

THE EVALUATION OF TEXAS 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER PROJECTS

COMMON FEATURES OF PROMISING AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IN TEXAS



CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS REPORT



EVALUATION SERVICES

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LEARNING CENTER PROJECTS**

**Common Features of Promising Afterschool Programs in Texas
Cross-Case Analysis Report**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2003, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) awarded 21st Century Community Learning Center (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).

To determine the sample for the study, SEDL identified 12 “promising” grantees based on expert recommendations, annual performance report (APR) data, and student performance data associated with projects. During the spring of 2006, SEDL’s National Partnership staff visited 1–2 centers for each grantee 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 the site-visit summary reports and related survey results, SEDL evaluation staff developed case profiles that summarized each grantee’s afterschool program. SEDL’s evaluation approach and the resulting 12 case profiles were described and presented in a report titled *The Evaluation of Texas 21st Century Community Learning Center Projects: Case Study Report* (SEDL, 2006).

This report summarizes findings from SEDL’s cross-case analyses of interview, focus group, APR, and survey data gathered for the study. 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. The evaluation team identified common characteristics across the *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*). This evaluation, therefore, was at the center-site level looking at programmatic activities and results are reported in terms of common characteristics of *afterschool programs* observed at the center sites of the identified, promising grantees.

Across the promising grantees, evaluators found common characteristics in terms of program structure and process, academic opportunities, and support systems. These include the following:

- 1. Strong leadership with shared decision making:** All of the afterschool programs observed for this study used a decision-making process that was collaborative and shared, involving people who play multiple roles with the program. Site coordinators played a key role in the decision-making structure and generally had a fair amount of autonomy in designing and overseeing center sites to meet local needs. Curricular decisions routinely relied on input from instructional staff. Finally, principals were reportedly included in the decision-making process by most, if not all, of the grantees.
- 2. Strong relationships with their corresponding day schools:** All of the observed afterschool programs maintained very close ties with their day school counterparts. Several factors were especially important across the all programs in achieving successful bridging between the two. First, day school and afterschool centers frequently shared common staff. Second, strong ties between day and afterschool programs were maintained through an intentional alignment of goals and curriculum. Finally, because the afterschool curriculum was aligned with day school curriculum, the majority of it was reported to be, or assumed to be, standards-based.
- 3. A variety of academic and enrichment instructional practices:** In these programs, academic assistance focused primarily on reading and math, with a secondary emphasis on science learning. The majority of the observed programs offered homework help or tutoring followed by academic instruction and enrichment opportunities. Some had set days for content instruction and others designated hours per day. Many programs emphasized a balance of academic, enrichment, and social development instruction within most of their activities. Common instructional practices observed across all of the grantee centers highlighted the use of engaging students through hands-on learning experiences, purposeful pairings of students, and integrating content learning with other academic disciplines, with “real world” experiences, and with activities designed to engage students in fun and interesting ways.
- 4. Positive, engaging afterschool climate with strong staff, student, and parent relationships:** A striking feature among the programs was that all appeared to be successful in creating a positive, engaging afterschool climate. The context in which afterschool activities occurred at all centers was consistently described using terms such as “supportive,” “relaxed,” “caring,” “respectful,” “safe,” “positive,” and “nurturing.” Relationships between staff and students at all of the center sites were very positive. Afterschool teachers reported having more personal and casual relations with students than was possible in day school classes. Students were observed interacting very comfortably with staff about both classroom-related and personal issues.
- 5. Strong community connections and partnerships:** The majority of grantees used a combination of day school teachers who are generally responsible for academic instruction and college students or community members who tend to oversee homework

assistance, tutoring, and the enrichment activities. In several cases, the afterschool programs partnered with community-based organizations and relied on the support of volunteers to provide components of the afterschool programs. Community partners for the observed grantees included local Boys and Girls Clubs, the YMCA, parks and recreation departments, chapters of the Texas Council for Drug and Alcohol Abuse, universities, church groups, and businesses. In some cases, grantees have established advisory boards to keep parents and the community involved in planning and decision making.

6. **Strategies for parental engagement and awareness:** Many of the programs provided parents with opportunities for meaningful engagement with the afterschool program. Although parental volunteerism was reportedly low across all of the observed centers, many programs implemented strategies to keep parents informed of, aware of, and interacting with the afterschool activities. For the most part, communications with parents occurred daily when they arrived to pick up their children from the afterschool center. Parental communications also occurred by telephone and through newsletters. The majority of programs provided parents with weekly or monthly newsletters and invited parents to attend special events. In some cases, parent education classes were offered in English as a Second Language (ESL) and technology.
7. **Internal or external processes to gather evaluation data:** All of the programs had some sort of structure in place for collecting evaluation data. Enrollment and attendance were monitored at every center site for the purposes of grant reporting and program planning. Some programs surveyed parents and teachers for satisfaction and interest in enrichment topics. External evaluations were reportedly occurring by four of the grantees using independent consultants or school district evaluators. However, details about these evaluations and their results were not well-known.

Overall, the cross-case analysis yielded results that suggest that common practices across afterschool programs included strong leadership that relies on shared or collaborative input from staff, the inclusion of community members and organizations in providing program activities, and concerted efforts to keep parents informed of program offerings and students' progress. Furthermore, both staff and students reported the blending of academic, enrichment, and recreational activities as providing learning opportunities in ways that are fun and engaging for students. This is achieved, in part, through the positive and more casual relationships between staff and students in the afterschool programs.

Although SEDL's evaluation was not designed to contrast the features of high-performing programs with features of typical or low-performing programs, the common characteristics identified and presented in this report are viewed to be consistent with promising practices identified through other research efforts nationally. These study findings can serve as a guide to new and struggling afterschool programs about features that may be most important when developing or refining an afterschool program. Further research, however, is needed to illuminate the particular practices and approaches adopted by those afterschool programs that achieve the greatest developmental gains for students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SEDL would like to acknowledge the staff and students of the afterschool programs that participated in this study. These programs are part of the Amarillo Independent School District, Austin Independent School District, Center Independent School District, Houston Independent School District, Hughes Springs Independent School District, the IDEA Academy, Kermit Independent School District, Lubbock-Cooper Consolidated Independent School District, Mason Independent School District, Mercedes Independent School District, Northside Independent School District, Round Rock Independent School District, and Temple Independent School District. We would like to thank the staff, students, and parents for their time in completing surveys and talking to us about their afterschool programs.

SEDL's 21st CCLC evaluation team (Melissa Dodson, Erin McCann, and Sue Street) would like to recognize the work of David Stamman, Pamela Romero, and Martha Perez from Academic Information Management (AIM) in conducting the site selection component of the study methodology. Furthermore, the evaluation team would like to thank the National Partnership staff at SEDL who completed site visits for the study. The site visit team consisted of Deborah Donnelly, Marilyn Heath, Joe Parker, Maggie Meyers, and Zena Rudo. In addition, a special thanks goes to Nance Bell from Applied Research Solutions (ARS) for her assistance with the case study and cross-case analyses. Finally, SEDL needs to recognize the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) at the University of California, Los Angeles for permitting the use of the surveys and interview protocols they designed for the National Partnership study. In particular, SEDL would like to thank CRESST researchers Denise Huang and LeeAnn Trusela for their assistance coding the interview and focus group transcripts for the Texas study.

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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 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 programs across Texas and to examine common characteristics across the programs. 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).

The National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning

The National Partnership is a 5-year initiative funded by the USDE 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 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 identified 12 “promising” grantees based on expert recommendations, annual performance report (APR) data, and student performance data associated with the projects. The National Partnership’s experienced staff and consultants conducted site visits to 1–2 centers funded by each grantee to collect data using validated site-visit protocols, interview guides, and surveys. Finally, SEDL subcontracted CRESST to revise qualitative coding schemes used by the National Partnership to code and analyze transcript data collected through interviews and focus groups.

This report summarizes findings from SEDL’s cross-case analyses of interview, focus group, APR, and survey data gathered for the study. 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. The evaluation team identified common characteristics across the *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*). This evaluation, therefore, was at the center-site level looking at programmatic activities and results are reported in terms of common characteristics of *afterschool programs* observed at the center sites of the identified, promising grantees.

STUDY OVERVIEW

The purpose of SEDL’s evaluation was to identify and examine common program practices used by a sample of 12 of the most promising second-year 21st CCLCs in Texas. SEDL identified 12 “promising” grantees based on expert recommendations, APR data, and student performance data associated with the programs. During the spring of 2006, SEDL’s National Partnership staff visited 1–2 centers for each of 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 the site-visit summary reports and related survey results, SEDL evaluation staff developed case profiles and conducted cross-case analyses of the grantees. The methods and the resulting 12 case studies were described in detail in a report titled *The Evaluation of Texas 21st Century Community Learning Center Projects: Case Study Report* (SEDL, 2006). The following section presents a brief overview of the site selection process, the site visits, and case profile analyses followed by the methods specifically related to the cross-case analyses.

Selection of Promising Programs

In order to examine common characteristics of promising 21st CCLCs, SEDL subcontracted with AIM to conduct a multipart selection process to identify 12 of the most promising second-year 21st CCLC grantees in Texas. 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

Once the phone interviews were completed, the evaluation team met to select the final set for presentation to and approval by TEA. Table 1 below presents the grantees and demographic information for the 12 afterschool sites that were examined and profiled for the evaluation.

Table 1. 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	mid/high
3	Center ISD	7	27.6	25.0	62.1	2,485	elem/mid
4	Houston ISD	4	29.1	59.0	82.8	208,454	elem/mid
5	IDEA Academy	1	0.3	93.9	80.1	659	mid
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/mid
9	Mercedes ISD	1	0.3	99.0	91.8	5,336	jh/alt/high
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/mid
12	Temple ISD	12	29.3	29.8	55.9	8,105	elem

Source: Annual Performance Reports, Texas Education Agency

To validate the selection and screening process, an additional nine grantees that did not meet the initial selection criteria were added to the pool of telephone interviews. To avoid potential bias during the telephone interviews, the interviewers were unaware of or “blind” about which grantees met or did not meet the selection process. The results of these interviews were then compared to those found in the selected grantees to help ensure validation of the selection process. None of the randomly selected grantees 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 phone screening.

The selection process included alternate grantees to use as potential replacements for those that could not be visited due to scheduling conflicts. 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 SEDL’s case study report. However, the data collected at Hughes Springs were transcribed and contribute to the findings presented in this cross-case analysis report.

Site Visits to Promising Programs

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

presents the centers that received site visits for each grantee. Twenty-one center-sites were visited, and a total of 56 interviews and focus groups were conducted for the study.

Table 2. 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	Reagan High
3	Center ISD	Center Elementary	Center Intermediate
4	Houston ISD	Las Americas Middle	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
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 through observations, interviews, and focus groups included the following:

- General background information on 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)

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. The surveys were modified versions of the CRESST instruments used in the National Partnership study.

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).

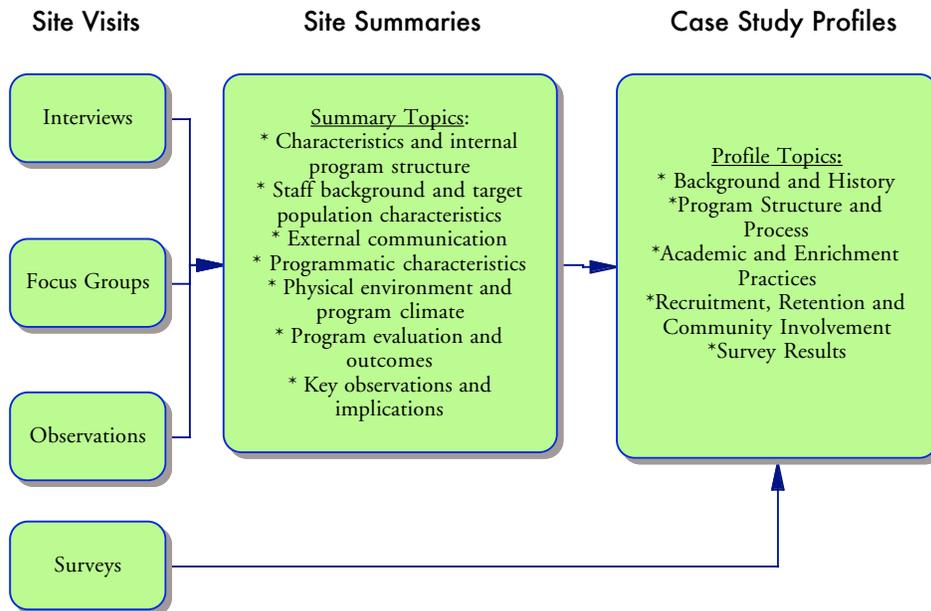
A total of 905 students completed program participant surveys (19% response rate), which focused on the amount of time students spend in the afterschool program; the types of activities they participate in; their perceptions of the afterschool program and staff; and academic and/or personal impacts they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

Case Study Profiles

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 1 below describes the data sources for developing the case profiles.

Figure 1. Data sources for case study profiles.

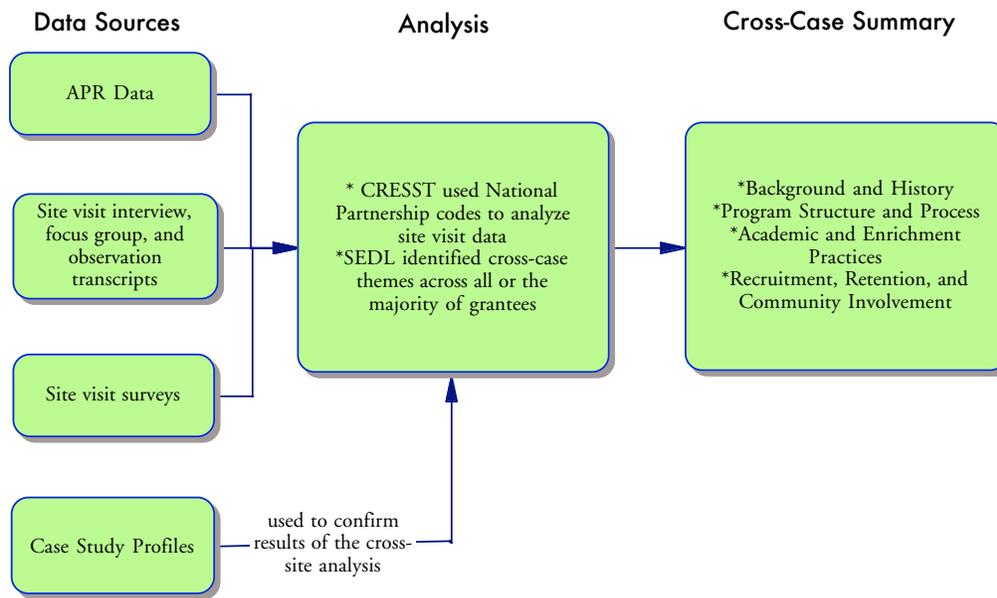


The 12 case profiles were presented in SEDL's report titled *The Evaluation of Texas 21st Century Community Learning Center Projects: Case Study Report* (SEDL, 2006). The case profiles were used to validate cross-case analyses described below.

Cross-Case Analysis

The cross-case analysis relied on the analytical strategy of interpreting and summarizing the data gathered through interviews, surveys, and annual performance reports for each grantee. The process for analyzing and summarizing data across all 12 grantees is presented in Figure 2 and described below.

Figure 2. Cross-Case Analysis Procedures



Coding of Interviews and Focus Groups

After taped interviews were transcribed, CRESST researchers developed codes and subcodes based on the coding schemes used in the National Partnership study and revised them to reflect evaluation questions related to the Texas study. The coding process began with a review of the transcriptions and the development of an initial code set that reflected salient concepts and common responses across programs and interviewees. CRESST researchers then used the initial code set to qualitatively analyze a small subset of interviews. Upon completion of these tasks, the team condensed the initial codes and developed additional codes that more accurately reflected the data. To establish inter-rater reliability, the team initially coded an extensive sample of interviews as a group and then individually coded the interview transcripts. After coding was completed, CRESST reviewed the individually coded transcriptions and established final reliability through consensus.

In the end, a total of 23 categories of codes and subcodes were identified to capture data targeted by the interview and focus group protocols used in the Texas study (see Appendix A for the CRESST code schemes). Example codes include the following:

- ☐ Community Connections
- ☐ Connections to Day School

- Decision Making
- Parent Involvement
- Professional Development
- Scheduling
- Staff-Student Relationships
- Staffing
- Teaching and Learning Methods

The Atlas.ti statistical software package was used to code all interviews. Quotations or text relevant to the study were organized by the 23 categories and subcodes. Frequency tables with data output identified response frequencies for each interviewee and were provided to SEDL evaluators in Word format for further analysis.

Cross-Case Analyses

The goal of the cross-case analysis was to summarize and interpret the data gathered across all the grantees through interviews, focus groups, surveys, and annual performance reports. After reviewing the amount, quality, and reliability of the various data sources, SEDL developed a data analysis plan that identified the primary and secondary sources of data organized by the 23 code categories (see Appendix B). Common characteristics were first identified through analyses of the primary sources. Secondary sources of data served to either confirm or contradict findings identified by the primary sources. For example, findings related to program structure and processes were identified through analyses of project director and site coordinator interviews and confirmed by staff responses to survey items. Findings related to teaching practices were identified through analyses of instructor responses to items about teaching practices on the staff survey and confirmed by coded comments from instructor interviews and focus groups.

For the purpose of reporting, findings were categorized into the following two areas of common characteristics:

- **Shared Features:** Features identified and confirmed by primary sources and secondary sources to exist across at least 12 of the 13 grantees (including Hughes Springs)
- **Notable Features:** Features shared by the majority of grantees but not identified and confirmed to exist in all grantees

This report highlights the features that were identified to be present in *all* or the *majority* of afterschool programs implemented by grantee center-sites. It is frequently the case that grantees and their center sites varied in the degree and ways with which each feature was implemented. Because of this, the report combines the discussion of these factors into one section of common characteristics but distinguishes between features that are found in all of the grantees versus features found in the majority of them.

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

The 21st CCLC grantees examined for this study cover a cross-section of the state and include a variety of program styles and foci. All of the programs observed for this study were Cycle 2 or Cycle 3 projects that had been operational for at least 1.5 to 2 years when data were collected. All of the programs served ethnically diverse populations comprising primarily lower-income students. Furthermore, all the programs served students with limited English proficiency (LEP). The size of the LEP student population ranged between 4 and 200 students across the observed center sites. Finally, all of the programs had strong academic goals in math and reading, including improving math and reading skills, bringing students to grade level, and developing an interest in math and reading. The centers observed during site visits served between 100–600 students each semester and were meeting enrollment targets as evidenced by waiting lists.

SEDL’s cross-case analysis identified several common characteristics across the promising grantees in terms of program structure and process, academic practices, and relationship building.

Strong Leadership With Shared Decision Making

While the decision-making structures developed by specific grantees varied somewhat, the common feature within all of their programs is that decision making is generally collaborative and shared, involving people who play multiple roles within the program. The most common leadership positions are project director (at the district level) and site coordinator (at the center site level), and individuals in these positions routinely rely on input from instructional staff in making decisions. There are additional levels of management among some of the larger centers. For instance, a center located in a large urban district has a project director, regional managers (who oversee up to five centers), site coordinators, and a steering committee at each center to make curriculum decisions. Other centers have representatives from collaborating partner organizations built into their decision-making structure. However, even in these more complex configurations, there is a priority placed on staff input and leadership.

Plan, plan, plan, plan,
plan. And just talk. Talk to
everybody. Talk to
everybody that’s involved,
and look for a solution.
--Site Coordinator,
Mercedes ISD

A few project directors take a more involved, hands-on approach (e.g., conducting routine observations in center classrooms), but the day-to-day decisions at specific center sites are most often the responsibility of site coordinators. This is a key position in the decision-making structure for most grantees. Site coordinators generally have a fair amount of autonomy (within the overall requirements of the grants) in designing and overseeing center sites to meet local needs and serve an important role in facilitating communication between people at all levels in grantee organizations. Respondents frequently used the phrase “site-based decision making” to describe the process used in their afterschool programs. In one center, the site coordinators were the principals at the schools that hosted the afterschool program. This was not a common

arrangement, but principals were reportedly included in the decision-making process by most, if not all, of the grantees.

The priority placed on the inclusion of input from afterschool staff in decision making by all grantees was confirmed in feedback from staff members in interviews, focus groups, and surveys. Staff survey results showed that staff members across all grantees agreed or strongly agreed that they had “a voice in decisions about curriculum and instruction” and that they took “an active role in program leadership and decision making.”

Strong Relationships With Day School

All of the afterschool programs maintain very close ties with their day school counterparts. Several factors were especially important across all programs in achieving successful bridging between the two. First, the day schools and the afterschool programs frequently share common staff. In nine of the 12 programs considered here, the staffs are partially or completely the same (including day school teachers serving as afterschool site coordinators in one program). The advantages of this arrangement are clear: The afterschool instructors have a strong working knowledge of day school curriculum and goals and are able to align their activities with the needs of the day school. Using many of the same teachers in both programs also provides continuity for the students. While having common staff is an effective way to bridge the day school and the afterschool programs, it is not absolutely necessary. In two cases, centers intentionally chose to have separate groups of teachers because working in both settings had been too tiring for some day school teachers. However, grantees and center sites that chose to have separate day school and afterschool teachers established strong and consistent communication between the two in order to maintain successful coordination of learning activities.

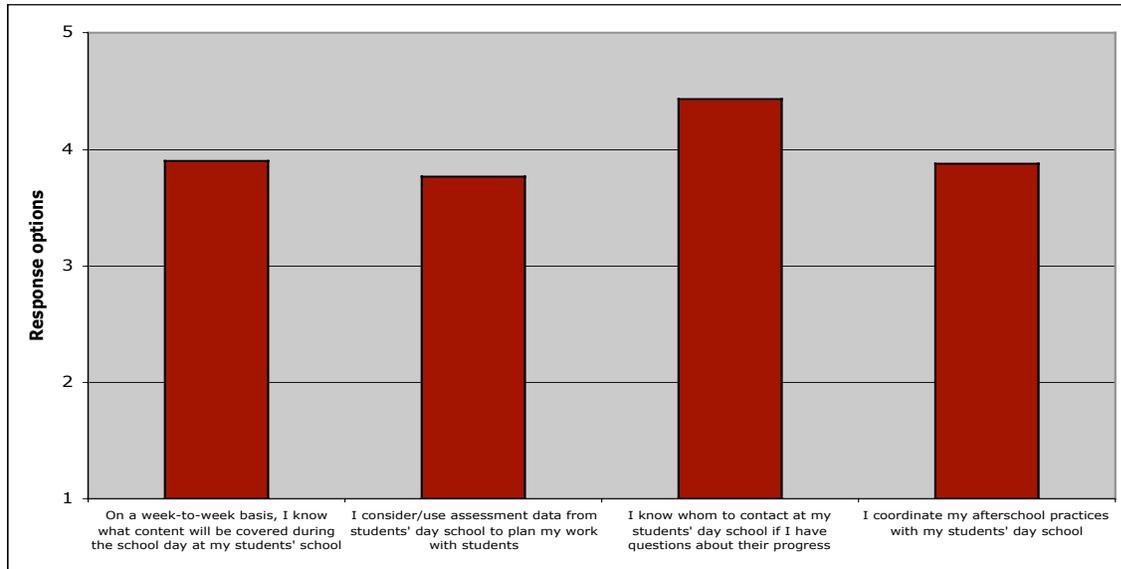
Second, strong ties between day schools and afterschool programs are maintained through an intentional alignment of goals and curriculum (especially in academic classes). The most common mechanism used for maintaining this coordination is the strong emphasis placed on homework assistance in most afterschool programs. In order to help students complete their day school homework, teachers and tutors must be familiar with the content of day school classes and communicate regularly with day school teachers about the progress and needs of specific students (in many cases, teachers’ afterschool students are different from those they work with during the day).

We try to do lots of hands-on extension of the regular school day, just new and different ways of learning that maybe the regular classroom teacher doesn't have time to do.
--Site Coordinator,
Center ISD

Finally, because the afterschool curriculum is aligned with day school curriculum, the majority of it is reported to be, or assumed to be, standards-based. Grantees viewed afterschool programs as an effective way to support day school learning and to ultimately improve students’ day school performance. Many of the grantees reported building on regular school curriculum. Several others noted that the curriculum was specifically developed to incorporate standards. Having these as primary goals for their afterschool programs ensures that maintaining strong ties between the two is an ongoing priority.

Feedback from afterschool staff on surveys strongly supported the existence of strong ties between day schools and afterschool programs. As shown in Figure 3, afterschool instructors reported that they were familiar with day school curriculum, used student assessment data from the day school in planning afterschool activities, maintained close communication with day school teachers, and coordinated afterschool practices with students' day school experiences.

Figure 3. Mean Ratings by Program Staff about Program Connections With Day School (n=246)



Note. Ratings scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree

Shared Academic and Enrichment Instructional Practices

With a strong emphasis on homework assistance and tutoring in these afterschool programs, one focus of the staff was to provide a continuity with students' day school work. In these programs, academic assistance focused primarily on reading and math, with a secondary emphasis on science learning. The majority of the observed programs offered homework help or tutoring followed by academic instruction and enrichment opportunities. Some had set days for content instruction, and others designated hours per day. Many centers emphasized a balance of academic, enrichment, and social development instruction within most of the program activities.

General Instructional Strategies

Feedback from afterschool staff surveys and interview and focus group data highlighted the use of a combination of instructional strategies, including whole-group, small-group (or peer pairings), and individual instruction. Students are primarily engaged through hands-on learning experiences. With regard to peer pairing, in one center, fifth graders who are proficient in math or reading work with second graders needing assistance in those areas. According to one staff member, the second graders love working with the fifth graders. Another staff member at this same center indicated that the pairing also tends to foster increased self-confidence in the fifth

graders. Staff from another center site noted that they had students who attended the afterschool program not because they needed help, but because they enjoyed helping out other students. The advantages of peer pairings, according to another staff focus group participant, is that “it emphasizes [students’] learning to hear someone else learning the same thing; that’s real positive.” Small-group and student pairing strategies occurred both across grade levels and between students in the same grades.

Promising practices among these afterschool center sites also included using specific instructional strategies in reading, math, and science, as well as integrating content learning with other academic disciplines, with “real world” experiences, and with activities designed to engage students in fun and interesting ways.

We collaborate with Junior Achievement where we teach children about money, about their community, about different vocational skills. You know, different things that they’re going to need and strategies for the real world.

Teacher,
Northside ISD

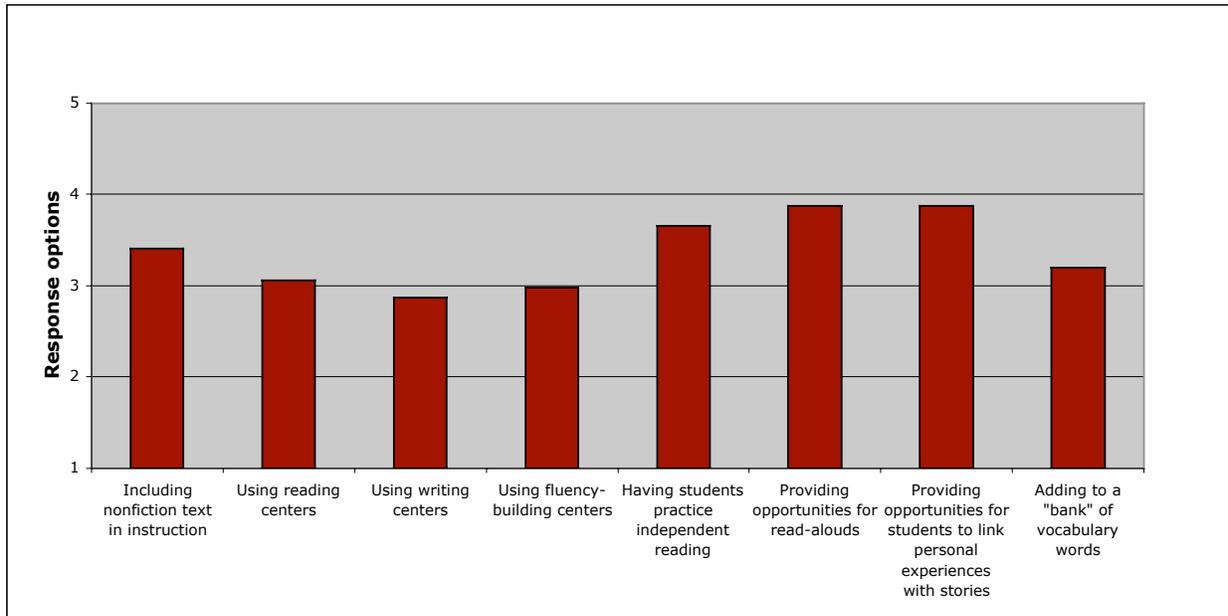
Common Reading Teaching Practices

Instructional strategies for reading used most frequently by afterschool staff included providing students with opportunities for read-alouds and for linking their personal experiences with stories. Read-alouds, according to a staff focus group participant, provide struggling readers with opportunities to read simple text in front of the other children. According to one staff member, these experiences help students “begin to feel more confident with their reading skills.” Many of the staff also indicated that they work with students in reading centers and in building their vocabulary.

The integration of reading/literacy learning takes many forms throughout the grantee centers. At one center site, program staff combine reading with art. In one class, the instructor had students create masks representing Greek times while reading a book on Greek theatre. Another connected students’ reading with a discussion of current events. The topic was martyrdom, and students were reading *Antigone*. The instructor noted that the discussion then moved to the 9/11 disaster with students “talking about Moussaoui and how he wanted to . . . be a martyr.” Other activities linked drawing pictures and creating scrapbooks relative to characters in stories being read, using the Internet to research content material for creating a magazine, reading recipes and cooking, and creating a radio monologue and performing it for peers.

Survey findings related to common reading teaching practices implemented across the grantee centers are displayed in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Instructor Perceptions of Implementation of Reading Practices (n=182)



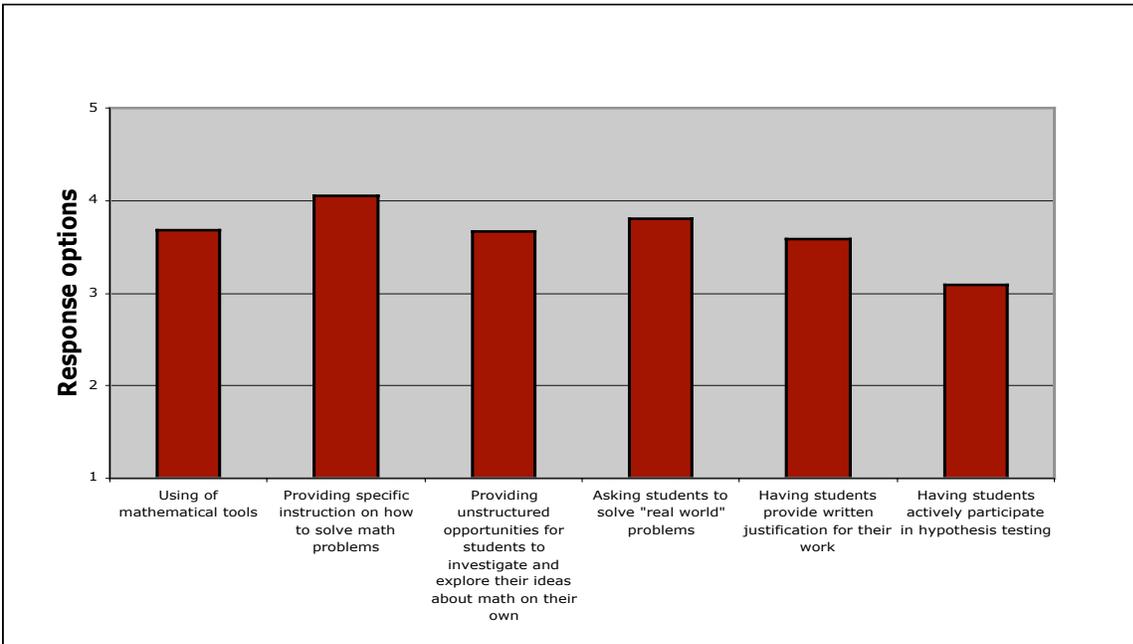
Note. 1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Frequently; 5 = Always

Common Mathematics Teaching Practices

Math strategies common across center sites included having students solve “real world” problems and offering opportunities for students to explore their ideas about math on their own. Activities often promoted learning in other academic content areas and frequently meshed easily with common life occurrences. For example, a combination of concepts in science, mathematics, and literacy were incorporated into a program where students applied problem-based learning to an understanding of the force required to pull a bag of marbles up two inclined lanes the students built the previous week. The instructor helped students develop an experimental situation, which then required scientific investigation, mathematical calculations, and an explanation of the results. In other observations of math-related activities, young students at one center engaged in categorizing gummy bears by color, drawing graphs representing each color, and labeling the graphs. At another site, students were observed actively engaging in a competitive math game called Round the World. This game was directed at reinforcing multiplication learning, which many of the fourth-grade students were having difficulty with. At the game’s conclusion, students appeared to have enjoyed the activity and felt proud of having demonstrated new knowledge. Similar activities at other sites included a cooking class that prompted students to consider how ingredients would change if recipes were halved, doubled, or otherwise modified, and a basketball throw competition that integrated knowledge of mathematics and physical fitness.

Survey findings related to common mathematics teaching practices implemented across the grantee centers are displayed in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5. Instructor Perceptions of Implementation of Mathematics Teaching Practices (n=111)



Note. 1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Frequently; 5 = Always

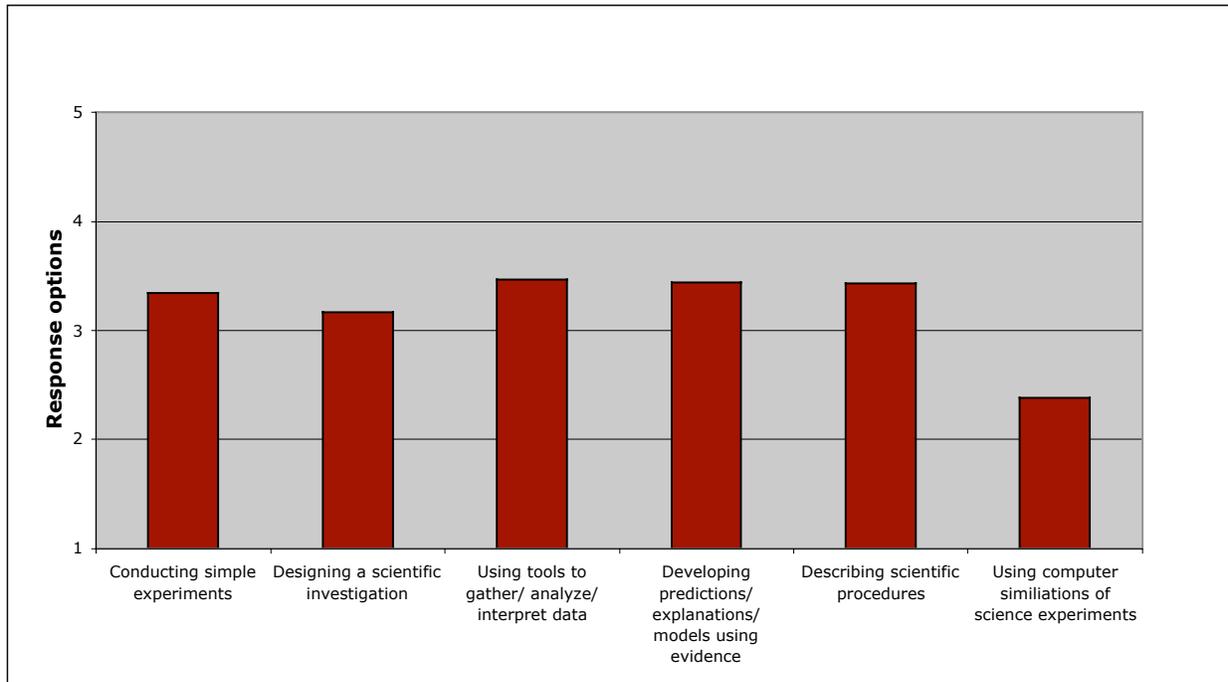
Common Science Teaching Practices

For those staff focused on science instruction, teaching methods included having students conduct simple experiments where they would gather, analyze, and interpret data. From this process they would then develop explanations, predictions, or models based on evidence. In one center, students studying weather patterns learned about weather conditions, clouds, thunder, etc., and made predictions for the upcoming weeks, incorporating the subject areas of reading, writing, math, and science. Multiple skill learning was also observed in another center during a criminal scene investigation activity. A finding of what blood splatters may reveal was discussed, an experiment was conducted, and students problem-solved when their solution did not pan out positively. The linking of science with a “real world” situation piqued their interest and prompted their determination to reach a viable conclusion to the situation.

Further examples of academic integration involved one center’s focus on the theme of “travel in the 50 states.” Students studying geography and state symbols were engaged in activities such as using computers to find travel information about various states they had chosen to investigate and gathering recipes indigenous to the area.

Survey findings related to common science teaching practices implemented across the grantee centers are displayed in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6. Instructor Perceptions of Implementation of Science Teaching Practices (n=62)



Note. 1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Frequently; 5 = Always

Common Enrichment Teaching Practices

To address the social and emotional development of students, as well as their physical fitness, the majority of grantee centers offered sports, dance, games, crafts, art, cooking, and cultural activities, among others. Many of the activities were project-based and aimed at enhancing students’ positive attitudes, demeanor, and self-esteem and increasing students’ teamwork skills, leadership capabilities, and character development. These activities often blend academic learning and “real world” experiences in engaging ways that attract students’ interest. For example, relevant to reading, science, and mathematics learning, students in one class study aspects of nutrition such as the chemical interactions of foods, counting calories, and reading food packaging labels. In one center site, students worked on a science club project that had clear and intentional ties to their day school curriculum. The goals of the activity involved developing hypotheses and gaining a knowledge of astronomy through building a structure that resembled a planetarium using everyday items. Other enrichment activities that frequently incorporated academic learning included jewelry-making classes, sewing and cooking classes, money management classes, and various sports and physical fitness activities. With respect to physical fitness, offerings included dance, karate, and basketball and sought to instill and/or reinforce positive sportsmanship and sharing characteristics. Other classes focused on social/emotional issues such as anger management, drug abuse prevention, information on gang

We will teach these kids how to be respectful, how to play the game, how to be good sportsmen. But at the same time, we will teach them math skills. We will teach them how to keep their own stats. We will teach them how to do averages.

--Teacher,
Amarillo ISD

violence, and parent-child relationships, as well as learning about potential colleges, completing college applications, and developing a resume.

Positive, Engaging Afterschool Climate

A striking feature among the grantees was that all appeared to be successful in creating a positive, engaging afterschool climate. The context in which afterschool activities take place at all centers was consistently described using such terms as “supportive,” “relaxed,” “caring,” “respectful,” “safe,” “positive,” and “nurturing.” A major goal of several of the grantees was to provide a safe place for kids to go after the school day, and they seem to have been successful in achieving this. They also appeared to have created an atmosphere in which staff maintains high expectations that students consistently meet.

Relationships between staff and students at all of the center sites are very positive. Afterschool instructors reported having more personal and casual relations with students than is possible in day school classes. According to APR data, staff turnover at all the observed centers is low. In

This family here—and we call it a family—of staff members is very strong-knit, so we all enjoy working with each other.

--Instructor,
Northside ISD

addition, small student-to-teacher ratios were observed at all of the centers. Students were observed interacting very comfortably with staff about both classroom-related and personal issues. Staff at several of the center sites described the general atmosphere as “feeling like family,” and all seemed truly interested in their students’ success. Student achievements are regularly celebrated in events that include family and community members. In general, a different, more personal relationship between students and staff is encouraged and developed in these afterschool programs. Particular mention was made at one center site of the positive relationships that existed between students and

college students who served as tutors in the afterschool program. Closer to the students in age, the college tutors are able to develop less formal relationships with students and to serve as positive role models.

The student response to this type of environment has been very positive. At all of the grantee center sites, students were observed to be very engaged in both academic and enrichment classes. They also seemed very comfortable with staff members and received a lot of encouragement and support from them in both individual and group settings. Students in all of the afterschool programs are able to have more control over their own learning process (i.e., receiving individualized help) and sometimes over their class schedule. While homework completion or tutoring sessions are generally mandatory, many centers let students, especially middle and high school students, choose enrichment activities to attend once they are finished with academic classes. Afterschool students appreciate this increased flexibility and freedom, and disciplinary problems are not common.

It has been really rewarding, I think, for the teachers because I see them in a completely different atmosphere. They’re smiling. They’re jumping up and down. They’re doing things with the kids. They’re on the floor with them. I see them during the day also, so it’s completely different. They feel differently. They get along with the kids differently.

--Project Director,
Hugh Springs ISD

Survey data received from parents and students generally support this positive view of the social and learning environments created in these afterschool programs. The majority of parents stated that the afterschool staff deal with the students quickly and fairly, that they feel welcome at the afterschool center, and that they feel comfortable communicating with the afterschool staff. The majority of elementary school students reported that they get along with the afterschool staff, who listen to what they say. In addition, they enjoy going to the center and feel safe while they are there. The majority of middle and high school students reported that staff and students at the center treat each other with respect, that staff listen to what they say, and that their ideas count. Furthermore, the middle and high school students report that the center is a comfortable place to hang out and that they enjoy the activities.

It's respectful. I think it's very warm. I think my children trust me. And feel that I'm their advocate.

--Instructor,
Mason ISD

Strong Community Connections and Partnerships

The majority of grantees reported using a combination of day school teachers who are generally responsible for academic instruction and college students or community members who tend to oversee homework assistance, tutoring, and the enrichment activities. In many cases the afterschool program relies on the support of volunteers. In 2006, seven of the 12 grantees reported using volunteers in the afterschool programs. For example, in several programs, enrichment activities such as character education, sports, cheerleading, music, and arts and crafts were provided by volunteers from the YMCA or community organizations such as local churches and the Boy Scouts. In one site, study groups led by IBM volunteers for mathematics and science are available. The use of local college students for tutoring and members of the community for teaching some enrichment classes has strengthened ties with the community at several center sites. For example, one center offers a ballroom dancing class that is taught by volunteers from a local for-profit dance studio. The studio offers discounted rates for students who want to continue classes outside of the afterschool program.

In several cases, center sites have partnered with community-based organizations to provide components of their afterschool programs. Community partners for the observed grantees included local Boys and Girls Clubs, the YMCA, parks and recreation departments, chapters of the Texas Council for Drug and Alcohol Abuse, universities, church groups, and businesses. In some cases, grantees have established advisory boards to keep parents and the community involved in planning and decision making. In others, the community donates supplies and materials that are not allowed as expenses under the 21st CCLC grant. Finally, community partnerships are viewed to be the major mechanism for sustaining the afterschool programs after funding ends.

Parental Engagement and Awareness

Many of the grantees provide parents with opportunities for meaningful engagement with the afterschool program. Although parental volunteerism is reportedly low across all of the sites, many programs have implemented strategies to keep parents informed of, aware of, and interacting with the afterschool program activities. 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. The majority of programs provide parents with weekly or monthly newsletters and invite parents to attend special events. In some cases, parent education classes are offered in English as a Second Language (ESL) and technology. At one center, the afterschool program hosts parent nights and allows parents opportunities to work in the school's community gardens. Another center employs two parent liaisons who are responsible for keeping parents, especially Spanish-speaking parents, involved and informed. Finally, several programs invite parents to culminating events to celebrate and recognize student accomplishments.

Internal or External Processes to Gather Evaluation Data

The final characteristic identified across the grantee programs regarded collecting evaluation data to refine and improve program practices. Enrollment and attendance were monitored at every center site for the purposes of grant reporting and program planning. The project directors, site coordinators, and/or school principals at many centers make regular classroom walk-throughs and instructor observations. In addition, instructors from many of the programs monitor grades and test scores of their students. Some programs surveyed parents and teachers for satisfaction and interest in enrichment topics. External evaluations were reportedly occurring at four of the grantee programs by independent consultants or school district evaluators. However, details about these evaluations and their results were not well-known by the afterschool staff. Instead, many of the grantees relied mostly on internal, formative evaluation information to inform instructional focus and content.

CONTEXT FOR THE COMMON CHARACTERISTICS FINDINGS

This evaluation sought to identify and describe common practices among promising 21st CCLC programs in Texas. SEDL used methods adapted from the National Partnership study and experienced staff to select projects and conduct center site visits. Overall, the cross-case analysis yielded results that suggest that characteristics common in observed afterschool programs include strong leadership that relies on shared or collaborative input from staff, the inclusion of community members and organizations in providing program activities, and concerted efforts to keep parents informed of program offerings and students' progress. Furthermore, the blending of academic, enrichment, and recreational activities has been reported by both staff and students as providing learning opportunities in ways that are fun and engaging for students. This is achieved, in part, through the positive and more casual relationships between staff and students in the afterschool centers.

SEDL's evaluation was not designed to contrast the features of high-performing programs with features of typical or low-performing programs. However, it has been determined from several sources that the common characteristics identified and presented in this report are not necessarily typical of all 21st CCLC grantees in Texas. For example, validation procedures in the site selection process confirmed that the sample of grantees had program characteristics that were more notably defined and implemented than grantees that did not pass screening procedures to be selected for the study. Furthermore, a presentation of preliminary findings to both TEA and National Partnership Staff confirmed that the characteristics featured here are viewed to be consistent with promising practices identified through other research efforts nationally. Further research, however, is needed to illuminate the particular practices and approaches adopted by those afterschool programs that achieve the greatest developmental gains for students.

APPENDIXES

National Partnership Coding Schemes

Texas Education Agency Project Project Director Interview Codes

7.7.06□

Overall prog desc - general	Interviewee provides a good general program description. This code can be used throughout the interview.
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I. Background

A. (Project Director’s) Personal Background

Question 1.

Years as Project Director	Code Definitions
Director exper: <1 yr	Interviewee has been Project Director of the ASP for <1 year.
Director exper: 1–2 yrs	Interviewee has been Project Director of the ASP for 1–2 years.
Director exper: 3–5 yrs	Interviewee has been Project Director of the ASP for 3–5 years.
Director exper: 6–9 yrs	Interviewee has been Project Director of the ASP for 6–9 years.
Director exper: 10+ yrs	Interviewee has been Project Director of the ASP for 10+ years.

Question 2.

Responsibilities as Project Director	Code Definitions
Director responsibilities/role	Use this code for responses to question 2 that specifically address the PD’s main responsibilities. Otherwise use dec-mkg codes.

Question 3. Just use these codes re: decision making from SC and instructor interviews.

Decision-making Processes	Code Definitions
Dec-mkg: central	ASP decisions are made primarily by site coordinator, project director, or another core instructional leader (i.e., instructors, staff, and/or other stakeholders do not play a role in decision making—it’s top-down).
Dec-mkg: decentral	Decisions at ASP are made collaboratively (i.e., structures in place to involve instructors and/or other stakeholders); or instructors are allowed to work fairly independently (i.e., to

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Evaluation Services

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	make their own decisions re: curriculum without much guidance from upper-level staff).
Dec-mkg: yes instruct input	ASP instructors are given the opportunity to offer input into decision making about curriculum and instruction.
Dec-mkg: no instruct input	ASP instructors are not given the opportunity to offer input into decision making about curriculum and instruction.

B. Grant Background and Organizational Structure

Questions 4–5.

Program Background, Part 1	Code Definitions
Prog bkgrd: years op	PD reports years program has been in operation.
Prog bkgrd: history	PD gives overview of how grant was started and how it has grown/developed over time.
Prog bkgrd: future	PD describes program’s projected growth and/or plans for self-sustainability.

Question 6.

Program Goals, General	Code Definitions
Prog goals: general	This code is specifically for PD interview question 6 re: broad goals/objectives for the ASP. This differs from more specific questions re: math/reading/science curricular goals.
Prog goals: varies by site, yes	PD describes how broad ASP goals/objectives vary from site to site.
Prog goals: varies by site, no	PD describes how broad ASP goals/objectives are consistent across all sites within the program.

Question 7.

Program Structure	Code Definitions
Prog struct: # sites	PD reports number of sites served by the ASP grant.
Prog struct: # students	PD reports number of students served by the entire program (this differs from question 3 in SC interview re: # students served at site level).
Prog struct: pop	PD reports population served by entire program (ethnicities, language groups, SES).
Activities offered, prog level	PD describes different types of activities offered at the program level (e.g., math, reading, science activities described generally—do not use to code specific content area teaching strategies).
Overall prog desc - general	Interviewee provides a good general program description. This code might be necessary for question 7 if PD just offers broad description of the ASP grant’s organizational structure.

Question 8.

Variation Across Sites	Code Definitions
Site variation: pop	PD describes ways in which individual sites within the program vary in terms of populations served.
Site variation: grade levels	PD describes ways in which individual sites within the program vary in terms of grade levels served.
Site variation: activities	PD describes ways in which individual sites within the program vary in terms of activities offered.
Site variation: practices	PD describes ways in which individual sites within the program vary in terms of general practices.

Question 9.

Site Support	Code Definitions
Site support: descrip	PD describes the type(s) of support provided to different sites by the grant central office.

Question 10.

Community Involvement in ASP	Code Definitions
Commty involv: yes	Interviewee describes any means by which the ASP involves the community in ASP activities, either at the site or the program level (e.g., partnerships w/ local community agencies, shared materials or strategies w/ universities).
Commty involv: no	The ASP does not involve the community in ASP activities.

Question 11.

Inter-site Collaboration	Code Definitions
Inter-site collab: yes	PD describes any type of coordination/collaboration that exists between individual sites within the program.
Inter-site collab: no	PD states that there is no collaboration or coordination between individual sites within the program.

Questions 12–13.

Program Structure, Part 2	Code Definitions
Prog struct: recruit	PD describes recruitment/promotional strategies used to increase student enrollment in the ASP’s reading/math/science programs.
Prog struct: retent	PD describes how student attendance/retention strategies are used to monitor and/or enhance attendance in specific content practices.

C. Content Practice Background

Question 14.

Instructional Practices	Code Definitions
Instruct: strategies, math	Use this code for all responses to question 14 re: general math practices funded by the grant.
Instruct: strategies, reading	Use this code for all responses to question 14 re: general reading practices funded by the grant.
Instruct: hwk/tutoring	Description of how homework help and/or tutoring is integrated into ASP curricula.
Instruct tech: grouping strateg	Interviewee describes grouping strategies for instruction (e.g., whole group, pairs, solo).
Instruct: real world connect	ASP engages students in personally and/or culturally relevant activities through instruction.
Instruct: cross-content	Instruction integrates and overlaps various content areas (math, reading, science, art, social science, etc.)
Instruct: diff instruct	Instructors modify instruction based on students' different ability levels and prior experience.
Instruct: social/developmental practice	Integration of social development activities into regular ASP instruction (e.g., activities geared toward socialization, creativity, self-esteem).
Instruct: site variation, yes	PD describes any type of variation from site to site in math/reading practices.
Instruct: site variation, no	PD states that there is no variation from site to site in math/reading practices.

Question 15.

Curricular Goals - Math	Code Definitions
Curric goals, math: acad	Primary goals of math curriculum are academically based (e.g., needs assessment, math skills improvement, bringing students to grade level, developing an interest in math).
Curric goals, math: non-acad	Goals of math curriculum are focused on non-academic activities (e.g., social/personal skills, fun, safety).
Curric goals, math: both	Math curriculum focuses both on academic achievement and personal enrichment.

Curricular Goals - Reading	Code Definitions
Curric goals, reading: acad	Primary goals of reading curriculum are academically based (e.g., needs assessment, reading skills improvement, bringing students to grade level, developing an interest in reading).
Curric goals, reading: non-acad	Goals of reading curriculum are focused on non-academic activities (e.g., social/personal skills, fun, safety).
Curric goals, reading: both	Reading curriculum focuses both on academic achievement and personal enrichment.

	and personal enrichment.
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Curricular Goals - Science	Code Definitions
Curric goals, science: acad	Primary goals of science curriculum are academically based (e.g., needs assessment, science skills improvement, bringing students to grade level, developing an interest in science).
Curric goals, science: non-acad	Goals of science curriculum are focused on non-academic activities (e.g., social/personal skills, fun, safety).
Curric goals, science: both	Science curriculum focuses both on academic achievement and personal enrichment.

II. Internal Site Structure
A. Professional Development

Question 16.

PD Offered? Content? Frequency?	Code Definitions
PD offered: yes, ASP	Program offers professional development specifically for ASP staff (not through day school).
PD offered: yes, day school	ASP staff participates in professional development provided by the day school.
PD offered: no	No professional development is offered to ASP staff.
PD offered: struct	This code covers all description of PD structure (how topics are chosen, site-by-site or program-wide, general structure).
PD content: math	ASP staff is offered professional development designed specifically for math content instruction.
PD content: reading	ASP staff is offered professional development designed specifically for reading content instruction.
PD content: science	ASP staff is offered professional development designed specifically for science content instruction.
PD content: disc/mgmt/soc issues	Professional development includes coverage of issues relating to discipline, classroom management, and/or social issues (e.g., cooperation, bullying).
PD content: other	Other type of professional development cited by interviewee.
PD offered: freq	SC or Project Director reports frequency and/or duration of professional development offerings.
PD offered: attendance	SC or Project Director estimates number of staff that attend professional development.

B. Evaluative Structures

Questions 17–19.

Evaluation/Impact	Code Definitions
Eval info: general	This covers all descriptions of any type of evaluation process (e.g., formal, informal, internal, external, anecdotal info.).
Imp: acad	Some form of academic impact by the ASP is described (e.g., improved student achievement, test scores).
Imp: attendance/retention	Description of program impact on student attendance and/or retention.
Imp: engagement	Description of program impact on student engagement.
Imp: soc skills	Description of program impact on student social skills/self-esteem.
Imp: other	Any other non-academic form of impact by the ASP is described.
Imp: none	Interviewee explicitly states that the ASP program has had no discernible impact.

C. Summary/Collection of Available Data

Question 20.

Question 20	Notes/Description
Overall prog desc - math	SC or PD explains what makes the program unique in terms of math curriculum practice.
Overall prog desc - reading	SC or PD explains what makes the program unique in terms of reading curriculum practice.
Overall prog desc - science	SC or PD explains what makes the program unique in terms of science curriculum practice.

Question 21.

Overall prog desc - general	Interviewee provides a good general program description. This code can be used throughout the interview (except for specific math-/reading-related responses to question 20).
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**Texas Education Agency Project
Site Coordinator Interview Codes
7.7.06**

Overall prog desc - general	Interviewee provides a good general program description. This code can be used throughout the interview.
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I. Background

A. Site Background

Questions 1–5.

Site Background	Code Definitions
Site bkgrd: years op	SC reports years program has been in operation.
Site bkgrd: site history	SC reports overview of site beginnings, growth, and development over time.
Site bkgrd: # students, site level	SC reports number of students served by site (this differs from question 7 in PD interview re: # students served at program level).
Site bkgrd: pop	SC reports population served by site (ethnicities, language groups, SES).
Site bkgrd: refer/recruit	SC reports on how students are generally referred to the site or recruited (e.g., recommended by day school, join voluntarily). This is different from code for program-level recruitment.

Question 6 (Overview question).

Overall prog desc - general	Interviewee provides a good general program description. This code can be used throughout the interview.
Activities offered: site level	SC describes different types of activities offered at the site (e.g., math, reading, science activities described generally—do not use to code specific content area teaching strategies).

B. Content Practice Background

Question 7.

Curricular Goals - Math	Code Definitions
Curric goals, math: acad	Primary goals of math curriculum are academically based (e.g., needs assessment, math skills improvement, bringing students to grade level, developing an interest in math).
Curric goals, math: non-acad	Goals of math curriculum are focused on non-academic activities (e.g., social/personal skills, fun, safety).

	activities (e.g., social/personal skills, fun, safety).
Curric goals, math: both	Math curriculum focuses both on academic achievement and personal enrichment.

Question 8.

Curricular Goals - Reading	Code Definitions
Curric goals, reading: acad	Primary goals of reading curriculum are academically based (e.g., needs assessment, reading skills improvement, bringing students to grade level, developing an interest in reading).
Curric goals, reading: non-acad	Goals of reading curriculum are focused on non-academic activities (e.g., social/personal skills, fun, safety).
Curric goals, reading: both	Reading curriculum focuses both on academic achievement and personal enrichment.

Question 9.

Curricular Goals - Science	Code Definitions
Curric goals, science: acad	Primary goals of science curriculum are academically based (e.g., needs assessment, science skills improvement, bringing students to grade level, developing an interest in science).
Curric goals, science: non-acad	Goals of science curriculum are focused on non-academic activities (e.g., social/personal skills, fun, safety).
Curric goals, science: both	Science curriculum focuses both on academic achievement and personal enrichment.

Questions 10–12.

Curricular Design	Code Definitions
Curric design: self	Curriculum is self-designed (by staff/instructors). If there is no clear indication that the program is purchased, then default code is self-designed. This could possibly include purchased materials (e.g., materials, resources) that are not part of a purchased program per se.
Curric design: purchased	ASP uses a purchased program (e.g., Houghton Mifflin Reading) If there is no clear indication that the program is purchased, then default code is self-designed.
Curric design: both	ASP uses a combo of purchased/self-designed programs.
Curric design: mod	SC describes how ASP curriculum has been modified since its inception, reasons for the modification(s), and info on instructor, parent, student, and/or DS teacher input on these changes.

(Site Coordinator’s) Personal Background

There are no specific codes for questions 13–14 re: site coordinator’s responsibilities/authority in decision making. This question can be covered by decision-making codes in section III-D (centralized vs. decentralized).

Questions 15–16.

Overall ASP Experience	Code Definitions
ASP exper: <1 yr	<1 year experience with ASPs (including current ASP).
ASP exper: 1–2 yrs	1–2 years experience with ASPs (including current ASP).
ASP exper: 3–5 yrs	3–5 years experience with ASPs (including current ASP).
ASP exper: 6–9 yrs	6–9 years experience with ASPs (including current ASP).
ASP exper: 10+ yrs	10+ years experience with ASPs (including current ASP).

Questions 17–18.

SC Experience	Code Definitions
SC exper: ASPs	SC describes ASP experience in greater detail (beyond years spent, question 17).
SC exper: DS teaching	SC has experience teaching in regular day schools (use this to cover description, subjects taught, years spent).
SC exper: Admin	SC has administrative experience outside the ASP (e.g., day school, community college) Use this to cover description and years spent.
SC exper: Other	SC describes some other experience outside ASP.

II. Research-Based Design

A. Content Knowledge

Question 19.

Math Standards Familiarity/Knowledge	Code Definitions
Standards knowl, math: strong	Interviewee clearly has a strong familiarity with/understanding of state or national math standards.
Standards knowl, math: mod	Interviewee has a fairly good familiarity with/understanding of state or national math standards.
Standards knowl, math: weak	Interviewee doesn’t seem to have much familiarity with/understanding of state or national math standards.

Reading Standards Familiarity/Knowledge	Code Definitions
Standards knowl, reading: strong	Interviewee clearly has a strong familiarity with/understanding of state or national reading standards.
Standards knowl, reading: mod	Interviewee has a fairly good familiarity with/understanding of state or national reading standards.
Standards knowl, reading: weak	Interviewee doesn't seem to have much familiarity with/understanding of state or national reading standards.

Science Standards Familiarity/Knowledge	Code Definitions
Standards knowl, science: strong	Interviewee clearly has a strong familiarity with/understanding of state or national science standards.
Standards knowl, science: mod	Interviewee has a fairly good familiarity with/understanding of state or national science standards.
Standards knowl, science: weak	Interviewee doesn't seem to have much familiarity with/understanding of state or national science standards.

Questions 20–21.

Standards Links/Coverage	Code Definitions
Standards link: none	Interviewee explicitly states that there are no links between the curriculum overall and state/national standards.
Standards link: ltd/moderate	Interviewee is able to describe some links between the curriculum overall and state/national standards but is not entirely clear.
Standards link: specific	Interviewee is able to provide more specific information about how the curriculum addresses the standards.
Standards link: purch'd prgm - assumed	Interviewee indicates that standards coverage is assumed because links to the standards are provided within a purchased program used in the ASP.
Standards link: focus	Interviewee describes math/reading/science standards given more focus than others in ASP curriculum.

Question 22.

Connections to Day School	Code Definitions
Connect DS: comm struct	Interviewee cites ways (formal or informal) in which communication occurs between ASP and day school staff.
Connect DS: curric plan	Interviewee describes curricular coordination between DS and ASP math/reading/science programs.
Connect DS: no comm	Interviewee explicitly states that there is no communication,

	formal or informal, between ASP and the day school.
Connect DS: no curric	Interviewee explicitly states that there is no curricular coordination, formal or informal, between ASP and the day school.
Connect DS: occasionally	ASP staff communicate occasionally (e.g., several times a year, once a year) with day school staff (through such means as notes, e-mails, phone calls, in person, etc.).
Connect DS: regularly	ASP staff communicate on a regular basis (once a month or more) with day school staff (through such means as notes, e-mails, phone calls, in person, etc.).
Connect DS: staff overlap	At least some of the ASP instructors are also day school teachers.
Connect DS: pt pers	Any sort of liaison who coordinates between the ASP and day school staff is described.

B. Teaching and Learning Methods

Questions 23–29.

Instructional Practices	Code Definitions
Instruct: strategies, math	Use this code for all responses to question 23 re: general math instructional strategies.
Instruct: strategies, reading	Use this code for all responses to question 23 re: general reading instructional strategies.
Instruct: strategies, science	Use this code for all responses to question 23 re: general science instructional strategies.
Instruct: strategies, general	Use this code for all responses to question 23 that are not specific to math/reading/science.
Instruct: hwk/tutoring	Description of how homework help and/or tutoring is integrated into ASP curricula.
Instruct tech: grouping strateg	Interviewee describes grouping strategies for instruction (e.g., whole group, pairs, solo)
Instruct: real world connect	ASP engages students in personally and/or culturally relevant activities through instruction.
Instruct: cross-content	Instruction integrates and overlaps various content areas (math, reading, science, art, social science, etc.)
Instruct: diff instruct	Instructors modify instruction based on students' different ability levels and prior experience.
Instruct: social/developmental practice	Integration of social development activities into regular ASP instruction (e.g., activities geared toward socialization, creativity, self-esteem).

III. Internal Site Structure

A. Scheduling

Question 30.

General Activities Scheduling	Code Definitions
Sched: general	Use this code to capture any scheduling info from question 30 not specific to math, reading, or science.

Questions 31–32.

Math Scheduling	Code Definitions
Sched: days/week - math	Days/week allocated to math instruction.
Sched: hours/day - math	Hours allocated daily to math instruction.

Reading Scheduling	Code Definitions
Sched: days/week - reading	Days/week allocated to reading instruction.
Sched: hours/day - reading	Hours allocated daily to reading instruction.

Science Scheduling	Code Definitions
Sched: days/week - science	Days/week allocated to science instruction.
Sched: hours/day - science	Hours allocated daily to science instruction.

B. Staffing

Questions 33–34.

Staffing	Code Definitions
Staff: certified instructors	SC reports # of certified instructors at ASP.
Staff: qual	Staff qualifications are described.
Staff: staff/stud ratio - math	Staff/student ratio for math instruction.
Staff: staff/stud ratio - reading	Staff/student ratio for reading instruction.
Staff: staff/stud ratio - science	Staff/student ratio for science instruction.
Staff: tching exper	SC reports # of staff w/ previous teaching experience.

C. Professional Development

Question 35.

PD Offered? Content? Frequency?	Code Definitions
PD offered: yes, ASP	Program offers professional development specifically for ASP staff (not through day school).

PD offered: yes, day school	ASP staff participates in professional development provided by the day school.
PD offered: no	No professional development is offered to ASP staff.
PD content: math	ASP staff is offered professional development designed specifically for math content instruction.
PD content: reading	ASP staff is offered professional development designed specifically for reading content instruction.
PD content: science	ASP staff is offered professional development designed specifically for science content instruction.
PD content: disc/mgmt/soc issues	Professional development includes coverage of issues relating to discipline, classroom management, and/or social issues (e.g., cooperation, bullying)
PD content: other	Other type of professional development cited by interviewee.
PD offered: freq	SC or Project Director reports frequency and/or duration of professional development offerings.
PD offered: attendance	SC or Project Director estimates number of staff that attend professional development.

D. Decision making

Questions 36–38.

Decision-Making Processes	Code Definitions
Dec-mkg: central	ASP decisions are made primarily by site coordinator, project director, or another core instructional leader (i.e., instructors, staff, and/or other stakeholders do not play a role in decision making—it’s top-down).
Dec-mkg: decentral	Decisions at ASP are made collaboratively (i.e., structures in place to involve instructors and/or other stakeholders); or instructors are allowed to work fairly independently (i.e., to make their own decisions re: curriculum without much guidance from upper-level staff).
Dec-mkg: yes instruct input	ASP instructors are given the opportunity to offer input into decision making about curriculum and instruction.
Dec-mkg: no instruct input	ASP instructors are not given the opportunity to offer input into decision making about curriculum and instruction.
Dec-mkg: e.g.	SC offers e.g. of a recent curricular decision and how it was made.

E. Adequacy of Space/Resources

Question 39.

Resource Needs	Code Definitions
Rsrc need: supplies	In order to be optimally effective, the ASP needs more supplies/texts (non-tech).
Rsrc need: staff	In order to be optimally effective, the ASP needs more/better qualified staff/professional development.
Rsrc need: space	In order to be optimally effective, the ASP needs more space/facilities.
Rsrc need: tech	In order to be optimally effective, the ASP needs more technology (e.g., computers, software, digital cameras)
Rsrc need: other	Another area of need is cited for the ASP to be optimally effective.
Rsrc need: none	Interviewee reports that all resource needs are adequately met by ASP.

F. Self-evaluative Structures

Questions 40–41.

Evaluation/Impact	Code Definitions
Eval info: general	This covers all descriptions of any type of evaluation process (e.g., formal, informal, internal, external, anecdotal info.).

IV. External Communication and Support

A. Level of Communication Between Day School and Afterschool Program

Questions 42–44.

Connections to Day School	Code Definitions
Connect DS: comm struct	Interviewee cites ways (formal or informal) in which communication occurs between ASP and day school staff.
Connect DS: curric plan	Interviewee describes curricular coordination between DS and ASP math/reading/science programs.
Connect DS: no comm	Interviewee explicitly states that there is no communication, formal or informal, between ASP and the day school.
Connect DS: no curric	Interviewee explicitly states that there is no curricular coordination, formal or informal, between ASP and the day school.
Connect DS: occasionally	ASP staff communicate occasionally (e.g., several times a year, once a year) with day school staff (through such means as notes, e-mails, phone calls, in person, etc.).

	as notes, e-mails, phone calls, in person, etc.).
Connect DS: regularly	ASP staff communicate on a regular basis (once a month or more) with day school staff (through such means as notes, e-mails, phone calls, in person, etc.).
Connect DS: staff overlap	At least some of the ASP instructors are also day school teachers.
Connect DS: pt pers	Any sort of liaison who coordinates between the ASP and day school staff is described.

B. Parent Involvement

Questions 45–47.

Parent Involvement in ASP	Code Definitions
Par involv: opps	Interviewee cites any type of opportunity for parents to participate in the ASP (e.g., classroom volunteering/tutoring, curricular feedback, field trips, chaperoning events, student performances/events, parents’ nights, potlucks, parent classes/workshops).
Par involv: est low	Interviewee offers a low estimate of the number of parents involved in various ASP activities.
Par involv: est med	Interviewee offers a medium estimate of the number of parents involved in various ASP activities.
Par involv: est high	Interviewee offers a high estimate of the number of parents involved in various ASP activities.
Par info: dissem structs	Information about the ASP is shared with ASP parents through any of the following means: newsletters, fliers, telephone, notes, e-mail, meetings, outreach activities (e.g., parents’ nights, potlucks, parent classes), informal conversation.

C. Community Connections/Relationship With Grantee (Head Office)

Question 48.

Community Involvement in ASP	Code Definitions
Commty involv: yes	Interviewee describes any means by which the ASP involves the community in ASP activities, either at the site or the program level (e.g., partnerships w/ local community agencies, shared materials or strategies w/ universities).
Commty involv: no	The ASP does not involve the community in ASP activities.

Questions 49–50.

Relationship w/ Grantee	Code Definitions
Rel grantee: descrip	SC describes the relationship between the site and the grantee (i.e., head office).
Rel grantee: support - yes	SC reports that the ASP generally receives the support and/or resources it needs from its head office.
Rel grantee: support - no	SC reports that the ASP generally does not receive the support and/or resources it needs from its head office.

V. Student/Adult Interaction

A. Relationship With Students and Staff

B. Opportunities for Individual Student Attention/Feedback

Questions 51–53.

Staff/Student Relationships	Code Definitions
Staff/stdt relate: descrip	General description of relationships between ASP staff and students.
Staff/stdt relate: discipline	General description of ASP’s approach to discipline.
Staff/stdt relate: fdbk	Description of opportunities for individual student attention and/or feedback in math/reading/science instruction.

VI. Outcomes

A. Site Level Internal/External Evaluation Activities and Findings

Questions 54–57.

Evaluation/Impact	Code Defintions
Eval info: general	This covers all descriptions of any type of evaluation process (e.g., formal, informal, internal, external, anecdotal info.).
Imp: acad	Some form of academic impact by the ASP is described (e.g., improved student achievement, test scores).
Imp: attendance/retention	Description of program impact on student attendance and/or retention.
Imp: engagement	Description of program impact on student engagement.
Imp: soc skills	Description of program impact on student social skills/self-esteem.
Imp: other	Any other non-academic form of impact by the ASP is described.

Imp: none	Interviewee explicitly states that the ASP program has had no discernible impact.
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B. Summary/Collection of Available Data

Question 58.

Available Data	Code Defintions
Data avail: yes	SC provides copies of available assessment data to researcher (district data, state test results, student evaluations, attendance data).
Data avail: no	SC is unable to provide any assessment data.

Question 59.

Question 59	Notes/Description
Overall prog desc - math	SC or PD explains what makes the program unique in terms of math curriculum practice.
Overall prog desc - reading	SC or PD explains what makes the program unique in terms of reading curriculum practice.
Overall prog desc - science	SC or PD explains what makes the program unique in terms of science curriculum practice.

Question 60.

Overall prog desc - general	Interviewee provides a good general program description. This code can be used throughout the interview (except for specific math-/reading-/science-related responses to question 59).
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SEDL's Cross Case Analysis Plan

Background and History	Primary Sources of Data	Secondary Sources of Data
Site Beginning, Growth, Development	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews	Teacher Interviews/Focus Groups
Years of Operation	APR	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews
Number of Students Served	APR	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews
Student Demographics	APR	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews

Program Structure and Process	Primary Sources of Data	Secondary Sources of Data
Staffing	APR	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews
Staff Experience	Program Staff Surveys	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews
Decision Making: central, decentralized, instructor input	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews	Program Staff Surveys
Schedule: tutoring, homework help, academics, days per week, hours per day	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews	Field Notes
Professional Development: offered, content, frequency, attendance	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews	Program Staff Surveys Teacher Interviews/Focus Groups
Adequacy of Space and Resources: supplies, staff, space, technology, other	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews	Teacher Interviews/Focus Groups
Connections to Day School: frequency, curriculum, communications, staff overlap	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews	Program Staff Surveys

Academic and Enrichment Practices	Primary Sources of Data	Secondary Sources of Data
Curricular Goals: academic, enrichment	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews	APR
Curriculum Linked to Standards	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews	Teacher Interviews/Focus Groups
Adult/Student Relationships	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews	Student and Parent Surveys
Familiarity/Knowledge of Standards	Program Staff Surveys	Teacher Interviews/Focus Groups
Academic Instructional Strategies: math, reading, science, tutoring	Program Staff Surveys	Teacher Interviews/Focus Groups

Instructional Strategies: grouping strategies, “real world” connection, cross-content, social development	Program Staff Surveys	Teacher Interviews/Focus Groups

Recruitment & and Retention Parent & and Community Involvement	Primary Sources of Data	Secondary Sources of Data
Recruitment and Retention Strategies	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews	Teacher Interviews/Focus Groups
Parent Involvement: opportunities, information, level	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews	Parent Survey
Community Connections	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews	APR

Program Outcomes	Primary Sources of Data	Secondary Sources of Data
Evaluation Activities	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews	Teacher Interviews/Focus Groups
Outcomes: academic, attendance, engagement, social skills, other	Director/Site Coordinator Interviews	Parent and Student Surveys