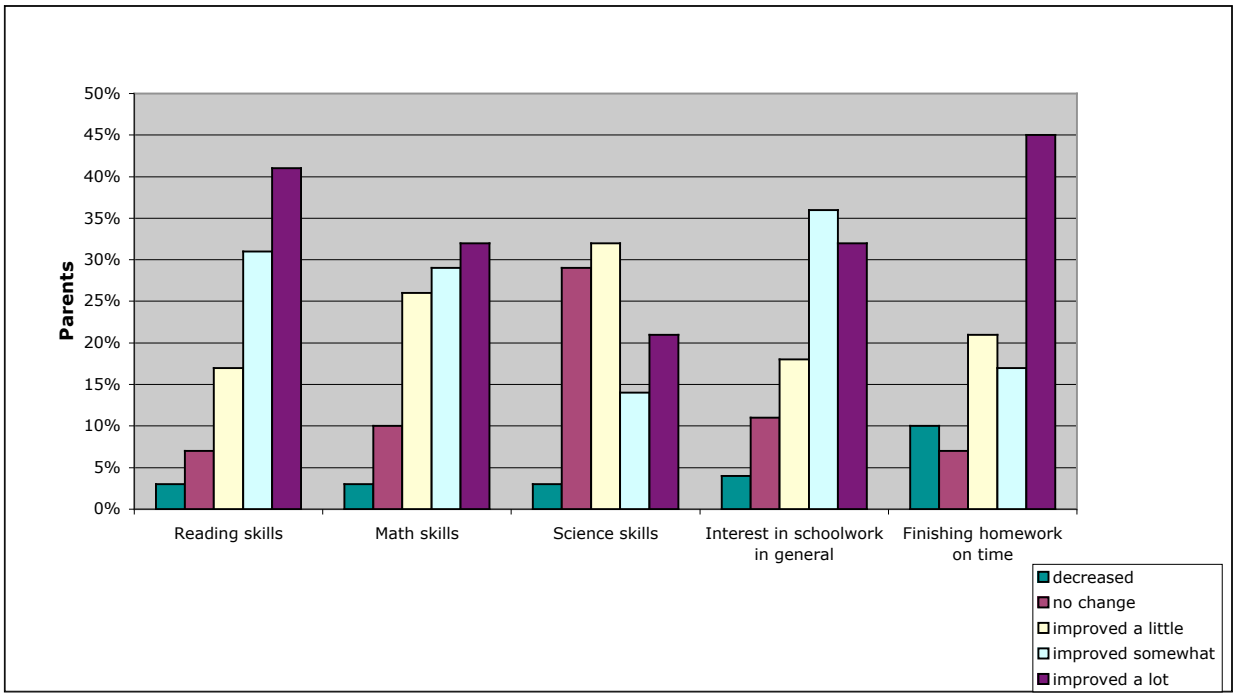


Note. N = 48; Ratings options: Yes, No, or Unsure

Parent Survey. Thirty-two parents of students participating in the afterschool program completed surveys. On a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *Never* and 10 = *Always*, parents rated several statements about the program and program staff. Mean ratings for all nine statements ranged from 7.4 to 9.9. Highest-rated was the perception by parents that program staff are available to talk with them in their own home language. Other highly rated items included parents being comfortable asking program staff what their children are learning in the afterschool program, feeling welcome to visit the program, and having staff who are available to talk about parents' questions or concerns.

Sixty-six percent of the parents reported that they visited their children's afterschool program at least once a month or more. However, only 39% stated that they help out in the program at least once a month or more. As shown in Figure 83, with respect to changes in their children's academic tasks, skills, and interest, parents primarily reported that their children had *improved a little* to *somewhat improved* in all areas. Overall, parents rated their happiness with the afterschool program activities, staff, materials and resources, and the progress their children have been making in learning high (means ranged from 8.5 to 9.0 on a scale of 1–10), with between 74 and 83% of parents indicating that they were very happy with the program and the results they were seeing in their children (scale: 1 = *very unhappy* to 10 = *very happy*).

Figure 83. Round Rock ISD: Percent of Parents Indicating Various Program Outcomes



Note. N = 32; Ratings scale: 1 = Decreased, 2 = No change, 3 = Improved a little, 4 = Improved somewhat, 5 = Improved a lot

Profile Summary

In March 2004, Round Rock Independent School District (RRISD) received the 21st CCLC, Cycle 2 grant to implement the After School Promoting Intensive Remediation & Enrichment (ASPIRE) Program in five center sites. Centers were located in four elementary schools and one middle school. Site visits occurred at the Anderson Mill and Bluebonnet locations (Elementary Schools???). The students served are primarily a mixture of Hispanic, African American, and White ethnicities and from low-income households.

The ASPIRE program seeks to expand afterschool programs throughout the district in partnership with the YMCA of Greater Williamson County and the Round Rock community. The program provides snack time, homework and academic learning activities led by certified teachers, and enrichment activities provided by trained volunteers from the YMCA. The project director provides leadership and makes many of the organizational decisions in conjunction with the partners, site coordinators, and instructors. An advisory council, comprising parents, staff, school administrators, and community members, assists with decision making.

The ASPIRE Program is primarily focused on academic work through homework assistance and academic instruction. Individual centers determine the center's academic focus based on student performance. Certified day school teachers provide content lessons and YMCA counselors run the enrichment activities, which include karate, music, arts, and physical education. Instructors purposely try to make connections between subject areas. A curriculum director was hired to plan and develop the program's academic lessons. Day school teachers nominate potential

afterschool participants, and letters are sent out to the parents. Enrollment slots are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Survey results indicate that staff frequently provides students with opportunities for read-alouds, for specific instruction on how to solve math problems, and to describe scientific procedures. Students reported that the afterschool program has helped them do better with mathematics problems, finish their homework, and make new friends.

TEMPLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

21st Century Community Learning Center at
Jefferson Elementary School
Site Visit: April 13, 2006

Overview

Background and History

- Temple Independent School District (TISD) received the 21st CCLC Cycle 1 and Cycle 3 grants to implement the Project FOCUS program in nine center sites.
- The students served by the afterschool program are primarily a mixture of Hispanic, African American, and White ethnicities and from low-income households.

Program Structure and Process

- Day school teachers conduct both group and individual (or pull-out) tutoring and supervise a homework club. College students teach the enrichment activities.
- The program uses a "cluster" schedule, which provides an hour of tutoring and homework followed by enrichment activities clustered by grade levels.
- The project director manages the administrative functions from the district level and oversees each center, which is run by a site coordinator and an assistant site coordinator.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- Content instruction is embedded into the clustered enrichment activities. Each cluster has an intentional academic focus in mathematics, reading, science, health/nutrition, youth development, technology, physical education, or visual arts.
- The site coordinators design the cluster activities in collaboration with the instructors and students, who generate ideas and complete activity summary sheets aligned to the TEKS.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- Regular attendees of the afterschool program are eligible to enroll in the all-day summer school program for free.

Survey Results

- Students reported that the afterschool program has helped them do better with mathematics problems, finish their homework, and use computers to do homework or other schoolwork.
- Overall, parents indicated they were happy with the program and the results they were seeing in their children.

Grantee Background and History

In 2001, Temple Independent School District (TISD) received the 21st CCLC Cycle 1 grant to implement the Project FOCUS program in five center sites. In September 2004, TISD received Cycle 3 grant funds to support four additional afterschool centers including Jefferson Elementary School, Meridith-Dunbar Elementary School, Lamar Middle School, and Travis Middle School. A site visit occurred at Jefferson Elementary School. The Jefferson Elementary afterschool program serves approximately 226 students. The students in the program are primarily African American (33%), Hispanic (34%), and White (31%). The majority of students are from low-income households. Key student demographics for the center are listed in Table 37 below.

Table 37. Center Student Demographics

Center Name	Total Students	Ethnicity					Gender		Category		
		African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian	White	Male	Female	ELL	Econ Dis	Special Needs
Jefferson Elementary	226	76	78	0	0	72	99	127	1	133	27

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

TISD's 21st CCLC grant supports a variety of staff members who work directly with the students participating in activities at the center. In Spring 2006, there were 40 paid workers at the Jefferson Elementary center. These included coordinators, day school teachers, college students, community members, and other non-teaching staff or non-school staff. The staff are listed in Table 38 below. The center reported no volunteer staff and zero in-kind support or staff turnover for Spring 2006.

Table 38. Jefferson Elementary Afterschool Staffing

Staff	Number Paid	Volunteers	In-Kind	Paid Staff Turnover
Center administrators/coordinators	3	-	-	-
Day school teachers	17	-	-	-
College students	11	-	-	-
Parents	-	-	-	-
Youth development workers	-	-	-	-
Community members	5	-	-	-
Other non-teaching/non-school staff	4	-	-	-
High school students	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**40**	**-**	**-**	**-**

Source: Annual Performance Report, Texas Education Agency

Program Structure and Process

The TISD 21st CCLC afterschool program is called Project FOCUS and provides tutoring, homework assistance, and enrichment activities scheduled in a "cluster" format with a variety of enrichment activities within each cluster. The Jefferson Elementary center has access to the school's facilities, including the gymnasium, cafeteria, library, and staff workroom. The primary goal of the afterschool program is to provide a safe, drug-free, and secure environment for the children after school. The center operates between 3 and 5:30 p.m., opening with snack time. An

hour of tutoring and homework help is provided between 3:30 and 4 p.m., followed by enrichment activities clustered by grade levels. The enrichment activities alternate with Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday schedules and include music and movement, a readers' theater, a metrological society, a young authors' guild, art, etc.

The afterschool tutoring and homework assistance is provided by day school teachers who conduct both group and individual (or pull-out) tutoring and supervise a homework club. College students who teach and supervise the clustered activities primarily provide the enrichment activities. On average, the student-to-teacher ratio is no more than 15:1.

Management and Leadership. The TISD 21st CCLC project director manages the administrative functions from the district level and oversees each center, which is run by a site coordinator and an assistant site coordinator. The Jefferson site coordinators are day school teachers and were hired to work in the afterschool program when the Cycle 3 grant was awarded to the district. The site coordinators primarily make curricular decisions with input from the instructors and students. The project director, site coordinators, and school principals regularly observe afterschool instructors using walk-throughs. Staff development is provided at least once a month on technology, planning, and behavior management. Many of the trainings are 30 minutes to an hour long in length.

Climate. The overall climate of the afterschool program is energetic, safe, and supportive. The afterschool program is highly organized, the instructors are highly motivated, and students are engaged in activities they helped generate with the instructional staff. Site coordinators closely monitor the students' arrival to and departure from the afterschool program.

Programmatic Goals. The TISD afterschool program seeks to provide a safe, secure, and nurturing environment for children to engage in academic and enrichment activities. The program strives to improve student achievement and increase the students' exposure to cultural, social development, recreational, technological, and fine arts learning opportunities. Project FOCUS relies on college students who teach the clustered activities. The afterschool staff expect students to increase their performance in core subjects and increase passing rates on the TAKS.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

Content instruction is embedded into the clustered enrichment activities. Each cluster has an intentional academic focus in mathematics, reading, science, health/nutrition, youth development, technology, physical education, or visual arts. The cluster activities are designed by the site coordinators in collaboration with the instructors and students, who generate ideas and complete activity summary sheets that are aligned to the TEKS. Teaching strategies vary depending on the activity and include a variety of grouping strategies, hands-on instruction using manipulatives, project-based activities, and long-term projects.

Key Observations. Because the site visit observations occurred late in the afternoon a day before a school holiday (Good Friday), student attendance was low and observations were limited. Three activities were briefly observed. Students in the library were participating in the Young Authors' Guild, a reading enrichment activity. Students were using the Internet to research content material for creating a magazine. Each student was researching a separate task. Students in the

gym were participating in the Game Zone cluster and were playing a game that they had created. The students had prepared and written rules and tried out the game for the observers. Students in the staff workroom were participating in the Visual Arts Society cluster and were making clay beads. The activity was intended to have a mathematical component, but the connection was not obvious and no mathematics instruction or use of mathematics was observed.

Tutoring and Homework Help. The first hour of the TISD afterschool program is devoted to tutoring and homework help with an emphasis on improving TAKS skills in reading, mathematics, and science. All students are required to participate in this component of the program before moving to the enrichment activities. Teachers from the day school recommend students for tutoring and provide individualized and small-group instruction. Students who do not need tutoring are allowed to participate in the homework club until the enrichment activities begin. College students assist with transitioning students from tutoring to enrichment activities.

Social/Development Practices. Social/developmental activities are embedded in many of the clustered activities and are intended to promotes students' self-esteem, confidence, and success. For example, the Game Zone activity emphasizes teamwork, sportsmanship, and building self-esteem.

Student Assessment Practices Students complete a pretest and a posttest in reading and mathematics to determine if academic gain has been accomplished as a result of the enrichment activities. Instructors provide ongoing feedback during tutoring and clustered activities.

Alignment With and Ties to Day School. Because the site coordinators are regular day school teachers, communication between the afterschool and day school staff happens regularly and easily. Each cluster activity is aligned to the TEKS and the day school curriculum.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

Enrollment is primarily targeted to students who are at risk of failing. The remaining slots are available to any student on a first-come, first-served basis. Students in an at-risk situation are referred to the afterschool program by the school principal and school counselors. Recruitment is not viewed as an issue, and there is currently a waiting list for students to enter the program. Project FOCUS is available in the summer as well. Participants of the afterschool program are eligible to attend the all-day summer school program for free. Parents are encouraged to regularly send their children to the afterschool program so they can have free child care over the summer months. Because parents are low-income, many have limited options for afterschool care.

Parental and Community Involvement. The elementary center offers family activities such as popcorn movie nights and project showcases, with approximately 30% of the parents attending. For the most part, communication with parents occurs daily when they arrive to pick up their children from the program. Parental communication also occurs by telephone and through newsletters and the Project FOCUS Web site. Community volunteers include Temple Parks and Recreation, a local campfire organization, the Temple Public Library, and the Texas Council for Drug and Alcohol Abuse.

Program Evaluation. TISD office staff are conducting an evaluation of Project FOCUS. Internal evaluation activities include parent surveys, instructor observations, attendance monitoring, and analysis of students' pretest and posttest assessment scores. The primary purpose of the internal evaluation is to determine if attendance in the afterschool program increases test scores.

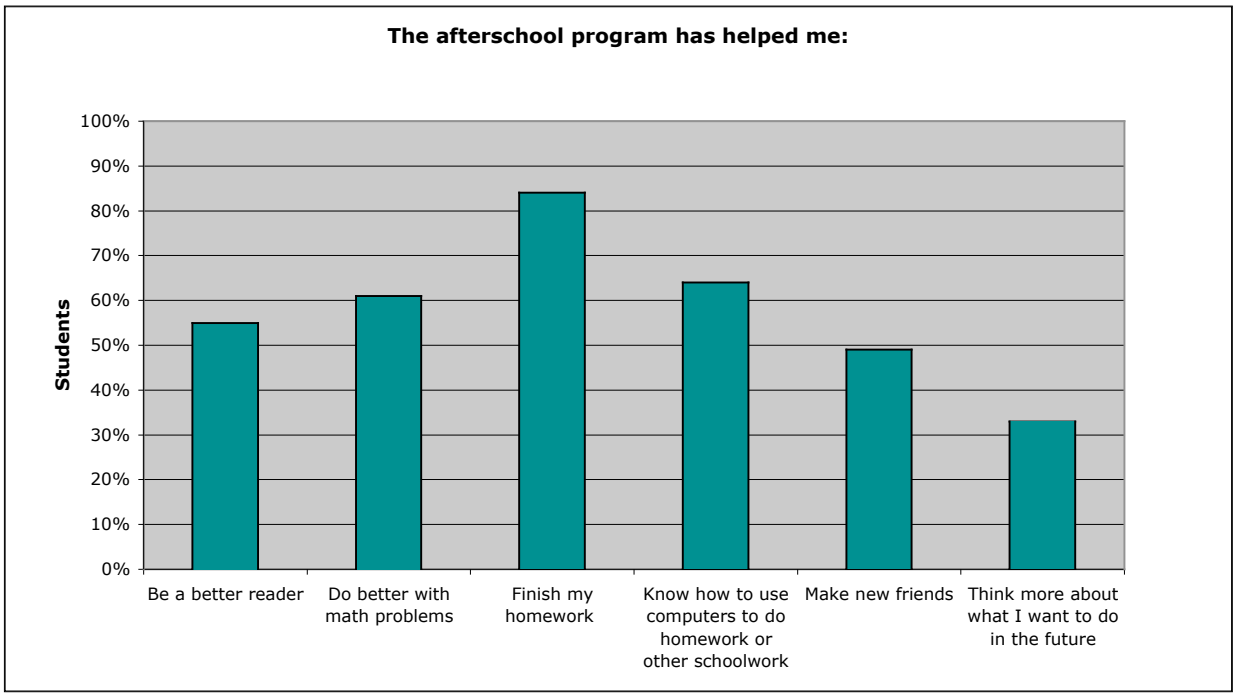
Survey Results

Students participating in the afterschool program and parents of participating students completed surveys in the spring of 2006 regarding the afterschool program practices and impacts. The project director (or representative of the project director) was mailed surveys prior to the site visit to distribute to program staff, students participating in the program, and their parents. At the time of the site visit, no program staff surveys had been collected, nor have any been received by mail since the site visit. Therefore, survey results are provided only for students and for parents of students participating in the afterschool program.

Student Survey. Students attending the afterschool program from the grades 4 and 5 completed surveys (n = 33). Students rated 22 statements on a scale of 1–3 where 1 = *Never,* 2 = *Sometimes,* and 3 = *Always.* Thirty-three percent of the students indicated that they *always* practiced reading in the afterschool program. Twenty-four percent indicated the same for mathematics, 13% for writing, and 13% for science.

In general, students reported that they liked the activities in their afterschool program (mean = 2.8), that the program staff listen when students have something to say (mean = 2.2), that they get along well with the program staff (mean = 2.3), that they feel safe while attending the program (mean = 2.5), and that much of their time is spent working on homework or schoolwork (mean = 2.6). As shown in Figure 84, 55% of the students also reported that the afterschool program has helped them be a better reader, 61% reported that they do better with mathematics problems, and 84% reported that they finish their homework at the program. Overall, 76% of the students reported that the program is helping them become better students, and slightly more than half of the students (52%) reported that they "really like the program—it's great."

Figure 84. Temple ISD: Percent of Elementary School Students Indicating Various Program Outcomes

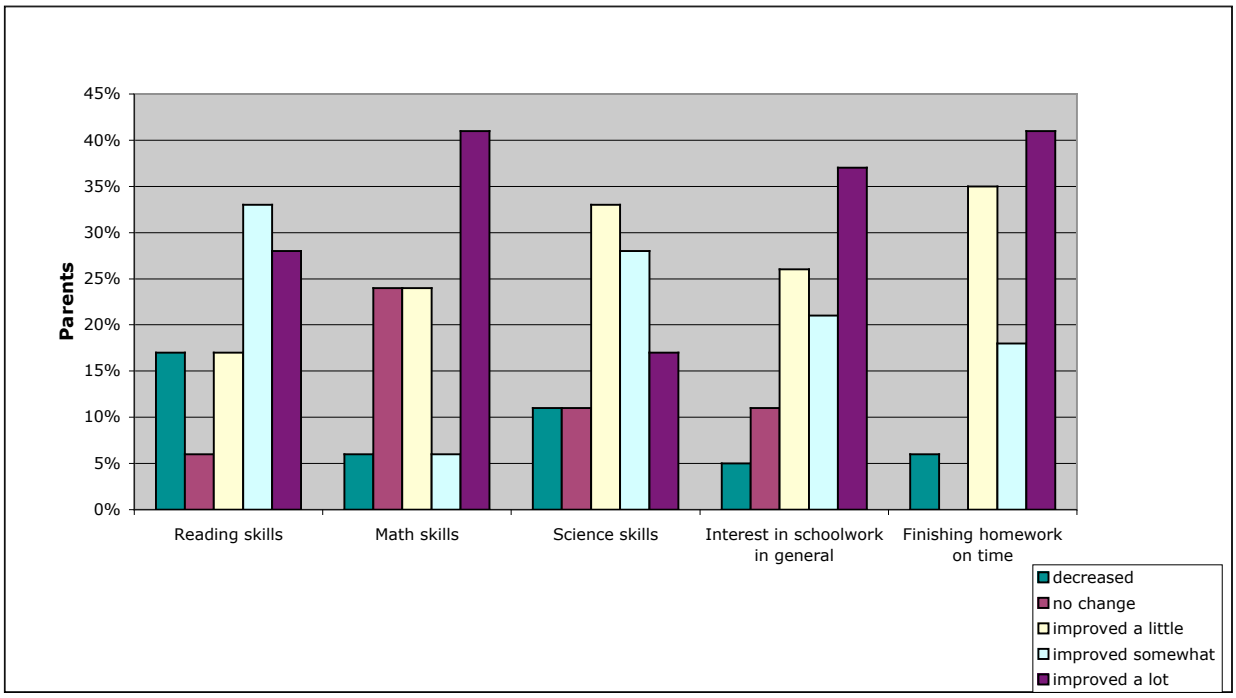


Note. N = 33; Ratings options: Yes, No, or Unsure

Parent Survey. Twenty-two parents of students participating in the afterschool program completed surveys. On a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *Never* and 10 = *Always*, parents rated several statements about the program and program staff. Mean ratings for all nine statements ranged from 7.2 to 9.2. Highest-rated was the perception by parents that program staff are available to talk with parents about their questions or concerns. Other highly rated items included parents being comfortable asking program staff what their children are learning in the afterschool program, feeling welcome to visit the program, and perceiving the staff as being fair to all students.

Fourteen of the parents reported that they visited their children's afterschool program at least once a month or more. However, only three stated that they help out in the program at least once a month or more. As shown in Figure 85, with respect to changes in their children's academic tasks, skills, and interest, parents primarily reported that their children had *improved a little* to *somewhat* in all areas. Overall, parents rated their happiness with the afterschool program activities, staff, materials and resources, and the progress their children have been making in learning relatively high (means ranged from 7.6 to 8.3 on a scale of 1–10, with 1 = *very unhappy* and 10 = *very happy,* with between 14 to 16 of parents indicating that they were very happy with the program and the results they were seeing in their children).

Figure 85. Temple ISD: Number of Parents Indicating Various Program Outcomes



Note. N = 22; Ratings scale: 1 = Decreased, 2 = No change, 3 = Improved a little, 4 = Improved somewhat, 5 = Improved a lot

Profile Summary

Temple Independent School District (TISD) received the 21st CCLC Cycle 1 and Cycle 3 grants to implement the Project FOCUS program in nine center sites. A site visit occurred at Jefferson Elementary School. The students served by the afterschool program are primarily a mixture of Hispanic, African American, and White ethnicities and from low-income households.

Project FOCUS provides tutoring, homework assistance, and enrichment activities scheduled in a "cluster" format beginning with an hour of tutoring and homework followed by enrichment activities, and clustered by grade level. Day school teachers conduct both group and individual tutoring and supervise a homework club. College students teach the enrichment activities which include music and movement, a readers' theater, a metrological society, a young authors' guild, and art. The project director manages the administrative functions from the district level and oversees each center, which is run by a site coordinator and an assistant site coordinator. The site coordinators primarily make curricular decisions with input from the instructors and students.

Content instruction is embedded into the clustered enrichment activities. Each cluster has an intentional academic focus in mathematics, reading, science, health/nutrition, youth development, technology, physical education, or visual arts. The site coordinators design the cluster activities in collaboration with the instructors and students, who generate ideas and complete activity summary sheets aligned to the TEKS. The overall climate of the afterschool program is energetic, safe, and supportive. The afterschool program is highly organized, the

instructors are highly motivated, and students are engaged in activities they helped generate with the instructional staff.

Enrollment is primarily targeted to students who are at risk of failing. The remaining slots are available to any student on a first-come, first-serve basis. For the most part, communication with parents occurs daily when they arrive to pick up their children from the center. Parental communication also occurs by telephone and through newsletters and the Project FOCUS Web site. Community volunteers include Temple Parks and Recreation, a local campfire organization, the Temple Public Library, and the Texas Council for Drug and Alcohol Abuse.

Survey results were not available for program staff, however students reported that the afterschool program has helped them do better with mathematics problems, finish their homework, and use computers to do homework or other schoolwork. In addition, parents indicated they were happy with the program and the results they were seeing in their children.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A. Site Selection Nurturer Nomination Instructions

Email to ESC Nurturer
RE: Evaluation of 21st Century Community Learning Centers –Site Selection Process

Dear <Name>

Thank you for participating in the evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Center Projects being conducted by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), through its contractors, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory and Academic Information Management. An important component of this study is identifying afterschool sites across Texas that demonstrate exemplary or promising practices in core content areas. Following this, SEDL afterschool experts will conduct site visits to twelve 21st Century programs identified as highly effective programs. Profiles of each center will be developed describing their (a) implementation processes, (b) academic and enrichment practices, and (c) recruitment, retention, and marketing strategies. Finally, cross-case analyses will provide descriptions of best practices related to content practices and delivery strategies that TEA can disseminate to local education agencies and community-based organizations seeking to establish or improve their afterschool programs and practices.

The site selection process will utilize several criteria to identify successful programs. As an Education Service Center 21st Century Program Nurturer, your direct involvement with these programs is a valuable source of information. We are requesting your input into the selection process by completing the attached form.

While there are many possible definitions of highly effective programs, for the purpose of this study, an effective program that incorporates best practices is defined as one that includes the following elements:

- Practices that have been proven through scientifically based research to be effective;
- Practices that could be replicable in other similar schools;
- Practices that work well for multiple student groups; and
- Practices linked to increased student performance.

We ask that the form be completed and returned by March 6th, 2006 via email to aimdata@earthlink.net or mailed to:

AIM, Inc.
P.O. Box 90759
Austin, TX 75709-0759

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or email me using the contact information listed below. We appreciate your assistance in this component of the evaluation.

Sincerely,

Melissa M. Dodson, PhD
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
Evaluation Services
(512) 476-6861 X 370
mdodson@sedl.org

21st CCLC Site Selection ESC Nurturer Instructions

Using the form provided, categorize the 21st Century programs for which you have responsibility into the four categories provided below. We have provided a list of your grantees and centers area for your convenience. In order to categorize each grantee, use the guidelines listed below in combination with your own judgment. This is a subjective process. The information you provide will be used in conjunction with other objective data to make a final selection of sites that will be visited by the evaluation team. Please note that this is a classification, not a ranking system. Please do not label any program as "bad" or other such labels.

Categories

Outstanding / Highly Effective Program	**Good Program**	**Interesting / Unique Program**	**Do not consider this program for this study**
An outstanding program: • uses successful practices in core content areas • achieves or substantially is on target to achieve at least 75% of the program objectives • successes are based on implementation practices, *not* on the success of one individual • is replicable in similar schools and/or settings • works for multiple student groups • is strongly supported by teachers and administrators • is successful in all or most centers within a grantee area • consistently show very high levels of student performance	*A good program:* • uses successful practices in core content areas • achieves or substantially is on target to achieve at least 50% of the program objectives • successes are based on implementation practices, *not* on the success of one individual • is replicable in similar schools and/or settings • works for multiple student groups • is supported by teachers and administrators • is successful in at least 50% of the centers within a grantee area • consistently shows high levels of student performance	*An interesting or unique program:* • may or may not use scientifically based practices • may or may not have achieved intended results but has innovative approaches • may only be applicable to certain student groups • implements practices that are innovative, though not necessarily proven to be effective • implements promising practice, but unsubstantiated in terms of success	*A program that should not be considered for this study*: • has no known results • is not based on scientifically based effective practices • is not well defined • is not implemented consistently • consistently shows low levels or neutral levels of student performance • may be difficult to replicate • depends on one or two individuals for success If you do not have knowledge of a program, include in this category.

- Refer to the list provided to obtain identification numbers. All grantees in your list should be categorized into one of the four categories.
- Within the first two categories, *Outstanding/Highly Effective* and *Good*, please list **no more than five (5) grantees**.
- List the top reason or justification for categorizing this grantee as *Outstanding* or *Good*.
- For each grantee in the *Outstanding* or *Good* categories, please list up to two centers that you think would be good candidates for researchers to visit.
- This is a Microsoft Word document. You may need to add spaces in the last two categories, but please list only five in the *Outstanding* and *Good* categories.

Outstanding / Highly Effective Programs (Please list up to five grantees)			
Grantee ID	**Center Name**	**Center ID**	**Justification / Reason** **Indicate the top reason for including the grantee in this category**
1.	a.	a.	
	b.	b.	
2.	a.	a.	
	b.	b.	
3.	a.	a.	
	b.	b.	
4.	a.	a.	
	b.	b.	
5.	a.	a.	
	b.	b.	
Good Programs (Please list up to five grantees)			
Grantee ID	**Center Name**	**Center ID**	**Justification Reason** **Indicate the top reason for including the grantee in this category**
1.	a.	a.	
	b.	b.	
2.	a.	a.	
	b.	b.	
3.	a.	a.	
	b.	b.	
4.	a.	a.	
	b.	b.	
5.	a.	a.	
	b.	b.	

Interesting / Unique Programs			
Grantee ID	**Center Name**	**Center ID**	**Justification Reason (OPTIONAL) Indicate the top reason for including the grantee in this category**
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
Should not be considered for this study			
Grantee ID	**Center Name**	**Center ID**	**Justification Reason (OPTIONAL) Indicate the top reason for including the grantee in this category**
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

Appendix B. Site Selection Phone Interview Protocol

Texas 21st Century Community Learning Center Projects
Evaluation Study – Site Selection Process
Telephone Interview Protocol

Thank you for participating in the evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Center Projects being conducted by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), through its contractors, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) and Academic Information Management. Researchers from SEDL with extensive experience in conducting research on afterschool programs will conduct site visits to twelve 21st Century programs in April 2006. Profiles of each center will be developed describing their (a) implementation processes, (b) academic and enrichment practices, and (c) recruitment, retention, and marketing strategies.

Your program has been identified as one of the possible sites to visit through a combination of performance analyses and recommendations from TEA staff and the Education Service Center Nurturer. We appreciate you spending a small amount of time with us so that a final selection can be made.

Questions

Please tell me a little bit about and the project and your involvement with it.

How are students enrolled in the program? Is recruitment an issue? *(Look for evidence of a structured recruitment plan.*)
_____ Recommended by staff who instruct during the regular school day
_____ Join voluntarily
_____Parental
_____Other

Setting of clear goals for content area practice (i.e., reading/math) (Comp. #1)

1. Evidence	2. Some Evidence	3. No Evidence

Academics
What are the main academic goals / objectives of this program?
(Look for a description that indicates there are clear lesson plans and that instruction is an essential component of the program.)

Look for sample characteristics of successful practices / activities:
_____Well defined goals (for all staff)
_____A clear mission
_____High Expectations for staff
_____High expectation for student achievement

Does your program have specific goals for the reading program?

Does your program have specific goals for the math program?

Other
What other main goals or objectives does your program have?

Assignment of research-based activities to achieve goals (Comp. # 2)

1. Evidence	2. Some Evidence	3. No Evidence

How was your curriculum designed/selected? (i.e., is it self-designed, based on a purchased program, a combination of these, etc.)?

Who participated in selecting the chosen curriculum?
_____ Do your instructors give input on curriculum?
_____ Do parents/students give input?
_____ Do day school teachers give input on curriculum?

Do you know if the curriculum selected is a research-based model/program?

Can you give me some examples of research-based activities?

Look for sample characteristics of successful practices / activities

____Making learning fun
____field trips
____current events
____democracy in the classroom
____opportunities to explore
____Games and sports
____Use of visual and tactile tools
____Journal writing
____Picture cards
____Mutli-modal learning
____Computer-based learning
____Cross-content instruction
____Arts activities
____Cooperation and Communication skills
____Multi-cultural learning
____Service-learning
____Community connections
____Tutoring and homework
____Peer tutoring, mixed level pairs
____Opportunity for individualized help
____Breaking up the day
____Real-world experiences

Use of research-based curriculum and teaching strategies (Comp. # 5)

1. Evidence	2. Some Evidence	3. No Evidence

What types of teaching strategies are used in your program?

Look for sample characteristics of successful practices / activities:

_____ The activity is well organized
_____ The activity involves the practice/a progression of skills
_____ The activity challenges students intellectually, creatively, and/or physically
_____ The activity requires analytic thinking

Provision of opportunities for student practice (Comp. # 10)

1. Evidence	2. Some Evidence	3. No Evidence

What opportunities are provided for students to apply or practice what they learn?

Alignment of practice content materials to state standards (Comp. # 3)

1. Evidence	2. Some Evidence	3. No Evidence

How does your curriculum address the state standards (The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS))?

Can you give me a few examples of how the program's curriculum focuses on the TEKS?

Links from practice content activities to school day activities (Comp. # 4)

1. Evidence	2. Some Evidence	3. No Evidence

Look for sample activities/practices:

_____ Hiring a teacher from the day school to keep the afterschool project apprised
_____ Using literacy and mathematics materials that were used during the school
_____ Observing in classrooms and talking informally with regular teachers
_____ Pooling resources
_____ Arranging for classroom libraries, manipulatives, and games to be available for the after-school
_____ Hiring school-day paraprofessional aides to coordinate the academic records of student progress between the regular school-day and after-school program
_____ Sharing the school's parent liaison to facilitate connections

How is your curriculum linked to your students' regular day curriculum? How? (meetings, emails)

Describe any coordination between the regular day program and the afterschool program?

How do your staff members and regular day school teachers communicate regarding the ongoing needs of the students?

Provision of a positive program environment (Comp. # 6)

1. Evidence	2. Some Evidence	3. No Evidence

What provisions do you have to foster a positive program environment? Can you give me some examples?

Sample characteristics of successful practices / activities:

_____ Staff is equitable and inclusive with all youth
_____ Encouraging the participation of any students who appeared to be isolated
_____ Positive behavior-management techniques, such as setting appropriate limits and communicating clear expectations for behavior.

Employment of motivational strategies to engage students in learning (Comp. # 7)

1. Evidence	2. Some Evidence	3. No Evidence

How do you motivate students to learn?

Look for ample characteristics of successful practices / activities:
_____ encourage students to share their ideas, opinions, and concerns
_____ engage personally with students
_____ communicate goals, purposes, expectations
_____ verbally recognize student's efforts and accomplishments
_____ assist students without taking control
_____ ask students to expand upon their answers and ideas
_____ challenge students to move beyond their current level of competency
_____ plan for/ask students to work together
_____ employ two or more teaching strategies
_____ a safe and healthy environment

Promotion of student engagement (e.g., encouraging meaningful experiences) (Comp. # 8)

1. Evidence	2. Some Evidence	3. No Evidence

Are there specific strategies used to keep students motivated and engaged?

Look for sample characteristics of successful practices / activities:
_____ Encourages parental involvement
_____ Encourages community involvement
_____ Real world experiences
_____ Field trips
_____ Sustained skill-building experiences
_____ Volunteering in classroom activities
_____ Giving feedback on curricular decision-making
_____ Participating in site activities like field trips, back-to-school nights
_____ Parent enrichment activities or classes (e.g., language courses for parents)
_____ Shares info with parents (newsletters, meetings, etc.)
_____ Monitors if students are on task
_____ Provides individualized student attention / instruction
_____ Students are provided opportunities for leadership roles

Effective program management/support/resources (e.g., staff/student ratio, staff educational experience, ongoing evaluation) (Comp. # 9)

1. Evidence	2. Some Evidence	3. No Evidence

How do you manage the program?

What qualifications and characteristics do you look for in the after school staff?

Are staff development opportunities provided to program staff? How often? What are they?

Does your program have appropriate space / resources (access to playgrounds, libraries, computer labs, etc.)?

What will happen to this program once funding ends?

Look for sample characteristics of successful practices / activities:

_____ Effective leadership
_____ Opportunities for staff development
_____ Qualified personnel
_____ Sustainable (capacity building) practices
_____ Appropriate fiscal management
_____ Appropriate space / resources
_____ Effective coordination of services (committees agencies, universities, etc.)
_____ Network (sharing of information, etc) with other after school programs
_____ Effective communications methods
_____ Low staff turnover

Periodic evaluation to check program effectiveness (Comp. # 11)

1. Evidence	2. Some Evidence	3. No Evidence

How do you evaluate your program?

Resetting goals according to assessment results (Comp. # 13)

1. Evidence	2. Some Evidence	3. No Evidence

Has the afterschool program curriculum been modified since its inception as a result of your evaluation practices?

Periodic assessment to review student progress (Comp. # 12)

1. Evidence	2. Some Evidence	3. No Evidence

How and how often do you assess student progress?

Sample characteristics of successful practices / activities:

_____ Consistent period review of assessment data
_____ Application / intervention as a result of evaluation findings
_____ Dissemination of evaluation results for improvement
_____ Development of standards and goals based on evaluation findings (data driven decision making)
_____ Evidence of accountability practices
_____ Evidence that a well-thought out evaluation plan is in place (rigorous)
_____ Use of external evaluators
_____ School and district level involvement

Final Thoughts

What do you feel makes your after school program unique?

Is there anything else you would like to share with us about your program that I haven't asked?

If your program is selected for an on site visit, what week in April would be best for you, ask for two.

_____ April 3 – 7
_____ April 10 – 14
_____ April 17 – 21
_____ April 24 - 28

Appendix C. Site Visit Protocols

Texas Education Agency Project **Project Director Interview Protocol**

I. Background

A. PD's Personal Background

1. How many years have you been the Project Director?

2. As a Project Director, what are your main responsibilities?

3. What role do you have in making the following kinds of decisions (for the project as a whole) at the individual sites?
   - personnel
   - curricular
   - organizational

B. Grant Background and Organizational Structure

4. How many years has your afterschool project grant been in operation?

5. Can you tell me a little about the history of your grant?
   - How was the grant started?
   - Has the program grown and developed over time? If so, how?
   - What is the projected growth for the grant?
   - Is there a plan for self-sustainability? Please describe.

6. What are the goals and/or objectives of the afterschool project? Does this vary by site?

7. Please describe the organization/structure of the entire afterschool project grant.
   - How many individual sites does the grant serve?
   - Overall, approximately how many students does your grant currently serve?
   - Overall, what population(s) does the grant serve?
     - Ethnicities
     - Language groups/level of English proficiency
     - Income level (SES)
     - Education level of parents
     - What types of activities are offered (academic & social)?

8. In what ways do the individual sites vary in terms of the populations served, grade levels served, activities offered, and practices used?

9. In general, what type of support does the afterschool project (grant central office) provide to the individual sites?

10. How are community resources utilized/incorporated into the overall afterschool project and individual sites?

11. What type of coordination/collaboration exists between individual sites?

12. Are there specific recruitment or promotional strategies that you use to increase student enrollment in the project's reading/math/science practices?

13. Do you monitor student attendance and retention in specific content practices? Are there specific strategies that you employ to enhance student retention in the practice (i.e., to increase student attendance in terms of both frequency of participation and reduction of withdrawal from the practice)?

C. Content Practice Background

14. What types of math/reading practices are used within the afterschool programs funded by the grant?
    - Does this vary by site?
    - If so, how?

15. What are the primary goals of the math/reading/science practices?
    - Specific content areas/standards
    - Academic achievement
    - Skills improvement over time
    - Social/personal development
    - Ability to communicate

II. Internal Site Structure

A. Professional Development

16. Does the afterschool project (grant) offer professional development to staff?
    - If so, what types of professional development are offered?
    - How are the topics determined?
    - Is this done by site, or for all staff within the afterschool projects' funded programs?
    - How frequently are professional development activities offered?

    - What is the structure for these offerings (e.g., how long are the topics covered)?
    - Approximately how many staff have attended?

B. Evaluative Structures

17. Are the individual sites evaluated? If so, is there a formal evaluation process? Informal? Have the sites been independently evaluated? If so, by whom? ***(Note to Interviewer: be sure to get a copy of any reports.)*** What specific criteria do you use to evaluate the sites' success?

18. Have there been any notable findings from these individual site evaluations?

19. Is the program as a whole evaluated? Any notable findings?

C. Summary/collection of available data

20. What do you feel makes your afterschool project (grant funded programs) unique when it comes to math/reading practices?

21. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about your afterschool project that I haven't asked?

I. Background

A. Site background

1. How many years has your site been in operation?

2. Can you tell me a little about the history of your site?
   - How was the site started?
   - How has the site grown and developed?

   o Approximately how many students does your site currently serve?

   o What population(s) does your site serve?
   - Ethnicities
   - Language groups/level of English proficiency
   - Income level (SES)

5. How are students referred to the site? Is recruitment an issue?
   - Recommended by the day school
   - Join voluntarily

6. *Overview question*: Can you describe your site briefly? What are the different types of activities offered at your site?

B. Content Practice background

7. What are the primary goals of your **math** curriculum?
   - Academic achievement/skills
   - Other (personal development, etc.)

8. What are the primary goals of your **reading** curriculum?
   - Academic achievement/skills
   - Other (personal development, etc.)

9. What are the primary goals of your **science** curriculum?
   - Academic achievement/skills
   - Other (personal development, etc.)

10. How was your curriculum designed? What are the distinguishing features of the curriculum (i.e., what's special about it)?
    - Self-designed
    - Purchased
    - Other

11. Has the curricula been modified since its inception? If yes, what were the reasons for the modification(s)?

12. How was the curriculum modified?
    - Do your instructors give input on curriculum?
    - Do parents/students give input?
    - Do day school teachers give input on curriculum?

C. Personal background

13. As a Site Coordinator, what are your responsibilities?

14. What authority do you have in making the following kinds of decisions at the site – personnel, curricular, organizational?

15. How many years have you been at the site?

16. How many years of experience do you have with other afterschool programs?

17. What kinds of experience do you have do you have in such programs?

18. What is your previous teaching/administrative experience in regular day schools?
    - What subjects have you taught/for how many years?
    - What grade levels have you taught?

II. Research-based Design

A. Content Knowledge

19. Are you familiar with your state standards in:
    - Math?
    - Reading?
    - Science?

20. Is your site curriculum linked to those state standards? What is the linkage? How do you know?
    - What specific steps, if any, have you taken to make sure your curriculum addresses state standards?

21. Are any particular standards given more focus/priority than others by your curriculum? If so, why?

22. How, if at all, is your curriculum coordinated with your students' day school curriculum?

B. Teaching and learning methods

23. What types of teaching strategies are characteristic of your site?

24. How do you integrate homework help and/or tutoring into your site?

25. Do you use grouping strategies (e.g., small group instruction, pairs work, whole group instruction)? If so, how?

26. How does your curriculum provide "real world" connections for students?

27. How do you link your curricular content areas (i.e., how do you integrate various curricular content areas—math, reading, social science, art—with each other)?

28. What approaches do you use to address different ability groups, such as ELL students?

29. What, if any, activities do you include at your site that focus on social development/non-academic outcomes (e.g., socialization, creativity, self-esteem)?

III. Internal Site Structure

A. Scheduling

30. How are your students' afterschool hours at your site allocated among different activities you offer?

31. How many days a week are allocated to:
    - Math curriculum?
    - Reading curriculum?
    - Science curriculum?

32. How many hours a day are assigned to:
    - Math curriculum?
    - Reading curriculum?
    - Science curriculum?

B. Staffing

33. How many certified instructors do you have at your site? Other staff members?
    - What qualifications do you look for in the staff assigned to deliver the curriculum?
    - What is the staff/student ratio for the **math** curriculum? **Reading**? **Science**?

34. How many of your staff have previous teaching experience?

C. Professional Development

35. Does your site offer professional development to staff?
    - If so, what types of professional development do you offer?
    - How frequently are the activities offered? What is the structure for these offerings (e.g., how long are they)?
    - How many staff have attended?

D. Decision-making

36. Could you provide me with an overview of the site management/governance structure?

37. How are decisions about curriculum and instruction made at the site?
    - Who is responsible?
    - Who has final authority?

38. What is the role of site instructors in site decision-making?
    - Could you give an example of a recent curricular decision and how it was made?

a. Adequacy of space/resources

39. What types of resources do you need at your site (to be effective in working with students) that you currently lack (e.g., supplies, texts, more staff, more physical space)?

b. Self-evaluative structures

i. How do you evaluate your site? Do you have a formal evaluation process? Informal?

ii. If so, what specific criteria do you use to evaluate the sites' success? Please respond for each of the following areas:
    - At the site level?

- At the classroom level?
- At the staff level?
- Has your site been independently evaluated? If so, by whom? ***(Note to Interviewer: be sure to get a copy of any reports)***

IV. External Communication and Support

A. Level of Communication between Day School and Afterschool Program

42. What, if any, structures do you have in place to ensure communication between your site staff and day school teachers/administrators?

43. How, if at all, do your staff members and day school teachers coordinate curriculum planning?

44. How, if at all, do your staff members and day school teachers communicate regarding the ongoing needs of the students? How common is this communication (i.e., how frequently does it occur)?

B. Parent Involvement

45. What opportunities, if any, do you provide for parents to be involved in your site?

- Classes/enrichment opportunities
- Volunteer opportunities
- After school night

46. Approximately what percentage of parents are involved in each of these activities?

47. How, if at all, do you share information with parents (e.g., newsletters, meetings, by telephone, by email)?

C. Community Connections/Relationship with Grantee (head office)

48. How, if at all, do you involve the community in your site?

- Partnership with local community agencies
- Shared materials/strategies with universities/colleges

49. What is the relationship of your site to the grantee (head office)?

50. If applicable, are you getting the support and resources your site needs from your grantee (head office)?

V. Student/Adult Interaction

A. Relationships with Students

51. How would you describe the relationship between your staff and students?

52. How would you characterize your site's approach to disciplining students?
    - What steps are taken, if any, to insure consistency?

B. Opportunities for Individual Student Attention/Feedback in Instruction

53. What opportunities, if any, does your math/reading/science curriculum provide for individual student attention/feedback?
    - One-on-one tutoring
    - Scheduled meetings w/students to discuss progress

VI. Outcomes

A. Site Level Internal/External Evaluation Activities and Findings

54. What were the major findings of any internal/external evaluations?
    - Student outcomes/achievement
    - Attitudinal changes

55. Do you keep track of student attendance at your site? Have there been any changes in attendance over time?

56. Do you track/measure student engagement over time? How has it changed, if at all?

57. Are there any other ways that your students have been impacted by your site that we haven't discussed?

B. Summary/Collection of Available Data

58. Could we please have a copy of any assessment data you might have? ***(Note to interviewer: refer to archived data checklist to probe for specific types of data.)***
- District data (e.g., SAT-9, CAT/6)
- Statewide tests
- Periodic student evaluations
- Attendance record

59. What do you feel makes your site unique when it comes to:
    - **math** curriculum practice?
    - **reading** curriculum practice?
    - **science** curriculum practice?

60. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about your site/curriculum that I haven't asked?

Texas Education Agency Project **FOCUS GROUP Instructor Interview Protocol**

Center Name and Location:_____Date:_____

I. Background

Name	# of years you been at this site?	# years you have taught in afterschool programs?	What subject areas and grade levels have you taught and for how many years?			What certifications/ credentials do you have?
			Subject areas	Grade levels	Years	
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						

I. Background

A. Instructor's Personal Background

1. How many years have you been at the site?
2. How many years experience do you have with other afterschool programs?
3. What types of teaching experience do you have?
   - What subjects have you taught/for how many years?
   - What grade levels have you taught?
   - What, if any, additional certifications or credentials do you hold?

II. Research-based Design

i. Content Knowledge

4. Are you familiar with your state standards in math/reading/science?

5. Does your site curriculum address those state standards? If so, how?
   - What specific steps have you taken to make sure your curriculum addresses the state standards?

6. Are any particular standards given more focus by your site? If so, why?

7. What specific standards were covered during the lesson I observed or will observe?

8. Is your curriculum also linked to your students' day school curriculum? In what ways was the lesson I observed linked to the day school curriculum?

ii. Teaching and Learning Methods

1. What types of teaching strategies are characteristic of your math/reading/science curriculum?

2. How do you integrate homework help and/or tutoring into your math/reading/science curriculum?

3. Do you use grouping strategies? If so, how?
   a. Small group instruction
   b. Pairs work
   c. Whole group instruction

12. How does your curriculum provide "real world" connections for students?

13. How do you link your math/reading/science curricula to other content areas, such as social studies, art, physical education etc.?

14. What approaches do you use to address different ability groups, such as ELL students?

15. What, if any, activities do you include at your site that focus on social development/non-academic outcomes (e.g., socialization, self-esteem)?

III. Internal Site Structure

A. Professional Development

16. Does your site offer professional development to staff and instructors?
    - If so, what types of professional development are offered?
    - Which professional development activities, if any, have you attended through your site or grantee?
    - Did you find them useful? How/why? If not, why not?
    - Are there any other areas in which you would like to receive further professional development training?

B. Decision-making

17. How are decisions about curriculum and instruction made at the site?
    - Are decisions about curriculum and instruction made mostly by site coordinators?

18. What is the role of site instructors in site decision-making?
    - Do you feel that your opinions and input influence decisions about curriculum and instruction?

19. In what ways do your site staff members communicate and collaborate?
    - Curriculum?
    - Student progress?

C. Adequacy of Space/Resources

20. What types of resources do you need, that you currently lack at your site, to be more effective in working with students (e.g., supplies, texts, more staff, more physical space)?

D. Self-evaluative Structures (Organizational Efficiency)

21. How do you evaluate your site? Do you have a formal evaluation process? Informal?

22. If so, what specific criteria do you use to evaluate your site's success? Please respond for each of the following areas:
    - At the site level?
    - At the classroom level?
    - At the staff level?

IV. External Communication and Support

A. Level of Communication between ASP and Day School

23. What structures, if any, are in place at your site that encourage communication between you and your students' day school teachers/administrators?
    - Do you know whom to contact at your students' day schools if you have a question about curriculum? To discuss a specific student?

24. How, if at all, does your site coordinator encourage communication with students' day school teachers/administrators?

25. How often do you speak with your students' day school teachers?

26. What do you typically discuss with your students' day school teachers if you speak with them?
    - Student progress
    - Curriculum
    - Coordination of homework
    - Math/reading/science instruction

27. Do your staff members and day school teachers coordinate curriculum planning? If so, how?
    - Do you have access to students' day school textbooks?

B. Parent Involvement

28. How often do you meet with the parents of your site's students?
    - Do you have designated times to meet with parents?

- What percentage of parents do you meet with over the course of a semester?

29. What opportunities are provided through your site/grantee for parents to be involved in your site?
    - Classes/enrichment opportunities
    - Volunteer opportunities
    - After school night
    - Other

30. To what extent are the parents of the students you teach involved with your site?
    - Volunteering in classroom activities
    - Giving feedback on curricular decision-making
    - Participating in site activities

31. How is information shared with parents (e.g., newsletters, meetings, telephone, email)?

V. Student/Adult Interaction

i. Relationships with Students

32. How would you describe the relationship between you and your students?

33. What expectations do staff have about how students will do academically?

34. How would you characterize your site's approach to disciplining students?
    a. Do you feel it is fair?
    b. What steps are taken, if any, to insure consistency?

ii. Opportunities for Individual Student Attention/Feedback

1. What opportunities, if any, do you provide in your math/reading/science curriculum instruction for individual student attention/feedback?
    a. One-on-one tutoring
    b. Counseling issues
    c. Scheduled meetings w/students to discuss progress

VI. Outcomes

A. Areas of Student Impact

36. Do you keep track of student attendance at your site? Have there been any changes in attendance over time?

37. Do you track/measure student engagement over time? How has it changed, if at all?

38. What sort of data do you use to assess student achievement?

39. What changes, if any, have you noted in student achievement over time?

40. Are there any other ways that your students have been impacted by your site that we haven't discussed?

41. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about your site that I haven't asked?

Introduction
Evaluator: Pass out sign-in sheet, introduce yourself and the purpose of the visit to the school by saying:

My name is _____ and I work for the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) in the area of afterschool programs. The purpose of this study is to identify afterschool programs exhibiting the best instructional practices, and gather information about these sites. Your center has been selected for participation in this study because it has been identified as a best practices program. Site instructors from 12 centers are being asked to participate in interviews and focus groups to gather information about instructional practices and experiences with the selected afterschool programs.

Comments made by individual's will not be attributed to them and will be kept confidential.

I would like to tape-record the session to ensure that I do not miss any important information. The tape will be used to take notes from and transcribed for qualitative analyses. Does anyone object to the tape-recording?

I. Background (recorded info)

1. Let's go around the room, introduce ourselves, and if you will, please indicate the subject area you teach for this afterschool program and how long you been part of the program.

II. Research-based Design

A. Content Knowledge

2. Who here would say that they are familiar with Texas state standards in:
   - math?
   - reading?
   - science?

3. Would you say your site curriculum addresses those state standards? If so, how?

B. Teaching and Learning Methods

In this next set of questions, I want to understand more about your math, reading, and science instructional methods.

4. How do instructors at this site integrate homework help and/or tutoring into the math/reading/science curriculum?

5. Do any of you use grouping strategies? If so, how? (Note comments made about the following):
   - Small group instruction
   - Pairs work
   - Whole group instruction

6. How does the site's curriculum provide "real world" connections for students?

7. How is math/reading/science curricula linked to other content areas, such as social studies, art, physical education etc.?

8. What approaches are used to address different ability groups, such as ELL students?

9. What, if any, activities at your site focus on social development/non-academic outcomes (e.g., socialization, self-esteem)?

III. Internal Site Structure

A. Professional Development

10. Does your site offer professional development to staff and instructors?
    - If so, how many of you have attended professional development made available by your site?
    - Did you find them useful? How/why? If not, why not?

B. Decision-making

Now I want to learn more about how decisions about curriculum and instruction are made at the site.

11. Are decisions about curriculum and instruction made mostly by site coordinators?

12. What is the role of site instructors in site decision-making?

C. Adequacy of Space/Resources

13. What types of resources (e.g., supplies, texts, more staff, more physical space) does this afterschool program currently lack and need to be more effective with students?

D. Self-evaluative Structures (Organizational Efficiency)

14. What structures are in place to evaluate your afterschool program's success? Do you have a formal evaluation process? Informal?

IV. External Communication and Support

A. Level of Communication between ASP and Day School

15. How many of you communicate with the students' day school teachers?

16. What do you typically discuss with your students' day school teachers if you speak with them? (Note comments made about the following)
    - Student progress
    - Curriculum
    - Coordination of homework
    - Math/reading/science instruction

B. Parent Involvement

17. What opportunities are provided through your site for parents to be involved in your afterschool program? (Note comments made about the following):
    - Classes/enrichment opportunities
    - Volunteer opportunities
    - After school night
    - Giving feedback on curricular decision-making

V. Student/Adult Interaction

A. Relationships with Students

Now I want to learn more about student/adult interactions in this afterschool program.

18. How would you describe the relationship between afterschool staff and the students? (Note comments about academic expectations and discipline)

B. Opportunities for Individual Student Attention/Feedback

19. What structures are in place to provide individual student attention/feedback? (Make note of comments about the following):
    - One-on-one tutoring
    - Counseling issues
    - Scheduled meetings w/students to discuss progress

VI. Outcomes

A. Areas of Student Impact

20. Please describe ways that students have been impacted by your site that we haven't yet discussed. What changes have you noted in student achievement?

21. That concludes our focus group. Are there any additional comments you would like to share with me?

Appendix D. Survey Instruments

I am in Grade: _____ **Site ID:**

Texas 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs (CCLC)

Student Survey - (Elementary)

Please read each sentence and circle the word that describes your afterschool program best.

1.	In the afterschool program, I practice:			
	a. Math	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
	b. Reading	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
	c. Writing	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
	d. Science	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
2.	Grown ups in the afterschool program help me with my schoolwork or homework.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
3.	Students in the afterschool program help each other with schoolwork or homework.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
4.	Grown ups in the afterschool program teach me ways to help me study for tests.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
5.	I like going to the afterschool program.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
6.	I get along with the other kids at the afterschool program.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
7.	At the afterschool program, we can get into trouble for talking when we aren't supposed to.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
8.	I get to choose what I want to do in the afterschool program.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
9.	I like the activities at the afterschool program.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
10.	I get bored at the afterschool program.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
11.	The grown ups at the afterschool program listen to me when I have something important to say.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
12.	I get along with the grown ups at the afterschool program.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
13.	Other kids at the afterschool program tease me.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
14.	At the afterschool program, I have to do what's planned by the grown ups, no matter what.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
15.	My friends come to the afterschool program.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
16.	I feel safe when I am at the afterschool program.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
17.	I get to help other kids with their schoolwork or activities when I am at the afterschool program.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
18.	Grown ups at the afterschool program talk to me about my future.	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**

PLEASE TURN PAGE OVER →

In your afterschool program how often do you do the following things?

19.	Arts activities (dance, music, drama, drawing)	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
20.	Homework or schoolwork	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
21.	Sports or games	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**
22.	Other activities – What are they? _____ _____ _____	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Always**

The afterschool program has helped me to:

23.	Be a better reader	**No**	**Yes**	**Not Sure**
24.	Do better with math problems	**No**	**Yes**	**Not Sure**
25.	Finish my homework	**No**	**Yes**	**Not Sure**
26.	Know how to use computers to do homework or other schoolwork	**No**	**Yes**	**Not Sure**
27.	Make new friends	**No**	**Yes**	**Not Sure**
28.	Think more about what I want to do in the future	**No**	**Yes**	**Not Sure**

29. The afterschool program helps me to be a better student.

Yes **No**

30. Overall, how do you like the afterschool program?

- ❍ I really like the program – it's great.
- ❍ I sort of like the program – it's okay.
- ❍ I don't like the program at all – I wish I didn't have to come.

Thank You

I am in Grade _____ **Site ID:**

Texas 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs (CCLC)
Student Survey

(Middle/High School)

Please read each sentence and fill in the circle that best describes your Afterschool Program:

	Never	*Sometimes*	*Often*	*Always*
1. In the afterschool program, I get help from the staff with my schoolwork or homework.	❍	❍	❍	❍
2. Students in this program help each other with schoolwork or homework.	❍	❍	❍	❍
3. In the afterschool program, I am learning ways to help me study for tests.	❍	❍	❍	❍
4. I get a chance to do a lot of activities in this program that I don't usually get to do anywhere else.	❍	❍	❍	❍
5. Teachers and students treat each other with respect in this program.	❍	❍	❍	❍
6. The staff in this program encourage me to try new things.	❍	❍	❍	❍
7. I like the activities at the afterschool program.	❍	❍	❍	❍
8. I'm usually bored at the afterschool program.	❍	❍	❍	❍
9. The staff at the afterschool program listen to me when I have Something important to say.	❍	❍	❍	❍
10. There are too many rules in the afterschool program.	❍	❍	❍	❍
11. I get to work on projects here that really make me think.	❍	❍	❍	❍
12. I feel like my ideas count here.	❍	❍	❍	❍
13. In the afterschool program, I have to do what's planned, no matter what.	❍	❍	❍	❍
14. The afterschool program is a comfortable place to hang out.	❍	❍	❍	❍
15. Through the afterschool program, I can work on project in my community.	❍	❍	❍	❍
16. The afterschool program provides me with opportunities to be a leader.	❍	❍	❍	❍

In your afterschool program, how often have to participated in the following:

	Never	*Sometimes*	*Often*	*Always*
17. Homework help or tutoring	❍	❍	❍	❍
18. Reading activities (but not schoolwork related)	❍	❍	❍	❍
19. Math or science activities (but not schoolwork related)	❍	❍	❍	❍
20. Arts activities (e.g., dance, music, drama, painting)	❍	❍	❍	❍
21. Sports and/or games	❍	❍	❍	❍
	Never	*Sometimes*	*Often*	*Always*

Please Turn Over and Complete Survey Items on Back →

22.	Practicing to fill out job applications	❍	❍	❍	❍
23.	Listening to guest speakers on different types of careers	❍	❍	❍	❍
24.	College entrance exam practice tests	❍	❍	❍	❍
25.	Other activities – What are they?				
	_____	❍	❍	❍	❍
	_____	❍	❍	❍	❍
	_____	❍	❍	❍	❍

The afterschool program has helped me to:

		Yes	*No*	*Not Sure*			*Yes*	*No*	*Not Sure*
26.	Understand what I read better	❍	❍	❍	31.	Finish my homework	❍	❍	❍
27.	Feel more comfortable solving math problems	❍	❍	❍	32.	Make new friends	❍	❍	❍
28.	Use computers to do homework or other schoolwork	❍	❍	❍	33.	Think more about my future	❍	❍	❍
29.	Work together with other students	❍	❍	❍	34.	Feel more confident about my schoolwork	❍	❍	❍
30.	Learn about what kind of career I might want	❍	❍	❍					

What effects has attending the afterschool program had for you?

		Yes	*No*	*Not Sure*			*Yes*	*No*	*Not Sure*
35.	I am more interested in school	❍	❍	❍	40.	I try harder to solve problems with my schoolwork	❍	❍	❍
36.	I attend classes more frequently than I did before	❍	❍	❍	41.	I feel I'm a better student since I joined the afterschool program	❍	❍	❍
37.	I complete and turn in more assignments on time	❍	❍	❍	42.	I feel that there are people who care if I do well in	❍	❍	❍
38.	I pay better attention in class students	❍	❍	❍	43.	I work in my classes even if I don't like them	❍	❍	❍
39.	When I don't understand something, I ask teachers or other adults	❍	❍	❍	44.	I haven't changed much since attending the afterschool program	❍	❍	❍

45. Overall, how do you like the afterschool program?

- ❍ I really like the program – it's great
- ❍ I sort of like the program – it's okay
- ❍ I don't like the program at all – I wish I didn't have to come

Thank You

Site ID:

Centros Comunitarios de Aprendizaje para el Siglo 21
: Encuesta para los Padres

Para los siguientes conceptos, marque un círculo alrededor del número que mejor refleje su respuesta a cada expresión.

1. **En una escala del 1 al 10, donde 10 es la mejor puntuación, díganos qué piensa de los siguientes conceptos:**

	Nunca									**Siempre**
a. Siento que soy bienvenido al visitar a mi(s) hijo(s) en el programa extra-escolar cada vez que lo deseo.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b. Alguien está disponible para hablar conmigo en el programa extra-escolar si tengo preguntas o problemas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c. Me siento cómodo pidiéndole información a las personas que trabajan en el programa extra-escolar sobre lo que mi(s) hijo(s) aprende(n) ahí.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
d. El personal del programa extra-escolar me ayuda a entender los reportes de calificaciones y los papeles que recibo de la escuela de mi(s) hijo(s).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
e. El personal del programa extra-escolar me notificaría inmediatamente si mi(s) hijo(s) no presta(n) atención a sus deberes escolares.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
f. El personal del programa extra-escolar maneja los problemas de conducta de mi(s) hijo(s) de manera rápida y justa.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
g. El personal del programa extra-escolar trata a todos los estudiantes imparcialmente.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
h. Hay miembros del personal del programa que pueden hablar conmigo en mi idioma nativo.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
i. El personal del programa extra-escolar me sugiere formas de ayudar a mi(s) hijo(s) con sus tareas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. **¿Con qué frecuencia…:**

	Nunca	Una o dos veces al año	Una vez cada unos cuantos meses	Al menos una vez al mes	Más de una vez al mes
a. Visita usted el programa extra-escolar de su(s) hijo(s)?	1	2	3	4	5
b. Presta su ayuda en el programa extra-escolar de su(s) hijo(s)?	1	2	3	4	5
c. Recibe usted un boletín del programa extra-escolar?	1	2	3	4	5
d. El programa extra-escolar ofrece una noche para que los padres aprendan más sobre el trabajo de sus hijos?	1	2	3	4	5
e. Asiste usted a talleres o clases ofrecidas por el programa extra-escolar?	1	2	3	4	5

3. Díganos aproximadamente con qué frecuencia ocurre lo siguiente en el programa extra-escolar de su hijo(a):

	Nunca	Una o dos veces al año	Una vez cada unos cuantos meses	Al menos una vez al mes
a. Alguien del programa extra-escolar me explica las reglas del programa relativas a cómo debe(n) comportarse mi(s) hijo(s) .	1	2	3	4
b. Alguien del programa extra-escolar me habla sobre los cambios en la enseñanza que recibe(n) mi(s) hijo(s).	1	2	3	4
c. El programa extra-escolar me invita a participar voluntariamente en las actividades del programa.	1	2	3	4
d. El programa extra-escolar me envía boletines o información en mi idioma nativo.	1	2	3	4

4. ¿Desde que su(s) hijo(s) asiste(n) a las actividades de lectura del programa extra-escolar, ha observado usted algún cambio en su:

		Disminuido	No hay cambio	Un poco mejor	Algo mejor	Mucho mejor	No estoy seguro
a.	Habilidad para ciencia?	1	2	3	4	5	6
b.	Habilidad para las matematicas?	1	2	3	4	5	6
c.	Habilidad para leer?	1	2	3	4	5	6
d.	Habilidad para escribir?	1	2	3	4	5	6
e.	Interés en la ciencia?	1	2	3	4	5	6
f.	Interés en las matematicas?	1	2	3	4	5	6
g.	Interés en la lectura?	1	2	3	4	5	6
h.	Interés en la escritura?	1	2	3	4	5	6
i.	Interés en sus trabajos escolares en general?	1	2	3	4	5	6
j.	Hábito de terminar la tarea a tiempo?	1	2	3	4	5	6

5. ¿Cuál satisfecho está usted con las siguientes partes del programa extra-escolar de su(s) hijo(s)?

		No sé	Muy insatisfecho								Muy satisfecho
a.	El tipo de actividades que ofrecen.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b.	El desempeño del personal del programa extra-escolar en general.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c.	Lo que aprende(n) mi(s) hijo(s) en el programa extra-escolar.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
d.	Los materiales y recursos que proporciona el programa a los padres (talleres, boletines, noches para los padres).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Site ID:

Texas 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs (CCLC)
Parent Survey

For the items below, please circle the number that best reflects your response to each statement.

2. On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the best, please let us know how you feel about the statements below:

		Never									Always
a.	I feel welcome to visit my child's afterschool program any time I want.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b.	Someone is available to talk to me at the afterschool program when I have any questions or concerns.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c.	I feel comfortable asking the people who work at the afterschool program what my child is learning there.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
d.	The afterschool program staff helps me understand the report cards and paperwork I get from my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
e.	The afterschool program staff will let me know immediately if my child is not paying attention to his/her schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
f.	The afterschool program staff deal with my child's behavior problems quickly and fairly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
g.	The afterschool program staff is fair to all students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
h.	There are program staff available who can speak with me in my home language.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
i.	The afterschool program staff show me ways I can help my child with his/her homework.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6. How often:

	Never	Once or twice a year	Once every few months	At least once a month	More than once a month
a. Do you visit your child's afterschool program?	1	2	3	4	5
b. Do you help out in your child's afterschool program?	1	2	3	4	5
c. Do you receive a newsletter from the afterschool program?	1	2	3	4	5
d. Does the afterschool program offer a parents night for you to learn more about your child's work?	1	2	3	4	5
e. Do you attend parent workshops or classes offered by the afterschool program?	1	2	3	4	5

7. Please estimate how often the following happens at your child's afterschool program:

	Never	Once or twice a year	Once every few months	At least once a month
a. Someone at the afterschool program explains to me the program's rules for how my child should behave.	1	2	3	4
b. Someone at the afterschool program tells me about changes in what they are teaching my child.	1	2	3	4
c. The afterschool program invites me to volunteer in the program.	1	2	3	4
d. The afterschool program sends me handouts/information in my home language.	1	2	3	4

8. Since your child started attending the activities in the afterschool program, have you noticed a change in his/her:

		Decreased	No change	Improved a little	Improved somewhat	Improved a lot	Not sure
a.	Science skills?	1	2	3	4	5	6
b.	Math skills?	1	2	3	4	5	6
c.	Reading skills?	1	2	3	4	5	6
d.	Writing skills?	1	2	3	4	5	6
e.	Interest in science?	1	2	3	4	5	6
f.	Interest in math?	1	2	3	4	5	6
g.	Interest in reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6
h.	Interest in writing?	1	2	3	4	5	6
i.	Interest in his/her schoolwork in general?	1	2	3	4	5	6
j.	Finishing of homework on time?	1	2	3	4	5	6

9. How happy are you with the following parts of your child's afterschool program?

		Don't know	Very unhappy								Very happy
a.	The kinds of activities offered.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b.	The overall performance of the afterschool staff.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c.	What my child learns in the afterschool program.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
d.	The materials and resources that the program provides for parents (e.g., workshops, newsletters, parents' nights).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Texas 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs (CCLC)
Program Staff Survey

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1. What is your role in the 21st CCLC afterschool program? (Please check one)

○	Site Coordinator
○	Instructor
○	Partner Organization Staff
○	Counselor
○	Regular Volunteer
○	Other

2. What content area do you work with in the afterschool program? (Check all that apply)

○	Reading
○	Math
○	Science
○	Arts
○	Social Studies/History
○	Other

3. What is the highest level of education that you have completed, and any other credentials you may have (multiple responses are possible):

○	Currently in high school
○	High school graduate/GED
○	Associate's degree
○	Bachelor's degree
○	Master's degree
○	Doctoral degree
○	Teaching credential
○	CLAD
○	BCLAD
○	Counseling certification
○	Other

For the items below, please circle the number that best reflects your response to each statement.

4. How long have you:		**Less than 1 Year**	**A year**	**1-3 Years**	**4-7 Years**	**More than 7 Years**	**Not Applicable**
a.	been working at your current afterschool site?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
b.	been involved in reading practices at your current afterschool site?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
c.	been involved in math practices at your current afterschool site?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
d.	been involved in science practices at your current afterschool site?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
e.	been working in afterschool programs in general?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
f.	been teaching either as an afterschool instructor or a day school teacher?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪

5. During the past year, how often:		Never	Once	2-3 Times	4 or More Times	Don't Know
a.	has your afterschool site offered professional development/training for staff?	①	②	③	④	⓪
b.	have you participated in professional development/training through your afterschool program?	①	②	③	④	⓪

If you have participated in professional development/training, what subject area(s) did it cover (e.g., math, reading, arts, etc.)?

_____

_____

_____

6. Which of the following professional development topics did you learn about this year through your afterschool program? (Please check all that apply)

○	Connecting afterschool learning with day school curriculum
○	Applying state standards to afterschool curriculum/practices
○	Helping students with reading
○	Helping students with math
○	Evaluating the afterschool program (self-evaluation)
○	Working with English language learners (students who do not speak English as their first language)
○	Assessment
○	Other
○	No professional development was offered

7. Please check the top three areas in which you would like further professional development:

○	Connecting afterschool learning with day school curriculum
○	Applying state standards to afterschool curriculum/practices
○	Helping students with reading
○	Helping students with math
○	Evaluating the afterschool program (self-evaluation)
○	Working with English language learners (students who do not speak English as their first language)
○	Assessment
○	Other

8. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:		Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
a.	I have experienced working with diverse student populations.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
b.	I am familiar with the state standards.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
c.	On a week-to-week basis, I know what content will be covered during the school day at my students' schools.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
d.	I consider/use assessment data from students' day school to plan my work with students.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
e.	I know whom to contact at my students' day schools if I have a questions about their progress or status.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
f.	I coordinate my afterschool practices with my students' day school homework.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
g.	I use my students' day school textbooks as part of my afterschool practices on a regular basis.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
h.	I go over my students' day school homework with them on a daily basis.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪

9. Are there specific staff members who are in charge of coordinating communication between the afterschool program and the students' day schools?

○ Yes ○ No ○ Don't know

10. On average, how often during a given semester do you:		Never	Less than once per month	Once per month	Twice per month	More than twice per month
a.	speak with your students' day school teachers to coordinate curriculum?	①	②	③	④	⑤
b.	speak with your students' day school teachers regarding homework in general?	①	②	③	④	⑤
c.	speak with your students' day school teachers specifically regarding instructional issues?	①	②	③	④	⑤

11. Do you have designated times set aside to meet with parents of your afterschool students?

○ Yes ○ No ○ Don't know

12. On average, how often do you meet with the parents of your afterschool students?

Never	Less than once per month	Once per month	Twice per month	More than twice per month
○	○	○	○	○

13. On average, percentage of parents do you meet with at your afterschool site over the course of a semester?

○	None
○	Fewer than 10%
○	11-25%
○	26-50%
○	51-75%
○	76% or more
○	Don't know/Unsure

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14. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your afterschool site:		**Strongly Disagree**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**Strongly Agree**	**Not Applicable**
a.	Students understand the standards for behavior.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
b.	The site addresses student behavioral issues in a timely and consistent manner.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
c.	The staff have a voice in decisions about curriculum and instruction.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
d.	Staff may take an active role in leadership and decision-making.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
e.	I regularly adjust my afterschool program practices based on data about student learning (e.g., test results, student work).	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
f.	Staff meet with each other on a regular basis to review data on student learning (e.g., test result, student work).	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
g.	The afterschool staff receive adequate support from our supervisors.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪
h.	An adequate selection of texts are available for instruction.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⓪

15. How often do you use the following types of practices as part of your afterschool program?		Never	Less than once per month	Once per month	Once per week	More than once per week
a.	Service learning practices (linking instruction to community service).	①	②	③	④	⑤
b.	Project-based learning practices (having students work on projects spanning several days).	①	②	③	④	⑤
c.	Tutoring and homework help.	①	②	③	④	⑤
d.	Use of learning centers/center-based practices.	①	②	③	④	⑤
e.	Integrating content instruction with other disciplines (e.g., reading with art, science with technology)	①	②	③	④	⑤
f.	Provide direct feedback to individual students about progress.	①	②	③	④	⑤
g.	Having students work in smaller groups or teams.	①	②	③	④	⑤
h.	Individualized instruction (e.g., one-on-one tutoring, peer support, computer-assisted instruction).	①	②	③	④	⑤
i.	Work with the students as one large group.	①	②	③	④	⑤
j.	Provide additional support for students who do not speak English as their first language (English learners).	①	②	③	④	⑤
k.	Let students know your expectations and criteria for their afterschool assignments.	①	②	③	④	⑤
l.	Provide different types of instruction to students based on the ability level.	①	②	③	④	⑤

16. How often, as part of your afterschool program's ***reading*** instruction, do you assess student progress with:		Never	Less than once per month	Once per month	Once per week	More than once per week
a.	Formal tests/quizzes	①	②	③	④	⑤
b.	Informal observation	①	②	③	④	⑤
c.	Spot-checking student work for understanding	①	②	③	④	⑤

17. How often, as part of your afterschool program's ***math*** instruction, do you assess student progress with:		Never	Less than once per month	Once per month	Once per week	More than once per week
a.	Formal tests/quizzes	①	②	③	④	⑤
b.	Informal observation	①	②	③	④	⑤
c.	Spot-checking student work for understanding	①	②	③	④	⑤

18. How often, as part of your afterschool program's *science* instruction, do you assess student progress with:		Never	Less than once per month	Once per month	Once per week	More than once per week
a.	Formal tests/quizzes	①	②	③	④	⑤
b.	Informal observation	①	②	③	④	⑤
c.	Spot-checking student work for understanding	①	②	③	④	⑤

The following questions ask about the methods and concepts you engage in as part of your work in the afterschool program related to reading, math, and science instruction.

19. I currently focus on *reading* content in the afterschool program:

○ Yes ○ No

If you answered "NO" above, please skip questions 20 and 21, and go on to question 22.

20. How frequently do you engage in the following reading practices as part of your afterschool program?

Reading Practices		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
a.	Including nonfiction text in instruction	①	②	③	④	⑤
b.	Using reading centers	①	②	③	④	⑤
c.	Using writing centers	①	②	③	④	⑤
d.	Using fluency-building centers	①	②	③	④	⑤
e.	Having students practice independent reading (e.g., computer or tape assisted)	①	②	③	④	⑤
f.	Providing opportunities for read-aloud	①	②	③	④	⑤
g.	Providing opportunities for students to link personal experiences with stories	①	②	③	④	⑤
h.	Adding to a "bank" of vocabulary words	①	②	③	④	⑤

The following items are divided by grade levels – K-2, 3-5/6, and 6 and above. Please answer the section(s) that relate(s) to the reading instruction that you provide in the afterschool program.

21. How frequently do you cover the following reading concepts as part of your afterschool reading program?

Reading Concepts		Never	Once a year	Once every few months	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Reading – Grades K-2 (If you do not currently instruct students at this grade level, please leave this section blank and go to the next section)							
a.	Print representation of spoken language (e.g., understanding that print represents spoken words)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
b.	Recognizing common text features such as headings, key words, illustrations, maps, charts	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
c.	Demonstrating awareness of sound-symbol relationships	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
d.	Understanding alphabetic principles (that each letter represents a sound)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
e.	Applying decoding to comprehend text (e.g., breaking apart words to understand meaning)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
f.	Reading silently or aloud with fluency (smoothly and easily)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
g.	Self-monitoring/self-correcting reading	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
h.	Vocabulary development	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
i.	Identifying literary devices (e.g., simile, metaphor)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
j.	Understanding antonyms/synonyms	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Reading Concepts		Never	Once a year	Once every few months	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Reading – Grades 3-5/6 (If you do not currently instruct students at this grade level, please leave this section blank and go to the next section)							
a.	Using glossaries, table of contents, chapter headings, and indexes to locate information	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
b.	Applying phonetic strategies (e.g., breaking words into sounds) to make meaning from text	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
c.	Applying decoding to comprehend text (e.g., breaking words apart to understand meaning)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
d.	Developing pre-reading strategies	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
e.	Understanding textual features (e.g., tables, graphs, lists)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
f.	Understanding prefixes, suffixes, and affixes	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
g.	Using pictures and context cues to understand meanings of words	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

Reading Concepts		Never	Once a year	Once every few months	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
h.	Identifying homophones and homographs	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
i.	Understanding story components (such as setting, characters, plot)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
j.	Self-monitoring for comprehension	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
k.	Making inferences using evidence	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
l.	Reading a variety of literary genres (e.g., short stories, fiction, nonfiction, mythology)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
m.	Researching topics using a variety of materials	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Reading Concepts		Never	Once a year	Once every few months	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Reading – Grades 6 and above (If you do not currently instruct students at this grade level, please leave this section blank and go to the next question)							
a.	Using text features such as lists, indices, headings	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
b.	Identifying/using text organizational structures (e.g., arrangement, order) to gain meaning from text	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
c.	Applying self-correcting strategies to decode text.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
d.	Making predictions/drawing conclusions	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
e.	Self-monitoring for reading	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
f.	Vocabulary development	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
g.	Identifying figurative and literary devices (e.g., metaphor, simile)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
h.	Analyzing the purpose of different literary texts	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
i.	Understanding literary techniques (such as foreshadowing)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
j.	Developing and investigating research questions	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
k.	Producing book reports or other written projects	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

22. I currently focus on *math* content in the afterschool program:

○ Yes ○ No

If you answered "NO" above, please skip questions 23 and 24, and go on to question 25.

23. How frequently do you engage in the following math practices as part of your afterschool program?

Math Practices		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
a.	Use of mathematical tools (e.g., manipulatives, calculators, computer-based tools)	①	②	③	④	⑤
b.	Providing specific instruction on how to solve math problems	①	②	③	④	⑤
c.	Providing unstructured opportunities for students to investigate and explore their ideas about math on their own.=	①	②	③	④	⑤
d.	Asking students to solve "real world" problems	①	②	③	④	⑤
e.	Having students provide written justification for their work	①	②	③	④	⑤
f.	Having students actively participate in hypothesis testing	①	②	③	④	⑤

The following items are divided by grade levels – 3-5/6, and 6 and above. Please answer the section(s) that relate(s) to the math instruction that you provide in the afterschool program.

24. How frequently do you cover the following math concepts as part of your afterschool program?

Math Concepts		Never	Once a year	Once every few months	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Math – Grades 3-5/6 (If you do not currently instruct students at this grade level, please leave this section blank and go to the next section)							
a.	Understanding/application of fractions, decimals, percentages	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
b.	Multiplication and division	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
c.	Understanding of patterns (using numbers or shapes)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
d.	Using equations to express relationships between numbers	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
e.	Using graphs, tables, or other graphic representations	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
f.	Working with 2- and 3-dimensional shapes	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
g.	Basic measurement (length, area, weight, volume)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
h.	Designing studies and collecting data	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Math Concepts		Never	Once a year	Once every few months	Monthly	Weekly	Daily

Math Concepts		Never	Once a year	Once every few months	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Math – Grades 6 and above (If you do not currently instruct students at this grade level, please leave this section blank and go to the next question)							
a.	Using fractions, decimals, and percentages	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
b.	Using ratios and proportions	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
c.	Using tables or graphs to represent/analyze problems	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
d.	Understanding/applying basic geometric concepts such as angles, side length, perimeter, area	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
e.	Formulas for areas of more complex shapes (e.g., triangles, parallelograms, trapezoids, circles, pyramids, cylinders)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
f.	Problem solving using equations	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
g.	Designing small research studies	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
h.	Understanding/applying mean, range, and median	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
i.	Representing data in charts, such as histograms, scatter plots, or box plots	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

25. I currently focus on *science* content in the afterschool program:

○ Yes ○ No

If you answered "NO" above, please skip questions 26 and 27.

26. How frequently do you engage in the following science practices as part of your afterschool program?

Science Practices		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
a.	Conducting simple experiments	①	②	③	④	⑤
b.	Designing a scientific investigation	①	②	③	④	⑤
c.	Using tools to gather/analyze/interpret data	①	②	③	④	⑤
d.	Developing predictions/explanations/models using evidence	①	②	③	④	⑤
e.	Describing scientific procedures	①	②	③	④	⑤
f.	Using computer simulations of science experiments	①	②	③	④	⑤

27. **How frequently do you cover the following math concepts as part of your afterschool program?**

Science Concepts		Never	Once a year	Once every few months	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
a.	Understanding of concepts of scientific inquiry	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
b.	Properties, position, and motion of objects and materials	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
c.	Light, heat, electricity, and magnetism	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
d.	Characteristics and lifecycles of organisms and environment	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
e.	Position and motion of objects	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
f.	Objects and changes in earth and sky	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
g.	Understanding of science/technology	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
h.	Personal health and nutrition	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
i.	Characteristics/changes in populations and environments	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
j.	Properties/changes of properties in matter	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
k.	Motions and forces	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
l.	Transfer of energy	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
m.	Structure/function of living systems	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
n.	Reproduction and heredity	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
o.	Regulation and behavior	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
p.	Populations and ecosystems	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
q.	Diversity and adaptations of organisms	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
r.	Structure of the earth's system/the earth in the solar system	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
s.	Populations, resources, and environments	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
t.	Natural hazards, risks, and benefits	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
u.	History of nature and science	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

Thank You
for Your Time
in Completing this Survey