

Texas 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant Evaluation: Texas Afterschool Centers on Education

Project Director and Site Coordinator Survey
Results on the Texas Education Agency's
Coaching to Quality System and Program-
Related Challenges

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Acronyms

AIR	American Institutes for Research
CTQ	Coaching to Quality
HIT	High-impact tutoring
HQIM	High-quality instructional materials
OST	Out-of-school time
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
TEA	Texas Education Agency
Texas ACE	Texas Afterschool Centers on Education
21st CCLC	21st Century Community Learning Centers

Executive Summary

The Texas Afterschool Centers on Education (Texas ACE) is funded by the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grant program. Texas ACE provides a wide array of academic enrichment and youth development activities during non-school hours, with the primary goals of enhancing students' academic, social, and emotional well-being and cultivating skills and interests that will help them become college and career ready.

As a condition of receiving federal 21st CCLC funding for this program, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is required to conduct a statewide evaluation of Texas ACE. In 2022, TEA contracted with the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) to conduct this evaluation. This report, which is the final report in a series covering Texas ACE program implementation, presents the results of a project director and site coordinator survey collected during spring 2025. The survey covered project director and site coordinator **experience of TEA's new Coaching to Quality (CTQ) system** as well as **site coordinator experience of program-related challenges**.

The Texas ACE Roadmap, TEA's Coaching to Quality System, and the Survey

TEA's CTQ system is part of the Texas ACE comprehensive continuous improvement system. This system, described in [*Texas ACE Roadmap to High-Quality Out-of-School Time*](#) (Texas ACE Roadmap), begins with the Texas ACE "5 to Drive," which provides five foundational quality areas around stakeholder involvement, programming, key strategies, activity types, and overall goals. Building on these five "health monitoring" areas, the CTQ system is designed to help Texas ACE grantees move beyond mere compliance toward higher levels of program quality. To accomplish this, **the CTQ system includes observation visits (using an observation protocol and the "5 to Drive" health check), annual strategic planning, monthly coaching calls, and ongoing training and professional development**. Because the CTQ system was new as of spring 2025, TEA requested that AIR administer a survey covering project director and site coordinator experience with the system. Additionally, TEA requested that the survey include site coordinator questions concerning CTQ observation protocol-aligned topics to help identify any areas of common strength or struggle. **During spring 2025, AIR therefore collected a total of 54 project director surveys (57.4% response rate) and 490 site coordinator surveys (74.8% response rate)**. As noted above, the results of the survey are the subject of this report.

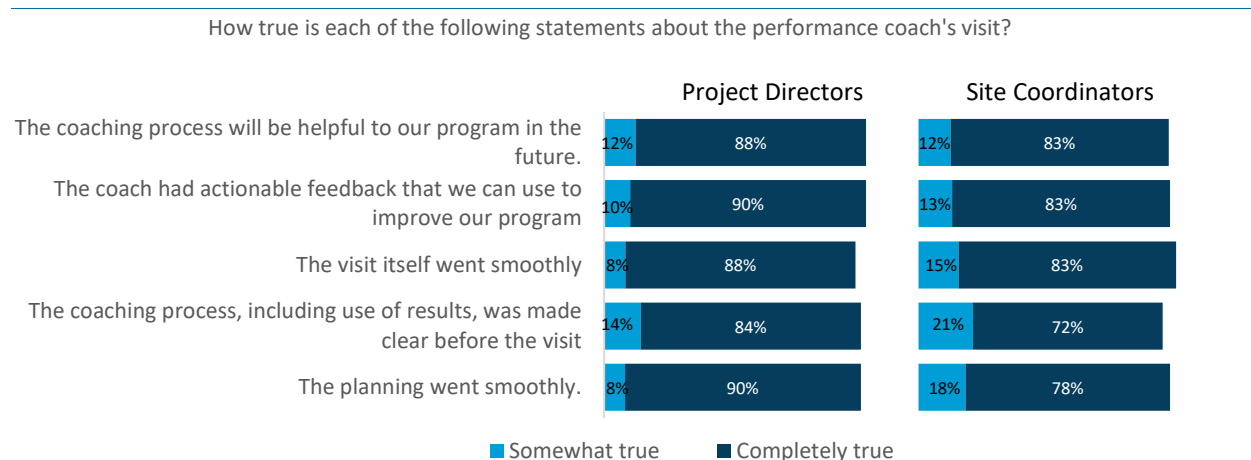
Project Director and Site Coordinator Experience of TEA's CTQ System

The CTQ experience section of the survey started with a question about whether respondents had reviewed the Texas ACE Roadmap. The vast majority of Texas ACE project directors said "yes, extensively" (82%), whereas site coordinators were more likely to say "yes, some" (50%).

Similarly, all project directors said they were aware of the CTQ system in particular, and 82% of site coordinators said they were aware of it. This is expected given the role of project directors (overseeing a grant funding multiple sites) versus that of site coordinators. All project directors also reported having been visited as part of the CTQ system, but only 37% of site coordinators said they had received a site visit (again, this is expected given that TEA visited at least one site per grant during 2024–25, but not all sites).

Project directors and site coordinators who said they received a CTQ coaching visit were asked to indicate their perceptions about the visit quality. For each item, nearly all respondents (both project directors and site coordinators) said that each statement was at least “somewhat true,” with most selecting “completely true.” **This response pattern shows that Texas ACE staff who received a CTQ visit generally found the visit helpful and reported that planning for the visit was relatively smooth.** Note, however, that site coordinators were slightly less likely to respond “completely true” than were project directors, suggesting existence of a modest growth area in terms of communication to and involvement of site coordinators, at least as of spring 2025 (see Exhibit ES1).

Exhibit ES1. Texas ACE Project Director and Site Coordinator Survey Responses Concerning Their Coaching to Quality Visit



Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator and Project Director survey administered by AIR during spring 2025.

Note. All project director percentages are based on 49–50 responses, whereas site coordinator percentages are based on 177–179 responses. Only responses of “somewhat true” and “completely true” are shown, so percentages for any one item do not sum to 100%.

Finally, project directors were asked three questions about how true it was that the monthly coaching calls were helpful. **About three quarters of project directors said that it was “completely true” that the calls would help them (a) make meaningful improvements to their program, (b) find solutions to program-related challenges, and (c) better understand the**

“5 to Drive” compliance areas and how they relate to their program. No respondents said that it was “not at all true” that the calls helped at least a little in these areas.

Site Coordinator Perceptions of Program Strengths and Challenges

Site coordinators were asked a series of questions about potential program-related challenge areas. The purpose of these questions was to help TEA identify areas of common strength as well as areas where additional TEA training might be helpful. The topics covered by the questions included positive out-of-school time (OST) culture, staffing, activity provision, instruction, and program planning. **For each of these topics, site coordinators were presented with a list of potential challenges and asked to indicate whether they have effective strategies, need to improve but know how to do so, or need to improve and would like additional training.** See Exhibit ES2 for a summary of site coordinator responses.

Exhibit ES2. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Responses to Program-Related Questions

Topic	Areas of strength	Areas of needed support
Positive OST culture	Site coordinators reported broad strength in this area, with about three quarters or more saying they have effective strategies for each challenge listed. Particular strengths were “positive relationships between youth and staff” (91% saying they have effective strategies) and “providing youth with opportunities for making meaningful decisions about how they spend their time in Texas ACE” (84% with effective strategies).	Very few site coordinators indicated wanting additional training for positive OST culture-related challenges. The item receiving the greatest proportion of support requests was “providing youth with age-appropriate leadership opportunities,” with about 4% saying their program needed to improve and they would like additional training to do so.
Strategic staffing	Most site coordinators reported having effective strategies for these items or needing to improve but knowing how to do so. Two challenge areas of general strength were “finding program staff who are engaging when leading activities” (58% with effective strategies, 31% saying they know how to improve) and “helping program staff design or select activities that support program goal achievement” (61% with effective strategies, and 27% knowing how to improve).	The challenge area for which site coordinators most frequently said they wanted additional training was “staff burnout,” with 21% saying they would like additional training. “Reducing staff day-to-day stress” was second, with 16% saying they would like additional training. However, site coordinators associated with Cycle 12 (i.e., who are newer) were more likely to say they want this type of support than Cycle 11 site coordinators.
Activity provision	The challenge areas with greatest strength (effective strategies) were “offering activities that are age-appropriate” (86% with effective strategies) and “providing activities that engage all students regardless of ability” (72% with effective strategies, 22% knowing how to improve).	The areas receiving the greatest proportion of support requests included “keeping youth engaged during activities with academic content” (10% requesting additional training in this area) and “providing activities that promote higher order skill development” (10% as well).

Topic	Areas of strength	Areas of needed support
Instruction	Areas of greatest strength included “regularly communicate with school-day teachers on student behavioral and academic progress” (73% with effective strategies, 22% knowing how to improve) and “aligning our activities’ academic content with school-day learning” (71% with effective strategies, 23% knowing how to improve).	Areas of greatest challenge were “training staff in practices that support inclusion of special populations” (19% requesting training support) and “helping less experienced staff improve in terms of instructional effectiveness” (14% requesting training support). Note that here, again, Cycle 12 site coordinators were more likely to request training support compared with Cycle 11 site coordinators. Additionally, site coordinators not associated with school-district grants were more likely to request training.
Program planning	Areas of greatest strength were “establishing clear staff performance expectations” (80% with effective strategies, 16% knowing how to improve) and “establishing clear job responsibilities” (81% with effective strategies, 15% knowing how to improve).	The program planning items receiving the most requests for additional training were “finding potential community partners” (13%) and “establishing local partnerships” (12%).

Source. Survey administered to 655 Texas ACE site coordinators during spring 2025.

Finally, following each of the topic areas listed in Exhibit ES2, the survey asked respondents who indicated having effective strategies or knowing how to improve (for any item) to **provide their best practices or solutions in an open-ended text box**. About 250–350 responses were received for each topic. Qualitative analysis of these responses revealed that, across topics, **site coordinators tended to stress the importance of effective communication practices (within the program, with the steering committee, and with all stakeholder groups); alignment between Texas ACE programming and the school-day, including data review and goal alignment; and inclusion of student voice and choice**. These themes strongly overlap with previously identified best practices, notably as presented in the previous report, [*Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Evaluation: Texas Afterschool Centers on Education—Descriptive Study of Site Coordinator Perspectives on Program Goals, Recruitment, Activity Provision, School-Day Linkages, and District Support \(2022–23\)*](#).

Overall, the findings of this report are very positive concerning TEA’s CTQ system while also suggesting areas for targeted training and further support.

Introduction

The Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program addresses the needs of students who attend schools that are struggling in their efforts to fully support students, located largely in communities that experience poverty. Texas Afterschool Centers on Education (Texas ACE), funded by the federal 21st CCLC grant program, provide a wide array of academic enrichment and youth development activities during non-school hours, primarily after school and during the summer. These activities are designed to enhance students' academic, social, and emotional well-being, and to cultivate skills and interests that will help them become college and career ready.

As a condition of receiving federal 21st CCLC funding for this program, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is required to conduct a statewide evaluation of Texas ACE. In early 2022, TEA contracted with the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) to conduct this evaluation, with work continuing through summer 2026. The evaluation comprises a series of data collection activities and attendant reports covering program characteristics, program implementation, exploration of the relationships between program characteristics and student outcomes, and program impact.

This report presents results from a project director and site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025. The survey covered project director and site coordinator experience of TEA's new Coaching to Quality system (CTQ system; described below), as well as site coordinator experience of program-related challenges. A full copy of the survey is provided in Appendix A.

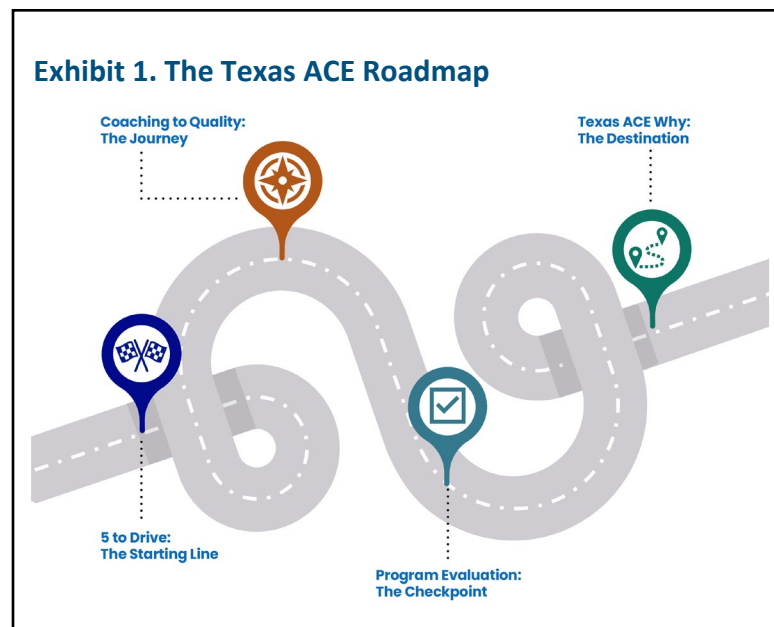
The Texas ACE Roadmap, TEA's Coaching to Quality System, and the Survey

TEA's CTQ system is part of the Texas ACE comprehensive continuous improvement system. This system, described in the *Texas ACE Roadmap to High-Quality Out-of-School Time* (Texas ACE Roadmap; Texas ACE, n.d.), begins with "5 to Drive," which provides five foundational quality areas around stakeholder involvement, programming, key strategies, activity types, and overall goals. Building on these five "health monitoring" areas, the CTQ system is designed to help Texas ACE grantees move beyond mere compliance toward higher levels of program quality.

To accomplish this, **the CTQ system includes observation visits (using an observation protocol and "5 to Drive" health check), annual strategic planning, monthly coaching calls, and ongoing training and professional development.** These quality improvement efforts help Texas ACE grantees move toward the "Texas ACE Why" (i.e., providing students with "equitable access to academic and nonacademic learning experiences outside of school in order to succeed in

college, career, and life”).¹ Progress toward this goal is assessed via periodic statewide and local-level evaluation (see Exhibit 1).

Because the CTQ system was relatively new in spring 2025, TEA requested that AIR administer a survey covering project director and site coordinator experience of the system. Additionally, TEA requested that the survey include site coordinator questions to help identify any areas of common strength or struggle; the question topics aligned with the CTQ observation protocol. The results of the survey are the subject of this report.



Overview of Survey Data Collection

AIR administered the survey online in May and June 2025. The survey was designed to be taken by all active project directors and site coordinators. Emails were sent to project directors associated with 94 grants and 655 Texas ACE programs. By July 1, 2025, AIR had received 490 complete site coordinator survey responses, for a total site coordinator survey response rate of 74.8% (based on 655 total centers). Only 54 project director surveys were received, for a response rate of 57.4% (based on 94 total programs). Total surveys received are shown in Exhibit 2, presented by the grant- and center-level characteristics used to analyze the survey response data.

¹ *Texas ACE Roadmap to High-Quality Out-of-School Time*, page 11.

Exhibit 2. Texas ACE Survey Respondents by Grant or Center Characteristics

Grant or center characteristic	Project director	Site coordinator
Grant Cycle¹		
Cycle 11	23 (43%)	246 (50%)
Cycle 12	31 (57%)	244 (50%)
School-District Grant Status		
School-district grant	37 (69%)	336 (69%)
Non-school-district grant	17 (31%)	154 (31%)
Elementary-Only Centers Versus Other Centers		
Elementary-only sites	41 (76%)	315 (64%)
Non-elementary-only sites	13 (24%)	175 (36%)
Center Locale		
City	21 (39%)	206 (42%)
Suburban	8 (15%)	85 (17%)
Town	11 (20%)	83 (17%)
Rural	14 (26%)	110 (22%)
Missing locale	-	6 (2%)

Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

¹ “Grant cycle” refers to the grant cohort, or when the grant was first awarded. Cycle 11 began operating in July 2021, and Cycle 12 began operating in August 2023.

Additional respondent characteristics are presented in Appendix B.

Organization of the Report

This report presents the survey results, starting with project directors’ and site coordinators’ perspectives on CTQ activities. The report then presents site coordinator-reported strengths and challenges related to positive out-of-school time (OST) culture, staffing, activity provision, instruction, and program planning. Where statistically significant (determined via chi-square tests, $p > 0.05$) and deemed practically meaningful, site coordinator responses are also provided by center- or grant-level characteristics (grant cycle, grantee school district status, elementary-only center status [serving elementary grades only or not], and locale). Appendix C presents all statistically significant center- and grant-level characteristic comparison results, including those included in the main report.² In each section pertaining to strengths and

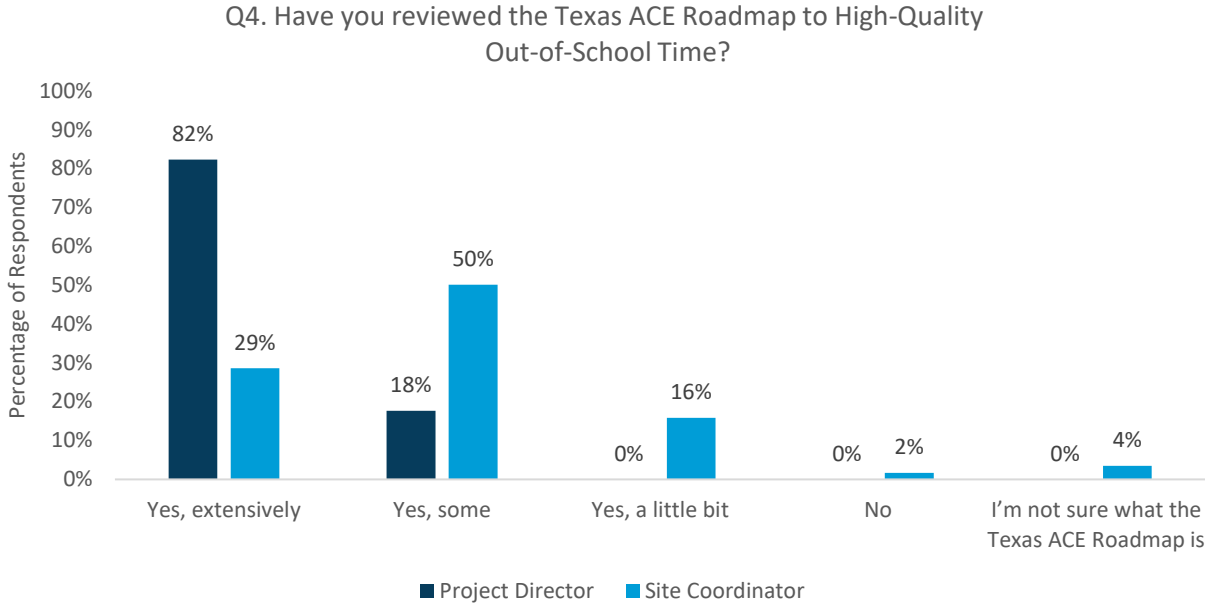
² An insufficient number of project director surveys were received to conduct chi-square analyses by grant characteristics.

challenges, site coordinator—provided best practices and solutions are also reported (gathered from open-ended item responses), along with links to key TEA resources. The report concludes with a brief discussion of findings.

Project Director and Site Coordinator Perceptions of TEA’s Coaching to Quality Initiative

Because the Texas ACE Roadmap and the CTQ system were both relatively new to grantees in spring 2025, the first set of questions in the survey asked respondents whether they had reviewed the Texas ACE Roadmap. Most Texas ACE project directors said “yes, extensively” (82%), while site coordinators were more likely to say “yes, some” (50%) (see Exhibit 3). Note that 2% of site coordinators said that they had not reviewed the Texas ACE Roadmap, and another 4% said that they were not sure what the Texas ACE Roadmap was. Project directors are expected to have greater familiarity with the Texas ACE Roadmap given their role within programs, so these results are congruent with those expectations.

Exhibit 3. Texas ACE Project Director and Site Coordinator Familiarity With the Texas ACE Roadmap



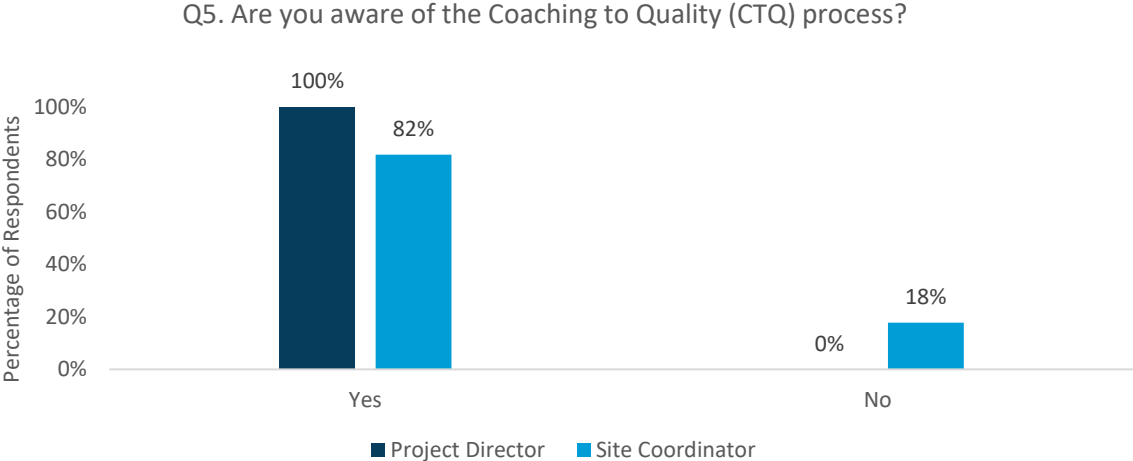
Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 51 project director surveys and 485 site coordinator surveys.

Along similar lines, all project directors said that they were aware of the CTQ system specifically. Most site coordinators also indicated awareness of the system, but a minority

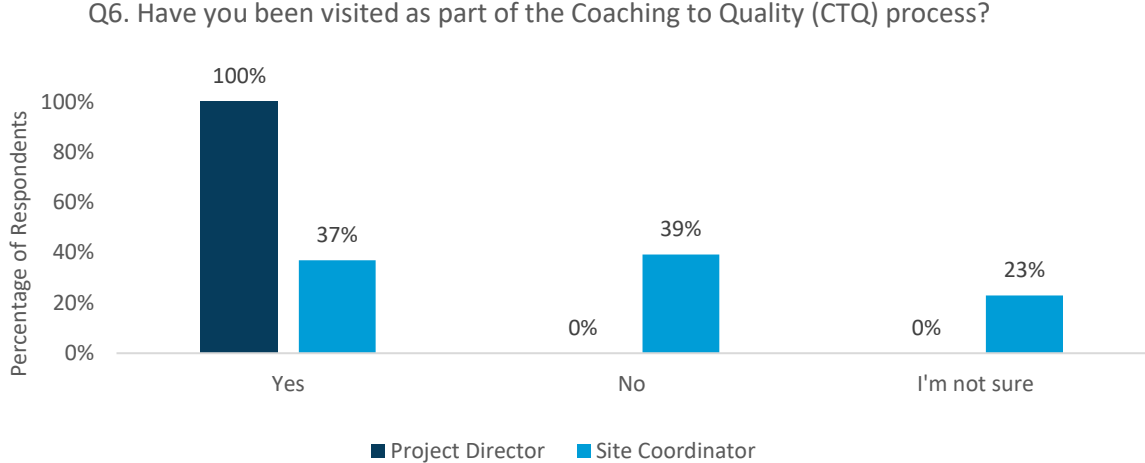
(18%) said that they were not aware of it (see Exhibit 4). This result was also expected, given that each grantee was visited by a TEA CTQ site visit observer during 2024–25, but not every site associated with each grant was visited. Exhibit 5 shows that all project directors responding to the survey said that they had received a coaching visit as part of the CTQ system, compared with just 37% of site coordinators (23% of site coordinators said they were unsure).

Exhibit 4. Texas ACE Project Director and Site Coordinator Awareness of TEA’s Coaching to Quality Process



Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.
 Note. Based on 51 project director surveys and 484 site coordinator surveys.

Exhibit 5. Texas ACE Project Director and Site Coordinator Report of Coaching to Quality Visits

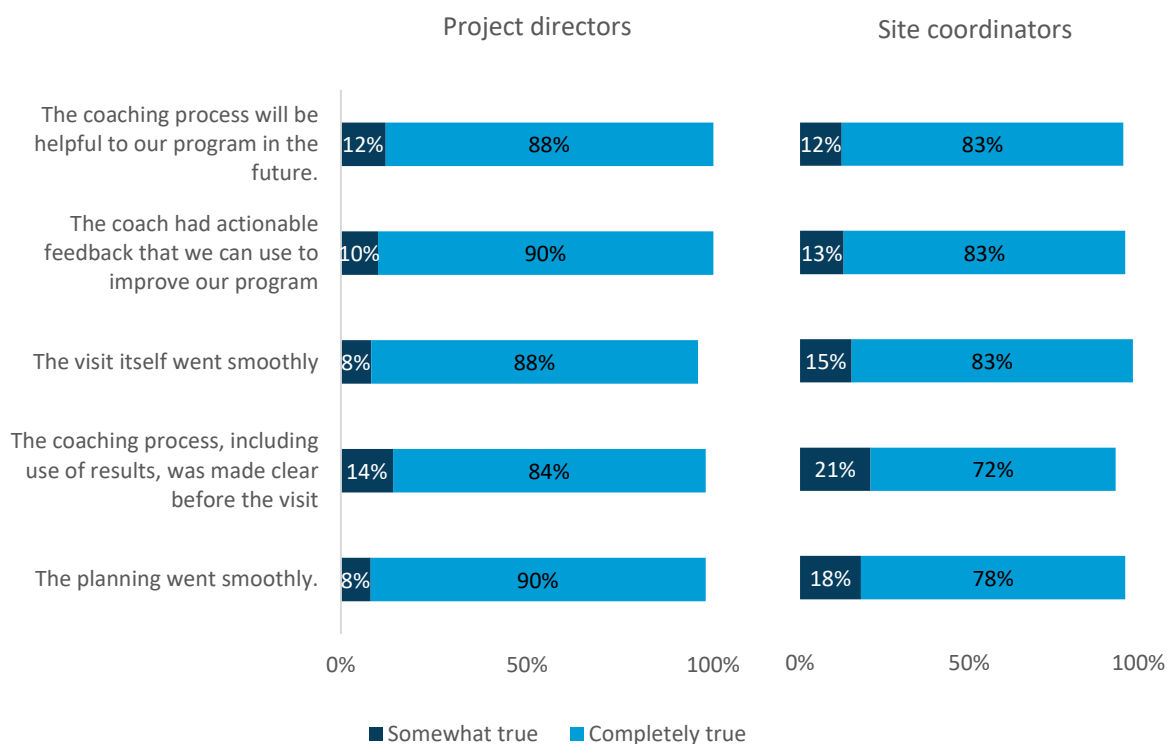


Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.
 Note. Based on 51 project director surveys and 484 site coordinator surveys.

Respondents who said that they had received a CTQ-related visit were then asked about the quality of that visit. As shown in Exhibit 6, respondents rated the extent to which a series of statements about the CTQ visit was true, including items such as whether the coaching process would be “helpful to our program in the future” and whether “the visit itself went smoothly.” Nearly all respondents, both project directors and site coordinators, said that each statement was at least “somewhat true,” with most selecting “completely true.” **This response pattern shows that Texas ACE staff who received a CTQ visit generally found the visit helpful and experienced planning for the visit as a relatively smooth process.** Note, however, that site coordinators were slightly less likely to respond “completely true” than project directors. This indicates a modest opportunity for growth in terms of communicating with and involving site coordinators, at least as of spring 2025.

Exhibit 6. Texas ACE Project Director and Site Coordinator Survey Responses Concerning Their Coaching to Quality Visit

Q7. How true is each of the following statements about the performance coach’s visit? [Question shown to respondents reporting a visit.]

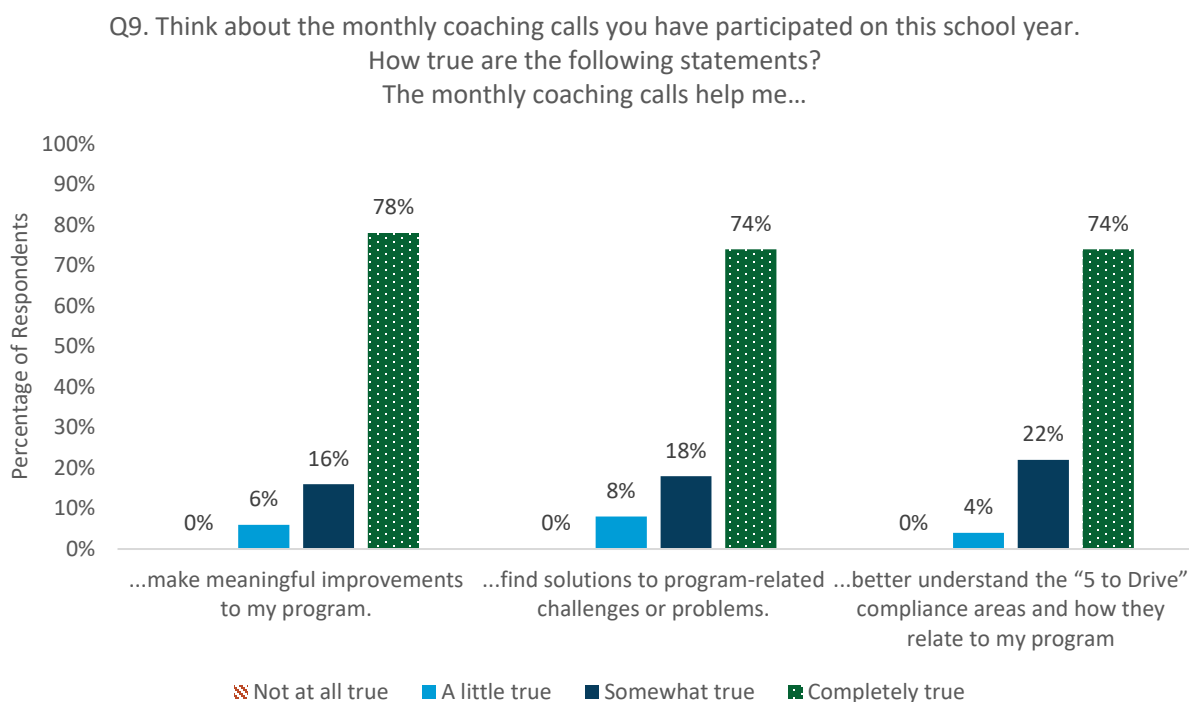


Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. All project director percentages are based on 49–50 responses. All site coordinator percentages are based on 177–179 responses. Only responses of “somewhat true” and “completely true” are shown, so percentages for any one item do not sum to 100%.

One way in which project director roles differ from site coordinator roles is that project directors participate in monthly CTQ coaching calls. A short series of questions only for project directors was included in the survey about those calls. As shown in Exhibit 7, about three-quarters of project directors said that it was “completely true” that the calls helped them make meaningful improvements to their program, find solutions to program-related challenges, and better understand the “5 to Drive” compliance areas and how they relate to their program. No respondents said that it was “not at all true” that the calls helped at least a little in these areas. Overall, **this pattern shows that project directors are finding the coaching calls helpful** (noting that about half of project directors are not reflected in these data because they did not respond to the survey).

Exhibit 7. Texas ACE Project Director Perspectives on Coaching to Quality Monthly Coaching Calls



Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. All project director percentages are based on 50 responses.

Finally, the survey included the following question about TEA health monitoring associated with the Texas ACE “5 to Drive,” as described in the Texas ACE Roadmap: “Has health monitoring associated with the Texas ACE ‘5 to Drive’ helped you improve your program?” Nearly all respondents said that it had, with 40% saying it had “helped some” and another 58% saying it had “helped a lot.”

Overall, survey responses about TEA’s CTQ system showed broad positive reception of CTQ activities. The one caveat remains the low survey response rate among project directors. Given the overall positive reception by project directors and site coordinators who did respond to the survey, however, **the survey results suggest that the CTQ system is broadly perceived by Texas ACE project directors and site coordinators as helpful for program improvement efforts.**

Site Coordinator Perceptions of Program Strengths and Challenges

This section presents response data provided by site coordinators on program-related topics, including the creation of a positive OST culture, staffing, activity provision, instruction, and program planning.

The first two topics were intentionally aligned with CTQ observation protocol quality domains (**Quality Domain 1: OST Culture** and **Quality Domain 2: Strategic Staffing**). The remaining topics—which cover activity delivery—only generally overlap with the CTQ **Quality Domain 3: Effective Instruction**. This is because Quality Domain 3 was still being finalized when the survey was developed.

Each subsection also includes quotes provided by site coordinators concerning solutions and best practices related to the potential challenges covered in the survey. These quotes are taken from open-ended items that followed each set of questions and specifically asked site coordinators to report solutions they wanted to share with Texas ACE colleagues across the state. Qualitative thematic analysis of these open-ended responses is also provided.

TEA CTQ Quality Domains and CTQ Resources

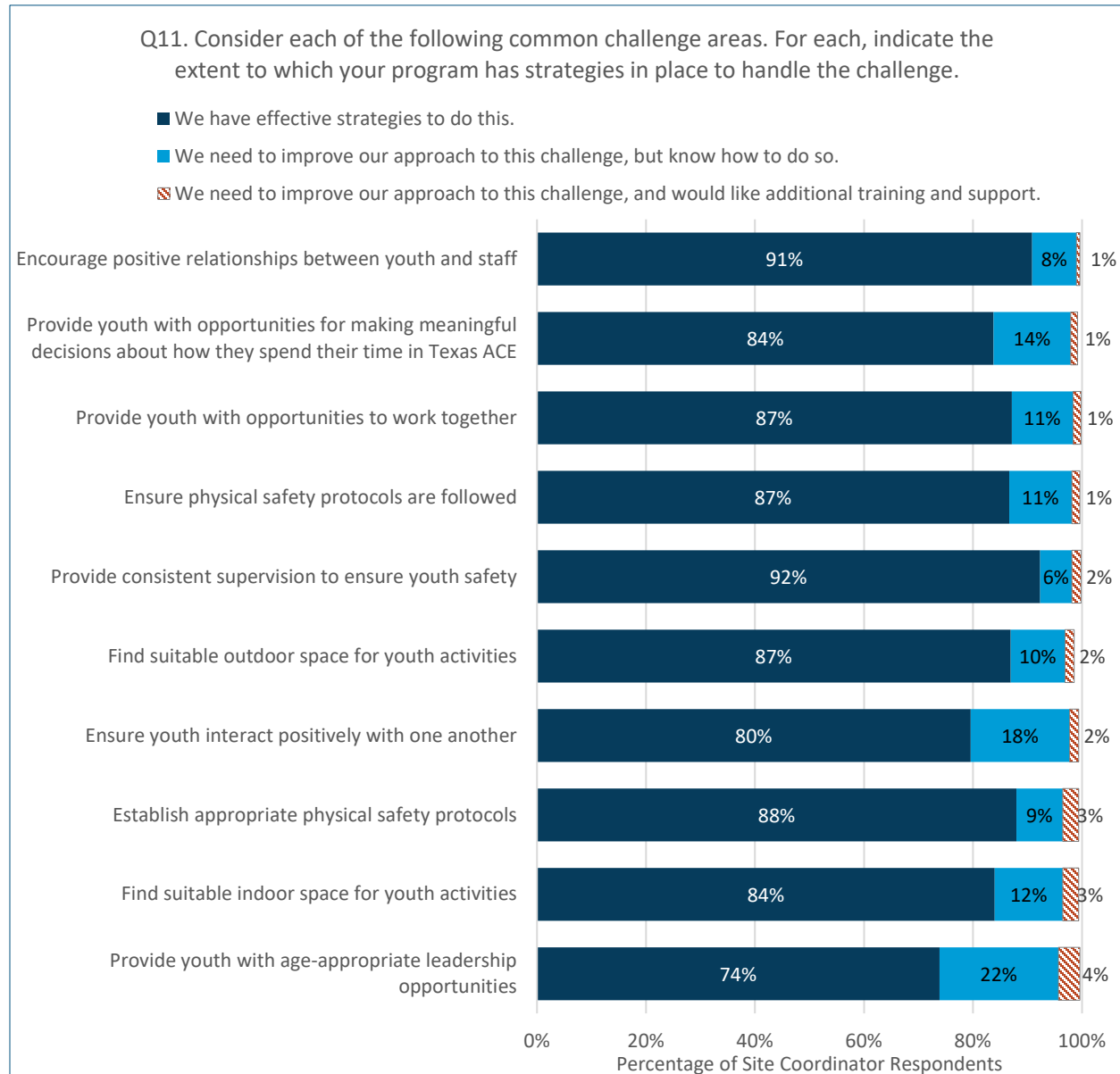
TEA has provided multiple trainings on the CTQ system, including trainings on the quality domains, the observation protocol, and CTQ as a whole. These trainings can be found at <https://mytexasace.org/training> (registration and log-in required).

On this webpage, note in particular the training videos and resources under the boxes titled “Coaching to Quality Webinar Series” and “Coaching to Quality Deep Dive Institute.” The first series provides a comprehensive overview of the CTQ system, including its broad purpose and Quality Domains 1–3. The deep dive series provides training materials and resources that explore the “Texas ACE Why” (briefly referenced in the introduction to this report), TEA’s plans for CTQ system roll-out, CTQ observation protocol domains, CTQ quality indicators, and CTQ observation examples and guidance.

Quality Domain 1: Positive OST Culture

The first CTQ observation protocol domain is Positive OST Culture. This domain covers aspects of youth safety; the availability of appropriate indoor and outdoor space; and the creation of a safe, supportive, and academically enriching environment. The survey included questions that covered these aspects, asking respondents to indicate whether they had effective strategies for each aspect or would like additional training in that area (see Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey Responses Concerning Positive OST Culture



Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Responses of “not applicable” are not shown in the chart but were included in the denominator for calculating percentages. Percentages are based on 479–482 responses per item.

As shown in Exhibit 8, roughly three-quarters or more of respondents said that their program had “effective strategies to do this” for each item. The strongest area was “encourage positive relationships between youth and staff” and the weakest was “provide youth with age-appropriate leadership opportunities.” Only a small minority of respondents indicated that they

wanted training on any particular item, suggesting that most site coordinators felt capable of handling challenges related to providing a positive OST culture, at least as described by the items shown in Exhibit 8.

That said, there were some statistically significant differences in how site coordinators responded to these items when analyzed by grant cycle. For several items, site coordinators associated with Cycle 12 were more likely to say that they needed to “improve our approach to this challenge, and would like additional training and support.” The differences were statistically significant for the following items: “establish appropriate physical safety protocols” (5% of Cycle 12 site coordinators vs. 1% of Cycle 11 site coordinators requested training); “provide consistent supervision to ensure youth safety” (3% of Cycle 12 site coordinators vs. 1% of Cycle 11 site coordinators); and “find suitable indoor space for youth activities” (5% of Cycle 12 site coordinators vs. 1% of Cycle 11 site coordinators). (See Appendix Exhibit C–11.) Still, the proportion of Cycle 12 site coordinators wanting additional training in these areas was relatively small and generally expected, given that Cycle 12 grants were newer than Cycle 11 grants.

For items associated with Quality Domain 1: Positive OST Culture, site coordinators who said that their program had effective strategies (for any item) or that they knew how to improve in a given area (again, for any item) were asked to share best practices or solutions via an open-ended text box. A total of 326 responses were provided, which AIR analyzed qualitatively using NVivo software. One theme in particular emerged from this analysis: **Communication and coordination with school-day staff is foundational to program quality.** For example, one site coordinator said that “good communication and a good relationship with the school administrators has been crucial for the availability of spaces,” while another said that “a common theme that has helped our program is to have clear and effective communication with all frontline staff.”

Overall, respondents described communication with teachers, administrators, and school teams as central to student support, program alignment, and day-to-day operations. Note that communication was framed not only as information sharing, but also as an ongoing collaborative process that allowed afterschool programming to remain responsive to school priorities, student needs, and emerging challenges. This is a recurrent theme within AIR’s recent research on Texas ACE, with effective communication emerging as a foundational best practice. See the findings presented in [*Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Evaluation: Texas Afterschool Centers on Education, Descriptive Study of Site Coordinator Perspectives on Strategic Planning, Partnerships, and Engagement \(2023–24\)*](#) (Bailey et al.,

Texas ACE CTQ Spotlight Examples for Quality Domain 1

TEA has gathered program quality highlights aligned with the CTQ domains and [placed them on a webpage organized by domain](#) (registration and log-in required). To build a positive OST culture, [one Texas ACE program worked to foster positive youth interactions via two program activities.](#)

2025) and [Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Evaluation: Texas Afterschool Centers on Education, Qualitative Study of Perspectives on Vision, Mission, and Goals and School Community Engagement \(2023–24\)](#) (Fales et al., 2025).

Related to communication, the incorporation of student voice and feedback as a driver for program design and engagement also emerged as an important theme in the qualitative analyses, with numerous site coordinators making reference to youth surveys or direct youth feedback on provided activities. Ensuring that youth are engaged in Texas ACE activities and have an opportunity to provide feedback helps to establish a positive OST culture, enabling Texas ACE staff to more adeptly adjust programming to be safer, more supportive, or more academically engaging.

Additional quotes from site coordinators are presented in the text box that follows.

Effective Strategies or Best Practices Associated With Items Related to Positive OST Culture, as Reported by Site Coordinators

“Always be proactive rather than reactive. Look for potential situations that could pose a situation and try to step in before. If youth are throwing a softball in the direction of the glass door; redirect them to another area. Have them stop and think as to what they should do. Supervision is key to safety. Eyes on youth at all times! Constantly walk around and engage youth.”

“We use restorative practices and community circles to promote mutual respect and understanding among youth. Staff facilitate team-building games and conflict resolution workshops to strengthen social-emotional skills and prevent bullying.”

“In all these areas establishing dialogue with the students at the beginning of program (greeting them, checking in on them, talking to them about things in their life) helps to open up conversation with them. Then as Program starts make sure to establish the rules and expectations of the activity and day.”

“Building solid relationships with school day administration and staff has made way for us to effectively overcome many of these challenges. We adhere to many of the same rules and expectations as the school day for smooth transitions. We also have school day staff on board with us which helps with continuity with little redirection and coaching.”

Quality Domain 2: Strategic Staffing

The second quality domain in the CTQ system is Strategic Staffing. Establishing high quality in terms of strategic staffing means creating well-defined staffing policies that support program goals (e.g., recruitment, hiring, and retention policies), as well as facilitating positive relationships between staff and students. Site coordinators were asked questions related to Quality Domain 2, as shown in Exhibit 9. In contrast to the response patterns observed for Quality Domain 1: Positive OST Culture, many more site coordinators indicated that they wanted additional training and support for items associated with Quality Domain 2. For example, **over a fifth of all respondents said that their program needed to improve and that they would like more training on avoiding staff burnout (21%)**, while **16% said that they wanted additional training and support on reducing day-to-day stress for staff**. Additionally, across all items related to Quality Domain 2, the proportion of respondents indicating that they had effective strategies was smaller than for the items associated with Quality Domain 1, showing that many site coordinators felt their program needed to improve in terms of strategic staffing.

Exhibit 9. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey Responses Concerning Strategic Staffing

Q13. Consider each of the following common challenge areas related to staffing. For each, indicate the extent to which your program has strategies in place to handle the challenge.



Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

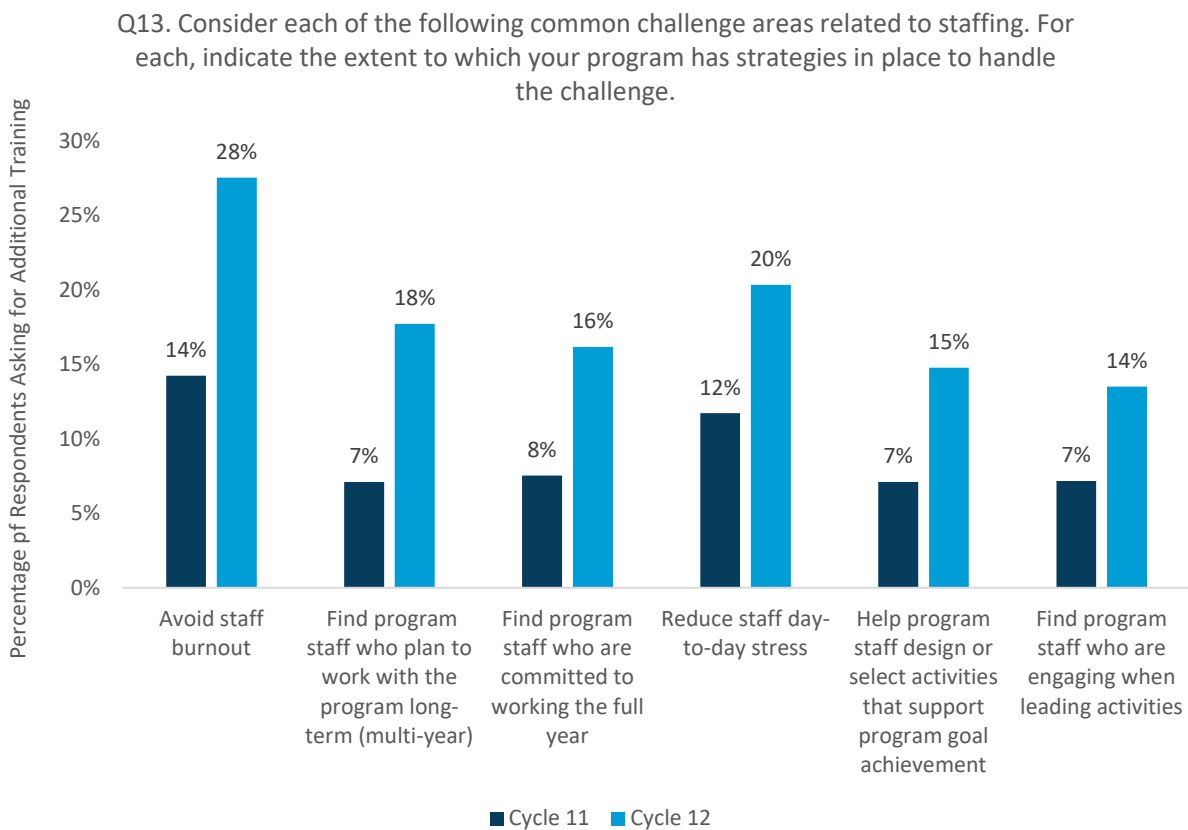
Note. Responses of “not applicable” are not shown in the chart but were included in the denominator for calculating percentages. Percentages are based on 472–476 responses per item.

There were significant and practically meaningful differences in site coordinator response patterns for Quality Domain 2 items when viewed by grant cycle. For many items, **Cycle 12 site coordinators, who started their grants cycles more recently compared to Cycle 11, were more likely than Cycle 11 site coordinators to say that they needed to improve and would like training and support** (see Exhibit 10; also see Appendix Exhibit C–12). Notably, 28% of Cycle 12 site coordinators said that they would like additional training or support on avoiding staff burnout, compared with 14% of Cycle 11 site coordinators.

Texas ACE CTQ Spotlight Examples for Quality Domain 2

On [TEA's CTQ highlights website](#), there are multiple examples covering Quality Domain 2: Strategic Staffing. For example, [one program built a positive work environment by explicitly recognizing Texas ACE staff within the community](#).

Exhibit 10. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Responses Concerning Strategic Staffing, Differences by Cycle



Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Responses of “not applicable” are not shown in the chart but were included in the denominator for calculating percentages. Percentages are based on 237–239 responses per item for Cycle 11 and 235–237 responses per item for Cycle 12. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

Site coordinators who indicated that they had effective strategies to deal with any of the listed staffing challenges related to Quality Domain 2, or who indicated that they knew how to improve, were asked to provide any best practices or strategies related to staffing that they wanted to share with their Texas ACE peers. Site coordinators provided 308 responses. Qualitative analysis of these responses indicated, in particular, that **staff capacity shapes implementation quality**. Note that this seems to work both positively and negatively, based on site coordinator quotes, and that “capacity” is affected by staff morale and sense of worth. For example, one site coordinator discussed the following:

“This year I have been challenged with having staff that have already been burnt out, or feel unseen with being here for multiple years without receiving any kind of raise or regular bonus. The staff often discuss how it is hard to continue when there are multiple breaks a year with no work (spring break, winter break, before school starts after summer) without having any kind of regular wage increase. I do believe that staff would be easier to get excited and engaged in activities if they felt that their own needs were being met financially. I recognize that this is a hard time to achieve this with so many funds being cut.”

Other stress sources can be time-related, as another site coordinator explained:

“Teachers are tired from the school day. We align the programs strategically so that the teachers don’t have to stress out about any lesson. We ensure that they are prepped and ready and always have support staff to assist as needed.”

Ensuring that staff feel valued and are provided with the necessary supports helps them to engage and convey their excitement to youth. However, supporting staff in this way is likely to be anything but simple for some programs and could require year-over-year adjustments as challenges shift and staff change.

Additional examples of how site coordinators support their staff are provided in the text box that follows. When reviewing these examples, note in particular that alignment between staff interest and activity types has previously been suggested as a best practice, since doing so bolsters both staff interest and youth engagement. See [*Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Evaluation: Texas Afterschool Centers on Education, Descriptive Study of Site Coordinator Perspectives on Program Goals, Recruitment, Activity Provision, School-Day Linkages, and District Support \(2022–23\)*](#) (Vinson et al., 2024). Note that, once again, strong and effective communication practices undergird these examples.

Effective Strategies or Best Practices Associated With Items Related to Strategic Staffing, as Reported by Site Coordinators

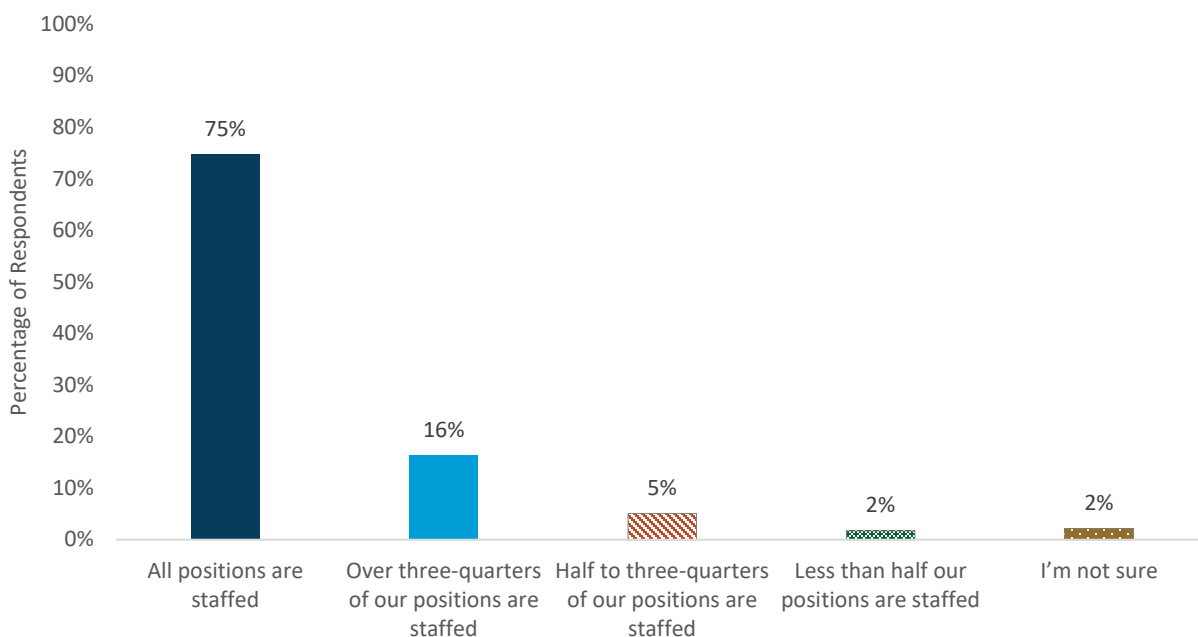
“With finding program staff who are engaging with leading activities, we try our best to accommodate our program staff to what their hobbies are and to see what qualifications they have for the activities we offer in the program.”

“To help program staff design or select activities that support afterschool program goals, start by clearly communicating the specific outcomes the program aims to achieve, such as academic growth or social-emotional development. Conduct needs assessments using student data and feedback to ensure activities are relevant and targeted. Encourage staff to use evidence-based curricula and align each activity directly with one or more program goals. Provide planning tools, training, and regular support to guide staff through intentional design and implementation. Finally, promote a culture of continuous improvement by gathering feedback and using evaluation results to refine activities.”

“One strategy that’s worked well for us is building a positive, team-oriented staff culture. We focus on open communication, giving staff input on activities, and recognizing their hard work throughout the year. To reduce stress and avoid burnout, we keep expectations realistic and check in regularly to offer support. When hiring, we look for people who genuinely enjoy working with kids and can engage them in meaningful ways. While we’re always working toward offering better pay, creating a supportive environment has been key to keeping staff motivated and committed long-term.”

As a final note on the topic of strategic staffing, most site coordinators, in response to a later question concerning staffing vacancies, reported that their programs were fully staffed (75%). About 16% said that “over three-quarters of our positions are staffed,” 5% said that “half to three-quarters of our positions are staffed,” and only 2% said that “less than half our positions are staffed.” Another 2% said “I’m not sure” (see Exhibit 11). These responses suggest that the vast majority of programs were able to fill their staff positions, although a sizeable minority were somewhat short-staffed, at least at the time of survey administration. Unfilled positions can create additional challenges and stress for staff at a given site. Furthermore, staffing levels alone do not capture staff suitability for their roles, skills, stress, burnout, or overall availability, even at fully staffed sites.

Exhibit 11. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey Responses Concerning Level of Texas ACE Staffing



Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 471 responses.

General Instruction-Related Strengths and Challenges

The third section in the survey included items related to activity provision, instruction, and program planning. As stated earlier, these areas overlap with Quality Domain 3: Effective Instruction in Academics and Enrichment, but were not aligned in the same way as the first two quality domains (due to the fact that Quality Domain 3 was still being finalized by TEA at the time of survey development). That said, Quality Domain 3 covers the use of high-quality instruction materials (HQIM), high-impact tutoring (HIT), school-aligned activity provision, and the provision of student interest-based enrichment that reinforces academic and nonacademic skills, and much of the content in this section directly relates to these topics.

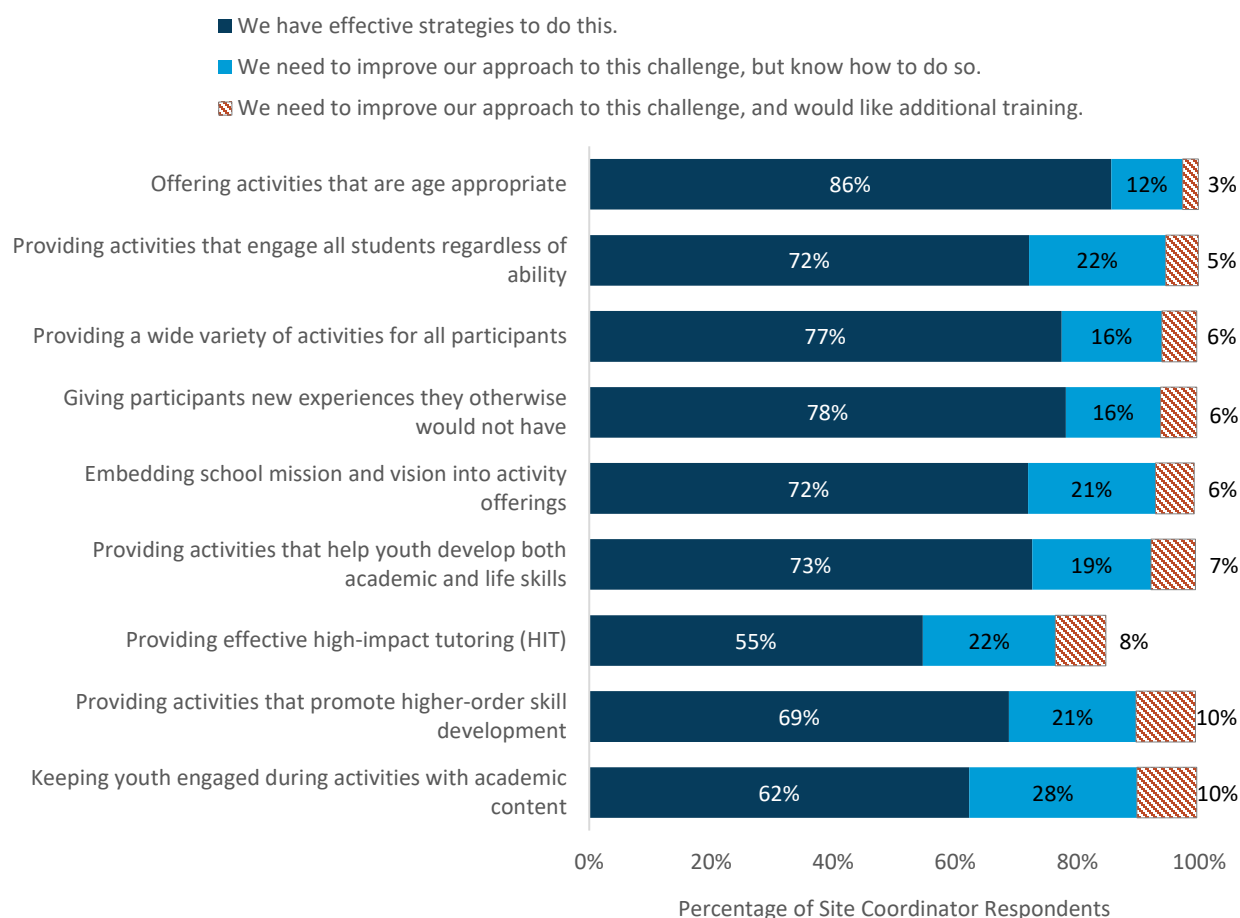
Activity Provision

Site coordinators were first asked questions about activity provision. As shown in Exhibit 12, the vast majority of site coordinators reported having effective strategies for offering age-appropriate activities or a variety of activities. **The areas in which the greatest proportion of site coordinators said they would like additional training included “keeping youth engaged during activities with academic content” (10%) and “providing activities that promote higher-order skill development” (10%).** Note that while about 15% of respondents indicated “not applicable” for “providing effective high-impact tutoring (HIT),” this was unsurprising; Cycle 11

grantees were not required to incorporate HIT, while Cycle 12 grantees were. However, Cycle 11 grantees that wanted to incorporate HIT seemed to want more training than their Cycle 12 peers: Eleven percent of Cycle 11 site coordinators wanted additional training on providing effective HIT, compared with just 6% of Cycle 12 site coordinators. **Cycle 12 site coordinators, on the other hand, were more likely to want additional training on keeping youth engaged in academic content (14%) than Cycle 11 site coordinators (6%).** (See Appendix Exhibit C–14.)

Exhibit 12. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey Responses to Questions About Activity Provision

Q15. Consider each of the following common challenge areas having to do with activity provision. For each, indicate the extent to which your program has strategies in place to handle the challenge.



Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Responses of “not applicable” are not shown in the chart but were included in the denominator for calculating percentages. Percentages are based on 467–471 responses per item.

As with the questions concerning the first two CTQ quality domains, site coordinators who reported effective practices or knowledge of how to improve were asked to provide any activity-related best practices or solutions they wanted to share with other Texas ACE programs. A total of 296 responses were provided. After conducting qualitative analysis on these responses, two prominent themes emerged. **First, many respondents indicated that activities with academic content were most effective when they intentionally reinforced school-day instruction or built on prior learning.** As one site coordinator explained, “[A]cademically, we provide students with an extension of academics that they have already engaged with so they are practicing and not having to acquire new learning which is very helpful.” Interestingly, the same respondent went on to say the following: “I would like to provide more effective high-impact tutoring (HIT), but feel that my ability to do this is limited without having teachers that actually have the experience to do so.” This point relates back to strategic staffing and the desire for more training around HIT.

Second, incorporating student “voice and choice” to drive activity content and delivery was highlighted as an important aspect of activity provision. This manifested in a variety of strategies, such as using student surveys to drive or refine activity options and providing students with a variety of choices between different offerings or within activities. Respondents also noted that they provided age-appropriate activity options. See the text box that follows for site coordinator quotes illustrating these themes.

Effective Strategies or Best Practices Associated With Items Related to Activity Provision, as Reported by Site Coordinators

“We’ve found that the most effective way to engage all students is to intentionally design programs with inclusion in mind, rather than adapting later. This means: Offering multiple ways to participate in every activity (e.g., hands-on, visual, verbal) [and] using Universal Design for Learning principles to plan lessons.”

“We’ve implemented hands-on activities that allow kids to explore their interests, such as project-based learning, STEM challenges, and themed weeks. Giving students voice and choice has significantly boosted participation and enthusiasm.”

“At [Texas] ACE, we try to provide a wide variety of clubs and make the clubs useful in a way that builds life skills or skills students can take with them. Students are encouraged to provide input as to their interests and enrichment/clubs are created around those interests. Many of the clubs and activities provided in [Texas] ACE are things that the campus or the teachers are not already providing such as Art club or cooking club.”

“To provide a wide variety of activities for all participants, we focus on student voice, community partnerships, and intentional planning. We start by surveying students at the beginning of each semester to learn about their interests, hobbies, and future goals. This helps us tailor enrichment offerings that appeal to a broad range of students—from athletics and creative arts to STEM, college & career readiness, and wellness. We also partner with local professionals, organizations, and businesses to bring in guest instructors or experiences that our staff may not be able to offer. This expands our programming without overextending internal resources, and gives students access to real-world expertise.”

“To effectively engage all students, design activities that are age-appropriate and inclusive of different learning styles and ability levels. Integrate the school’s mission and vision into programming to create consistency and purpose in every activity. Offer a variety of hands-on, real-world experiences that not only teach academic content but also build critical life skills like problem-solving, teamwork, and goal setting.”

Instruction

Also related to Quality Domain 3: Effective Instruction, the survey asked site coordinators questions specifically about instruction. In response, **a sizeable minority requested additional training, including support for training staff in practices that promote inclusion of special populations (19%) and assistance with improving the instructional effectiveness of less experienced staff (14%).** An additional **11% requested training on finding staff who are proficient and knowledgeable in the academic subjects embedded in activities** (see Exhibit 13).

Texas ACE CTQ Spotlight Examples for Quality Domain 3

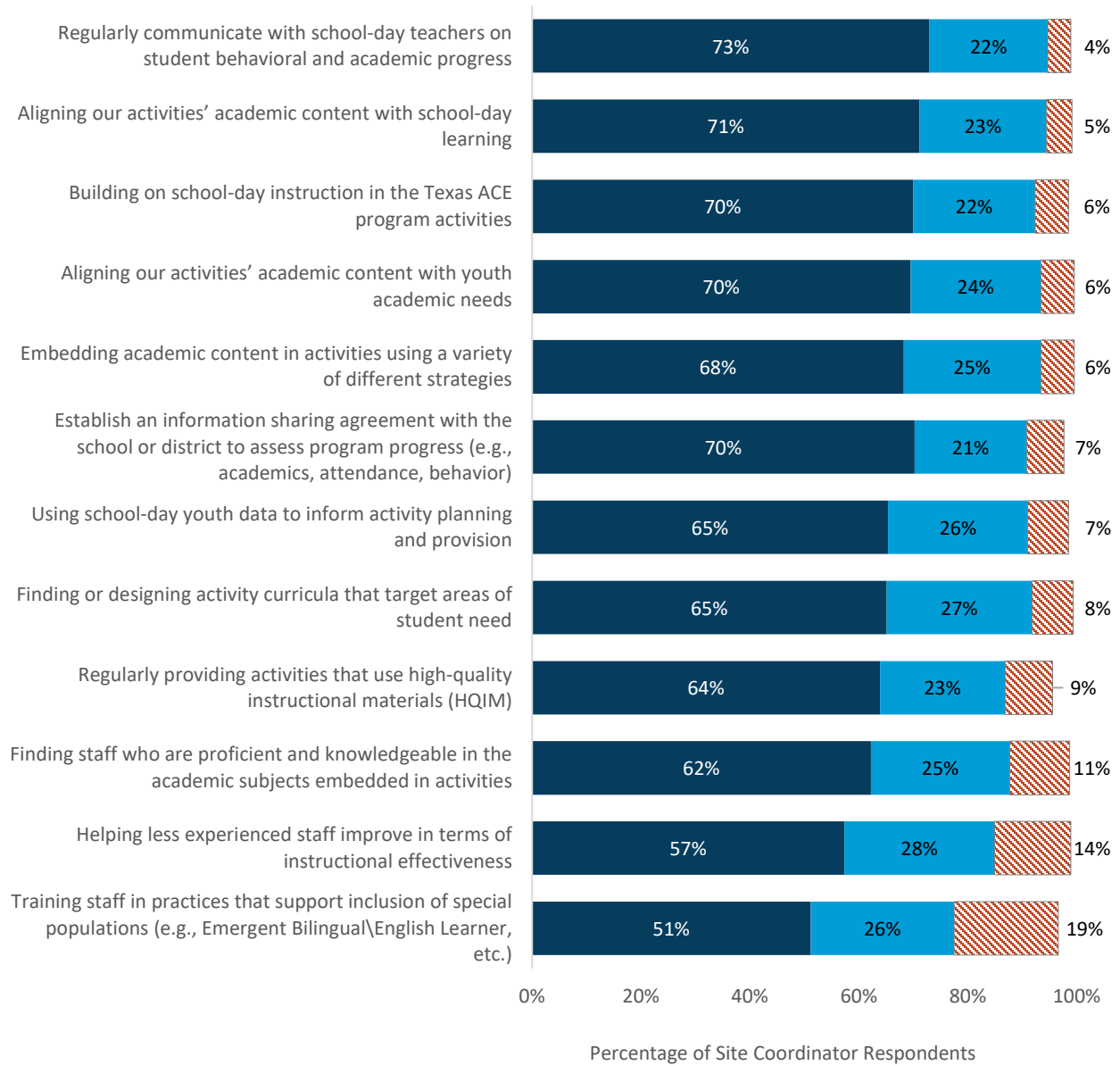
On [TEA's CTQ highlights website](#), there are several video examples covering Quality Domain 3 and effective instruction. For example, [this video](#) shows a staff member engaging youth in an activity with embedded academic content.

There were also numerous statistically significant differences in response patterns to these items. Specifically, **Cycle 12 site coordinators tended to want additional training across many challenge areas** (notably around training staff in practices that support the inclusion of special populations and helping less experienced staff improve their instructional effectiveness), as shown in Exhibit 14 (also in Appendix Exhibit C–17). **Site coordinators associated with non-school-district grants were also more likely than those associated with school-district grants to want additional training in a variety of areas, especially building on school-day instruction, embedding academic content, and aligning activity content with student academic needs** (see Exhibit 15; also see Appendix C–19).

Exhibit 13. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey Responses to Questions About Instruction

Q17. Consider each of the following common challenge areas having to do with instruction. For each, indicate the extent to which your program has strategies in place to handle the challenge.

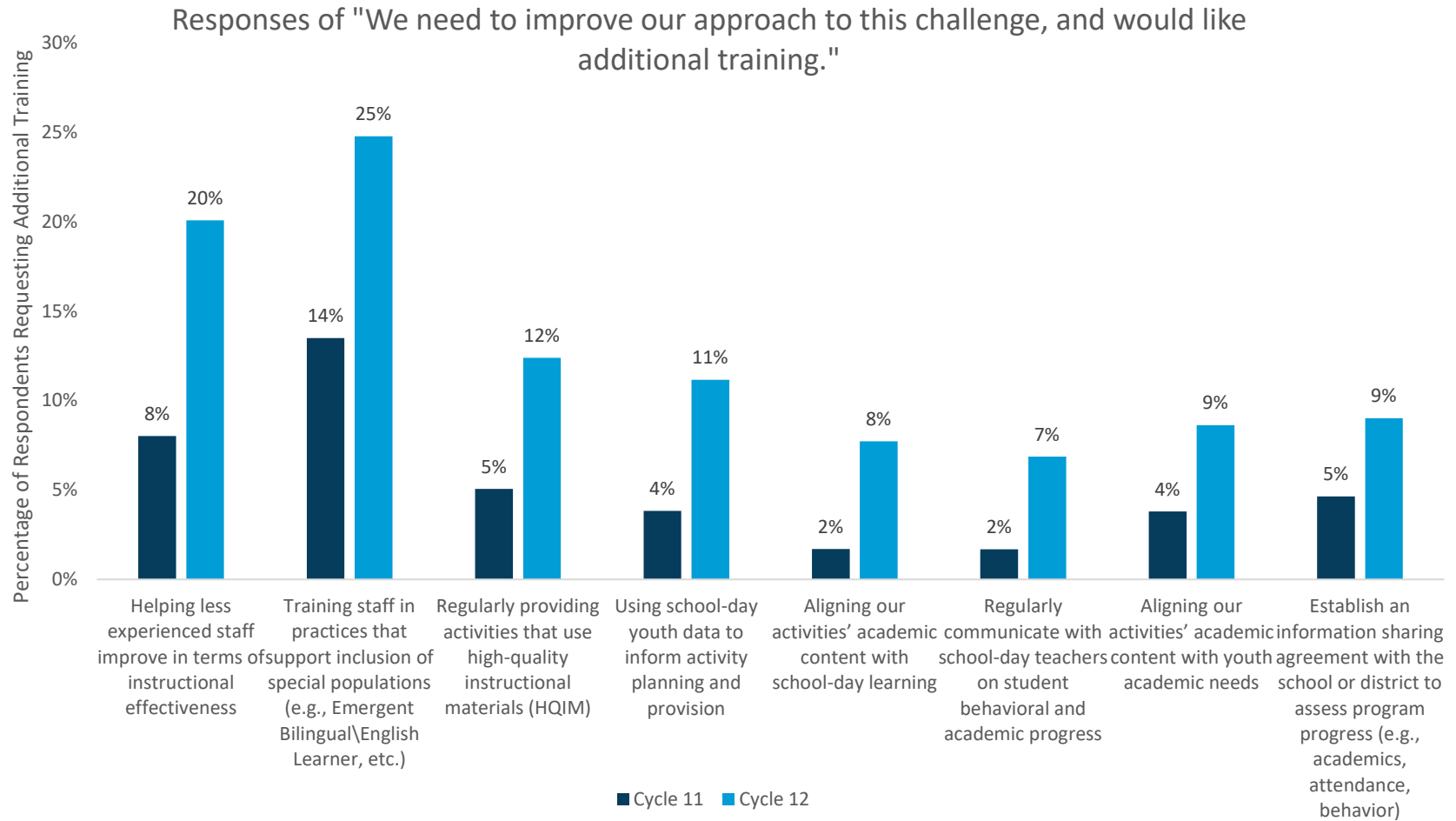
- We have effective strategies to do this.
- We need to improve our approach to this challenge, but know how to do so.
- We need to improve our approach to this challenge, and would like additional training.



Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Responses of “not applicable” are not shown in the chart but were included in the denominator for calculating percentages. Percentages are based on 464–471 responses per item.

Exhibit 14. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey Responses to Questions About Instruction, Differences by Cycle

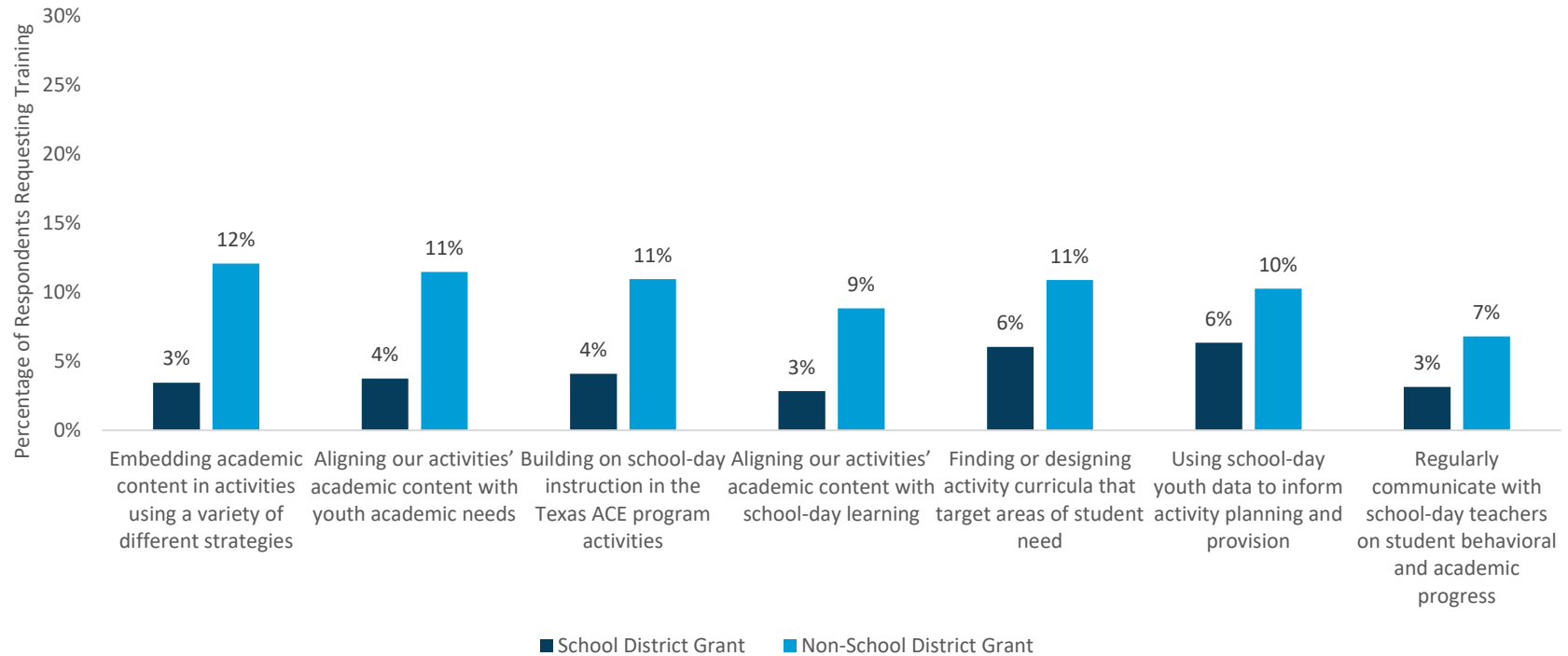


Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

Note. Responses of "not applicable" are not shown in the chart but were included in the denominator for calculating percentages. Percentages are based on 235–237 responses for Cycle 11 and 232–234 responses for Cycle 12.

Exhibit 15. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey Responses to Questions About Instruction, Differences by Grant School District Status

Q17. Consider each of the following common challenge areas having to do with instruction. For each, indicate the extent to which your program has strategies in place to handle the challenge.



Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Responses of “not applicable” are not shown in the chart but were included in the denominator for calculating percentages. Percentages are based on 147–149 responses for sites associated with non-school-district grants and 317–322 responses for sites associated with school-district grants. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

Again, site coordinators who said they had effective strategies or knew how to improve were asked to provide best practices or solutions via an open-ended item, resulting in 273 responses. As with Quality Domain 1: Positive OST Culture, **communication figured prominently in site coordinators' answers regarding high-quality instruction.** For example, concerning regular communication with program stakeholders, one site coordinator said, "This is what drives our program, this IS our program... We meet with the principal, assistant principal, instructional coaches, teachers, students, and parents, to make sure we know and use everything we can to develop a program that is effective for the students." Another said, "we make sure we are in constant communication with the teachers and administrators at our school." Yet another said, "We maintain strong communication with school-day staff to align activities with academic goals and student needs." In many cases, "communication" in these statements included reference to data, data interpretation, and alignment with the school day. This constitutes a second theme concerning alignment with school-day learning, similar to the thematic findings related to activity provision described above. See the text box that follows for more site coordinator quotes.

Effective Strategies or Best Practices Associated With Items Related to Instruction, as Reported by Site Coordinators

"Our after school program is an extension of the regular school day, because most of our staff continue on into the after school program. We base our schedule and staffing off their current work assignment and make the necessary adjustments when needed. Not only does the staff extend into afterschool, but the same ... lessons and academic focus does as well. We would love more core teachers to assist the students during the homework help hour of after school."

"We establish an information sharing agreement with the school or district to assess program progress (e.g., academics, attendance, behavior) by working closely with our [PEIMS data coordinator] on both Middle School and High School campuses as well as our director of [PEIMS]. We regularly communicate with school-day teachers on student behavioral and academic progress, and this allows us to align our activities' academic content with youth academic needs as well as helping us build on school-day instruction in the Texas ACE program activities and to embed academic content in activities using a variety of different strategies."

"Coordinators should work hard to create relationships with the school staff. Join them in PLCs [Professional Learning Community], CIC [Curriculum and Instruction Committee] meetings, luncheons, trainings and events. They open up on how students are struggling, how we can help and sometimes even want to be part of afterschool programming."

Program Planning

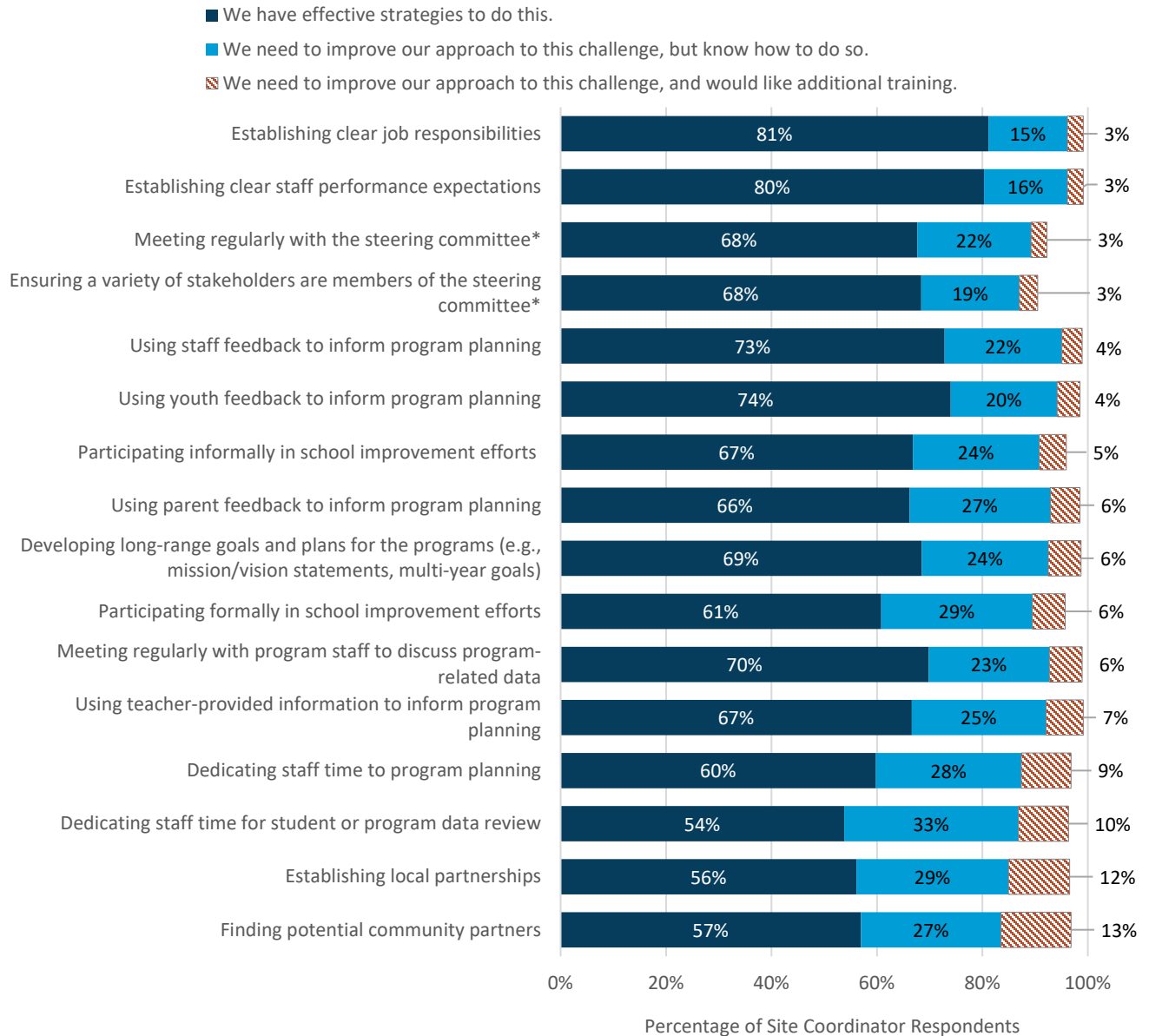
The final set of survey questions related to Quality Domain 3: Effective Instruction concerned program planning. These questions covered aspects such as finding partner agencies, using school data in planning activities, and incorporating feedback into planning. These aspects do not directly address Quality Domain 3, which covers academic and enrichment instruction, but they are certainly related as they can easily affect the quality of instruction.

Overall, site coordinators reported having effective strategies in place for most items related to program planning, with strong majorities saying that they either had strategies in place or knew how to improve. However, **about 13% said that they needed to improve and would like additional training on “finding potential community partners,” while 12% said that they would like additional training on “establishing local partnerships”** (see Exhibit 16). Concerning the latter, site coordinators associated with elementary-only sites were more likely to want additional training (15%, compared with 6% of site coordinators who were not associated with elementary-only sites; see Exhibit C–21). Additionally, site coordinators associated with non-school-district grants were more likely to say that they wanted training on “participating formally in school improvement efforts” than site coordinators associated with school-district grants (12% vs. 4%) (see Exhibit C–22).

Note that items in Exhibit 16 relating to steering committees were only displayed to survey respondents if they had previously indicated that their program had a steering committee (49% said yes, 17% said no, and 34% were unsure). Among those saying yes, 78% (or 185 of 238) said that they participated in the steering committee. Note that as reported in [*Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Evaluation: Texas Afterschool Centers on Education, Descriptive Study of Site Coordinator Perspectives on Strategic Planning, Partnerships, and Engagement \(2023–24\)*](#) (Bailey et al., 2025), only about 64% of site coordinators (as of spring 2024) said that their site had a steering committee (20% said that they were unsure and 16% said that their program did not have a steering committee). This suggests that many site coordinators remain disconnected from a Texas ACE steering committee.

Exhibit 16. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey Responses to Questions About Program Planning

Q22. Consider each of the following common challenge areas relating to program planning. For each, indicate the extent to which your program has strategies in place to handle the challenge.



Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. * = not shown if respondent said “no” or “I’m not sure” when answering Question 20. Based on 463–468 responses for item a and items d–i; 232 responses for item b; and 231 responses for item c.

As with the other sets of survey items, survey respondents were asked an open-ended question about best practices and solutions (with 256 responses). **Qualitative analysis again highlighted the importance of strong communication practices for program planning**, along with the **incorporation of student feedback** and **established continuous improvement structures** (e.g., planning opportunities, intentional review of data). For example, one site coordinator said,

“Aligning the afterschool program’s mission and vision with the district’s goals ensures consistency in purpose and student support. Regular quarterly meetings with community partners and parents create opportunities for transparency, shared updates, and valuable feedback, making this a strong strategy for continuous improvement and community engagement.”

Another site coordinator said,

“One key best practice is our active participation in school improvement efforts through regular check-ins with school leadership and teacher teams. This ensures our program goals align with campus priorities and that we remain part of a cohesive support system for students.”

Another respondent explained, “meeting with our steering committee is a great way to share ideas and get the community involved.” Additional site coordinator quotes are provided in the text box that follows.

Effective Strategies or Best Practices Associated With Items Related to Program Planning, as Reported by Site Coordinators

“We are on year 2 of our 5-year grant. I am working hard to show the campus and district how important and beneficial this program is. Each meeting I try to share our long-term goals and ideas for our students and program so they can see our vision. My staff and I work hard to support our students and district. I reach out frequently and partner with our community to come and share things with our students to help prepare them for life after graduation. We conduct surveys and listen to the students’ requests and try to build a program that they enjoy participating in. I also reach out to the teachers for reports on our students, both academically and about their behavior in the classroom. We encourage and set goals for the students that are struggling to help them reach their potential and personal goals.”

“We set clear long-term goals aligned with our campus mission and regularly involve our steering committee, which includes school leaders, teachers, parents, and community members. Staff meet consistently to review student data and plan accordingly, with clearly defined roles and performance expectations. We actively seek community partnerships and use feedback from students, parents, staff, and teachers to adjust programming. This collaborative approach ensures our program supports school improvement efforts while staying responsive to the needs of our high school students.”

“Our afterschool program ensures staff are well-informed about their roles by clearly outlining job responsibilities and through detailed role descriptions. To support ongoing effectiveness, we hold regular staff meetings where we review program-related data, discuss student progress, and collaborate on strategies for improvement.”

Discussion

The project director and site coordinator survey revealed widespread familiarity with the Texas ACE Roadmap. Eighty-two percent of project directors said that they had extensively reviewed it and 79% of site coordinators said that they had reviewed it to some extent. Similarly, all project directors were familiar with the CTQ process, as were 82% of site coordinators. Encouragingly, those who received visits as part of the CTQ process (all project directors and 37% of site coordinators) reported that the visits were broadly useful for program planning and went smoothly. This suggests that CTQ visits were well received. Further, about three-quarters of project directors reported that the monthly coaching calls helped them make meaningful improvements, find solutions to program challenges, and build understanding of “5 to Drive” compliance areas (though note again that only about half of project directors responded to the survey, and that these findings constitute a snapshot in time). Overall, the findings suggest that the CTQ system is helping site staff improve program quality.

In terms of questions relating to the CTQ quality domains, site coordinator survey responses indicated broad perceptions of capability or sufficiency around Quality Domain 1: Positive OST Culture. For all survey items associated with this domain, nearly three-quarters or more of site coordinators said that they had effective strategies to handle each challenge, and only 4% percent or fewer said that they wanted more training on any particular item. On the other hand, a sizeable minority of site coordinators—from about a fifth to a 10th of respondents—indicated not only that they needed to improve, but also that they wanted additional training around challenges related to Quality Domain 2: Strategic Staffing. The areas of greatest need were avoiding staff burnout (21% of site coordinators requested additional training on this) and reducing staff members’ day-to-day stress (16% requested additional training on this). Cycle 12 staff especially seemed to be struggling in these areas, with 28% of Cycle 12 site coordinators saying that they wanted additional training on avoiding staff burnout and 20% saying that they wanted training on reducing day-to-day stress. This makes sense, given that Cycle 12 grants were newer than Cycle 11 grants.

Survey items related to (if not aligned with) Quality Domain 3: Effective Instruction also showed general strength, though not to the extent of Quality Domain 1. The exception concerned items around instruction, which seemed to pose more of a challenge for some programs. In particular, a strong minority of site coordinators requested additional training on “training staff in practices that support inclusion of special populations” (19%), while 14% wanted additional training on “helping less experienced staff improve in terms of instructional effectiveness.” Cycle 12 site coordinators again were more likely to want such training, with 25% wanting training on practices that support inclusion and 20% wanting training to help less experienced

staff improve (compared with 14% and 8%, respectively, of Cycle 11 site coordinators). Site coordinators who were not associated with school-district grants were also more likely than school-district grant site coordinators to request training across multiple items related to instructional practice, particularly around aligning academic content with student needs (11% vs. 4%) and embedding academic content in activities (12% vs. 3%).

When asked to provide any best practices or solutions around items associated with the three quality domains, site coordinators tended to stress themes related to communication practice, school-day alignment, and the inclusion of student voice and choice. These themes overlap considerably with previously identified best practices, especially those identified in [*Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Evaluation: Texas Afterschool Centers on Education, Descriptive Study of Site Coordinator Perspectives on Program Goals, Recruitment, Activity Provision, School-Day Linkages, and District Support \(2022–23\)*](#) (Vinson et al., 2024). For convenience, the best practices identified in this earlier report are presented in Exhibit 17.

Exhibit 17. Previously Reported Best Practices Evident in the Texas ACE Spring 2025 Survey Site Coordinator Response Data

- **Establish effective communication strategies.** Interviewed site coordinators (fall 2023) stressed the importance of establishing effective communication strategies with stakeholders, noting that “stakeholders” include school district staff, school-day staff, students, caregivers, and community partners. It is also important to regularly assess communication strategy effectiveness relative to each stakeholder type. This is a foundational best practice; with effective communication, it is easier to recruit and retain students, establish linkages to the school day, obtain and interpret data, form activities that are relevant to student need and interest, and establish buy-in from the school and stakeholders.
- **Build a visible school presence.** Recruitment and retention rely on effective communication but also require visibility within the school or schools served. This could involve displays, advertisements, meetings, and so forth. Working with school counselors or athletic coaches may also help with recruitment and retention.
- **Show school-day staff how program goals support school goals.** As part of effective communication, it is important to clearly communicate how the program’s vision and mission align with and support school and district goals. This helps school-day staff understand how Texas ACE programming is relevant to their own work and makes continued communication and information sharing easier.
- **Data literacy.** Site coordinators who effectively communicate with school-day staff are also more likely to obtain the school-day data they need and are more likely to be able to talk through that data with knowledgeable school-day staff. This kind of side-by-side learning is essential for interpreting and using school-day data effectively and is a powerful tool for planning activities and establishing stakeholder buy-in.

- **Provide engaging activities.** Active listening is essential for creating high-quality, engaging activities. Site coordinators need to know and consider stakeholder interests (including those of youth participants and activity leaders) while also considering overall program goals. Finding out about activity leader interests can help provide ideas for enrichment activities, since activity leaders who find their activities personally interesting will more effectively convey that interest and excitement to participants.
- **Establish district support.** Site coordinators who were interviewed (fall 2023) said that attendance at district meetings or setting up virtual meetings with the superintendent can be effective for building district support. As part of this communication, however, the site coordinator needs to show how the program can support overall district goals. Using data to show how Texas ACE participants are being supported can be an effective and efficient way to do this.

Source. Site coordinator surveys collected by AIR in spring 2023 and site coordinator interviews conducted with a subset of site coordinators in fall 2023. Previously reported in [*Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Evaluation: Texas Afterschool Centers on Education, Descriptive Study of Site Coordinator Perspectives on Program Goals, Recruitment, Activity Provision, School-Day Linkages, and District Support \(2022–23\)*](#) (Vinson et al., 2024).

Overall, the findings presented in this report are very positive concerning TEA’s CTQ system, while also suggesting areas for targeted training and further support. It should be stressed once again, however, that the findings stem from spring 2025 and that TEA has since worked to make resources available to site coordinators across all three quality domains.

Recommendations

- Given that these findings present a snapshot of project director and site coordinator experience of the CTQ system, it may help TEA to survey these groups again. This would show TEA whether perceptions of the CTQ system have changed since spring 2025 and could guide TEA communication and training around the CTQ system.
- Across all three quality domains, most site coordinators reported that they had effective strategies for each challenge item or knew how to improve their program. However, a sizeable minority of Cycle 12 site coordinators appeared to be struggling with issues related to staffing (staff burnout, stress, and instructional practice). Additional training and support for this group of site coordinators could be warranted, acknowledging that TEA has been building out these types of supports since survey administration. Site coordinators associated with non-school-district grants may also benefit from additional training around instructional practice.

References

- Bailey, K., Midgyett, D., Bishop, A., & Vinson, M. (2025). *Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant evaluation: Texas Afterschool Centers on Education—Descriptive study of site coordinator perspectives on strategic planning, partnerships, and engagement (2023–24)*. American Institutes for Research. <https://tea.texas.gov/reports-and-data/program-evaluations/program-evaluations-out-of-school-learning-opportunities/tx-21st-cclc-eval-yr4-o2-report-2.pdf>
- Fales, R., Bailey, K., Midgyett, D., Bishop, A., & Vinson, M. (2025). *Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant evaluation: Texas Afterschool Centers on Education—Qualitative study of perspectives on vision, mission, and goals and school community engagement (2023–24)*. American Institutes for Research. <https://tea.texas.gov/reports-and-data/program-evaluations/program-evaluations-out-of-school-learning-opportunities/tx21stcclceval-txacestudy-508.pdf>
- Texas Afterschool Centers on Education. (n.d.). *Texas ACE roadmap to high-quality out-of-school time*. <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/support-for-at-risk-schools-and-students/texas-ace-roadmapreport.pdf>
- Vinson, M., Bishop, A., & Fales, R. (2024). *Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant evaluation: Texas Afterschool Centers on Education—Descriptive study of site coordinator perspectives on program goals, recruitment, activity provision, school-day linkages, and district support (2022–23)*. American Institutes for Research. <https://tea.texas.gov/reports-and-data/program-evaluations/program-evaluations-out-of-school-learning-opportunities/tx-ace-implementation-report-2-22-23.pdf>

Appendix A. Project Director and Site Coordinator Survey on Program Quality

The survey you are being asked to complete is part of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) evaluation being conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR). Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with AIR to evaluate the 21st CCLC programs (also known as Texas Afterschool Centers on Education [Texas ACE] program) in order to assess programs, student participation and outcomes, and to learn more about the activities and supports of high-quality programs. The purpose of the project is to better understand how centers funded by 21st CCLC support positive youth outcomes and the role program quality and different approaches to program design and delivery play in this process.

[For site coordinator survey version] This survey asks about issues related to Texas ACE **program quality**. The survey therefore includes questions about your experience with Coaching to Quality, program culture, staffing, and other aspects of program quality.

[For project director survey version] This survey asks about issues related to Texas ACE **program quality**. The survey therefore includes questions about your experience with Coaching to Quality.

It is important to note that this effort is not an evaluation of you or your program specifically. All responses you provide in taking this survey will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. No identifiable survey results will be provided to anyone outside the study team at AIR.

[For site coordinator survey version] There are no foreseeable risks to you based on your participation in this survey. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey is voluntary. You can opt not to answer any question and can stop participating at any time.

[For project director survey version] There are no foreseeable risks to you based on your participation in this survey. The survey should take approximately 5 minutes to complete. The survey is voluntary. You can opt not to answer any question and can stop participating at any time.

The answers you provide in response to this survey will be used by AIR only for this evaluation project. Upon completion of the evaluation, a survey dataset with all identifiers removed will be provided to TEA as a project record. After delivering this deidentified survey dataset to TEA, AIR will then destroy all remaining survey response data. That is, no data will remain that could link you to your responses.

Any questions about the study should be addressed to Matt Vinson at mvinson@air.org. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact AIR's Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is responsible for the protection of survey participants, at IRB@air.org, toll-free at 1-800-634-0797, or c/o IRB, American Institutes for Research, 1400 Crystal Drive, 10th Floor, Arlington, VA 22202.

Indicate whether you agree to take the survey by selecting an option below and clicking on the *submit* button. Note that, by selecting "I agree to take this survey," you are indicating that you agree to the terms as described above and agree to take the survey.

- I agree to take this survey.
- I do not agree to take this survey. *(Skip to the end of the survey.)*

[SUBMIT]

NOTE: Two versions of the survey will be administered, one for project directors and one for site coordinators. Questions specific to one group or the other are marked as such in red font.

Site Coordinators and Project Directors

First, we will ask you a series of questions about you, your program site, and your experience with the Coaching to Quality process.

1. What grade levels does your Texas ACE program PRIMARILY serve? Select all that apply.
 - Elementary
 - Middle
 - High school
2. How many years have you worked in the Texas ACE afterschool and summer program in any capacity?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1 to 2 years
 - 3 to 4 years
 - 5 years or more
3. How many years have you worked in your current position for the Texas ACE afterschool and summer program?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1 to 2 years
 - 3 to 4 years
 - 5 years or more

EXPERIENCE OF COACHING TO QUALITY

4. Have you reviewed the Texas ACE Roadmap to High-Quality Out-of-School Time?
 - Yes, extensively
 - Yes, some
 - Yes, a little bit
 - No
 - I'm not sure what the Texas ACE Roadmap is
5. Are you aware of the Coaching to Quality (CTQ) process?
 - Yes
 - No
6. Have you been visited as part of the Coaching to Quality (CTQ) process?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I'm not sure

7. [If previous answer is “Yes”] How true is each of the following statements about the performance coach’s visit?

	Not at all true	A little true	Somewhat true	Completely true
a. The planning went smoothly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The coaching process, including use of results, was made clear before the visit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. The visit itself went smoothly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. The coach had actionable feedback that we can use to improve our program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. The coaching process will be helpful to our program in the future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. [PD Only Question; ask only if the respondent indicated a coach visit] Did you have a follow-up communication with the performance coach after the CTQ visit?

- Yes
- No
- I’m not sure

9. [PD Only Question] Think about the monthly coaching calls you have participated in this school year. How true are the following statements?

	Not at all true	A little true	Somewhat true	Completely true
a. The monthly coaching calls help me make meaningful improvements to my program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The monthly coaching calls help me find solutions to program-related challenges or problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. The monthly coaching calls help me better understand the “5 to Drive” compliance areas and how they relate to my program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. [PD Only Question] Has health monitoring associated with the Texas ACE “5 to Drive” helped you improve your program?

- Not at all.
- Yes, but only a little.
- Yes, it has helped some.
- Yes, it has helped a lot.

QUALITY DOMAIN 1: POSITIVE OST CULTURE

Site Coordinators Only

Next, we will ask you a series of questions concerning possible challenges that your program may be experiencing. The purpose of collecting these data is to learn more about common challenge areas and to identify potential areas where added TEA support or training may be helpful. For each challenge area, we will also ask you whether you have any best practices or solutions related to these challenges that you would like to share.

The first challenge-related question concerns potential challenges associated with creating a positive OST culture.

11. Consider each of the following common challenge areas. For each, indicate the extent to which your program has strategies in place to handle the challenge.

Challenge Area	We have effective strategies to do this.	We need to improve our approach to this challenge, but know how to do so .	We need to improve our approach to this challenge, and would like additional training and support .	Not Applicable
a. Establish appropriate physical safety protocols	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Ensure physical safety protocols are followed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Provide consistent supervision to ensure youth safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Find suitable indoor space for youth activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Find suitable outdoor space for youth activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Ensure youth interact positively with one another	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Encourage positive relationships between youth and staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Provide youth with opportunities for making meaningful decisions about how they spend their time in Texas ACE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Provide youth with age-appropriate leadership opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Provide youth with opportunities to work together	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. For the previous set of questions, you indicated that your program either **has effective strategies** to manage the areas shown below, or that **your program knows how to improve your approach to the given challenge area**. What strategies or best practices would you want to share with other programs with respect to any one or all of these challenge areas?

- [Display challenge areas endorsed with either of the first two options in previous question]

[Enter text here—limit 1000 characters]

QUALITY DOMAIN 2: STRATEGIC STAFFING

Site Coordinators Only

13. Consider each of the following common challenge areas related to staffing. For each, indicate the extent to which your program has strategies in place to handle the challenge.

Challenge Area	We have effective strategies to do this.	We need to improve our approach to this challenge, but know how to do so .	We need to improve our approach to this challenge, and would like additional training and support .	Not Applicable
a. Find program staff who are engaging when leading activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Find program staff who are committed to working the full year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Find program staff who plan to work with the program long-term (multi-year)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Provide suitable pay to program staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Recruit teachers to help staff the program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Help program staff design or select activities that support program goal achievement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Reduce staff day-to-day stress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Avoid staff burnout	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. For the previous question, you indicated that your program either **has effective strategies** to manage the challenge areas shown below, or that **your program knows how to improve your approach to the given challenge area**. What strategies or best practices would you want to share with other programs with respect to any one or all of these challenge areas?

- [Display challenge areas endorsed with either of the first two options in previous question]

[Enter text here—limit 1000 characters]

OTHER POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

Site Coordinators Only

In this section, we will ask you a series of questions about other potential challenges that your program may be experiencing, starting with a question about activity provision.

15. Consider each of the following common challenge areas having to do with activity provision. For each, indicate the extent to which your program has strategies in place to handle the challenge.

Challenge Area	We have effective strategies to do this.	We need to improve our approach to this challenge, but know how to do so .	We need to improve our approach to this challenge, and would like additional training .	Not Applicable
a. Offering activities that are age appropriate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Providing activities that engage all students regardless of ability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Embedding school mission and vision into activity offerings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Providing effective high-impact tutoring (HIT)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Providing activities that promote higher-order skill development (e.g., problem solving, critical thinking, decision making, teamwork, goal setting, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Keeping youth engaged during activities with academic content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Providing activities that help youth develop both academic and life skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Providing a wide variety of activities for all participants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Giving participants new experiences they otherwise would not have	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. For the previous question, you indicated that your program either **has effective strategies** to manage the challenge areas shown below, or that **your program knows how to improve your approach to the given challenge area**. What strategies or best practices would you want to share with other programs with respect to any one or all of these challenge areas?

- [Display challenge areas endorsed with either of the first two options in previous question]

[Enter text here—limit 1000 characters]

17. Consider each of the following common challenge areas having to do with instruction. For each, indicate the extent to which your program has strategies in place to handle the challenge.

Challenge Area	We have effective strategies to do this.	We need to improve our approach to this challenge, but know how to do so .	We need to improve our approach to this challenge, and would like additional training .	Not Applicable
a. Establish an information sharing agreement with the school or district to assess program progress (e.g., academics, attendance, behavior)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Using school-day youth data to inform activity planning and provision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Regularly communicate with school-day teachers on student behavioral and academic progress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Aligning our activities' academic content with school-day learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Finding or designing activity curricula that target areas of student need	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Building on school-day instruction in the Texas ACE program activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Embedding academic content in activities using a variety of different strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Aligning our activities' academic content with youth academic needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Challenge Area	We have effective strategies to do this.	We need to improve our approach to this challenge, but know how to do so .	We need to improve our approach to this challenge, and would like additional training .	Not Applicable
i. Regularly providing activities that use high-quality instructional materials (HQIM)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Finding staff who are proficient and knowledgeable in the academic subjects embedded in activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Helping less experienced staff improve in terms of instructional effectiveness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Training staff in practices that support inclusion of special populations (e.g., Emergent Bilingual/English Learner, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. For the previous question, you indicated that your program either **has effective strategies** to manage the challenge areas shown below, or that **your program knows how to improve your approach to the given challenge area**. What strategies or best practices would you want to share with other programs with respect to any one or all of these challenge areas?

- [Display challenge areas endorsed with either of the first two options in previous question]

[Enter text here—limit 1000 characters]

The next set of potential-challenge questions ask about challenges relating to program administration and planning.

19. To what extent is your program fully staffed?

- All positions are staffed
- Over three-quarters of our positions are staffed
- Half to three-quarters of our positions are staffed
- Less than half our positions are staffed
- I'm not sure

20. Does your program have an active steering committee?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

21. [If yes to preceding question] Do you participate in steering committee meetings?

- Yes
- No

22. Consider each of the following common challenge areas relating to program planning. For each, indicate the extent to which your program has strategies in place to handle the challenge.

Challenge Area	We have effective strategies to do this.	We need to improve our approach to this challenge, but know how to do so.	We need to improve our approach to this challenge, and would like additional training.	Not Applicable
a. Developing long-range goals and plans for the programs (e.g., mission/vision statements, multi-year goals)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Meeting regularly with the steering committee [Do not show if respondent said “no” or “I’m not sure” to Q20.]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Ensuring a variety of stakeholders are members of the steering committee [Do not show if respondent said “no” or “I’m not sure” to Q20.]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Participating formally in school improvement efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Participating informally in school improvement efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Dedicating staff time to program planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Dedicating staff time for student or program data review	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Establishing clear job responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Establishing clear staff performance expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Meeting regularly with program staff to discuss program-related data	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Finding potential community partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Establishing local partnerships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Challenge Area	We have effective strategies to do this.	We need to improve our approach to this challenge, but know how to do so .	We need to improve our approach to this challenge, and would like additional training .	Not Applicable
m. Using youth feedback to inform program planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. Using parent feedback to inform program planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. Using staff feedback to inform program planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. Using teacher-provided information to inform program planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. For the previous question, you indicated that your program either **has effective strategies** to manage the challenge areas shown below, or that **your program knows how to improve your approach to the given challenge area**. What strategies or best practices would you want to share with other programs with respect to any one or all of these challenge areas?

- [Display challenge areas endorsed with either of the first two options in previous question]

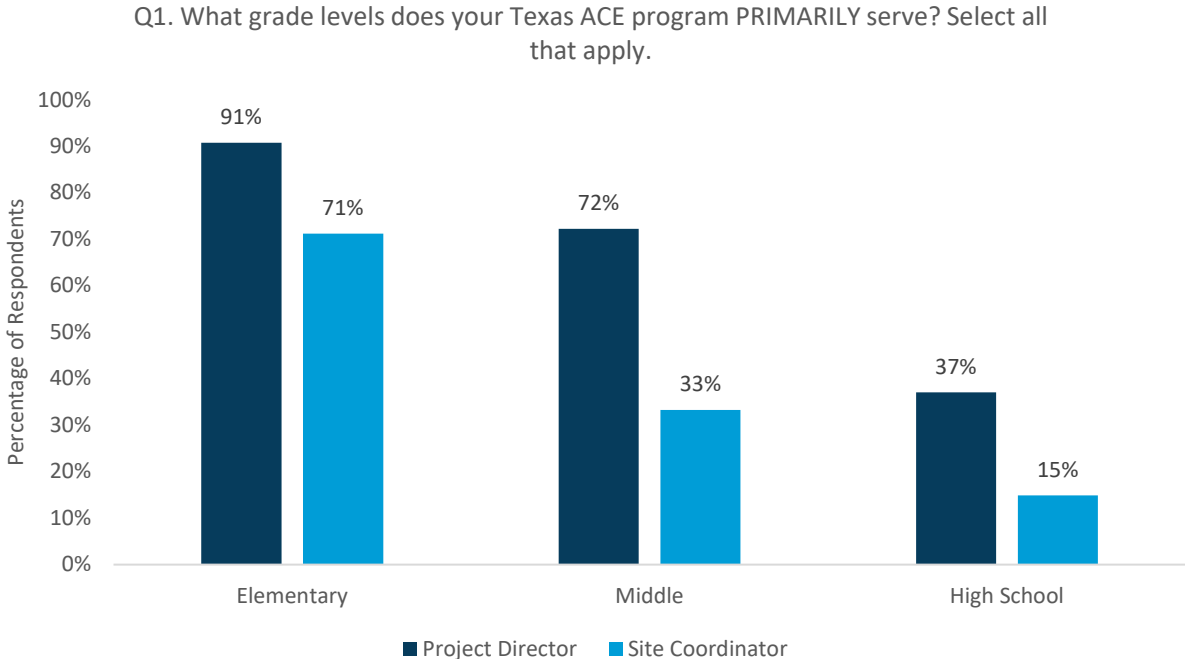
[Enter text here—limit 1000 characters]

Thank you for taking the survey!

Appendix B. Texas ACE Project Director and Site Coordinator Survey Respondent Information

As shown in Exhibit B–1, most respondents (project directors and site coordinators) were associated with sites that serve elementary students. Note that this is different from the center-level characteristic used for group analyses throughout the report. When responding to Question 1 in the survey, respondents could select as many of the three options as applied. The center-level characteristic variable (with binary values of elementary-only site and non-elementary-only site) was based on student grade-level data from schools attended by Texas Afterschool Centers on Education (Texas ACE) participants.

Exhibit B–1. Grade Levels Served by Texas ACE Project Director and Site Coordinator Survey Respondents

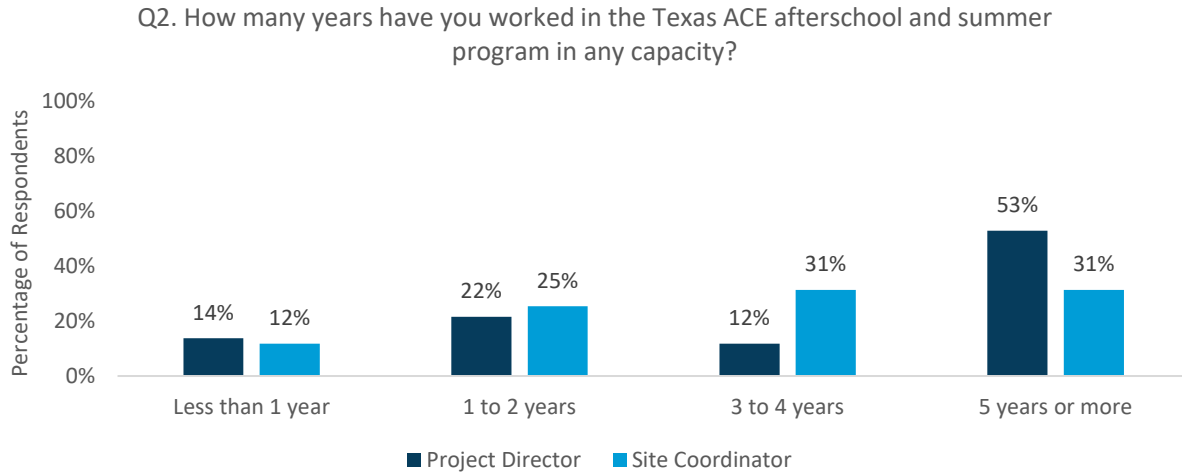


Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.
Note. Grade-band items are multi-selected; percentages do not sum to 100%. Based on 54 project director surveys and 490 site coordinator surveys from Cycle 11 and Cycle 12 respondents.

As shown in Exhibit B–2, most project directors said that they had five or more years of experience at their Texas ACE site (any capacity), compared with about a third of site coordinators. In terms of experience in their current role, about a quarter of project directors

said that they had five or more years of experience, compared with about 18% of site coordinators (see Exhibit B–3).

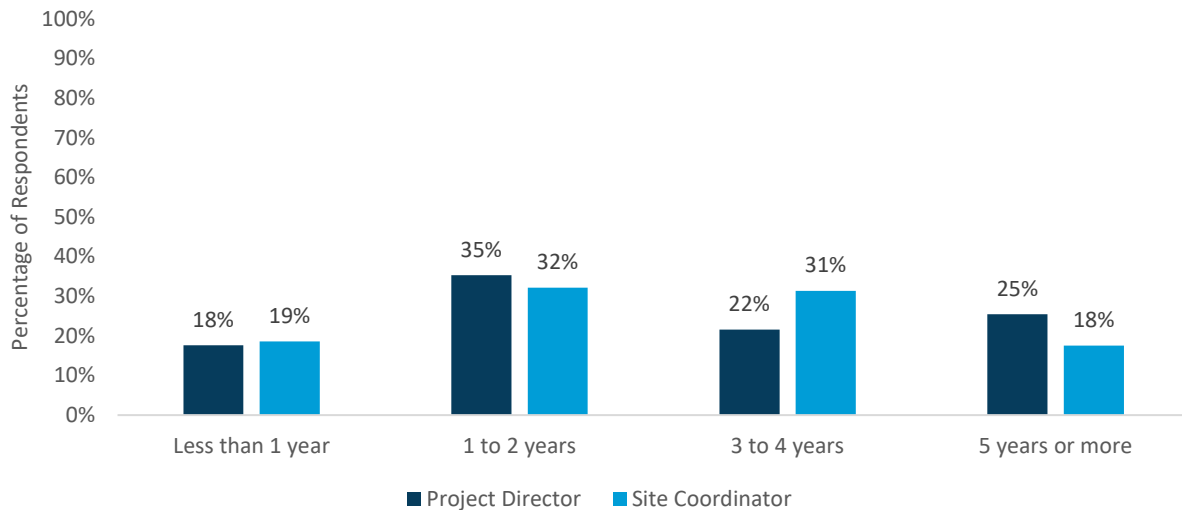
Exhibit B–2. Texas ACE Project Director and Site Coordinator Survey Respondent Years Served in Texas ACE, in Any Capacity



Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 51 project director surveys and 485 site coordinator surveys.

Exhibit B–3. Texas ACE Project Director and Site Coordinator Survey Respondent Years Served in Texas ACE, in Current Role



Source. Texas ACE site coordinator and project director survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 51 project director surveys and 485 site coordinator surveys.

Appendix C. Statistically Significant Survey Response Differences

Chi-square tests were used to examine subgroup differences in terms of survey question response patterns. Subgroups examined included locale (rural, town, suburban, and city), grade levels served (elementary-only sites compared with programs serving older youth, whether exclusively or in addition to elementary students), grantee school district status (i.e., whether the entity managing grant funds was a school district or was some other entity such as a community-based organization), and grant program cycle (Cycle 11 vs. Cycle 12).

All statistically significant results are shown in this appendix (based on chi-square, $p < .05$). Note that due to low n sizes when considered by subgroup characteristics (often less than 10), project directors’ responses were not included in the chi-square analysis.

A. RESPONDENT INFORMATION

1. What grade levels does your Texas ACE program PRIMARILY serve? Select all that apply.

Exhibit C–1. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Grade Levels Served by Texas ACE, by Cycle

	Cycle 11	Cycle 12
Middle school	29%	38%
High school	11%	19%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 243 survey responses associated with Cycle 11 and 242 survey responses associated with Cycle 12. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

Exhibit C–2. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Grade Levels Served by Texas ACE, by Elementary-Only Center Status

	Elementary-only sites	Non-elementary-only sites
Elementary school	99%	23%
Middle school	10%	75%
High school	3%	37%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 311 survey responses associated with elementary-only sites and 174 survey responses associated with non-elementary-only sites. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

Exhibit C–3. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Grade Levels Served by Texas ACE, by Grant School District Status

	Non-school-district grant	School-district grant
Middle school	43%	29%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 153 survey responses associated with non-school-district grants and 332 survey responses associated with school-district grants. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

- How many years have you worked in the Texas ACE afterschool and summer program *in any capacity*?

Exhibit C–4. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Staff Years Worked in Texas ACE in Any Capacity, by Cycle

	Cycle 11	Cycle 12
Less than one year	11%	12%
One to two years	19%	31%
Three to four years	46%	17%
Five years or more	24%	39%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 243 survey responses associated with Cycle 11 and 241 survey responses associated with Cycle 12. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

- How many years have you worked *in your current position* for the Texas ACE afterschool and summer program?

Exhibit C–5. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Staff Years Worked in Texas ACE in Current Position, by Cycle

	Cycle 11	Cycle 12
Less than one year	18%	19%
One to two years	26%	38%
Three to four years	44%	19%
Five years or more	12%	24%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR during spring 2025.

Note. Based on 242 survey responses associated with Cycle 11 and 241 survey responses associated with Cycle 12. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

Exhibit C–6. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Staff Years Worked in Texas ACE in Current Position, by Elementary-Only Center Status

	Elementary-only sites	Non-elementary-only sites
Less than one year	14%	28%
One to two years	33%	31%
Three to four years	34%	27%
Five years or more	19%	15%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 310 survey responses associated with elementary-only sites and 173 survey responses associated with non-elementary-only sites. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

B. EXPERIENCE OF COACHING TO QUALITY

4. Have you reviewed the *Texas ACE Roadmap to High-Quality Out-of-School Time*?

Exhibit C–7. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Extent of Review of the *Texas ACE Roadmap*, by Grant School District Status

	School-district grant	Non-school-district grant
Yes, extensively	32%	22%
Yes, some	51%	49%
Yes, a little bit	13%	22%
No	2%	1%
I’m not sure what the Texas ACE Roadmap is	2%	7%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 153 survey responses associated with non-school-district grants and 331 survey responses associated with school-district grants. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

5. Are you aware of the Coaching to Quality (CTQ) process?

Exhibit C–8. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Awareness of the Coaching to Quality Process, by Grant School District Status

	School-district grant	Non-school-district grant
Yes	85%	75%
No	15%	25%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 152 survey responses associated with non-school-district grants and 330 survey responses associated with school-district grants. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

6. Have you been visited as part of the Coaching to Quality (CTQ) process?

Exhibit C–9. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Awareness of the Coaching to Quality Process, by Grant School District Status

	School-district grant	Non-school-district grant
Yes	39%	35%
No	42%	35%
I’m not sure	20%	30%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 153 survey responses associated with non-school-district grants and 327 survey responses associated with school-district grants. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

Exhibit C–10. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Awareness of the Coaching to Quality Process, by Locale

	City	Suburban	Town	Rural
Yes	33%	33%	42%	45%
No	47%	39%	24%	37%
I’m not sure	20%	27%	33%	18%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 202 survey responses associated with city-based sites, 84 survey responses associated with suburban sites, 78 survey responses associated with town-based sites, and 110 survey responses associated with rural sites. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

7. [If previous answer is “Yes”] How true is each of the following statements about the performance coach’s visit?

No statistically significant differences were observed.

8. [Question only for project directors; ask only if the respondent indicated a coach visit] Did you have a follow-up communication with the performance coach after the CTQ visit?

Questions that were only for project directors were not analyzed using chi-square due to low n sizes.

9. [Question only for project directors] Think about the monthly coaching calls you have participated in this school year. How true are the following statements?

Questions that were only for project directors were not analyzed using chi-square due to low n sizes.

10. [Question only for project directors] Has health monitoring associated with the Texas ACE “5 to Drive” helped you improve your program?

Questions that were only for project directors were not analyzed using chi-square due to low n sizes.

C. QUALITY DOMAIN 1: POSITIVE OST CULTURE

11. Consider each of the following common challenge areas. For each, indicate the extent to which your program has strategies in place to handle the challenge.

Note: To present the data in a more compact format, response options from the survey have been shortened. See Appendix A for full response options as originally presented to survey respondents.

Exhibit C–11. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Questions Related to Establishing a Positive Out-of-School Time Culture, by Cycle

	Cycle 11				Cycle 12			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
a. Establish appropriate physical safety protocols	91%	8%	1%	1%	85%	9%	5%	0%

	Cycle 11				Cycle 12			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
c. Provide consistent supervision to ensure youth safety	95%	3%	1%	0%	89%	8%	3%	0%
d. Find suitable indoor space for youth activities	90%	9%	1%	1%	78%	16%	5%	0%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 242–243 survey responses (per item) associated with Cycle 11 and 237–239 survey responses (per item) associated with Cycle 12. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

12. For the previous set of questions, you indicated that your program either **has effective strategies** to manage the areas shown below, or that **your program knows how to improve your approach to the given challenge area**. What strategies or best practices would you want to share with other programs with respect to any one or all of these challenge areas?

Open-ended items were not analyzed using chi-square.

D. QUALITY DOMAIN 2: STRATEGIC STAFFING

13. Consider each of the following common challenge areas related to staffing. For each, indicate the extent to which your program has strategies in place to handle the challenge.

Exhibit C–12. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Questions Related to Staffing, by Cycle

	Cycle 11				Cycle 12			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
a. Find program staff who are engaging when leading activities	59%	33%	7%	1%	57%	29%	14%	0%
b. Find program staff who are committed to working the full year	66%	26%	8%	1%	59%	24%	16%	1%
c. Find program staff who plan to work with the program long-term (multi-year)	63%	28%	7%	2%	57%	24%	18%	1%
f. Help program staff design or select activities that support program goal achievement	65%	26%	7%	2%	57%	27%	15%	1%
g. Reduce staff day-to-day stress	58%	28%	12%	2%	47%	30%	20%	3%
h. Avoid staff burnout	53%	32%	14%	1%	46%	25%	28%	1%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 237–239 survey responses (per item) associated with Cycle 11 grants and 235-237 survey responses (per item) associated with Cycle 12 grants. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

Exhibit C–13. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Questions Related to Staffing, by Grant School District Status

	Non-school-district grant				School-district grant			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
a. Find program staff who are engaging when leading activities	44%	39%	15%	1%	64%	27%	8%	0%

	Non-school-district grant				School-district grant			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
c. Find program staff who plan to work with the program long term (multiyear)	51%	29%	18%	2%	64%	25%	10%	1%
f. Help program staff design or select activities that support program goal achievement	52%	35%	12%	1%	65%	23%	10%	1%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 152 survey responses (per item) associated with non-school-district grants and 322–324 survey responses (per item) associated with school-district grants. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

14. For the previous question, you indicated that your program either **has effective strategies** to manage the challenge areas shown below, or that **your program knows how to improve your approach to the given challenge area**. What strategies or best practices would you want to share with other programs with respect to any one or all of these challenge areas?

Open-ended items were not analyzed using chi-square.

E. OTHER POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

15. Consider each of the following common challenge areas having to do with activity provision. For each, indicate the extent to which your program has strategies in place to handle the challenge.

Exhibit C–14. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Questions Related to Activity Provision, by Cycle

	Cycle 11				Cycle 12			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
d. Providing effective high-impact tutoring	47%	23%	11%	19%	63%	20%	6%	11%

	Cycle 11				Cycle 12			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
f. Keeping youth engaged during activities with academic content	67%	27%	6%	0%	57%	28%	14%	0%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 235–238 survey responses (per item) associated with Cycle 11 and 232–233 survey responses (per item) associated with Cycle 12. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

Exhibit C–15. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Questions Related to Activity Provision, by Elementary-Only Center Status

	Elementary-only sites				Non-elementary-only sites			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
f. Keeping youth engaged during activities with academic content	67%	24%	9%	0%	54%	35%	11%	1%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 304 survey responses associated with elementary-only sites and 165 survey responses associated with non-elementary-only sites. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

Exhibit C–16. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Questions Related to Activity Provision, by Grant School District Status

	Non-school-district grant				School-district grant			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
e. Providing activities that promote higher order skill development (e.g., problem solving, critical thinking, decision making, teamwork, goal setting, etc.)	58%	29%	12%	1%	74%	17%	9%	1%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 150 survey responses associated with non-school-district grants and 321 survey responses associated with school-district grants. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

16. For the previous question, you indicated that your program either **has effective strategies** to manage the challenge areas shown below, or that **your program knows how to improve your approach to the given challenge area**. What strategies or best practices would you want to share with other programs with respect to any one or all of these challenge areas?

Open-ended items were not analyzed using chi-square.

17. Consider each of the following common challenge areas having to do with instruction. For each, indicate the extent to which your program has strategies in place to handle the challenge.

Exhibit C–17. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Questions Related to Instruction, by Cycle

	Cycle 11				Cycle 12			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
b. Using school-day youth data to inform activity planning and provision	67%	28%	4%	2%	64%	24%	11%	1%
c. Regularly communicating with	76%	21%	2%	1%	70%	23%	7%	1%

	Cycle 11				Cycle 12			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
school-day teachers on student behavioral and academic progress								
d. Aligning our activities' academic content with school-day learning	77%	21%	2%	1%	66%	26%	8%	1%
h. Aligning our activities' academic content with youth academic needs	75%	20%	4%	1%	64%	28%	9%	0%
i. Regularly providing activities that use high-quality instructional materials	61%	27%	5%	7%	67%	18%	12%	2%
k. Helping less experienced staff improve in terms of instructional effectiveness	61%	30%	8%	1%	53%	26%	20%	1%
l. Training staff in practices that support inclusion of special populations (e.g., emergent bilingual/English learner, etc.)	55%	28%	14%	4%	47%	25%	25%	3%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 233–237 survey responses (per item) associated with Cycle 11 and 231–234 survey responses (per item) associated with Cycle 12. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

Exhibit C–18. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Questions Related to Instruction, by Elementary-Only Center Status

	Elementary-only site				Non-elementary-only site			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
e. Finding or designing activity curricula that	69%	22%	8%	0%	58%	35%	6%	1%

	Elementary-only site				Non-elementary-only site			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
target areas of student need								
g. Embedding academic content in activities using a variety of different strategies	72%	22%	6%	0%	62%	31%	7%	1%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 301 survey responses (per item) associated with elementary-only sites and 163–168 survey responses (per item) associated with non-elementary-only sites. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

Exhibit C–19. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Questions Related to Instruction, by Grant School District Status

	Non-school-district grant				School-district grant			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
b. Using school-day youth data to inform activity planning and provision	55%	34%	10%	1%	70%	22%	6%	2%
c. Regularly communicating with school-day teachers on student behavioral and academic progress	62%	30%	7%	1%	78%	18%	3%	1%
d. Aligning our activities' academic content with school-day learning	62%	28%	9%	1%	75%	21%	3%	1%
e. Finding or designing activity curricula that target areas of student need	56%	33%	11%	0%	69%	24%	6%	1%
f. Building on school-day instruction in Texas ACE program activities	61%	27%	11%	1%	74%	20%	4%	2%

	Non-school-district grant				School-district grant			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
g. Embedding academic content in activities using a variety of different strategies	60%	28%	12%	0%	72%	24%	3%	1%
h. Aligning our activities' academic content with youth academic needs	61%	28%	11%	0%	74%	22%	4%	1%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 147–149 survey responses (per item) associated with non-school-district grants and 317–322 survey responses (per item) associated with school-district grants. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

18. For the previous question, you indicated that your program either **has effective strategies** to manage the challenge areas shown below, or that **your program knows how to improve your approach to the given challenge area**. What strategies or best practices would you want to share with other programs with respect to any one or all of these challenge areas?

Open-ended items were not analyzed using chi-square.

19. To what extent is your program fully staffed?

Exhibit C–20. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning the Extent to Which the Texas ACE Program is Fully Staffed, by Elementary-Only Center Status

	Elementary-only sites	Non-elementary-only sites
All positions are staffed	73%	79%
Over three-quarters of our positions are staffed	19%	11%
Half to three-quarters of our positions are staffed	5%	5%
Less than half our positions are staffed	0%	4%
I’m not sure	3%	1%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 303 survey responses associated with elementary-only sites and 168 survey responses associated with non-elementary-only sites. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

20. Does your program have an active steering committee?

No statistically significant differences were observed.

21. [If “Yes” to the preceding question] Do you participate in steering committee meetings?

No statistically significant differences were observed.

22. Consider each of the following common challenge areas relating to program planning. For each, indicate the extent to which your program has strategies in place to handle the challenge.

Exhibit C–21. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Questions Related to Program Planning, by Elementary-Only Center Status

	Elementary-only sites				Non-elementary-only sites			
	Effective strategies	Need to improve but know how	Need to improve and need training	NA	Effective strategies	Need to improve but know how	Need to improve and need training	NA
I. Establishing local partnerships	55%	26%	15%	4%	58%	34%	6%	2%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 299 survey responses associated with elementary-only sites and 166 survey responses associated with non-elementary-only sites. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

Exhibit C–22. Statistically Significant Differences Concerning Questions Related to Program Planning, by Grant School District Status

	Non-school-district grant				School-district grant			
	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Effective strategies</i>	<i>Need to improve but know how</i>	<i>Need to improve and need training</i>	<i>NA</i>
d. Participating formally in school improvement efforts	56%	30%	11%	2%	63%	28%	4%	5%

Source. Site coordinator survey administered by AIR in spring 2025.

Note. Based on 149 survey responses associated with non-school-district grants and 318 survey responses associated with school-district grants. Statistical significance determined by chi-square test ($p < 0.05$).

23. For the previous question, you indicated that your program either **has effective strategies** to manage the challenge areas shown below, or that **your program knows how to improve your approach to the given challenge area**. What strategies or best practices would you want to share with other programs with respect to any one or all of these challenge areas?

Open-ended items were not analyzed using chi-square.

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