

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program 2020-21 State Evaluation Report

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*July 2022*



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Evaluation Design .....	1
Grantee Characteristics .....	2
Program Implementation .....	2
COVID-19 Pandemic .....	2
Operations .....	3
Program Design .....	3
Adult Family Member Activities .....	4
Program Participation.....	4
Student Outcomes .....	5
Conclusion .....	9
Program Highlights .....	11
Introduction .....	13
Program Description .....	13
Reporting Venues .....	14
Evaluation Design .....	15
How To Use This Report.....	16
Findings .....	18
Grantee Characteristics .....	18
Program Implementation.....	20
Social Emotional Learning and Drug and Alcohol Program Funding .....	36
Program Participation.....	38
Student Outcomes .....	42
2020-21 Government Performance and Results Act .....	77
Reflections, Implications, and Recommendations for Improvement.....	79
Considerations for the State Team.....	79
Considerations for Grantees .....	80

## Executive Summary

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program provides federal funding for the establishment of community learning centers that provide academic and enrichment opportunities for children; particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools, to meet state and local standards in core academic subjects, through a broad array of activities that complement their regular academic programs. In addition to academics, centers are encouraged to offer participants a broad range of other services and programs, such as art, music, recreation activities, character education, career and technical training, drug and violence prevention programming, and technology education. Educational services for families of participating students, such as literacy instruction, computer training, or cultural enrichment, must also be included.

The 2020-21 program year included 196 grantees in four funding cycles, each called a cohort: Cohort 7 included 40 grantees, Cohort 8 included 42 grantees, Cohort 9 included 42 grantees, and Cohort 10 included 72 grantees. While Cohorts 8-10 were eligible to operate the full program year (summer 2020 through the end of the 2020-21 school year), Cohort 7 grant contracts ended on September 30, 2020, so grantees only operated for part of the program year.

Grantees were mainly schools, districts, or charter schools (42 percent) or community-based/nonprofit organizations (32 percent). This varied by cohort, with Cohort 9 having the highest concentration of school-based grantees (48 percent). Fifty-nine percent of grantees classified their programs as operating in an urban environment; 24 percent were reported as rural, 6 percent were reported as suburban, and 10 percent were reported as a combination of these types.

## Evaluation Design

The evaluation of the 2020-21 program year of 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs in Pennsylvania includes information about the programs operated under the Cohort 7, Cohort 8, Cohort 9, and Cohort 10 funding cycles. The timing of awards dictates what grantees report annually for evaluation.

The state evaluation of Pennsylvania's 21<sup>st</sup> Century program examined three performance measures focused on students' positive academic, social, and behavioral changes. Data sources included the federal 21APR system, Pennsylvania Implementation Survey, PA Operations Spreadsheet, PA De-identified Student Data Spreadsheet, and other data from PDE and the Center for Schools and Communities, which is Pennsylvania's contractor for 21<sup>st</sup> Century technical assistance.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) contracted with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit to conduct a comprehensive external evaluation of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pennsylvania 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers  
2020-21 State Evaluation Report  
Originated July 7, 2022

Community Learning Centers program to fulfill federal requirements under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended, Sections 4202 (C) and 4203 (A) and Section H-5 of the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Non-Regulatory Guidance*.

The program findings shared in this report include information reported by grantees and state-level program staff about the 2020-21 program year, which includes summer 2020 and school year 2020-21. The various reporting venues are explained in the prior section of this report.

## **Grantee Characteristics**

The 2020-21 program year included 196 grantees in four funding cycles (cohorts). Grantees were mainly schools, districts, or charter schools (42 percent) or community-based/nonprofit organizations (32 percent). This varied somewhat by cohort, with Cohort 9 having a higher concentration of school-based grantees (48 percent).

Grantees operated programs out of 540 centers (101 Cohort 7 centers, 106 Cohort 8 centers, 117 Cohort 9 centers, and 216 Cohort 10 centers). Grantees operated between one and 12 centers per grantee, with an average of three centers; however, the mode (most frequent value) was one center.

Fifty-nine percent of grantees classified their programs as operating in an urban environment; 24 percent were reported as rural, 6 percent were reported as suburban, and 10 percent were reported as a combination of these types.

## **Program Implementation**

While the purpose of 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs is to provide out-of-school-time programs that offer students supplemental academic and enrichment activities and there are some operational requirements, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century grant affords grantees a good deal of program design flexibility.

## **COVID-19 Pandemic**

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 viral outbreak a global pandemic. In response to growing numbers of infections and general uncertainty, Pennsylvania's Governor Tom Wolf began mitigation measures. In-person operations of many programs and services, including schools, ceased on or around Friday, March 13, 2020.

In August 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Education released guidance on when schools could re-open to in-person instruction based on county health statistics. Throughout the 2020-21 program year, schools and 21<sup>st</sup> Century sites followed remote, hybrid, or in-person operations. Primarily virtual was the most common operations

method for grantees, whether they operated only during the summer, only during the school year, or during both the summer and the school of the 2020-21 program year. Throughout the 2020-21 program year, grantees cited difficulties recruiting students and maintaining attendance rates due to complications caused by COVID-19.

## **Operations**

Grantees could operate programs during the summer of 2020,<sup>1</sup> school year 2020-21, or both. Specific date ranges were not prescribed to allow for the local variance of school year start or end dates. Program guidance required grantees to operate a minimum of 36 school year weeks, for 12-15 hours per week afterschool, unless approved to operate otherwise. However, because of the pandemic, grantees were not penalized if they were unable to reach their 36 weeks of operation or maintain their typical weekly hours. Grantees reported operations details in the Center Operations Spreadsheet, which they submitted to the state evaluation team in summer 2021.

Grantees operated programs out of 540 centers.

Based on hours per week and weeks in operation, evaluators estimated that grantees offered a combined total of 36,878 hours of programming during the summer and 191,414 hours during the school year, for a grand total of 228,292 estimated hours for the 2020-21 program year.

## **Program Design**

Program guidance included a list of allowable activities. In the PA Implementation Survey, grantees (196)<sup>2</sup> indicated which program areas they addressed from a list of 16 areas outlined in Pennsylvania's program guidance. The largest percentages of grantees indicated they offered literacy activities (96 percent), STEM activities (science, technology, engineering, math) (96 percent), homework help (88 percent), and/or arts/music activities (88 percent). Service categories indicated the least included truancy prevention (26 percent), counseling programs (33 percent), and/or violence prevention (33 percent). In the prior year, literacy activities, STEM activities, and homework help were also indicated as the most common, while truancy prevention and counseling programs also trended as the some of the least common activities.

Grantees were most likely to serve grades 3-8, with between 61 and 68 percent of grantees selecting one or more of the grade levels in this range. Grades 4-6 had the highest percentages (65 to 68 percent of grantees, or between 127 and 134 grantees).

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<sup>1</sup> Generally, grantees were required to operate during both summer and school year or school year only, depending on their contract. In some cases, a grantee contract ended early making them eligible to operate during a portion of the year.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all 196 grantees are included in the counts and percentages for each survey question.

## Adult Family Member Activities

Programs were required to serve parents and family members of participating students. For adult family members of participating students who participated in at least one activity of any type during this program year, 165 grantees (84 percent) reported serving parents/adult family members and these grantee counts ranged from one adult to 544, with an average of 37 adults. Grantee adult counts totaled 7,295 adult family members participating, which is less than half of the total adult participation in the previous year.

## Program Participation

Grantees served 26,880 students over the course of the summer 2020 and school year 2020-21 program year,<sup>3</sup> which is roughly half of the total students served in the previous year. 7,653 students (28 percent) attending 21st Century programming for 30 or more days and receiving the designation of regular attendee, which is roughly one-third of the total regular attendees served in the 2019-20 program year. Pennsylvania public school enrollment, based on PDE public enrollment records for the 2020-21 academic year, was 1,696,022 students. This means that Pennsylvania's 21st Century programs served approximately 1.6 percent of the Pennsylvania public school population, a decrease of 1.5 percentage points from 2019-20, or roughly 50%.

Participation ranged from three to 875 students per grantee, with an average of 140 students and 39 regular attendees per grantee. Thirty-nine grantees reported having no regular attendees, compared to three grantees in the 2019-20 program year.<sup>4</sup> For those grantees reporting regular attendees (157), regular attendee percentages ranged from 1 percent to 100% (all students served attended regularly), with an average regular attendee percentage of 27 percent.

A majority of students (64 percent) attended only during the school year; 25 percent attended during summer 2020 only and 11 percent attended both summer 2020 and school year 2020-21 terms.

Data were also available to compare the number of students served to the number of students grantees proposed to serve in their approved grant applications. This calculation was possible for Cohorts 8-10. Cohort 7 was not included in this analysis, as their grants were ending. Based on their funded grant documentation, these 156 grantees proposed to serve 36,464 students. Based on the data reported, these same 156 grantees served 24,381 students, which is 12,083 students less, or 66 percent of the total number that they had proposed to serve.

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<sup>3</sup> Two of the 196 grantees failed to submit their student-level data to evaluators. Evaluators gleaned student served counts from the grantees' local evaluation report. These grantees are included in overall students served totals, but they are not included in any sub-counts, such as summer counts, regular attendee counts, etc. They are also not included in any outcome data.

<sup>4</sup> Two grantees failed to provide their required student data file, so their counts of students by program attendance category, and thus count of regular attendees, are unknown.

Of the 156 grantees included in this comparison, 22 grantees served more students than they had proposed to serve in their grant applications, with overage counts ranging from three students more to 542 more, with an average of 118 students more than their proposed unique count. In terms of percentage over, this ranged from 1 percent more to 163 percent more students than proposed, average 43 percent more students.

One grantee reported serving exactly the same number as they proposed to serve.

The remaining 131 grantees served fewer students than they had proposed to serve. These grantees fell short of their target number by four students to 303 students, average 111 students, or by percentage, 2 percent to 95 percent short of their target (average 47 percent).

As outlined in the operations section of this report, grantees faced ongoing challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have contributed to less students served than proposed.

## **Student Outcomes**

Grantees reported having 7,653 regular attendees, and it is for these individuals that reporting outcome results was required. Results shared in the following section are provided overall for all regularly attending students having data.

### **Academics**

A total of 6,094 students had reading report card data that could be compared (students had two data points using a scale interpretable by state evaluators), which is 80 percent of school year regular attendees for whom outcomes data were reported.

Of the students having comparable reading report card grade data, 31 percent improved their reading grade from the first to the last reported grade. The next largest percentage, at 28 percent, showed no change, meaning they earned the same grade for both the first and last grading periods. Results also indicated that 26 percent declined from fall to spring and 15 percent did not need to improve their grade (they had the highest grade possible) and maintained that grade. Excluding the did not need to improve group, 36 percent of students improved their reading grade.

Results were disaggregated by program attendance category and were similar for each category: 30 percent for 30 days, 30 percent for 60 days, and 32 percent for 90+ days. Analysis by grade band showed that older students were more likely to improve, but also more likely to decline. Younger students were more likely to not need to improve.

Historical presence analysis for reading report card grades was also conducted, with 66 percent of regular attendees with report card data also having historical participation information. In looking at the results by years of 21<sup>st</sup> Century participation, improvement

percentages were both 33 percent for just the current year's participation and for the greatest duration category.

Finally, evaluators categorized reading report card grades, as possible, based on the year-end reported grades. This categorization only considered the student's grade reported value for the last marking period. Based on this analysis, 67 percent of students ended the year passing their reading course or earning a high or high mid-level grade. This varied only slightly by cohort, but Cohort 7 had the highest percentage of students with passing, high, or mid mid-level grades at 73 percent.

Of the 6,101 students with math report card grade data, 30 percent improved from fall to spring. The largest percentage, at 40 percent, showed no change, meaning they earned the same grade for both the first and last grading periods. Results also indicated that 23 percent declined from fall to spring and 7 percent did not need to improve their grade (they had the highest grade possible) and maintained that grade. Excluding the did not need to improve group, 32 percent of student improved their math grade.

Like reading, the results were fairly similar across categories: 31 percent improved within the 30 days group, 28 percent improved in the 60 days group, and 30 percent improved in the 90+ days group.

Analysis by grade band showed that older students were slightly more likely to improved (36 and 29 percent of middle and high school students improved) but were also more likely than younger students to decline. Younger students (PK-1st grade) were more likely than older students to not need to improve.

Historical presence analysis for math report card grades was also conducted, with 65 percent of regular attendees with report card data also having historical participation information. Improvement percentages ranged from 24 percent for students with more than five years of the program to 34 percent for students with five years of 21<sup>st</sup> Century programming.

Like reading, evaluators categorized math report card grades, as possible, based on the year-end reported grades. This categorization only considered the student's grade reported value for the last marking period.

Based on this analysis, 67 percent of students – the same percentage as reading – ended the year passing their reading course or earning a high or high mid-level grade. This varied only slightly by cohort, but Cohort 7 had the highest percentage of students with passing, high, or mid mid-level grades at 81 percent.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teacher Survey included an indicator for teachers to report student change in academics. This determination was to be made by the classroom teacher about each regularly attending student participating during the school year based on his/her professional opinion of the student's classroom performance.

Academic performance teacher survey data was available for 4,783 students, which is 62 percent of school year regular attendees. Results show that 53 percent of students with teacher survey data improved. Twenty percent of students included in analysis were reported as not needing to improve, 23 percent were reported as showing no change, and 4 percent declined, according to teacher survey results. Considering those students who needed to improve (excluding students with a response of “did not need to improve”) 66 percent of students improved.

**The count of students improving (2,520) was nearly 12 times larger than the count declining (213).**

Analysis by grade band revealed a range of percentages of students improving from 41 to 57 percent, with high school students being the least likely to improve; however, high school students were more likely than the others to be reported as “did not need to improve.”

State assessment data was available for approximately one-fifth of students in grades 3-8 and 11. Overall, 40 percent of students scored at proficient or advanced levels in reading and 34 percent did so in math. State assessments were not held during the 2019-20 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so cross year comparison is not possible for this data.

## **Behavior**

21st Century Teacher Survey data for each element includes between 4,678 and 4,790 students or 62 to 63 percent of school year regular attendees.

The 21st Century Teacher Survey results showed larger percentages of students improving than other measures of student achievement. If students who did not need to improve are excluded from the analysis, each of the six non-academic teacher survey indicators showed roughly half of regular attendees improving according to 21st Century Teacher Survey data:

- 66 percent of regular attendees with teacher survey data were reported as improving their homework completion to their teacher’s satisfaction;
- 66 percent of regular attendees with teacher survey data improved their class participation;
- 47 percent of regular attendees with teacher survey data improved in the area of volunteering in class;
- 59 percent of regular attendees with teacher survey data improved their class attentiveness;
- 54 percent of regular attendees with teacher survey data improved their class behavior; and
- 57 percent of regular attendees with teacher survey data improved their motivation to learn.

Grantees reported student behavior and discipline results for 2,031 students (27 percent of regular attendees). Overall results indicated that 68 percent of regularly attending students did not need to improve in the area of school behavior and discipline. The remaining categories showed similar results: 15 percent improved, 15 percent showed no change, and 3 percent declined according to grantee-defined change. Looking just at students who needed to improve, overall, 46 percent improved.

Considering program attendance, greater percentages of students did not need to improve with each greater program attendance category. The decline percentage decreased slightly from 4 percent to 2 percent with greater attendance.

School behavior and discipline were also examined by grade band. Students in the pre-K through fifth grade levels largely did not need to improve in this area. Middle school students (grades 6-8) were both more likely to improve and more likely to decline than other grade bands.

Evaluators also conducted historical presence analysis for school behavior, with 88 percent of students with school behavior data also having historical participation information. This analysis showed increasing improvement percentages; however, it is important to note that the number of students in each increasing year category decreases. Increased program attendance may indicate a positive program influence on school behavior.

Grantees reported school attendance results for 1,747 students, 23 percent of regular attendees, and these results showed 37 percent improved, 44 percent declined, 13 percent did not need to improve, and 6 percent showed no change.

Increasing program attendance shows increasing improvement percentages, from 34 percent for 30 days, 38 percent for 60 days, and 43 percent improving at 90+ days. Cohort 10 had the highest improvement percentage for the 90+ days grouping at 45 percent and the lowest percentage declining for this same participation level (2 percent).

There was little variation between students' likelihood to improve their school attendance by grade band. Younger students (grades PK-3) were somewhat more likely to decline than older students.

Historical presence analysis was also conducted for school attendance, with 57 percent of students with school attendance data also having historical participation information. Improvement percentages increase with longer participation up to five years. Increasing improvement percentages for longer participation is most pronounced when excluding students who did not need to improve; improvement percentages increased from 37 percent for one year to 55 percent for students with five years, but only 20 percent of students attending more than five years improved. It is important to note that the longer duration groups have smaller counts of students than the shorter duration groups, which may also contribute to these differences or to inherent differences in the students themselves.

## Promotion

Promotion status was available for 5,518 students (72 percent of regular attendees across 111 grantees). These results revealed that 99 percent of students with a promotion status were promoted or graduated. As nearly all students were promoted additional disaggregation would not add value to the finding.

## High School Credit/Course Recovery

Thirty-seven grantees reported student data showing that one or more high school students engage in course/credit recovery results through their 21<sup>st</sup> Century program (19 percent of grantees). Grantees offered course/credit recovery instruction primarily through computer-based instruction (47 percent), followed closely by a blend of face-to-face instructions and computer-based instruction (44 percent), and then primarily through face-to-face instruction (nine percent).

Grantees reported that 1,534 high school students participating in course/credit recovery, with 192 of these being regular attendees and 1,342 (87 percent) attending the 21st Century program fewer than 30 days. Of these 1,534 students participating in course/credit recovery activities, 1,127 recovered one or more courses/credits (73 percent). These students recovered a total of 1,872 total courses/credits:

- 526 literacy courses/credits (108 from regular attendees and 418 from non-regular attendees),
- 454 math courses/credits (65 from regular attendees and 389 from non-regular attendees), and
- 892 other courses/credits (198 from regular attendees and 694 from non-regular attendees).

## Conclusion

Pennsylvania 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs provided a variety of academic and enrichment services to students and their families intended to influence student outcomes. In most areas, considerable numbers of students showed improvement in one or more academic and/or behavioral elements, even though percentages may not be high in all areas.

Programs also faced considerable challenges and upheaval as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic. In some cases, even when grantees were positioned to offer remote/virtual learning opportunities during the pandemic, not all students or families had the resources or situations that allowed for program participation.

Despite the program implementation and student participation challenges resulting from the pandemic, student data reported showed that considerable numbers of students improved on the outcome measures. Results further suggest that increased, ongoing, and sustained participation (collectively, increased levels of program dosage) has a positive influence on students. However, considerable needs still exist.

Based on evaluation findings, evaluators recommend that grantees collaborate with their local evaluator to examine program findings in order to identify their students' areas of need and strength and make decisions designed to promote continuous program improvement and positive student outcomes. Grantees should implement strategies to increase student retention and ongoing, consistent program attendance. Also, grantees should consider how student needs have changed as a result of the pandemic and adjust their programs accordingly. Furthermore, evaluators recommend that the state team examine areas of grantee need in order to design and offer training, professional development, resources, and support designed to increase grantee capacity to implement effective and efficient programs. The state team should also work with grantees to address the large decrease in students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Evaluators finally suggest that the state team consider opportunities to collect data more efficiently at the state level, allowing for greater consistency and longitudinal analysis.

## Program Highlights

In this section, evaluators present several program highlights that showcase program success and progress. Program areas for improvement are addressed in the Reflections, Implications, and Recommendations section at the end of this report.

- More than 26,000 students had structured, safe, and educational afterschool programming and almost half (28 percent) attended such programs on a regular basis (30+ days). **Grantees served 26,880 students** during summer the 2020 and school year 2020-21 program year, which was approximately 1.6 percent of Pennsylvania's K-12 public school population (1.7 million).
- Grantees offered an estimated<sup>5</sup> 36,878 hours of programming during the summer and 191,414 hours during the school year, for a grand total of 228,292 hours for the 2020-21 program year.
- Nearly all grantees (94 percent) reported offering both STEM<sup>6</sup> and literacy activities as part of their 2020-21 programs.
- 75 percent of grantees reported that they implement literacy-related activities daily; 66 percent implement math activities daily.
- Slightly more than half of grantees (59 percent) classified their geographic context as urban; 24 percent self-classified as rural; 6 percent self-classified as suburban; and 10 percent indicated they served a combination of these community types.
- A total of 1,127 high school students recovered a total of 1,872 courses or credits, which likely supported them in meeting graduation requirements. These credits included 526 literacy credits, 454 math credits, and 892 other credits. Course/credit recovery students were 6 percent of all 21st Century participants.
- 4,409 students (53% of regular attendees) improved in at least one academic measure (reading/math report card grades, academic performance teacher survey data).
- Nearly all grantees maintain ongoing communication with school administrators (99 percent) and/or classroom teachers (91 percent); 75 percent of grantees employ school-day teachers as program staff, providing a direct connection between the school day and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program.

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<sup>5</sup> Based on grantee-reported typical weekly operations.

<sup>6</sup> STEM refers to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics activities.

- Of students needing to improve and included in analysis, 36 percent improved their reading report card grade and 32 percent improved their math report card grade from the first to their last marking period.
- Of the 5,968 students who had comparable report card grade data for reading and math, 854 students (14 percent) improved both their reading grade and math grade.
- The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teacher Survey results showed larger percentages of students improving than other measures of student achievement. Classroom teachers may be able to detect small improvements in individual students before they show up on assessments or other measures. These findings may indicate that student improvements may be observed in the future. If students who did not need to improve are excluded from the analysis, each of the seven teacher survey indicators showed that nearly half of regular attendees improving according to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teacher Survey data:
  - 66 percent of regular attendees with teacher survey data improved their academic performance;
  - 66 percent of regular attendees with teacher survey data were reported as improving their homework completion to their teacher's satisfaction;
  - 66 percent of regular attendees with teacher survey data improved their class participation;
  - 47 percent of regular attendees with teacher survey data improved in the area of volunteering in class;
  - 59 percent of regular attendees with teacher survey data improved their class attentiveness;
  - 54 percent of regular attendees with teacher survey data improved their class behavior; and
  - 57 percent of regular attendees with teacher survey data improved their motivation to learn.
- Grantees served 7,295 adult family members of participating students.

## Introduction

### Program Description<sup>7</sup>

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program provides federal funding for the establishment of community learning centers that offer academic and enrichment opportunities to children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools, to meet state and local standards in core academic subjects through a broad array of activities that can complement their regular academic programs. Literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children must also be provided.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> Century) program is authorized under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (P.L. 107-110), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Pennsylvania's primary goal for its 21<sup>st</sup> Century program is to assist youth to meet state standards for core academic subjects by providing them with academic and enrichment opportunities. In addition to academics, centers are encouraged to offer participants a broad array of other services and programs during non-school hours, such as art, music, recreation activities, character education, career and technical training, drug and violence prevention programming, and technology education. Educational services for families of participating students, such as literacy instruction, computer training, or cultural enrichment, must also be included.<sup>8</sup> Federal law requires that all 21<sup>st</sup> Century program sites provide academic enrichment activities and parental involvement activities. Programs are encouraged to use innovative instructional strategies, coordinate academics with local curricula and assessments, and use assessment data to inform instruction and evaluate results. Academics are to involve more than just helping participants with homework and should not just repeat school day activities.

Pennsylvania's 21<sup>st</sup> Century program encourages active youth and family participation to ensure that both have decision-making roles in the creation, operation, and evaluation of every 21<sup>st</sup> Century program in Pennsylvania. School and community collaboration is another key in meeting the academic, social, physical, and emotional needs of children and families. Programs are to offer quarterly open house meetings and maintain an open-door policy where adult family members feel welcome and are encouraged to drop in.

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<sup>7</sup> Program information and requirements were adapted from 21<sup>st</sup> Century application and program guidance documentation.

<sup>8</sup> The majority of 21<sup>st</sup> Century activities are to take place during non-school hours. However, activities for adult family members and pre-kindergarten students may take place during school hours if these times are the most appropriate to these constituents.

All activities are to be based on rigorous scientific research and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) provides “principles of effectiveness” to guide programs in identifying and implementing programs that enhance student learning. Activities must address the needs of local schools and communities and be continuously evaluated at the local level.

### **Grantee Eligibility**

Federal law mandates, per section 4203 (a)(3), that any public or private organization may apply for funding if it proposes to serve students who primarily attend schools eligible for school-wide programs under Title I section 1114, or schools that serve a high percentage of students (at least 40 percent) from low-income families and the families of such students. Non-school applicant agencies must collaborate with local education agencies when applying for funds and may establish memoranda of understanding, formal contracts, or informal agreements to facilitate implementation and data collection.

### **Participant Eligibility**

Eligible participants are public and private/nonpublic school students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Programs are to target the ages and grades deemed to be at greatest risk and those students who are academically below proficiency. At-risk behaviors might include poor school performance, poor school attendance, drug or alcohol abuse, criminal activity, or any other indicators judged by the applicant as placing the child at higher risk and greater need. Adult family members of students participating in the community learning center are to be served through educational activities that are appropriate for adults.

## **Reporting Venues**

### **21 Annual Performance Report**

21<sup>st</sup> Century is a federally-authorized program operating across the nation. One of the requirements of 21<sup>st</sup> Century grantees is to complete program and outcomes reporting in the federal 21APR system, where “APR” stands for Annual Performance Report. The 2020-21 year was the fourth year that the 21APR system operated.

The 21APR system collects information on grantees and their centers, program staffing information, activities, program attendance, student characteristics, and student outcomes based on federal measures. Student outcome measures included state reading and math assessment gains, reading and math report card grades, and teacher survey responses. However, at this time, no data or results entered by grantees are exportable for efficient state use.

### **State Reporting**

State reporting took three forms: the PA Implementation Survey, the Center Operations Spreadsheet, and the De-identified Student Data Spreadsheet. State reporting forms provided grantees with a method of reporting information that Pennsylvania needs to examine state and cohort performance given that data are not exportable for state use from the 21APR system. For the first time, student demographic data was also collected via students' PASecureIDs – provided in the Student Data Spreadsheet – from the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS).<sup>9</sup>

The Allegheny Intermediate Unit, the contracted evaluator for Pennsylvania's 21<sup>st</sup> Century program, constructed and implemented the state reporting forms. Evaluators compiled the data from each source for all grantees and analyzed it overall, by cohort, and by grantee.

### **Other Data Sources**

Additional information was collected about grantees and their programs by PDE and the Center for Schools and Communities, PDE's subcontractor for 21<sup>st</sup> Century technical assistance; however, these data/reports were typically not (intended to be) used for the state evaluation.

Grantees conduct a local level evaluation, and their contracted external local evaluator produces a report that they submit to the state. PDE program officers are the primary reviewers of these reports. The state evaluation team does not include grantee local evaluation information in the state evaluation process.

### **Evaluation Design**

The evaluation of the 2020-21 program year of 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs in Pennsylvania includes information about the programs operated under the Cohort 7, Cohort 8, Cohort 9, and Cohort 10 funding cycles. The 2020-21 program year included 196 grantees: Cohort 7 included 40 grantees, Cohort 8 included 42 grantees, Cohort 9 included 42 grantees, and Cohort 10 included 72 grantees. Cohorts 8-10 were eligible to operate the full program year, which included summer 2020 and school year 2020-21. Cohort 7 ended September 30, 2020, so these grantees only operated for part of the program year.

The evaluation of Pennsylvania's 21<sup>st</sup> Century program examined three performance measures, within which grantees established their own performance indicators. The measures included:

1. Participants in 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes;

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<sup>9</sup> For data elements in the student data workbook that were provided by both PIMS and the grantees, evaluators defaulted to PIMS data, as it is reported directly by students' LEAs. PIMS is a more accurate data source.

2. Increasing percentages of students regularly participating in the program will meet or exceed state and local academic achievement standards in reading and math; and
3. Students participating in the program will show improvement in the performance measures of school attendance, classroom performance, and reduced disciplinary referrals.

PDE contracted with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program to fulfill federal requirements under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended, Sections 4202 (C) and 4203 (A) and Section H-5 of the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Non-Regulatory Guidance*:

States must conduct a comprehensive evaluation (directly, or through a grant or contract) of the effectiveness of programs and activities provided with 21<sup>st</sup> Century funds. In their applications to the Department, States are required to describe the performance indicators and performance measures they will use to evaluate local programs. States must also monitor the periodic evaluations of local programs and must disseminate the results of these evaluations to the public.

## How To Use This Report

The primary audiences for this report include PDE, technical assistance providers, and Pennsylvania 21<sup>st</sup> Century grantees, though the results can be useful for other groups.

The evaluation of the 2020-21 program year focused on the three performance measures outlined previously. Additionally, grantees provided implementation and contextual data to support and explain program results. Findings and information are provided overall for the state (all grantees combined) and for each cohort as appropriate and available. Throughout this report, the narrative explanation precedes the graphical representation of results.

Throughout this report, for ease of reading, percentages have been rounded, which may result in totals not equal to 100 percent. Additionally, in tables or graphs where “0%” appears, the reader should note that these represent values of less than 1 percent expressed as a rounded value. Instances of zero percent where the item truly represents zero instances or individuals have been removed from graphs to make them easier to read. Likewise, where blank cells appear in data tables, the value is zero.

Some graphs contained in this report include both the number of instances (in a data table) along with an illustration of the proportional relationship of those figures. This type of graph is typically used when the categories are mutually exclusive and individual category percentages equal 100 percent. Other graphs only include the percentage of instances. This type of graph is typically used when multiple categories can apply to a

single item (grantees could select all items that applied). Data tables that include percentages are also used in cases where the percentage is a more accurate representation of the program or the population being examined. The type of illustration included will indicate to the reader the most appropriate way to examine the findings.

Some sections provide ranges (minimum and maximum) of results in order to demonstrate the variability of grantee programs and outcomes, as well as an average. An average, or mean, is a measure of central tendency where the result is calculated by adding two or more values together and then dividing the resulting total by the number of values included.

It is important for readers to note that not all grantees reported in all areas. In some cases, grantees were not required to report in all areas, as their applications and program operation dictated which reporting components applied to their programs. In other areas, grantees may have had no students to which a particular data element applied, or they failed to report. The number of grantees reporting in each area is provided to minimize confusion.

Care should be taken in making comparisons across cohorts, as each has differing populations, programs, and student counts, and grantees had different approved program applications. Further, some of each cohort's program requirements were slightly different to accommodate changes in state priorities and federal guidance. This report is not an evaluation of individual grantees, but rather an overall examination of the programs implemented during the 2020-21 program year, which includes summer 2020 and school year 2020-21. Grantees are required to have an external local evaluator that should be providing examination of each individual grantee's program. Grantees' local evaluation reports are to be submitted to the state in the fall each year.

This report includes detailed explanations of the program's implementation and outcomes as addressed throughout the findings section. In addition, this report includes sections that present information contained in findings in the context of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measures. For the first time, this report also includes an analysis of 21<sup>st</sup> Century student demographics, based on data pulled from the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS). The report concludes with evaluator reflections, implications, and recommendations for improvement.

It is important to remember that because of the nature of 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs, the students these programs serve, current information collection methods, and other resources available to schools, organizations, communities, and students, it is not possible to attribute student outcomes solely to this program's efforts.

The findings provided within this report should be used to guide program management and assist PDE and the contracted technical assistance team from the Center for Schools and Communities in providing assistance to grantees in order to improve implementation and outcomes.

## Findings

The program findings shared in this report include information reported by grantees and state-level program staff about the 2020-21 program year, which includes summer 2020 and school year 2020-21. The various reporting venues are explained in the prior section of this report.

### Grantee Characteristics

The 2020-21 program year included 196 grantees in four funding cycles (cohorts). Grantees were mainly schools, districts, or charter schools (42 percent) or community-based/nonprofit organizations (32 percent). This varied somewhat by cohort, with Cohort 9 having a higher concentration of school-based grantees (48 percent). Cohort details are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1.



Schools/Districts: 83



Community organizations: 62



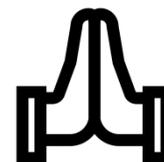
Intermediate units: 16



Nationally affiliated nonprofit: 15



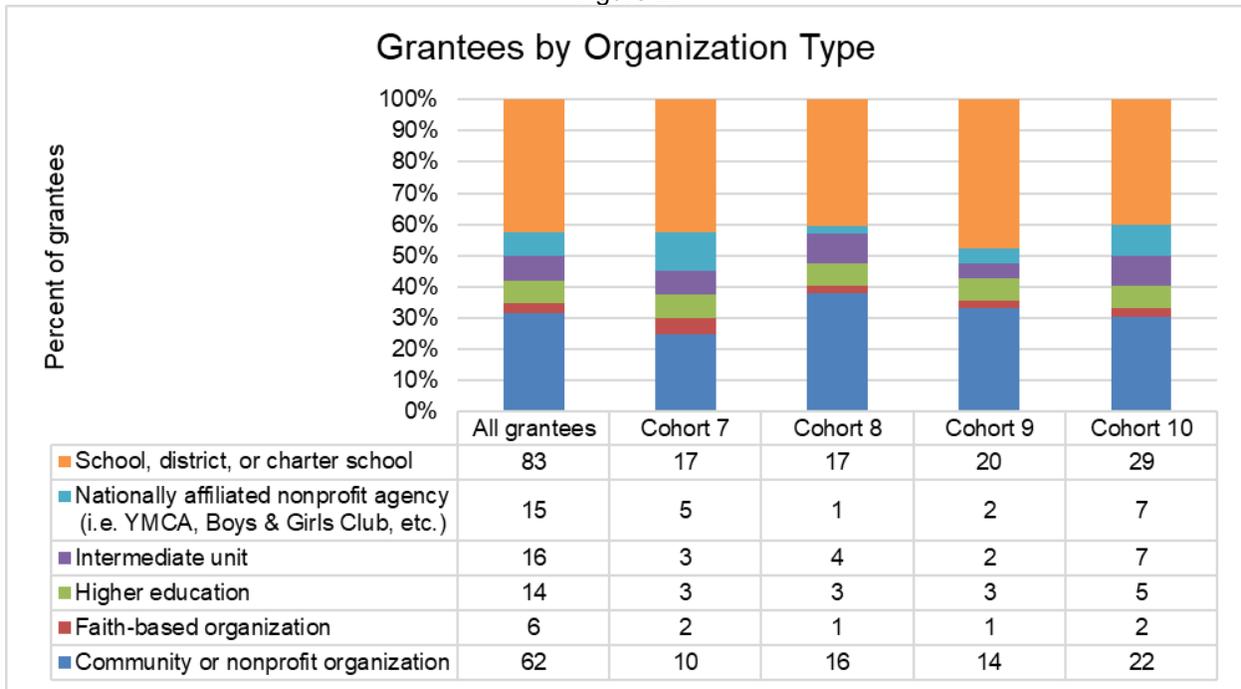
Higher education: 14



Faith-based organizations: 6

However, the grantee organization type is only indicative of the entity having fiscal and contractual responsibility for the program. Each grantee operated programming out of one or more centers (locations), which may be a different type than the grantee organization. For example, a community organization may operate its program in school buildings and a school district may operate its program in a community organization's facility, or some combination thereof. Each grantee was permitted to operate its program in whatever manner was described in its approved grant application based on the needs of the population to be served.

Figure 2.



Grantees operated programs out of 540 centers (101 Cohort 7 centers, 106 Cohort 8 centers, 117 Cohort 9 centers, and 216 Cohort 10 centers). Grantees operated between one and 12 centers per grantee, with an average of three centers; however, the mode (most frequent value) was one center.

Evaluators asked grantees to indicate the geographic context of their programs. Fifty-nine percent of grantees classified their programs as operating in an urban environment; 24 percent were reported as rural, 6 percent were reported as suburban, and 10 percent were reported as a combination of these types. Results were similar across cohorts.

Figure 3.

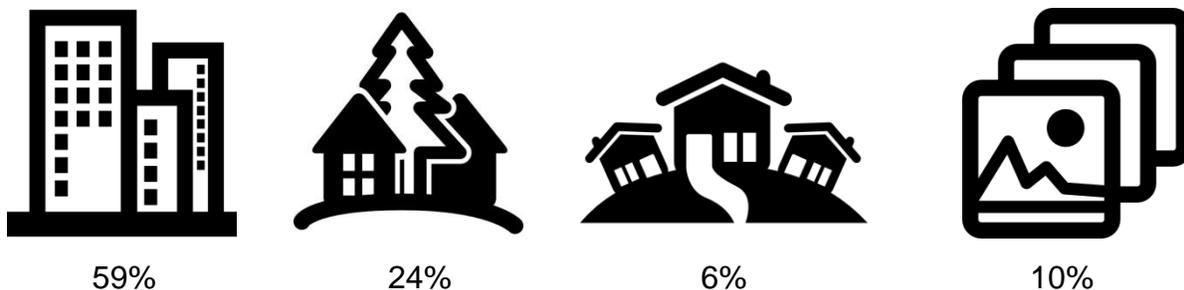
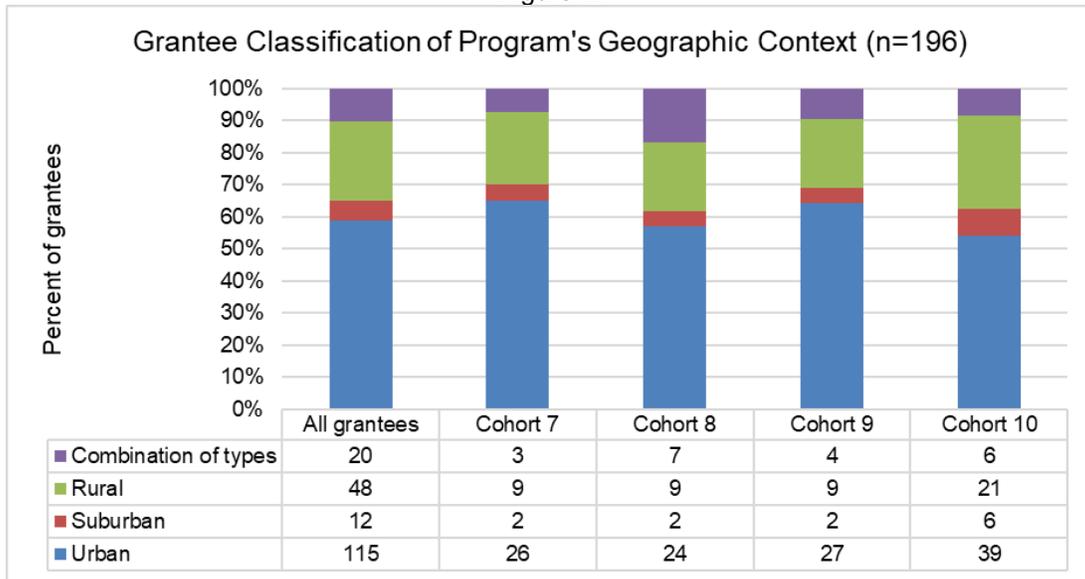


Figure 4.



## Program Implementation

While the purpose of 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs is to provide out-of-school-time programs that offer students supplemental academic and enrichment activities and there are some operational requirements, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century grant affords grantees a good deal of program design flexibility.

Implementation information about student and adult/family activities and staffing were collected in 21APR, but not available for state analysis as they have been in the past. Student demographics for all grants were also not available because of the changes in federal reporting and data availability. However, demographics data – extracted from Pennsylvania’s Information Management System - was available for 5,472 students (5,225 regular attendees and 247 non-regular attendees). This data represents 20 percent of all students, or 68 percent of regular attendees and 1 percent of non-regular attendees. Because the sample of non-regular attendees with demographic information was so low, it is excluded from the following analysis. Grantees are expected to prioritize at-risk and low-income populations as part of their grant eligibility requirements.

Of the 5,225 regular attendees with demographics data, over half were from Cohort 10 (59 percent). Cohort 9 represented 23 percent of students with data, followed by 17 percent for Cohort 8, and 1 percent for Cohort 7.

Students were slightly more likely to be female (54 percent) than male (46 percent). These percentages are similar to those of the statewide public school population. More than two-thirds of students (68 percent) had low-income status, indicating that 21<sup>st</sup> Century grantees are prioritizing and reaching low-income populations.

Of these 5,225 students, nearly half identified as white (48 percent), followed by 27 percent identifying as Black or African American, and 18 percent identifying as Hispanic. Other race and ethnicity categories account for less than 10 percent of students. When compared to statewide public school enrollment, 21<sup>st</sup> Century programming included the same or greater percentages of minority students, with the exception of Asian students.

Roughly 10 percent of students were classified as current or former English learners (ELs) (compared 4 percent of all Pennsylvania public school students). Current ELs represented 8 percent of the students with demographics data. One percent were former ELs whose language abilities are monitored, and less than 1 percent were former ELs whose abilities no longer need to be monitored. Of the 855 total students with current, monitored, or former EL status, 50 percent spoke Spanish as their home language, followed by 36 percent speaking Barbadian English, or Bajan. Other languages accounted for 2 percent or less of students.

Of the 5,225 students, 22 percent were reported as having special needs. Of these 1,171 students, 36 percent were reported as having a specific learning disability, 29 percent had a speech or language impairment, and 18 percent had another health impairment. Other special needs were less common.

The following table provides counts and percentages for each of the aforementioned demographic categories.

Table 1: Demographics of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Regular Attendees (from PIMS)

Demographic	Count (n=5,225)	Percentage	Statewide Percentage
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
<i>American Indian / Alaskan Native</i>	10	<1%	<1%
<i>Asian</i>	83	2%	4%
<i>Black or African American</i>	1,436	27%	15%
<i>Hispanic</i>	930	18%	13%
<i>Multi-Racial</i>	256	5%	5%
<i>Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic)</i>	4	<1%	<1%
<i>White</i>	2,506	48%	63%
<b>Low-income Status<sup>10</sup></b>			
<i>Yes</i>	3,575	68%	48%
<i>No</i>	1,650	32%	52%
<b>Sex</b>			
<i>Female</i>	2,806	54%	49%
<i>Male</i>	2,419	46%	51%
<b>English Learners (ELs)</b>			
<i>EL</i>	398	8%	<i>Not available</i>

<sup>10</sup> Based on calculations from the 2018-19 school year.  
 Pennsylvania 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers  
 2020-21 State Evaluation Report  
 Originated July 7, 2022

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Count (n=5,225)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Statewide Percentage</b>
<i>Former EL (monitored)</i>	73	1%	<i>Not available</i>
<i>Former EL (unmonitored)</i>	26	0%	<i>Not available</i>
<b>Disability</b>			
Yes	1,171	22%	<i>Not available</i>
No	4,054	78%	<i>Not available</i>

**COVID-19 Pandemic**

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 viral outbreak a global pandemic. In response to growing numbers of infections and general uncertainty, Pennsylvania’s Governor Tom Wolf began mitigation measures. In-person operations of many programs and services, including schools, ceased on or around Friday, March 13, 2020.

In August 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Education released guidance on when schools could re-open to in-person instruction based on county health statistics. Throughout the 2020-21 program year, schools and 21<sup>st</sup> Century sites followed remote, hybrid, or in-person operations. Primarily virtual was the most common operations method for grantees, whether they operated only during the summer, only during the school year, or during both the summer and the school of the 2020-21 program year. Throughout the 2020-21 program year, grantees cited difficulties in maintaining attendance rates due to complications caused by COVID-19.

**Operations**

Grantees could operate programs during the summer of 2020,<sup>11</sup> school year 2020-21, or both. Specific date ranges were not prescribed to allow for the local variance of school year start or end dates. Program guidance required grantees to operate a minimum of 36 school year weeks, for 12-15 hours per week afterschool, unless approved to operate otherwise. However, because of the pandemic, grantees were not penalized if they were unable to reach their 36 weeks of operation or maintain their typical weekly hours. Grantees reported operations details in the Center Operations Spreadsheet, which they submitted to the state evaluation team in summer 2021.

Grantees operated programs out of 540 centers.

Summer-operating centers (369) operated between eight and 45 hours per week, with the bulk of these hours occurring during the day on weekdays; only 14 centers (4 percent of summer centers) operated on weekday evenings, weekends, or holidays.

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<sup>11</sup> Generally, grantees were required to operate during both summer and school year or school year only, depending on their contract. In some cases, a grantee contract ended early making them eligible to operate during a portion of the year.

Center operations averaged 18 hours per week during the summer with the most frequent operations volume being 12 hours per week. Centers operated between three and five days per week. Most of the centers (350, 95 percent) operated either four or five days per week. Centers offered these programs between one and 10 weeks per center; 78 centers (21 percent) operated for six or more weeks.

The majority of summer centers operated primarily virtually (327, 89%). Thirty-seven (10 percent) of centers operated primarily in-person, and four centers (1 percent) operated primarily hybrid, with students mostly attending either in-person or virtually.

During the school year, programming occurred through 447 centers (83 percent of all centers).

Grantees offered programming between one and six days per week, with an average of four days per week, and between two and 47 total hours per week, with an average of 13 hours per week. The minimum requirement for hours per week during the school year was 12 hours; 392 centers (88 percent) met or exceeded this requirement.

Centers operated between one and 45 total weeks during the school year 2020-21, with 176 centers (39 percent of school year centers) operating for 36 weeks or more, which was the expected level of implementation for a full year's program, though grantees were not held accountable for this target in the pandemic condition. Programming ran for an average of 34 weeks.

Nearly half of school year centers operated primarily virtually (215, 48%). Eighty-three (19 percent) of centers operated primarily in-person. For hybrid operations, schedules where students attended in in-person cycles were most common, accounting for 83 centers (19 percent). Sixty-six centers (15 percent) operated on a hybrid schedule with students mostly attending either in-person or virtually.

Based on information grantees (196)<sup>12</sup> shared in the Implementation Survey about remote learning programming<sup>13</sup>:

- 184 grantees offered synchronous virtual activities.
- 81 grantees indicated they used asynchronous activities.
- 69 grantees reported that they used paper-based remote learning activities.
- 45 grantees reported using remote learning activities via email.
- 64 grantees reported using computer programs or app-based activities (not staff-led instruction).
- 135 grantees provided one-on-one help to individual students.
- 173 grantees provided support to students in small groups.

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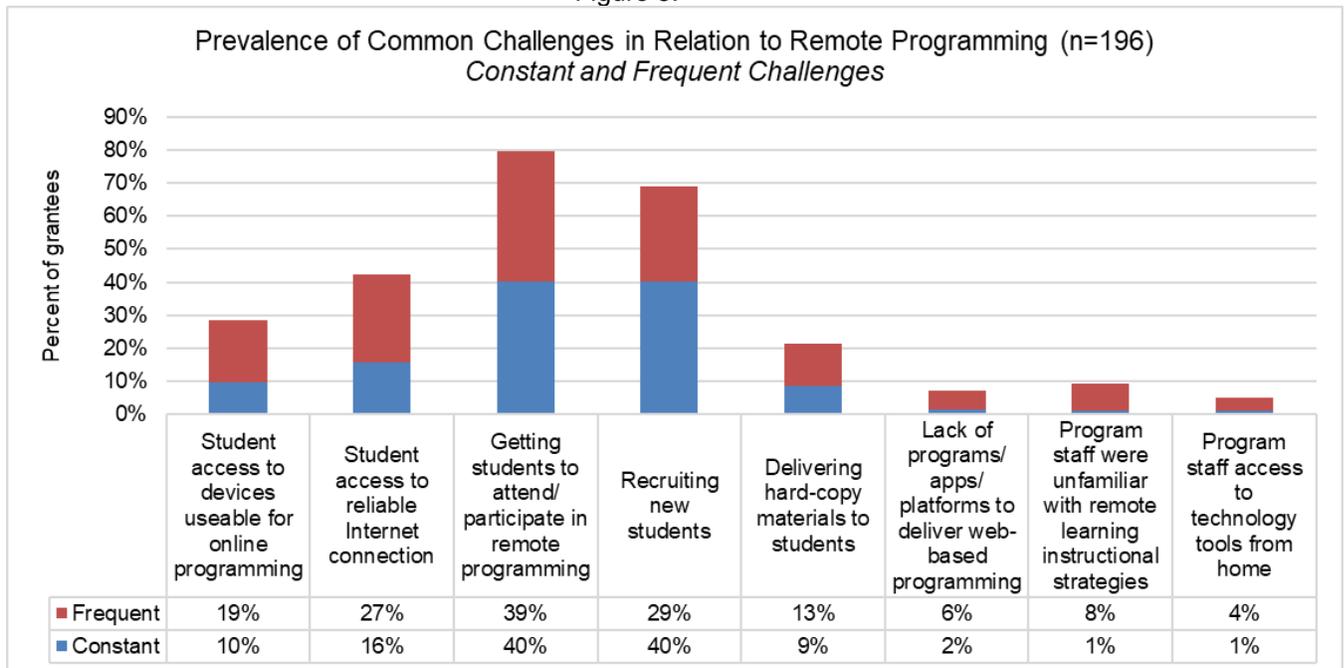
<sup>12</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all 196 grantees are included in the counts and percentages of each survey question.

<sup>13</sup> Counts include grantees who indicated that they used the following activities 'most or all of the time' or 'some of the time'. Grantees who indicated that they used the activities 'rarely' or 'not at all/did not use' were excluded from the counts.

- 86 grantees allowed students to work alone at their own pace.

Evaluators asked grantees to share their experience with common challenges in their transition to remote program delivery. Grantees were presented with a list of common challenges and asked to rate the prevalence of these challenges for their programs. Frequency options included ‘constant challenge,’ ‘frequent challenge,’ ‘occasional challenge,’ and ‘did not experience this challenge.’ The following graph illustrates these most frequent challenges. Getting students to attend/participate in remote programming was a top challenge.

Figure 5.



Based on hours per week and weeks in operation, evaluators estimated that grantees offered a combined total of 36,878 hours of programming during the summer and 191,414 hours during the school year, for a grand total of 228,292 estimated hours for the 2020-21 program year.

Grantees were also asked to estimate the average ratio of students to teacher during programming. The most common answer was ten students to one teacher (34 percent of 184 respondents), followed by 15 students to one teacher (24 percent), and 12 students to one teacher (14 percent). The smallest ratio listed was one to one and the largest was 24 students to one teacher. On average, programs had a student-teacher ratio of 10:1.

In the Implementation Survey, grantees were asked how they provided transportation during traditional, in-person programming. Grantees indicated that parents most often provided transportation (63 percent), followed by 35 percent of grantees providing

transportation during the school year. Thirty-three percent of grantees reported that most students live within walking distance of their center. Less commonly selected options are as follows:

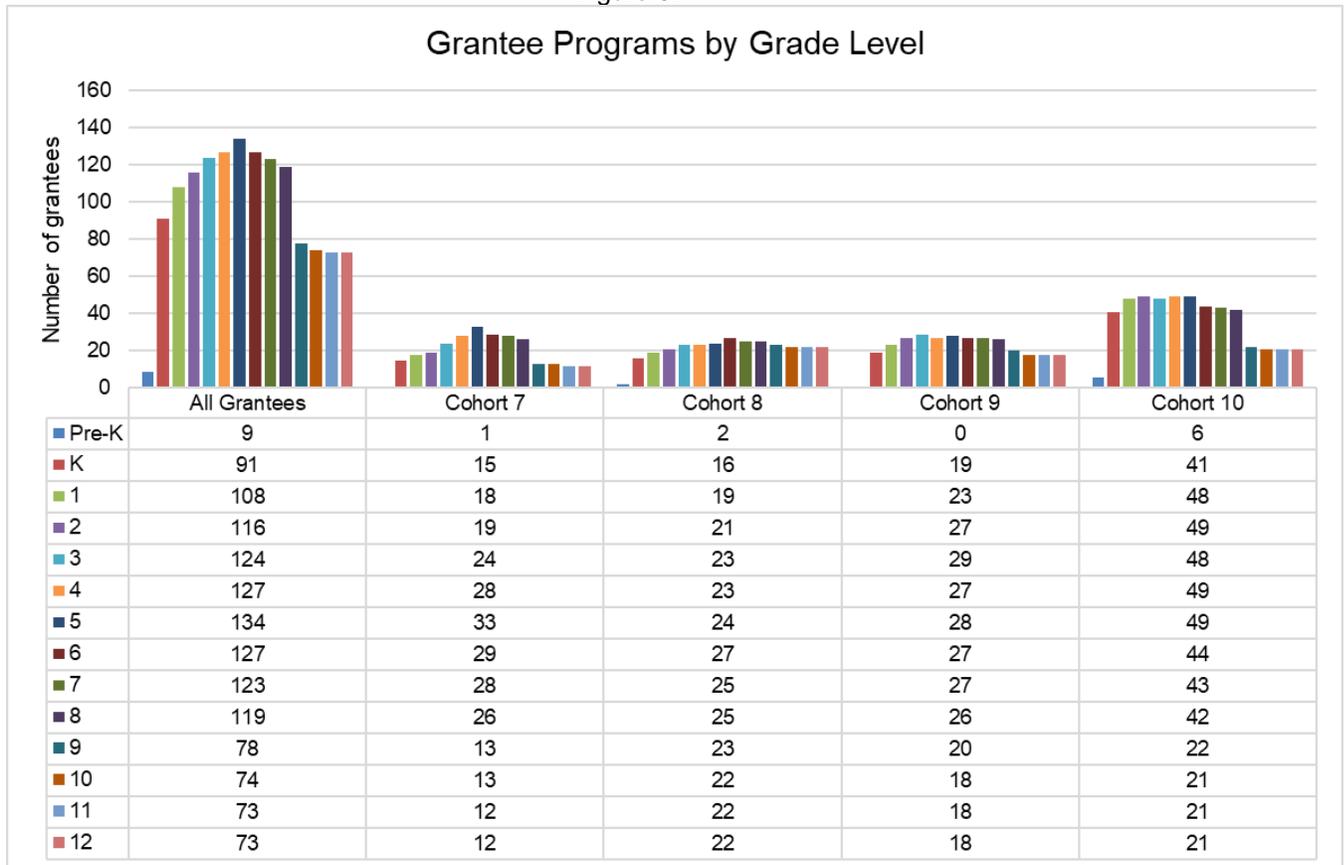
- Grantee provided transportation for field trips and special events (29 percent);
- Schools/districts provided transportation (28 percent);
- Grantee provided transportation during summer programming (28 percent);
- Grantee did not provide any transportation (26 percent);
- Grantees provided transportation on weekdays (21 percent);
- Students took public transportation (20 percent);
- Grantee shared that transportation is unnecessary (20 percent);
- Students drove themselves to programming (1 percent), and;
- Grantee provided transportation on the weekends (>1 percent).

## **Program Design**

Program guidance included a list of allowable activities. In the PA Implementation Survey, grantees indicated which program areas they addressed from a list of 16 areas outlined in Pennsylvania's program guidance. The largest percentages of grantees indicated they offered literacy activities (96 percent), STEM activities (96 percent), homework help (88 percent), and/or arts/music activities (88 percent). Less common service categories included truancy prevention (26 percent), counseling programs (33 percent), and/or violence prevention (33 percent). In the prior year, literacy activities, STEM activities, and homework help were also indicated as the most common, while truancy prevention and counseling programs also trended as the some of the least common activities.

Grantees were most likely to serve grades 3-8, with between 61 and 68 percent of grantees selecting one or more of the grade levels in this range. Grades 4-6 had the highest percentages (65 to 68 percent of grantees, or between 127 and 134 grantees).

Figure 6.



Grantees indicated in the PA Implementation Survey strategies they used to identify students to enroll. Grantees could select from a list of strategies or share their own and they could select all strategies that applied to them. The largest portion of grantees (93 percent) used teacher or school recommendation to identify students to enroll, followed by parent referral (83 percent of grantees), among others.

Grantees shared a variety of strategies they used to identify students' needs in the PA Implementation Survey. The largest portion of grantees (93 percent) used teacher or school recommendations or referrals to identify students' needs, followed by parent feedback (80 percent of grantees), report card grades (74 percent of grantees), and observation (73 percent of grantees), among others.

When selecting an intervention, grantees shared a variety of information or qualities that they considered to be the most important. Based on the PA Implementation Survey, alignment with PA academic standards was the most common (65 percent of grantees), followed by the intervention complements/matches district programming (63 percent of grantees), and demonstrated program success with specific student groups (56 percent of grantees), among others.

Identification and recruitment challenges grantees reported included parent commitment to consistent attendance (60 percent), difficulty connecting with children and families (lack of response to engagement attempts) (57 percent of grantees), and lack of internet connection at home for virtual learning (56 percent of grantees). Five percent of grantees indicated that they did not experience or were not aware of any such challenges.

Grantees were asked in the Implementation Survey to describe strategies/protocol their staff used to encourage regular and repeated attendance at their program. The largest portion of grantees (95 percent) did so by offering high-interest activities, followed by program staff contacting parents of students who were absent from the program (86 percent of grantees, among others).

Grantees were then asked to share which strategies were the most effective in encouraging regular and repeated attendance in *virtual* programming, if applicable. A variety of strategies were shared, which have been categorized into the following list of themes, given in order of frequency:

- Communication with families/students about programming via phone calls, emails, text messages, apps, learning platforms, social media, or letters;
- Incentives/prizes for participation and/or attendance;
- Offering high-interest activities;
- Delivery or pick-up of supplies/learning kits;
- Follow-up with the parents of absent students;
- One-on-one or small group tutoring;
- Students helped plan activities;
- Student leadership opportunities;
- Focus on building a relationship with students and/or families;
- Fun activities/games, and;
- Several other, less frequent strategies.

In addition to examining implementation and operations of 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs, the PA Implementation Survey asked grantees to indicate how they collaborated with students' schools. Grantees collaborated in multiple ways, but nearly all grantees indicated that they maintain ongoing communication with school administrators (99 percent of grantees), and many grantees maintain ongoing communication with school day teachers (91 percent). Many grantees (75 percent) reported that school day teachers also served as program staff, providing a direct link between school and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program.

The Implementation Survey asked grantees to share any models or pre-packaged programs that were being used academics in their program. These items have been categorized into the following list, given in order of frequency:

- Virtual learning platforms (e.g. i-Ready, Study Island, Edgenuity, IXL, Schoology, etc);

- ELA/literacy learning websites, curriculum, apps, etc. (e.g., Flocabulary, ReadWorks, Lexia Learning, Readingeggs, Wilson Foundations, etc.);
- STEM/STEAM learning websites, curriculum, apps, etc. (e.g., STEMfinity, LEGO STEM, Franklin Institute STEM curriculum, Science Explorers, etc.);
- Websites providing digital learning resources and lessons (PBS LearningMedia, Scholastic, National Geographic Learning, Education.com, etc.);
- Math learning websites, curriculum, apps, etc. (e.g., First in Math, Reflex Math, Mango Math, etc.);
- SEL resources, programs, etc. (e.g., Second Step Program, PATHS curriculum, Harvard PEAR, etc.), and;
- Less common themes, such as college and career readiness, drug and alcohol prevention, arts, wellness/fitness, and others.

Grantees were also asked in the survey to describe how their program integrated the school day curricula into its activities and how the educational activities offered supported regular school-day learning. Programs most commonly worked with school day teachers and administrators to develop their programming. Other strategies that the programs used are as follows, listed in order of frequency:

- Hiring school day teachers as program staff, which allowed for teachers to easily extend school day lessons and understand the needs of the students;
- Providing engaging activities that reinforced school day lessons;
- Providing individual or small-group tutoring;
- Designing programming after school-day curriculum and/or state standards;
- Making data-based decisions on programming and students' needs (e.g., via test scores, student portfolios, grades, etc.), and;
- Other, less common strategies.

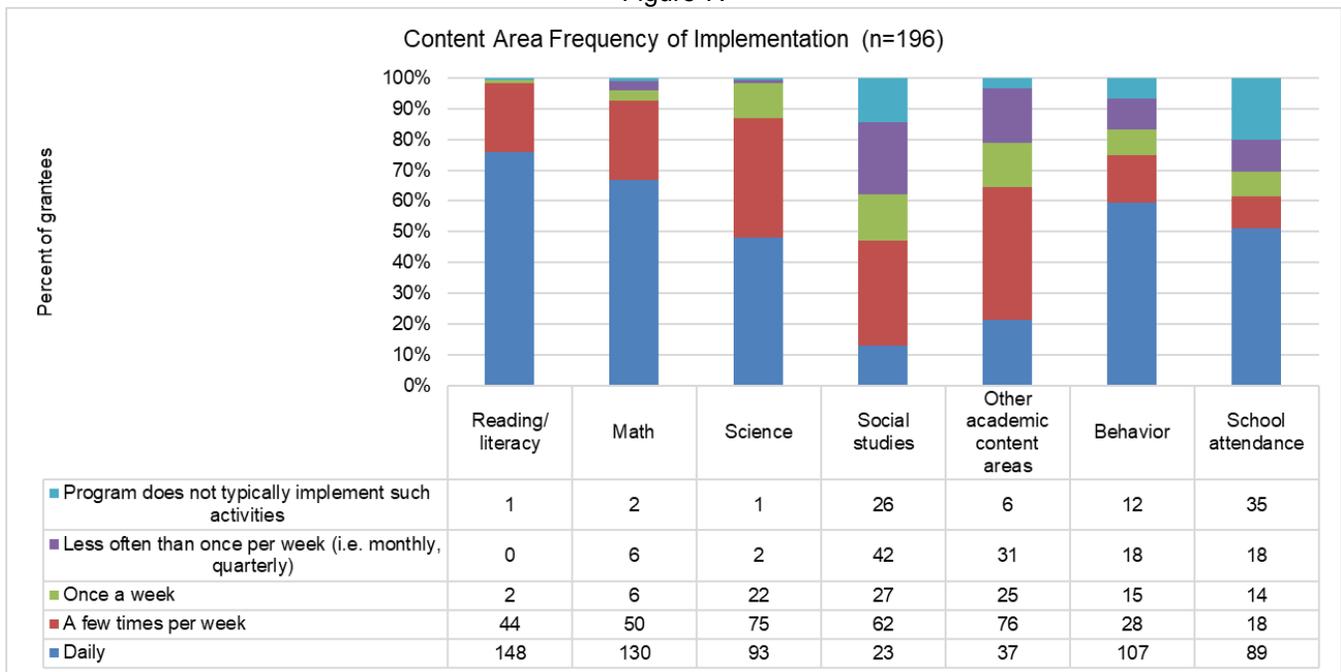
In the Implementation Survey, grantees were asked to describe the strategies/protocol their program used to influence positive student behavior (for students with such a need). The most common strategy was offering Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) activities or curriculum. Other strategies included, in no particular order:

- Modeling positive interactions and conflict resolution to students;
- Positive reinforcement of program rules;
- Opportunities for small-group social interaction and dialogue;
- Teamwork and problem-solving activities;
- Supportive staff and focus on building positive relationships with students;
- Peer mentoring and/or inter-generational mentoring;
- College and career planning/goal-setting;
- Service learning;
- Physical activity;
- Mindfulness activities;
- Individual program plans or behavior solutions for students;
- Partnerships with outside providers/vendors;

- Student leadership opportunities, including public speaking and opportunities to provide suggestions and rules for the program;
- Assistance with English language learning;
- Communicating and working with parents/guardians to address misbehavior;
- SEL and behavior management training for staff;
- Use of de-escalation strategies and/or one-on-one behavior redirection;
- Referral to specialized services (if appropriate);
- Building self-confidence and interpersonal skills;
- Providing individual and group therapy sessions (via a licensed therapist), and;
- Requiring parents and/or students sign a code of conduct contract.

In the PA Implementation Survey, grantees were asked to indicate the frequency with which they implemented activities relevant to key content areas within a typical program week. Reading and math activities were most frequently indicated as daily activities; 75 percent of grantees indicated daily reading or literacy activities and 66 percent of grantees indicated they had daily math activities in a typical program week. Grantees implemented science, social studies, and other areas less frequently.

Figure 7.



In the Implementation Survey, grantees were also asked to describe the strategies/protocol their program used to influence positive student behavior. The most common strategy was communication with parents (89 percent of grantees), followed by communication with school/teachers/administrators (83 percent of grantees), among others.

Grantees also used a variety of strategies to positively influence student attendance at school. According to the Implementation Survey, the most common strategy was communication with parents (82 percent of grantees), followed by communication with school/teachers/administrators (75 percent of grantees), among others.

### Adult Family Member Activities

Programs were required to serve parents and family members of participating students. In the PA Implementation Survey, grantees could indicate the types of parent or family activities offered from a list of options or describe other activity types. Grantees could select all activity types that applied to their program for 2020-21. A majority of grantees selected open house activities (62 percent of grantees), followed distantly by family literacy nights 38 percent of grantees), with other options selected to a lesser extent.

Table 2 provides counts and percentages of grantees offering different types of adult family member opportunities. This table simply indicates the number of grantees offering such activities and not the frequency, duration, content, or intensity of such offerings.

Table 2. Grantees’ Adult Family Member Activity Types and Prevalence

Activity Type	Number of Grantees Offering Such Activities	Percentage of Grantees Offering Such Activities
Adult education opportunities and/or GED classes	28	14%
Adult ESL services	20	10%
Career/job training	12	6%
Computer/technology training	43	22%
Cultural events	50	26%
Family literacy nights	74	38%
Health, nutrition, fitness, or wellness activities	65	33%
Open House	121	62%
Parent reinforcement of the importance of school and education	52	27%
Parent training on how to help their children with schoolwork	60	31%
Parent training on post-secondary options and planning	25	13%
Parent volunteering at the program	19	10%
Parent/Center staff meetings	51	26%
Parenting skills classes	40	20%
Structured family recreation	34	17%
Other	69	35%

Grantees also reported how they communicate with parents, students, and the community. Grantees most often indicated fliers, promotional materials, or newsletters as methods of sharing information (91 percent of grantees), followed by phone calls (88 percent of grantees), and informal feedback or communication (81 percent of grantees), among other formal and informal methods selected with lower frequency.

Grantees reported counts of parents/adult family members participating in program activities. For adult family members of participating students who participated in at least one activity of any type during this program year, 165 grantees (84 percent) reported serving parents/adult family members and these grantee counts ranged from one adult to 554, with an average of 37 adults. Grantee adult counts totaled 7,295 adult family members participating, less than half of adult participation in the previous year.

In terms of participation in parent education or engagement activities, including such activities as adult ESL, parent education/workshops, computer training, parenting skills, and similar offerings, grantees (117, 60 percent of grantees) reported serving 3,776 adults, with grantee counts ranging between one and 441 adult family members participate in such activities, with an average of 21 participants.

In terms of participation in parent involvement activities, such as open house events, family nights, and similar opportunities, 140 grantees (71 percent of grantees) reported serving 5,779 adult family members with grantee counts between one and 476 adult family member participants, with an average of 33 participants.

### **Grantee Provision of Professional Learning Opportunities**

Of the 196 grantees, 98 percent indicated that professional learning opportunities in some form was available to staff, either through the grantee or their home school/agency. This professional learning most typically took the form of staff orientations (90 percent of grantees) and/or health and safety trainings (71 percent of grantees), among other options. Professional development sessions and trainings were typically provided by grantee staff (90% of 193 respondents), presenters at conferences (61%), partners (48%), contractors/vendors (48%), and the school district/LEA (47%). Grantee contracts require them to participate in certain professional learning and conference opportunities. However, under the pandemic, many professional learning opportunities were canceled or postponed, which may contribute to lower-than-expected professional learning implementation.

When asked to indicate how professional development learning, information, and resources were shared with other program staff, email was selected most (95 percent of grantees), followed by staff meetings (92 percent) and informal conversations (79 percent) among other methods to a lesser extent.

### **State Provision of Professional Learning Opportunities**

PDE and the Center for Schools and Communities, PDE's contractor to provide training and technical assistance for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, offered or facilitated grantee access to several professional development opportunities. These opportunities occurred through four venues: the Extra Learning Opportunities Conference: Promising Practices – Proven Strategies, the annual 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Grantees' Meeting, Regional Trainings; and webinars throughout the year. The Center for Schools

and Communities was primarily responsible for state-level training opportunities and submitted a full report about trainings to PDE. As such, only an overview is included here. This summary intends to provide an overview of the scope and reach of state-offered professional development opportunities.

The Extra Learning Opportunities Conference took place virtually from February 23-25, 2021. Of the eight webinars offered, the session entitled Afterschool Reimagined: The Virtual Pivot in Mentoring Youth was the most highly attended, with 92 participants tuning into the presentation about the transition from in-person to virtual programming, and how to address the challenges faced by afterschool programs during an ongoing global pandemic. The second webinar with the most attendees was Wendy Kubasko's session about navigating change as an afterschool provider entitled Leading Through Change, with a total of 64 attendees.

Four webinars not related to the 2020 ELO conference occurred in the fall of 2020, covering topics relevant to out-of-school-time programs. Members of the state 21<sup>st</sup> Century team or various experts and contributors from outside the program presented the webinars. These webinar topics, timing, and participation counts are shown in Table 3. It is possible that the actual participant count is higher, as it is known that some groups have multiple people participating from the same location through one registration, but the extent to which this happens is not consistently captured, as participants need to self-report this information. Grantee representation or counts were not available. Webinars were 75 or 90 minutes long.

Four Regional Trainings were held virtually locations during the month of October 2020:

- October 20 – Western PA
  - 61 Attendees
- October 22– Central PA
  - 34 Attendees
- October 27–Philadelphia
  - 122 Attendees
- October 29- Northeastern PA
  - 82 Attendees

Each training was entitled Supporting Afterschool in a Time of Virtual Learning, and covered the following content:

- Best practices for administering afterschool programming
- How to determine and address the current needs of students and their families amidst a burgeoning pandemic
- Examining how to build connections online through the use of routine and program structures.

Table 3. Webinar Details

Topic	Presenter(s)	Month/Year	Participants
Continuing the Conversation – PA Perspective	You for Youth (Y4Y)	September 2020	10
Fraud Detection & Prevention	Special Agents Teke Brown, Jason Thomas, Kristy Smith, and Drake Halpern, Office of Inspector General, Investigation Services, U.S. Department of Education	September 2020	65
Hosting Virtual Family Fun Nights Workshop	Nicole Lovecchio, Chief SEL Officer, Wings For Kids; Mallory Dorsey, Program Quality Manager, Wings for Kids; Nicole Williams, Curriculum and Training Manager, Wings for Kids; Katie Barton, Social and Emotional Learning Trainer, WINGS for Kids	November 2020	68
Finding Meaning and Balance Between Home and Hybrid-Working: Self-Care and Support	Stephanie Colvin-Roy, Training and Organizational Development Associate for the Center for the Promotion of Social and Emotional Learning, Center for Schools and Communities	December 2020	35
Preparing for Virtual Instruction Emergencies	Leah Galkowski, Safe Schools Coordinator, Center for Safe Schools	January 2021	60
25 Positive Responses to Negative Student Behavior	Shauna King, King Professional Development LLC	March 2021	197
Monitoring Tips & Tricks	Jane Hershberger, Educational consultant, CCRES	March 2021	114
Fiscal Management Workshop	Maribel Martinez, 21st CCLC Fiscal Specialist, Pennsylvania Department of Education; Alex Pankratz, 21st CCLC Fiscal Technician, Pennsylvania Department of Education	April 2021	230
Helping Students Manage Anxiety and Stress	Katie Barton, Social and Emotional Learning Trainer, Wings for Kids; Nicole Williams, Curriculum and Training Manager, Wings for Kids	April 2021	68
Succession and Transition Planning in Afterschool Programs	Katherine Spinney, Katherine Spinney Coaching, LLC	May 2021	144
21st Century Evaluation and Reporting Update for New GPRA Measures Webinar	Program Director, Evaluation, Grants, & Data, Allegheny Intermediate Unit	June 2021	161
Continuing the Conversation: Dr. Milner's 2021 ELO Keynote Address	Professor and Chair of Education and Professor of Education in the Department of Teaching and Learning, Peabody College of Vanderbilt University	July 2021	July 7: 23 July 8: 9

## Professional Learning and Support Needs

Within the PA Implementation Survey, grantees had the opportunity to share or explain their needs or interests for additional training or support; about 61 percent of grantees provided a substantive response. These needs and interests are outlined in the following pages in no particular order. Common themes included needs related to staff training in social/emotional learning, parent engagement/involvement/programming, student/classroom behavior management, and successful recruitment and retention strategies, which have been common themes in the past as well. Programs expressed interest in these items as they relate to ongoing virtual/hybrid programming as well as the transition back to in-person programming. This year, programs are also interested in having further training on the new GPRA reporting guidelines.

### Identification, Recruitment, and Retention

- Recruitment and retention strategies, especially for middle and high school students and for virtual and hybrid program models;
- Staff retention strategies;
- Additional/ongoing support from school principals/administration, teachers, and parents regarding student recruitment;
- Maintaining consistent attendance amongst target populations, and;
- Training on diversity and equity.

### Operations and Implementation

- Communications network between grantees, especially those with similar settings, operations, etc.;
- Additional program operations support;
- Meeting 21CCLC standards;
- More flexibility in how funds can be used;
- Continued professional development and training opportunities (i.e., SEL, implementation and operations, STEM/STEAM, DEI, Wilson Language Training);
- Offer webinars/trainings during afterschool hours;
- Trainings/orientations for new staff or pre-recorded trainings;
- Continued access to the Y for Y website and module trainings;
- Strategies for building positive relationships with students;
- Strategies to improve student attendance, behavior, and/or engagement;
- Strategies to address transportation issues and barriers;
- De-escalation strategies;
- Strategies for working with students with special needs, especially older students;
- Developing activities that align with district's curriculum;
- Trauma-informed care practices;
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies for teen students;
- Digital learning;

- Arts and culture;
- Activities for elementary students;
- Continued support and guidance related to COVID-19 response;
- Avoiding virtual student burnout;
- How to communicate with and engage parents, especially virtually;
- Operating hybrid/virtual programs and safety in the virtual environment;
- Virtual learning best practices from other sites;
- Addressing gaps in learning and learning loss due to the pandemic;
- Incorporating hands-on, interactive, and physical activities virtually;
- Rebuilding family confidence that in-person programming is safe;
- Preparing for in-person operations (e.g., mask-wearing, physical distancing, etc.);
- Assistance finding partners that are operating in-person (many are still virtual);
- Working with community partners and incorporating them into 21C programs, and;
- Monitoring and assessing students' individual work.

#### Data and Evaluation

- Training on gathering and reporting data;
- Program evaluation and reporting;
- More streamlined reporting; some reports/data overlap;
- Federal reporting webinars, especially on new GPRAs;
- How to recruit a local evaluator; qualities to look for;
- Using data to guide daily program implementation and reporting, and;
- Training on tracking hours attended.

#### **Creative and Innovative Strategies**

In the PA Implementation Survey, grantees had the opportunity to share what they believed were creative or innovative strategies being used in their programs to engage students and address their needs; about 72 percent of grantees shared one or more strategies. These are listed here, in no particular order. Comments related to STEM/STEAM activities were most common.

- 1:1 and small-group tutoring for students;
- Use of various online platforms and apps for virtual learning;
- Use of assessment data and school day teacher feedback to identify and address student needs;
- Gauging student interests/needs via interest groups and surveys;
- Conferences and informal conversations with parents and educators;
- Regular communication with parents via phone calls, email, and texts;
- Weekly wellness calls to families to determine needs in the community;
- Family virtual home visits to determine student needs;
- Drive-by information sessions;

- Family reading programs;
- Debriefing with students daily to discuss areas for improvement;
- Contracting with local providers to develop and provide curriculum;
- Hands-on STEAM curriculum;
- Fine arts and creative activities and programming;
- Monthly themes for programming;
- SEL and/or wellness activities;
- Entrepreneurship programming;
- College readiness programming;
- Culturally competent and relevant programming;
- Culturally diverse staff;
- ELL Spanish language coordinator;
- Discussions of social issue topics and the roles students play in them;
- Virtual field trips and/or guest speakers;
- Weekly take-home activities that connected to live, virtual sessions;
- Outdoor programming;
- Synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities;
- Leadership opportunities for students; students select and lead activities;
- Maintaining student engagement through unstructured and/or short activities;
- Transportation and meals/snacks provided to students;
- Incentives and awards;
- Professional development opportunities for staff, and;
- Delivery or pick-up of materials/learning kits, technology, and/or other necessities.

## **Social Emotional Learning and Drug and Alcohol Program Funding**

During the 2020-21 year, PDE made available additional supplementary funding to existing grantees to implement social and emotional learning (SEL) programs and/or drug and alcohol prevention programs. Funds were available on a competitive basis. Grantees reported on their implementation of these funds in the Implementation Survey.

Only 47 grantees in Cohorts 7 (14 grantees), 8 (12 grantees), and 9 (16 grantees), 10 (5 grantees) were approved for these supplemental programs and funds:

- 20 grantees reported operating both drug and alcohol prevention programming as well as SEL programs;
- 25 grantees operated SEL programs; and
- Two grantees operated drug and alcohol prevention programs.

Grantees delivered these activities through a combination of program staff, school or LEA staff, community partners, and private contractors. Programming was offered to students from grades K-12.

Of the 45 grantees offering SEL programs, 31 percent offered SEL activities daily; 29 percent offered them several times per week; and 24 percent offered such activities once per week. The remaining 16 percent offered activities less frequently, reported different frequencies based on school operations influenced by the pandemic, or reported that SEL programming was only offered in summer 2020 and not during the 2020-21 SY.

Of the 22 grantees offering drug and alcohol prevention programs, 32 percent offered such activities weekly, 23 percent offered them two to three times per month, and 14 percent offered them several times per week. Two grantees offered such activities daily, and one grantee each offered this programming once per month or quarterly. Of the remaining three grantees, two did not offer SY 2020-21 programming, only summer 2020, and one was unable to offer these activities due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Evaluators asked grantees to briefly explain the nature of their social emotional learning and drug and alcohol prevention programs.

Social emotional learning programs covered topics including:

- Mindfulness activities
- Physical activities (e.g., yoga)
- Character development
- Creative activities (e.g., art, poetry, music, performing arts, journaling)
- Various SEL curriculums/lessons from external vendors
- Positive reinforcement activities
- Goal setting and self-improvement
- Healthy lifestyles
- Identifying and combatting bullying
- Time management
- Self-management
- Breathing exercises
- Self-reflection exercises
- Healthy relationships/boundaries
- Making good choices
- Self-discovery and confidence
- Conflict resolution
- Role play activities
- Problem-solving
- Healthy coping mechanisms
- Regulating emotions and/or stress
- Group therapy sessions
- Trauma informed care
- Partnerships with community agencies, vendors
- Guest speakers or lecture series
- Videos
- Student research projects
- Professional development

Drug and alcohol topics or programs included:

- Decision-making and consequences
- Being responsible
- Coping strategies
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Individual and community identity
- Relationships and/or peer pressure
- Self-confidence
- Discussion
- Games/role play activities
- Guest speakers
- Partnerships with community agencies

- Team building
- Friendship and/or kindness
- Problem-solving
- Family activities and events
- Specific models or curricula
- Staff instruction on substance abuse
- Drug and alcohol education

## Program Participation

Grantees served 26,880 students over the course of the summer 2020 and school year 2020-21 program year,<sup>14</sup> which is roughly half of the total students served in the previous year. 7,653 students (28 percent) attending 21<sup>st</sup> Century programming for 30 or more days and receiving the designation of regular attendee, which is roughly one-third of the total regular attendees served in the 2019-20 program year. Pennsylvania public school enrollment, based on PDE public enrollment records for the 2020-21 academic year, was 1,696,022 students. This means that Pennsylvania's 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs served approximately 1.6 percent of the Pennsylvania public school population, a decrease of 1.5 percentage points from 2019-20, or roughly 50%.

Under typical circumstances, an individual student would only receive services through one program/grantee. However, it is possible that a student may receive services under more than one grant. A student might transition from one grant to another: 1) because of normal grade progression (for example being eligible for one grade level and grant in summer and a different grade level and grant in the school year); 2) because a program ends; or 3) if the student moves to a new residence and is eligible for their new school's program. For 2020-21, evaluators asked grantees to indicate whether they were aware of students in their programs who were also served by another program, either through their organization or another. Thirty grantees (16 organizations) indicated that they were aware of one or more students who received services under more than one grant, totaling 468 students. Nine of these 30 grantees (representing 264 of the 468 students) were from Cohort 7, whose grants ended on September 30, 2020 of the 2020-21 program year. This count is considered in the 26,880 unique count above. However, these 468 students served through more than one cohort may be reported within each cohort's results as appropriate. However, as these 468 students make up 1.7 percent of the students served through 21<sup>st</sup> Century, their inclusion is highly unlikely to influence results in any considerable way.

Across cohorts, Cohort 10 had the largest portion of students (43 percent), followed by Cohort 8 (25 percent), Cohort 9 (21 percent), and finally Cohort 7 with 11 percent as shown in Figure 8. Cohorts 10 and 9 had the highest portion of students attend regularly (30 or more days), with 34 and 31 percent, respectively. Cohort 10 also had the highest proportion of students attending in the 90 or more days category (7 percent of Cohort 10 students).

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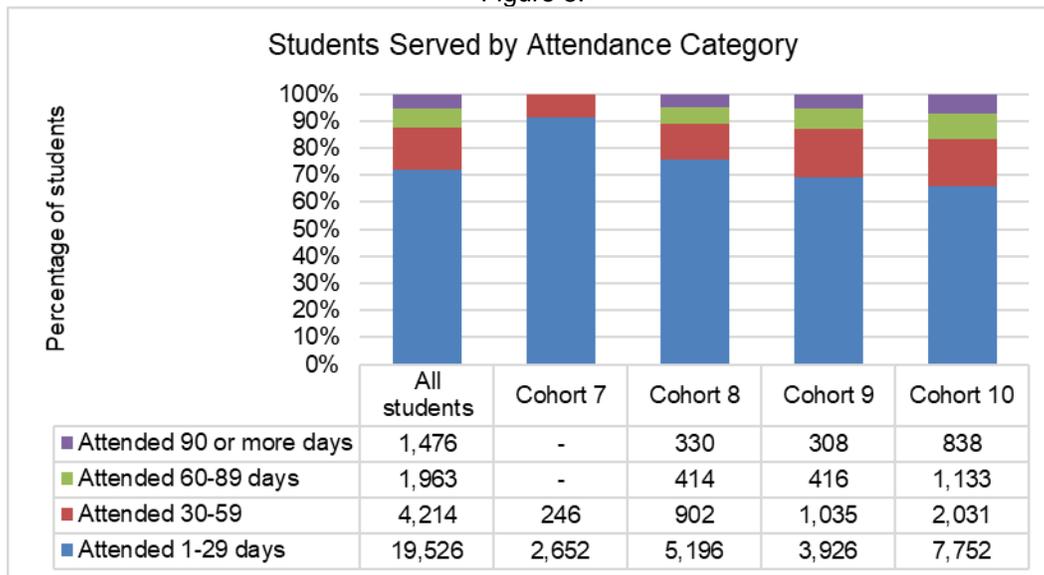
<sup>14</sup> Two of the 196 grantees failed to submit their student-level data to evaluators. Evaluators gleaned student served counts from the grantees' local evaluation report. These grantees are included in overall students served totals, but they are not included in any sub-counts, such as summer counts, regular attendee counts, etc. They are also not included in any outcome data.

Grantees reported in their Implementation Survey that most often used high interest activities (95 percent of grantees) and parent outreach following absences (86 percent of grantees), among other strategies, to encourage regular and repeated program attendance.

Participation ranged from three to 875 students per grantee, with an average of 140 students and 39 regular attendees per grantee. Thirty-nine grantees reported having no regular attendees, compared to three grantees in the 2019-20 program year.<sup>15</sup> For those grantees reporting regular attendees (157), regular attendee percentages ranged from 1 percent to 100% (all students served attended regularly), with an average regular attendee percentage of 27 percent.

Additional details about program participation are shown in the figures below.

Figure 8.



<sup>15</sup> Two grantees failed to provide their required student data file, so their counts of students by program attendance category, and thus count of regular attendees, is unknown.

Figure 9.

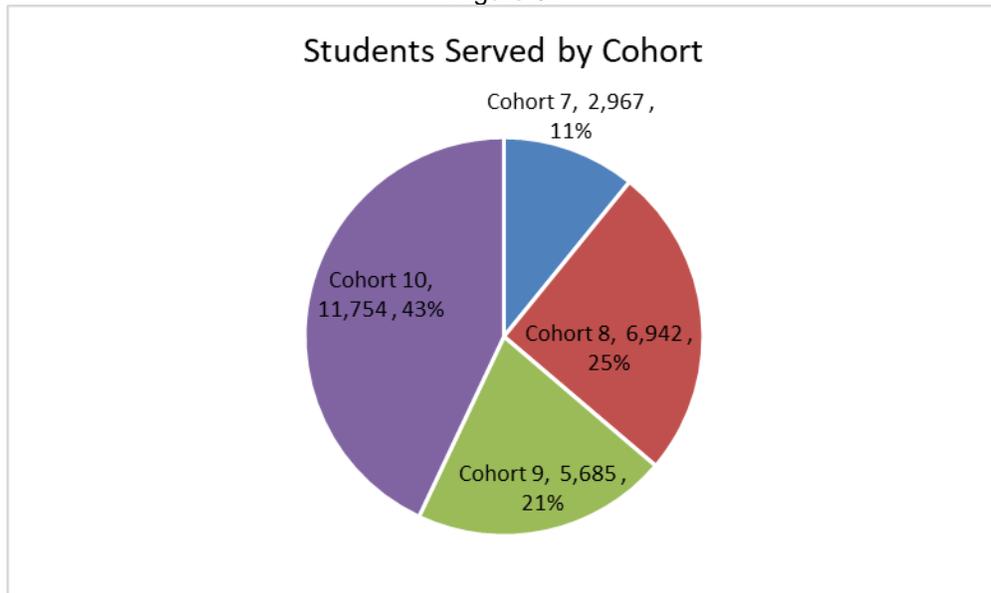
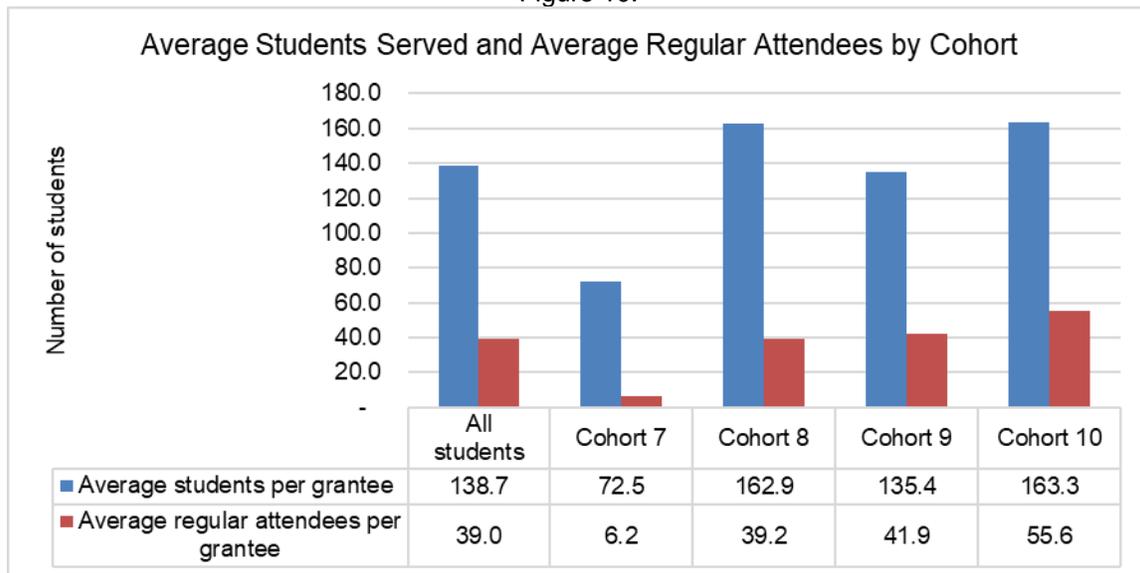
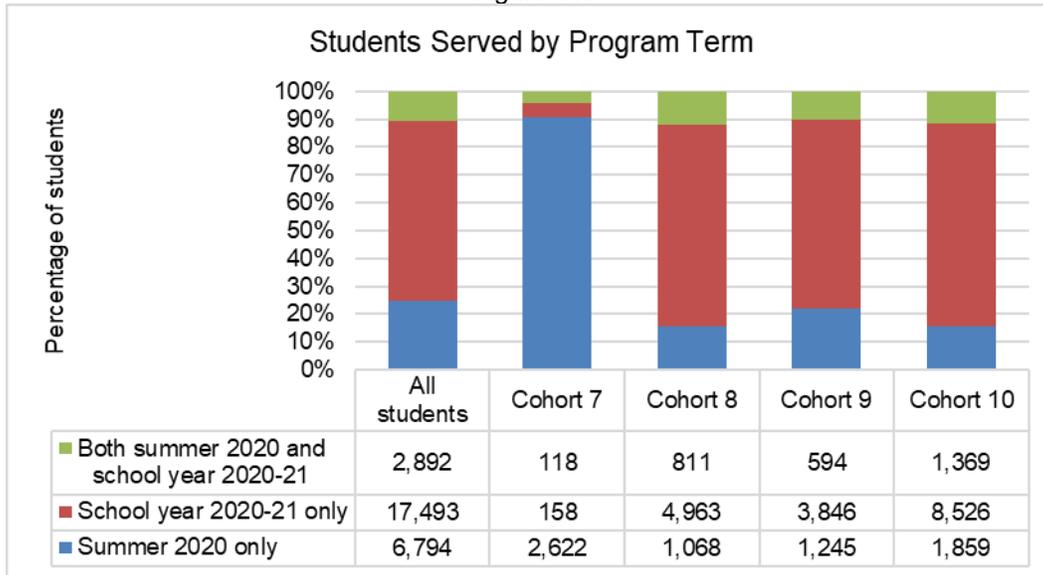


Figure 10.



A majority of students (64 percent) attended only during the school year; 25 percent attended during summer 2020 only and 11 percent attended both summer 2020 and school year 2020-21 terms.

Figure 11.



Data were also available to compare the number of students served to the number of students grantees proposed to serve in their approved grant applications. This calculation was possible for Cohorts 8-10. Cohort 7 was not included in this analysis, as their grants were ending. Based on their funded grant documentation, these 156 grantees proposed to serve 36,464 students. Based on the data reported, these same 156 grantees served 24,381 students, which is 12,083 students less, or 66 percent of the total number that they had proposed to serve.

Of the 156 grantees included in this comparison, 22 grantees served more students than they had proposed to serve in their grant applications, with overage counts ranging from three students more to 542 more, with an average of 118 students more than their proposed unique count. In terms of percentage over, this ranged from 1 percent more to 163 percent more students than proposed, average 43 percent more students.

One grantee reported serving exactly the same number as they proposed to serve.

The remaining 131 grantees served fewer students that they had proposed to serve. These grantees fell short of their target number by four students to 303 students, average 111 students, or by percentage, 2 percent to 95 percent short of their target (average 47 percent).

As outlined in the operations section of this report, grantees faced ongoing challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have contributed to less students served than proposed.

## Student Outcomes

Grantees reported on outcomes for regular attendees via the de-identified student data workbook component of annual state reporting. All grantees having regular attendees were required to report student outcomes, which included reading and math report card grade results, teacher survey results, reading and math state assessment results, school attendance, school behavior, and credit recovery, as they applied to the grantee's program and population served. Also, credit/course recovery outcomes were required for all credit recovery students even if they were not regular attendees.

Grantees reported having 7,653 regular attendees, and it is for these individuals that reporting outcome results was required. Students may have outcomes data under any number of the outcome areas and/or data source categories depending on the timing of their participation, grade level, and other reasons. Students may not have data for all areas because they do not apply (i.e., a student may not have state assessment results because they are not in a grade that takes the assessment), student mobility, or simply because data were not available for them. Results described in this report include all students having data reported that could be analyzed and may not represent all students served by the program. Relevant percentages describe the portion of students served who were included in analysis.

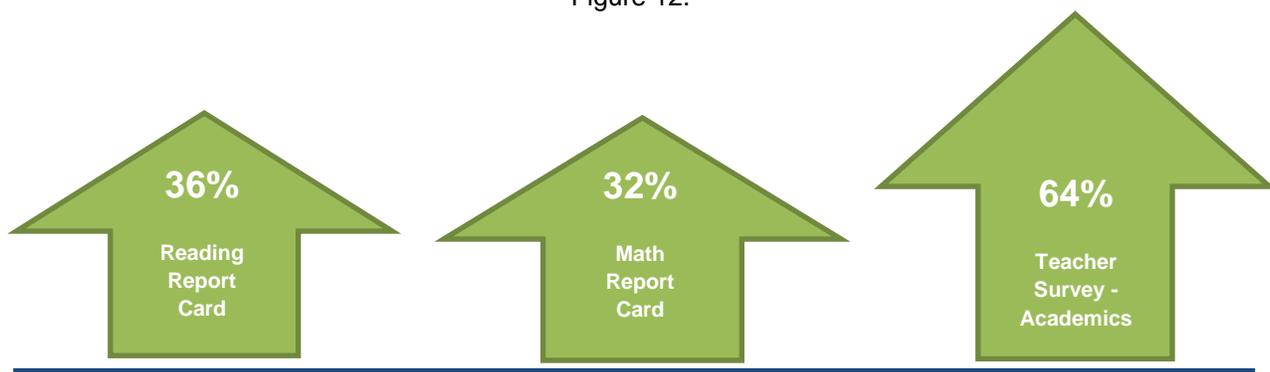
Results shared in the following section are provided overall for all regularly attending students having data. Results may also be presented by cohort, program attendance category (30-59 days, 60-89 days, 90+ days), grade or grade band, and/or historical duration of 21<sup>st</sup> Century participation.

### Academics

Results provided in this section address the program performance measure: "Increasing percentages of students regularly participating in the program will meet or exceed state and local academic achievement standards in reading and math."

The following graphic illustrates the overall percentage of students improving based on each data source after excluding students who did not need to improve.

Figure 12.



## State Reading and Math Assessments

Each year, students in certain grades take one of Pennsylvania’s literacy and/or math state assessments (PSSA, PASA, or Keystone Exam). The PSSA is administered to the most students and is given in March or April<sup>16</sup> in grades 3-8. Students in grades 8-11 take the Keystone Exam, which may be administered up to three times per year. Once a student scores at or above the proficient level, whether before or while enrolled in grade 11, the score is banked and applied to the student’s grade 11 year. Keystone Exam results may not be used for accountability purposes before grade 11. The PASA is Pennsylvania’s alternative state assessment and is administered in grades three to eight and 11 for students with cognitive disabilities. The Keystone Exam and PASA are aligned to the PSSA and use the same performance levels (below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced).

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and state-ordered physical facility closures, including schools, the 2019-20 state assessments were canceled. Assessments were held for the 2020-21 year. As such, consecutive year comparison data is not available, but analysis of the 2020-21 assessment scores has been included in this report. Grantees either reported students’ state assessment scores or provided students’ PASecureIDs so that evaluators could pull the data from PIMS.<sup>17</sup> Data was available for approximately one-fifth of students in grades 3-8 and 11. Overall, 40 percent of students scored at proficient or advanced levels in reading and 34 percent did so in math.

Table 4. State Reading and Math Assessment Results for 2020-21

Content area	Number of students reported	Percent of students represented (grades 3-8,11)	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below basic
Reading	1,036	21%	5%	35%	43%	18%
Math	1,066	22%	4%	30%	31%	34%

## Reading and Math Report Card Results

Grantees reported individual student fall and spring reading and math report card grades for regular attendees using the state de-identified student data spreadsheet template.

Students had to make a positive move of half a grade or more from the fall report card grade to the spring report card grade to be counted as improved, as defined by federal reporting criteria. Conversely, a lesser grade of half a grade level or more was

<sup>16</sup> Writing and science PSSA data are not included in state or federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century reporting at this time.

<sup>17</sup> In cases where both a state assessment score and PAsureID were provided, evaluators used the data pulled from PIMS.

considered a decline. For “A-F” scale letter grades, this involves a move within a letter grade,<sup>18</sup> for example from a “C-” to a “C+,” or among letter grades, for example “C-” to “B+.” For numeric scales, this involves a move of five or more percentage points (i.e., 70 percent to 75 percent). For schools using other scales, a student had to go from one level to another for change to be counted. Student academic change was determined based on a comparison of an individual’s fall and spring grade for the same school year; in this case, fall 2020 compared to spring 2021, or the first marking period of the school year and the last marking period. This methodology is consistent with prior years’ analysis, which had been based on federal guidance in place at the time.

Evaluators looked at report card grades in the following ways:

- Where two grades were provided and they were a comparable type (i.e., the same grading scale), evaluators compared the two grades to identify change.
- Where a spring grade was provided, evaluators classified that end grade to get a sense of where students ended the year, regardless of where they started.

A total of 6,094 students had reading report card data that could be compared (students had two data points using a scale interpretable by state evaluators), which is 80 percent of school year regular attendees for whom outcomes data were reported.

Of the students having comparable reading report card grade data, 31 percent improved their reading grade from the first to the last reported grade. The next largest percentage, at 28 percent, showed no change, meaning they earned the same grade for both the first and last grading periods. Results also indicated that 26 percent declined from fall to spring and 15 percent did not need to improve their grade (they had the highest grade possible) and maintained that grade. Excluding the did not need to improve group, 36 percent of students improved their reading grade.

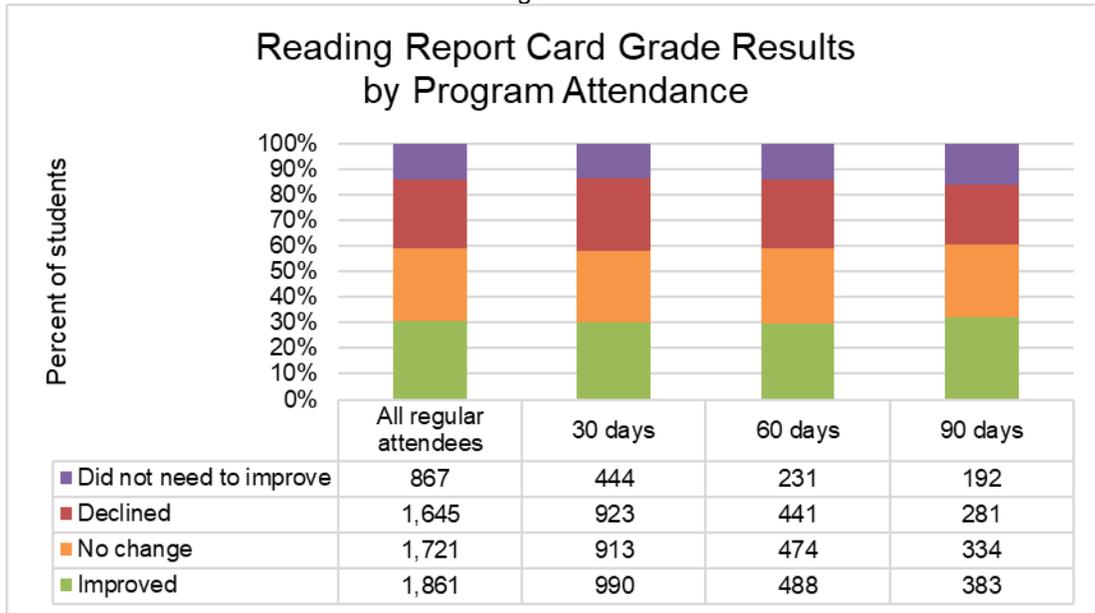
Results by cohort show similar percentages of students despite differences in student counts, with improvement percentages ranging from 28 percent (Cohort 9) to 34 percent (Cohort 8). Decline percentages ranged from 27 percent (Cohort 8) to 35 percent (Cohort 7).

Results were also disaggregated by program attendance category and improvement rates were similar for each category: 30 percent for 30 days, 30 percent for 60 days, and 32 percent for 90+ days. Looking at cohort results by program attendance, Cohort 8 had the highest percentage improving at the 90+ days levels with 36 percent. Readers might also note that the percentage declining decreases with greater attendance, indicating that greater program attendance may positively influence prevention of decline.

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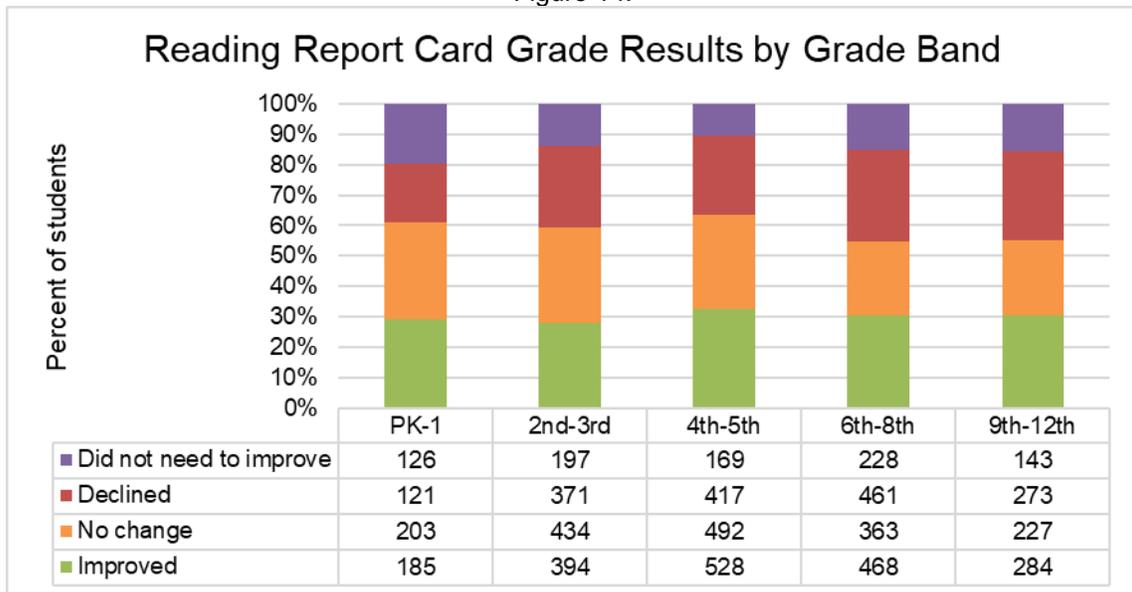
<sup>18</sup> Some schools do not give half letter grades. In these cases, grantees are instructed to report students’ whole letter grades, meaning it is slightly more difficult for these grantees to show students’ improvement using federal criteria. Data is not available on the extent to which this situation applies.

Figure 13.



Analysis by grade band showed that older students were more likely to improve, but also more likely to decline. Younger students were more likely to not need to improve. These trends were true in the prior year.

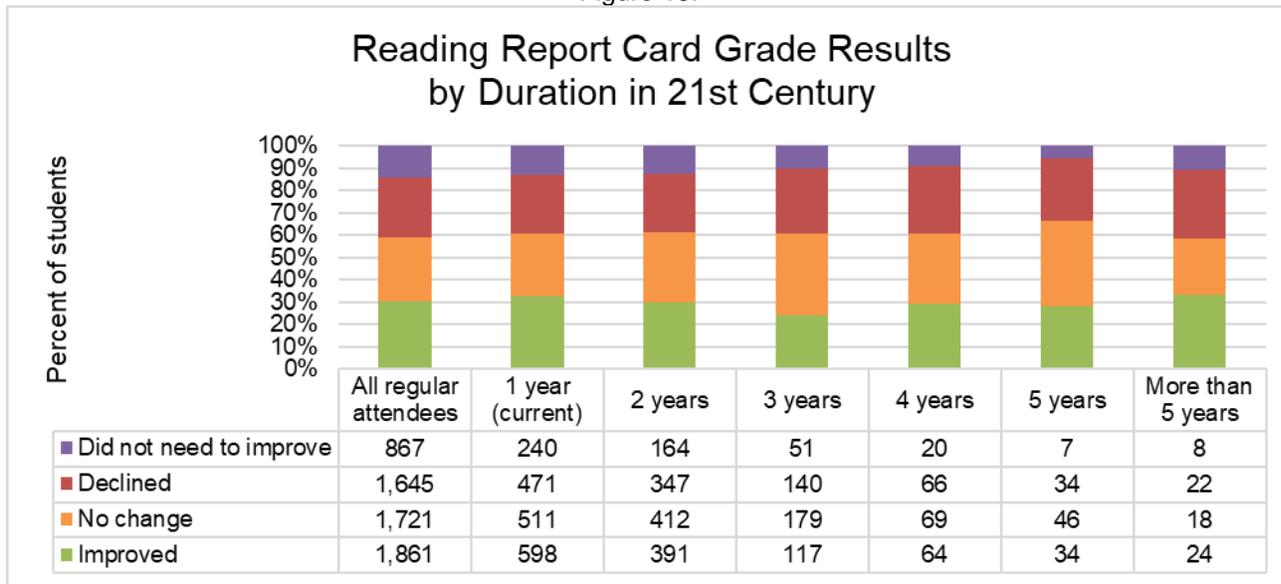
Figure 14.



Historical presence analysis for reading report card grades was also conducted, with 66 percent of regular attendees with report card data also having historical participation information. In looking at the results by years of 21<sup>st</sup> Century participation, improvement

percentages were greatest for participants who were new in 2020-21 and for those who had attended 21<sup>st</sup> Century programming for more than five years (both 33 percent). Readers should note that the greater years categories have smaller numbers of students, which may influence results. Longer participation may be a factor of grantee organization longevity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program, students having greater or ongoing needs, or simply student or family choice.

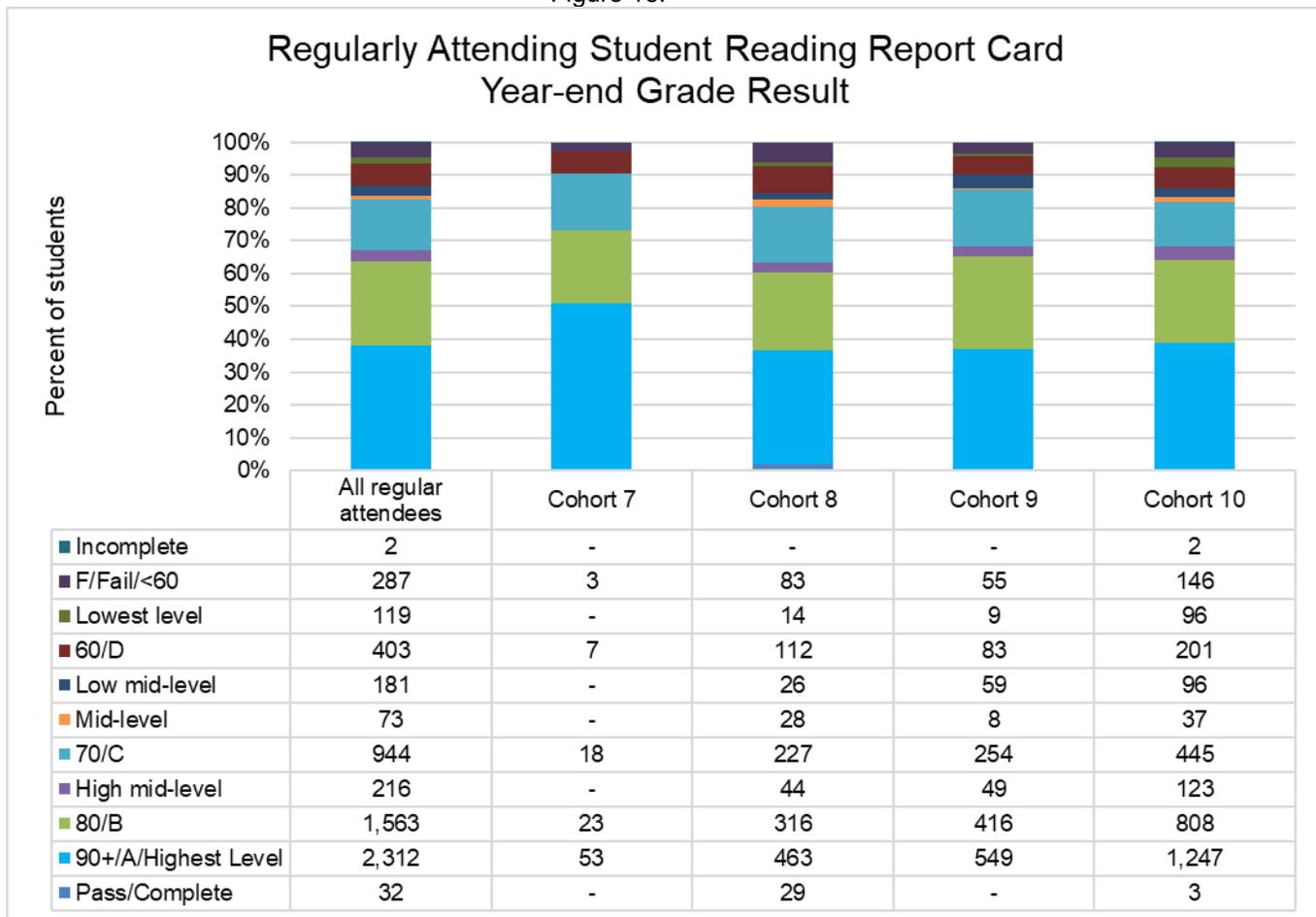
Figure 15.



Finally, evaluators categorized reading report card grades, as possible, based on the year-end reported grades. This categorization only considered the student’s grade reported value for the last marking period.

Based on this analysis, 67 percent of students ended the year passing their reading course or earning a high or high mid-level grade. This varied only slightly by cohort (63 to 73 percent).

Figure 16.



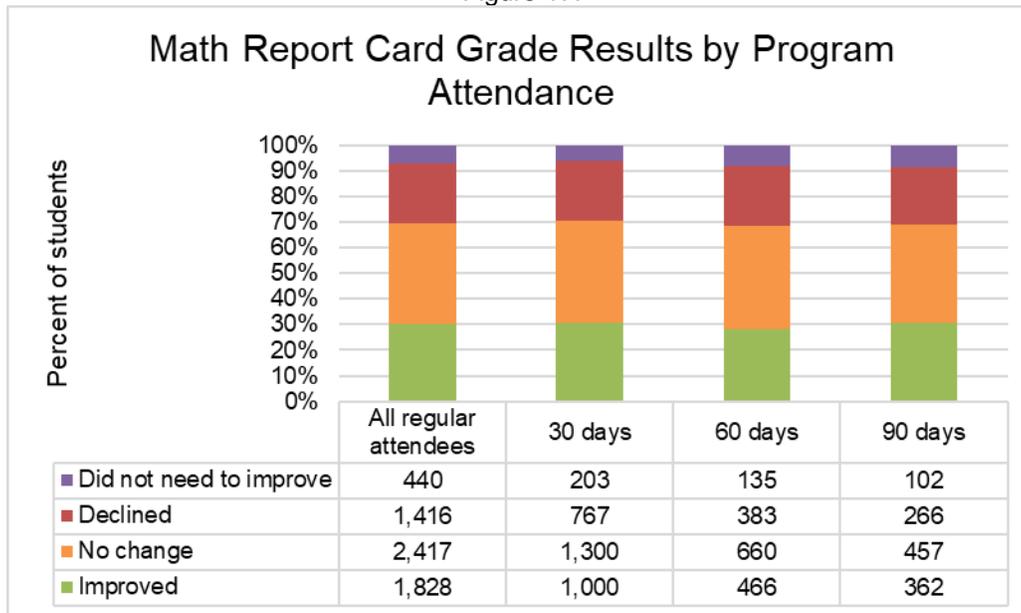
For math report card grades, 6,101 students had comparable math report card data (any grading scale), which is 80 percent of school year regular attendees.

Of these 6,101 students, 30 percent improved from fall to spring. The largest percentage, at 40 percent, showed no change, meaning they earned the same grade for both the first and last grading periods. Results also indicated that 23 percent declined from fall to spring and 7 percent did not need to improve their grade (they had the highest grade possible) and maintained that grade. Excluding the did not need to improve group, 32 percent of students improved their math grade.

Results by cohort show improvement percentages ranging from 27 percent (Cohort 9) to 34 percent (Cohort 8). Cohort results for the other change categories were similarly ranged when compared to the state result: some mirrored the state result, some were a few percentage points above the state percentage, and some were a few percentage points below the state.

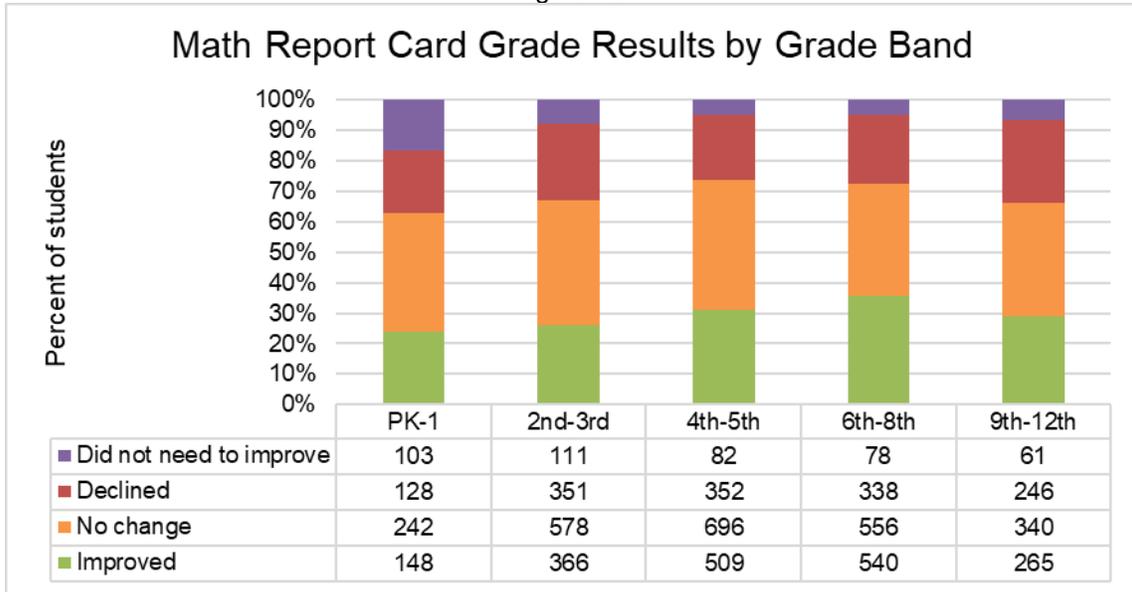
In addition to examining results overall, results were disaggregated by program attendance category. Like reading, the results were fairly similar across categories: 31 percent improved within the 30 days group, 28 percent improved in the 60 days group, and 30 percent improved in the 90+ days group. Other change categories ranged similarly, and unlike reading, there was no obvious trend that correlated increased attendance with an increased rate of improvement and a decreased rate of decline.

Figure 17.



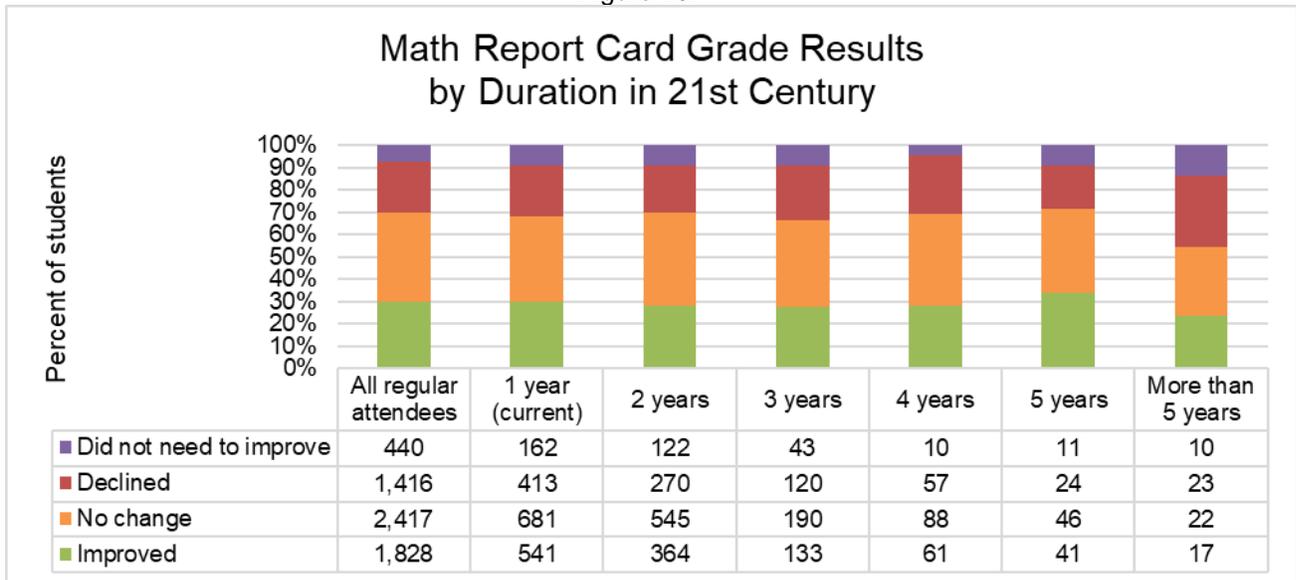
Analysis by grade band showed that older students were slightly more likely to improved (36 and 29 percent of middle and high school students improved) but were also more likely than younger students to decline. Younger students (PK-1<sup>st</sup> grade) were more likely than older students to not need to improve.

Figure 18.



Historical presence analysis for math report card grades was also conducted, with 65 percent of regular attendees with report card data also having historical participation information. There were no discernable trends between years or program participation and math grade improvement rates.

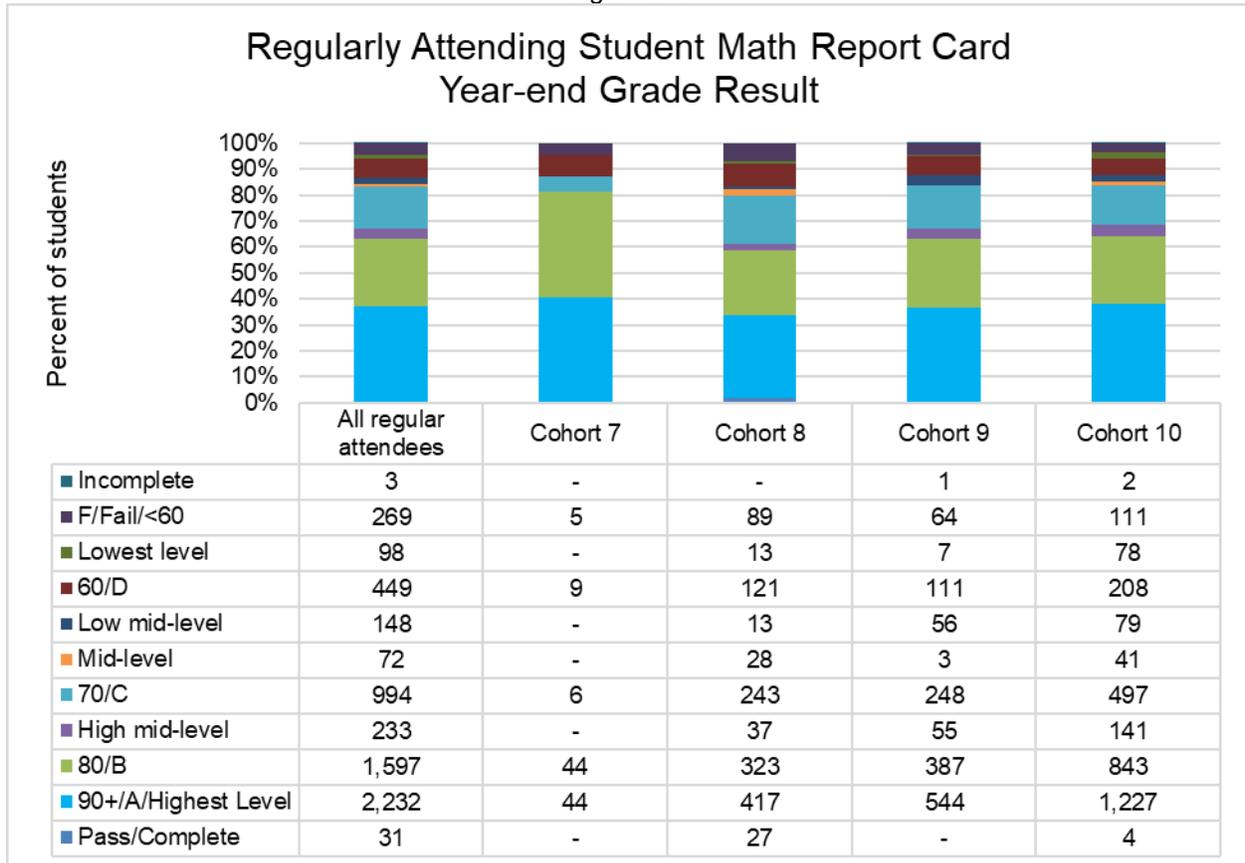
Figure 19.



Like reading, evaluators categorized math report card grades, as possible, based on the year-end reported grades. This categorization only considered the student's grade reported value for the last marking period.

Based on this analysis, 67 percent of students – the same percentage as reading – ended the year passing their reading course or earning a high or high mid-level grade. Excluding Cohort 7, which accounted for only 108 of the 6,126 students with year-end reading grades, the percentage of students with passing, high, or mid mid-level grades did not vary much.

Figure 20.



## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teacher Survey – Academic Performance

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teacher Survey included an indicator for teachers to report student change in academics. This determination was to be made by the classroom teacher about each regularly attending student participating during the school year based on his/her professional opinion of the student’s classroom performance. It was recommended that a math or language arts teacher complete the survey, though the content area of the teacher completing the survey was not collected. The instrument simply asks the respondent to choose a degree of change for the student’s “academic performance,” allowing the respondent to interpret that label in their own context.

The survey allowed the respondent teacher to rate the student's academic performance using a scale that included "improved," "no change," "declined," and "did not need to improve."<sup>19</sup>

In a typical year, the teacher survey component is one of the most time consuming data points for programs to collect, given that the surveys are collected for each individual child and the student's school day teacher is supposed to complete the survey. This means that some teachers may have to complete multiple surveys if multiple children in their class participate in the program and/or programs may need to track down school day teachers who may be in multiple school buildings. Given the pandemic shutdowns of both schools and programs collecting teacher surveys became increasingly difficult. Results of this year's teacher surveys may not be comparable to past or future years.

Academic performance teacher survey data was available for 4,783 students, which is 62 percent of school year regular attendees. Results show that 53 percent of students with teacher survey data improved.<sup>20</sup> Twenty percent of students included in analysis were reported as not needing to improve, 23 percent were reported as showing no change, and 4 percent declined, according to teacher survey results. Considering those students who needed to improve (excluding students with a response of "did not need to improve") 66 percent of students improved, compared to 76 percent in the previous year.

**The count of students improving (2,520) was nearly 12 times larger than the count declining (213).**

Cohort improvement percentages ranged from 50 percent for Cohort 8 to 54 percent for Cohort 10. Decline percentages were between 1 (Cohort 7) and 7 percent (Cohort 8).

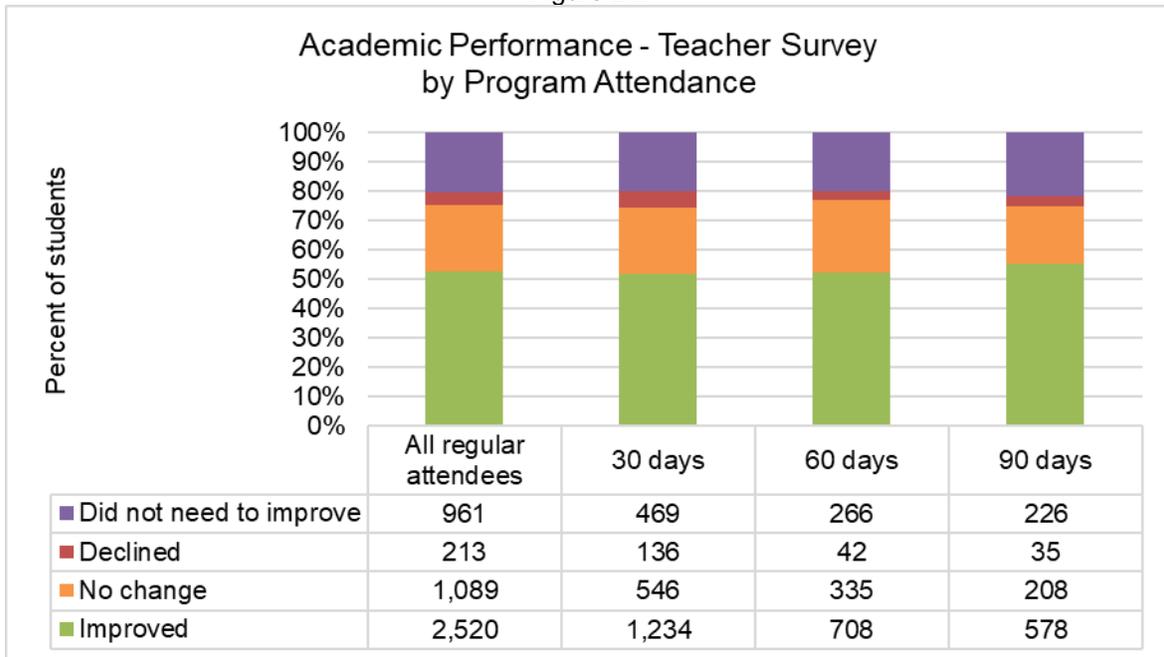
Percentages were similar across program attendance category, but with slightly increasing percentages improving with greater attendance (52 percent in the 30 days category, 52 percent in the 60 days category, and 55 percent in the 90 days category) and slightly decreasing percentages declining (6, 3, and 3 percent, respectively). This may indicate that increased participation in 21<sup>st</sup> Century has a positive influence on teacher survey outcomes relative to academics. By cohort, Cohort 8 showed the largest gain between the 30 days results and the 90 days results at 12 percentage points. In other words, Cohort 8's improvement percentage for students in the 90+ days category was 12 percentage points higher than the improvement percentage at 30-59 days.

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<sup>19</sup> Some grantees used the previous teacher survey scale of "did not need to improve," "significant improvement," "moderate improvement," "slight improvement," "no change," "slight decline," "moderate decline," and "significant decline. In these cases, evaluators simplified their answers to the new scale.

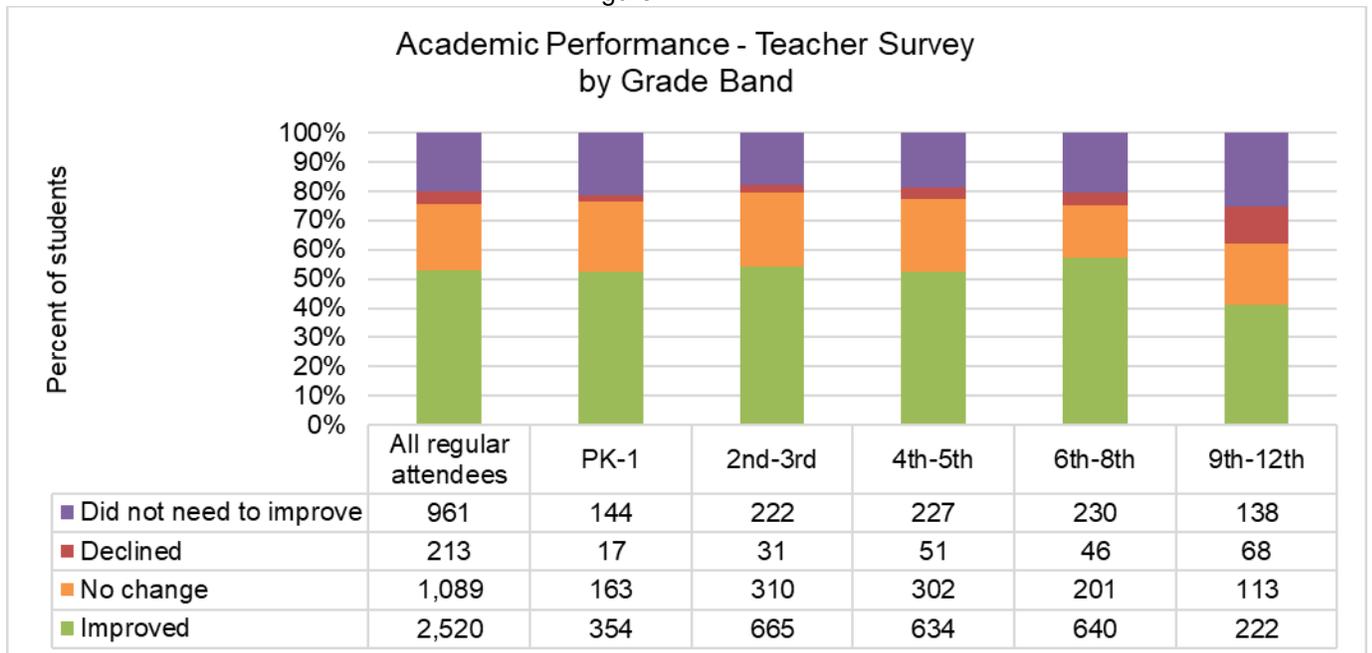
<sup>20</sup> This calculation excludes students who were reported as "did not need to improve."

Figure 21.



Analysis by grade band revealed a range of percentages of students improving from 41 to 57 percent. High school students were noticeably less likely to improve than younger students (41 percent), but also had the largest percentage of students who did not need to improve (26 percent). Regularly attending students whose grade level was not reported (less than 1 percent of regular attendees) are not included in grade band results, though they are included in the overall regular attendee results.

Figure 22.



## Behavior

Results provided in this section address the following program performance measures:

1. Participants in 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes and
2. Students participating in the program will show improvement in the performance measures of school attendance, classroom performance, and reduced disciplinary referrals.

The following graphic illustrates the overall percentage of students improving based on each data source after excluding students who did not need to improve.

Figure 23.



### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teacher Survey

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teacher Survey included indicators for classroom teachers to report on change in behavior based on his/her professional opinion and experience with each student. The survey provided a scale that included “did not need to improve,” “improved,” “no change,” and “declined.” Throughout this section, regularly attending students whose grade level was not reported (less than 1 percent of regular attendees) are not included in grade band results, though they are included in the overall regular attendee results. For results by cohort, only Cohorts 8, 9 and 10 were compared, as Cohort 7 accounted for less than 5 percent of students with teacher survey data. Cohort 7 students are included in overall calculations and in results by cohort graphs.

21<sup>st</sup> Century Teacher Survey data for each element includes between 4,678 and 4,790 students or 62 to 63 percent of school year regular attendees. The percentage differs by survey item as some teachers may not have provided a response for all items for all students who were included in grantee-submitted data.

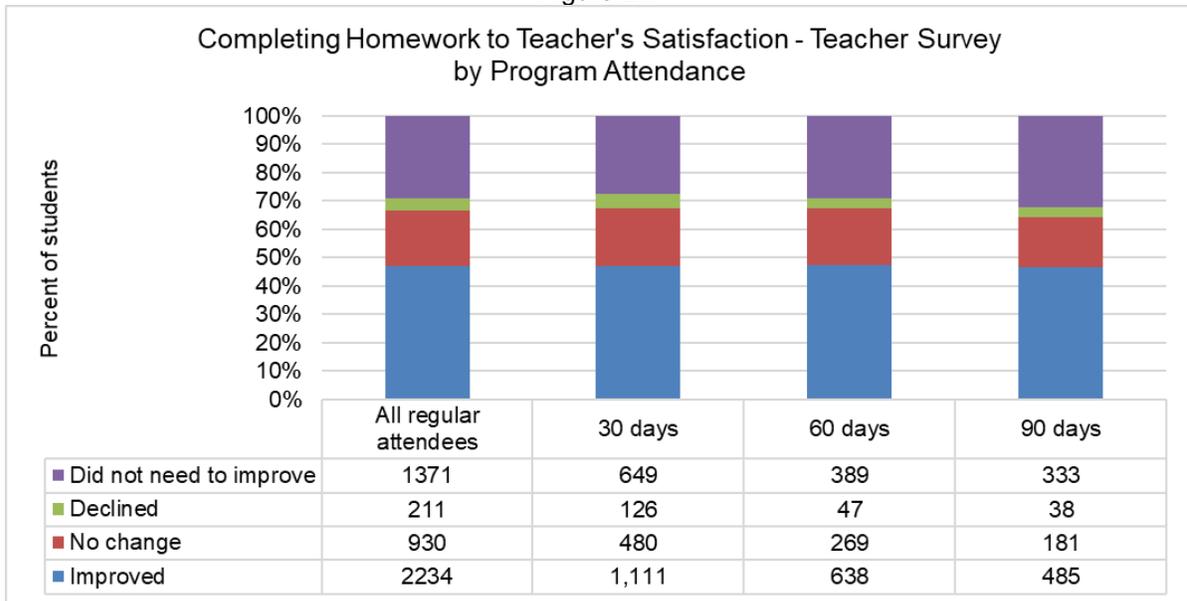
For the indicator of satisfactory homework completion, nearly half of reported students showed improvement (47 percent), 29 percent of students did not have a need to improve, 20 percent did not change, and 4 percent declined.

**The count of students improving (2,234) was more than 10 times larger than the count declining (211).**

Cohort results were similar to each other and the overall state results, with improvement percentages by cohort ranging from 46 percent for Cohort 8 to 48 percent for Cohort 9. Rates of decline ranged from 3 percent (Cohort 10) to 6 percent (Cohorts 8 and 9). No change percentages ranged from 18 to 20 percent. “Did not need to improve” ranged from 25 to 30 percent.

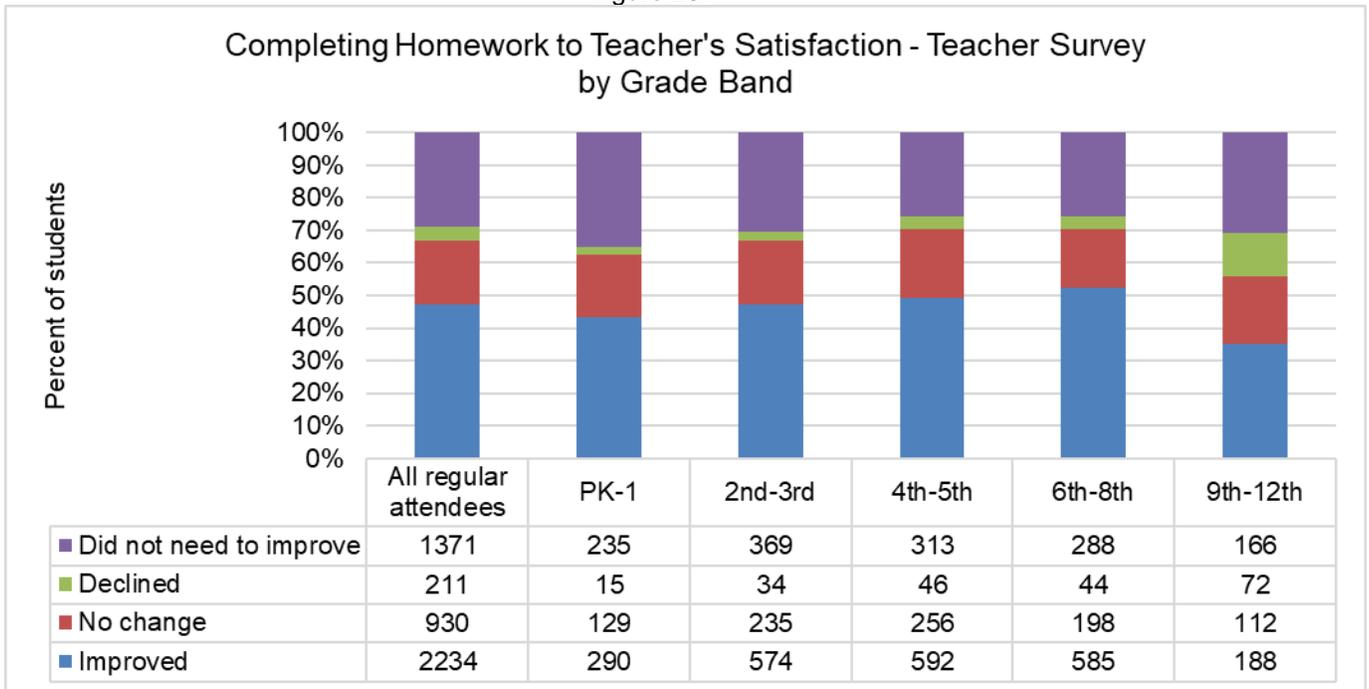
Overall attendance category results show little difference. However, Cohort 10 had the largest difference between the 30-59 days and 90+ days group. The percentage improving at 90+ days was 4 percentage points lower than that of the 30-59 days group.

Figure 24.



Improvement percentages by grade band ranged from 35 percent at the high school level to 52 percent for grades 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>. Overall, results were consistent across grade bands, though high school students were more likely to have a decline reported and slightly more likely group to show no need to improve.

Figure 25.



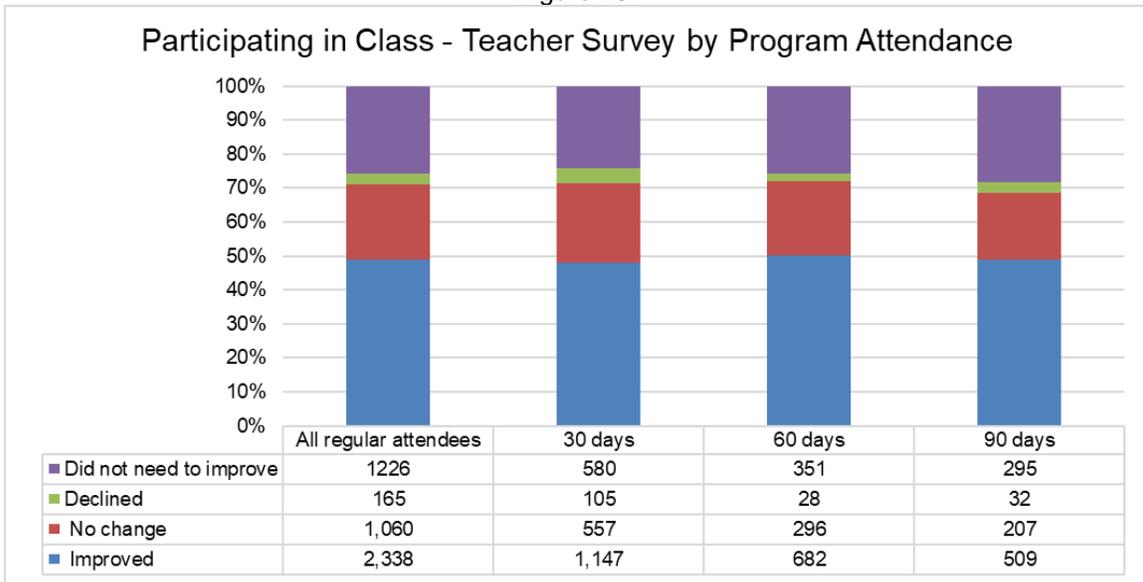
For the indicator of class participation, 49 percent of students improved, 26 percent did not need to improve, 22 percent showed no change, and 3 percent declined.

**The count of students improving (2,338) was more than 14 times greater than the count declining (165).**

Cohort results ranged from 46 percent improving for Cohort 8 to 50 percent improving for Cohort 10. Decline percentages by cohort were ranged between 2 and 5 percent. “No change” ranged from 21 to 24 percent and “did not need to improve” was 25 to 26 percent.

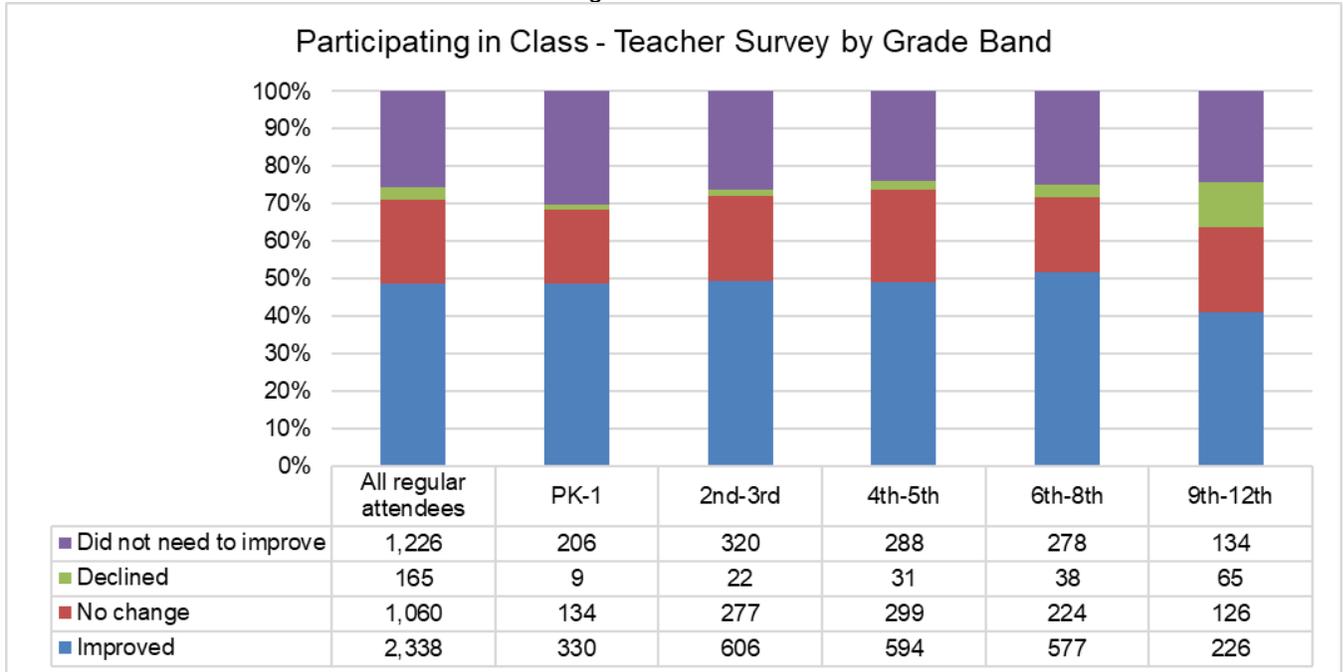
Improvement percentages by program attendance did not vary much between each greater attendance category: 48 percent of students attending 30-59 days improved, 50 percent of students attending 60-89 days improved, and 49 percent of students attending 90+ days improved. Cohort results showed that Cohort 9 had the largest gain for students attending in the greatest attendance category: the improvement percentage for Cohort 9 90+ days students was 10 percentage points greater than the improvement percentage for the 30-59 days students (48 percent). Cohort 9’s decline percentages also improve with greater attendance. Like homework completion, the percentage of Cohort 10 students improving at 90+ days was 4 percentage points lower than that of the 30-59 days group.

Figure 26.



For class participation by grade band, improvement percentages ranged from 41 to 52 percent, with students in grades 6 through 8 having the highest percentage improving. High school students were more likely than younger students to decline.

Figure 27.



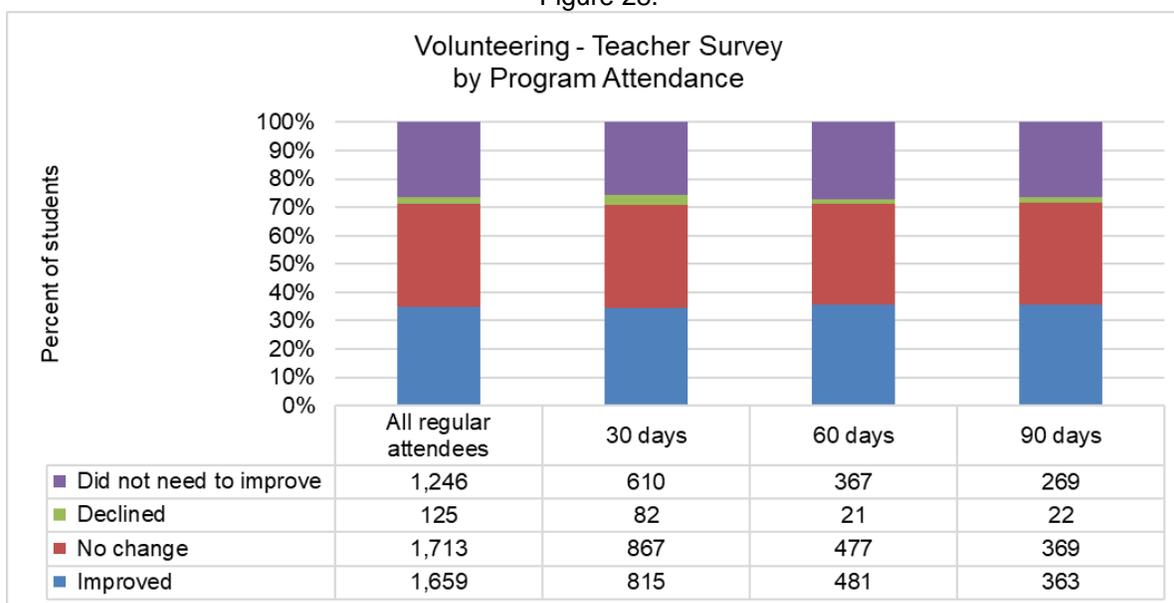
For the indicator of volunteering in class (i.e., for extra credit or more responsibilities), results were that 35 percent improved, 26 percent did not need to improve, 36 percent

showed no change, and 3 percent declined. Results by cohort showed improvement percentages ranging from 31 percent for Cohort 8 to 38 percent for Cohort 9. Rates of decline ranged from 2 percent to 4 percent. “No change” ranged from 33 to 38 percent, and “did not need to improve” ranged from 25 to 28 percent.

**The count of students improving (1,659) was more than 13 times greater than the count declining (125).**

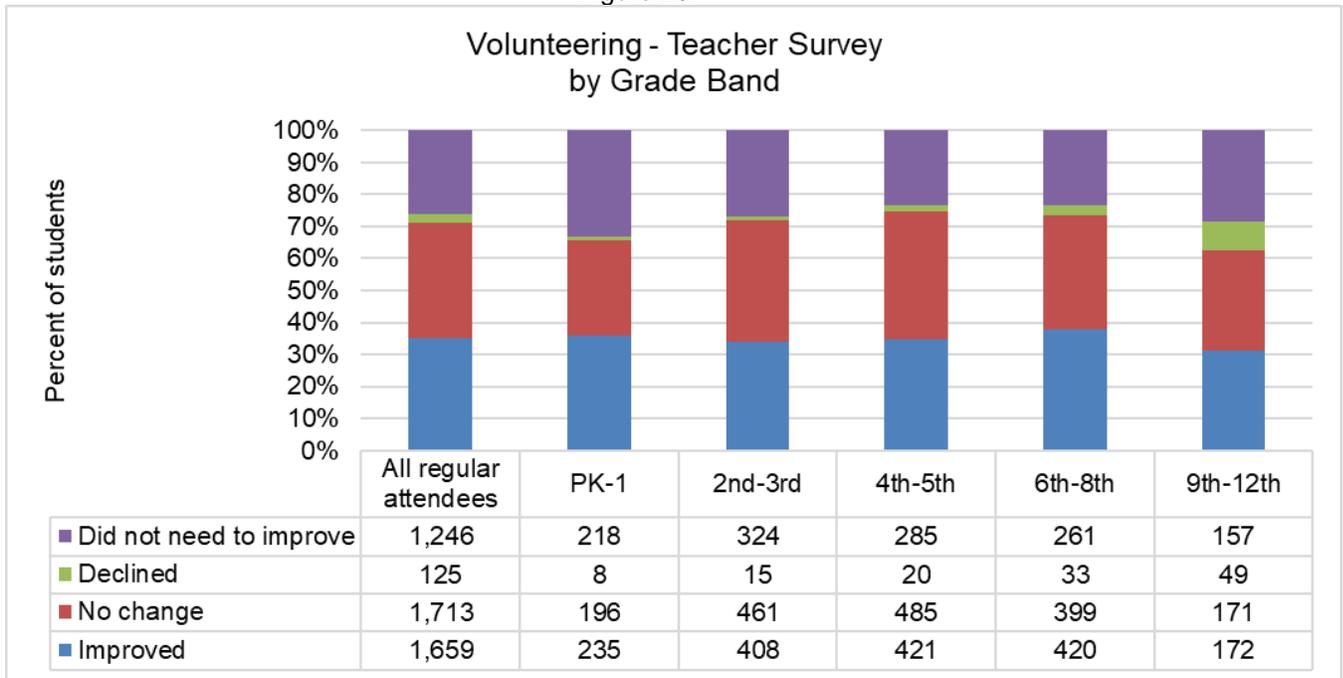
Results by program attendance showed improvement at 34 percent for the 30 days group, 36 percent for the 60 days groups, and 35 percent for the 90+ days group; decline was either 2 or 3 percent. However, Cohort 9 again showed the biggest positive difference by attendance: the improvement percentage for the 90+ days group (49 percent) was 13 percentage points higher than the 30 days percentage (36 percent), which was the highest improvement percentage of all the cohort 90+ days groups. Cohort 10 again showed a negative difference in the improvement percentages between the two groups. The 90+ days group had a rate of 3 percentage points lower than the 30 days group.

Figure 28.



The results by grade band for volunteering showed that students in grades 6 through 8, were most likely to improve, but only slightly more so than the other groups. But like other areas, high school students were more likely than younger students to decline, and also slightly more likely to not need to improve.

Figure 29.



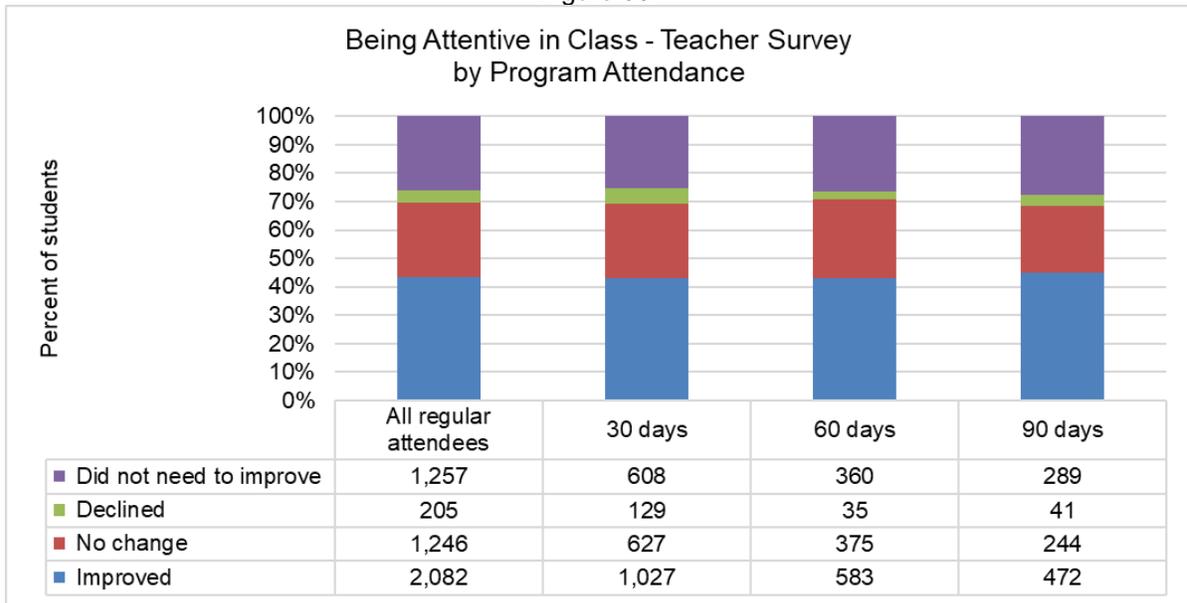
Class attentiveness results showed that 43 percent improved, 26 percent did not need to improve, 26 percent showed no change, and 4 percent declined.

**The count of students improving (2,802) was more than 13 times larger than the count declining (205).**

Cohort 9 had the largest improvement percentage at 45 percent, followed by Cohort 10 with 43 percent, and Cohort 8 with 42 percent. Cohort 10 had the lowest decline percentage at 3 percent, while Cohorts 9 and 8 were 5 percent and 6 percent, respectively.

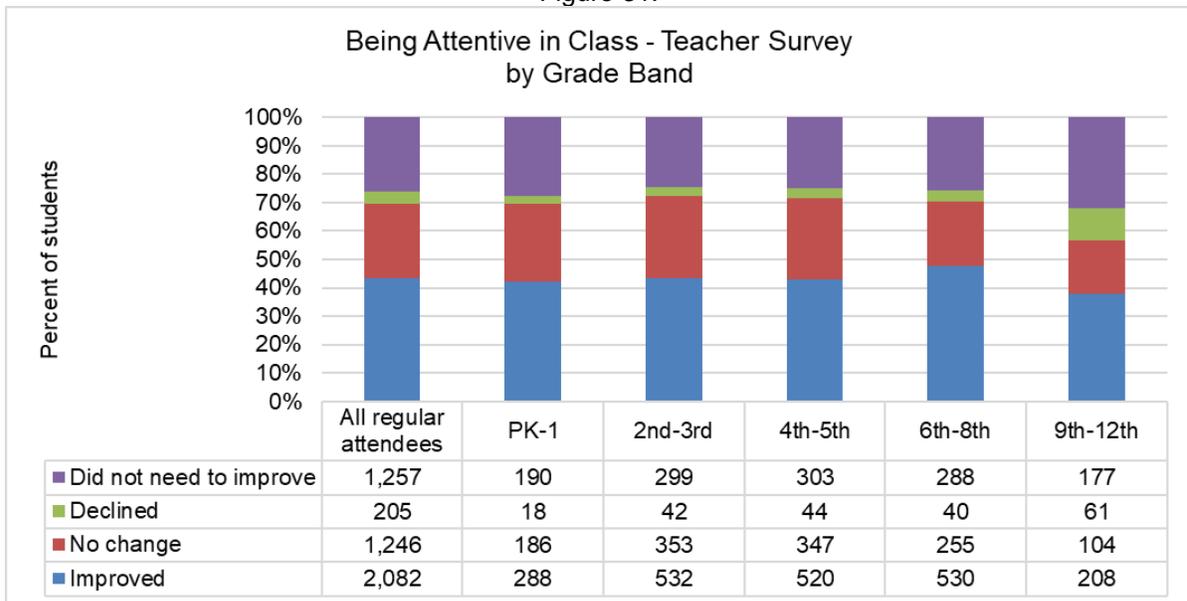
Overall, differences among attendance categories were small, differing no more than two percentage points. No change ranged 23 percent at 90+ days to 26 percent at 30 days. “Did not need to improve” ranged from 25 percent for 30 days and 28 percent for 90+ days. Cohorts 8 and 9 showed the most positive results by program attendance, with the percentage improving in the 90+ days category exceeding the percentage improving for the 30 days category by 9 and 8 percentage points, respectively. Again, Cohort 10 showed a negative difference as attendance increased (-3 percentage points).

Figure 30.



Like the other categories, results by grade band indicate slightly higher percentages improving for students in grades 6 through 8, and percentages declining were higher for high school students, but these students were also slightly more likely to not need to improve.

Figure 31.



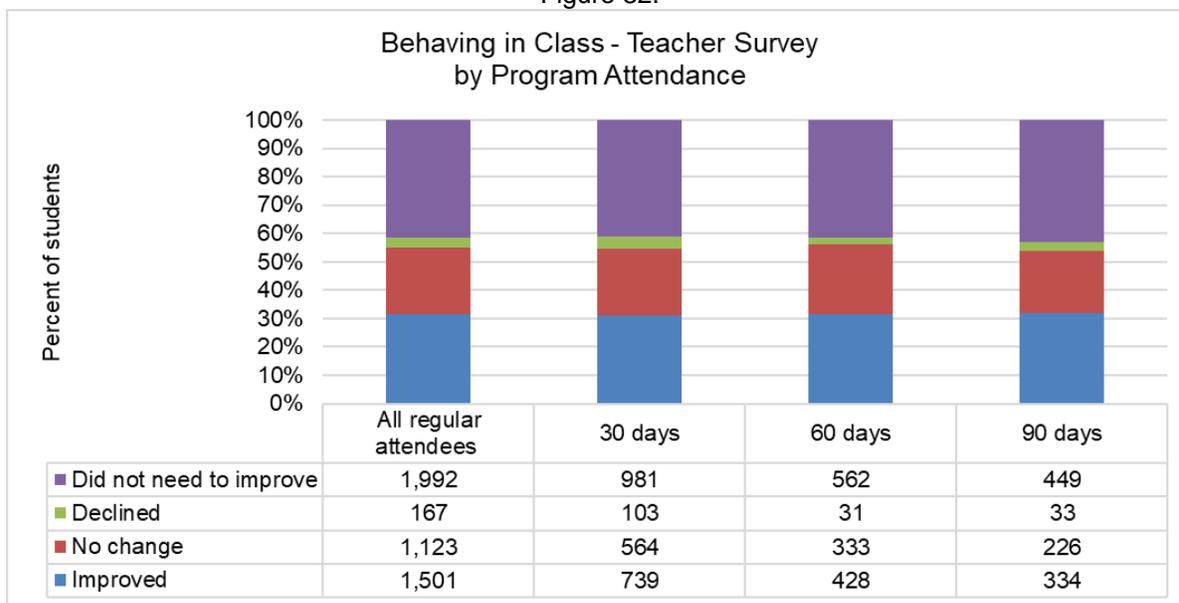
For the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teacher Survey indicator concerning class behavior, 31 percent of students improved, while 42 percent did not need to improve. Twenty-three percent of students exhibited no change and 3 percent of students declined.

**The count of students improving (1,501) was nearly 9 times larger than the count declining (166).**

Cohort 9 had the largest improvement percentage at 33 percent; Cohort 8 had the smallest improved percentage at 30 percent. Decline percentages ranged from 3 to 5 percent; no change ranged 22 to 24 percent; and did not need to improve ranged from 40 to 43 percent.

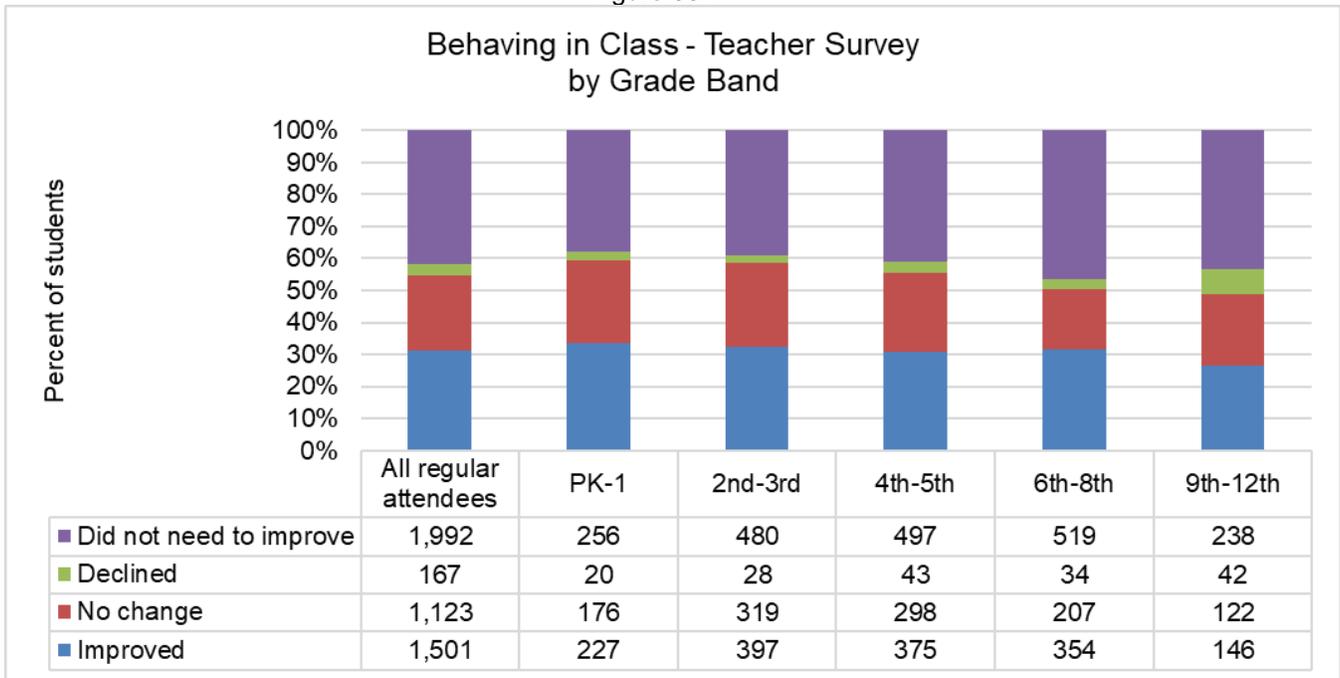
Results by program attendance showed very little difference in percentages improving with greater attendance: 31 percent at 30 days and 32 percent at 60 days and 90+ days. Like other indicators, Cohort 9 showed the biggest change in these categories, with the 30-59 days category showing an improvement percentage of 30 percent and the 90+ days percentage at 42 percent. Not only did Cohort 9 have the most noticeable difference in results by increased program attendance, but it also had the largest improvement percentage at 90+ days of any cohort, Cohort 8's was 32 percent, and Cohort 10's was 29 percent. Again, Cohort 10 showed a declining improvement percentage as attendance increased, with 90+ days being 3 percentage points lower than 30 days.

Figure 32.



For class behavior by grade band, improvement percentages ranged from 27 percent (high school) to 33 percent for grades PK-1. For this indicator, older students (grades 6-12) were most likely – compared to other grade bands – to not need to improve. Like other indicators, high school students were more likely to decline.

Figure 33.



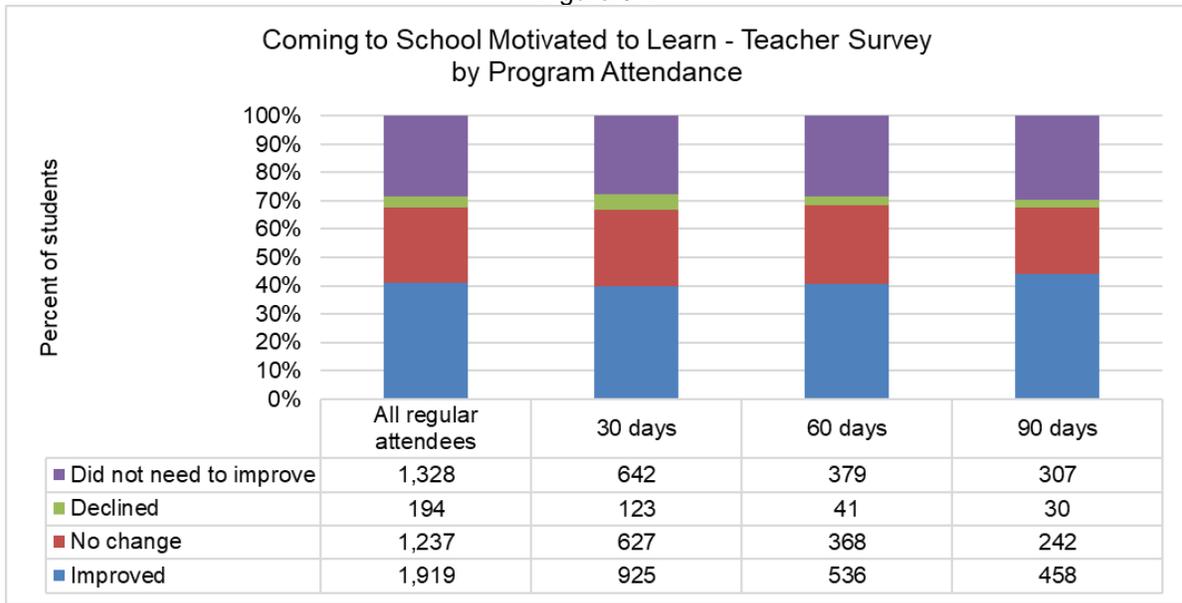
Of students included in teacher survey results for coming to school motivated to learn, 41 percent improved, 28 percent did not need to improve, 26 percent showed no change, and 4 percent declined.

**The count of students improving (1,919) was nearly 10 times greater than the count of students declining (194).**

Cohort 9 had the highest percentage of students improving at 43 percent, followed by Cohort 10 with 41 percent, and Cohort 8 with 39 percent. Decline percentages ranged from 3 to 6 percent for each cohort. Did not need to improve percentages by cohort ranged from 28 percent (Cohorts 9 and 10) to 30 percent (Cohort 8) and no change ranged from 24 percent (Cohort 9) to 28 percent (Cohort 9).

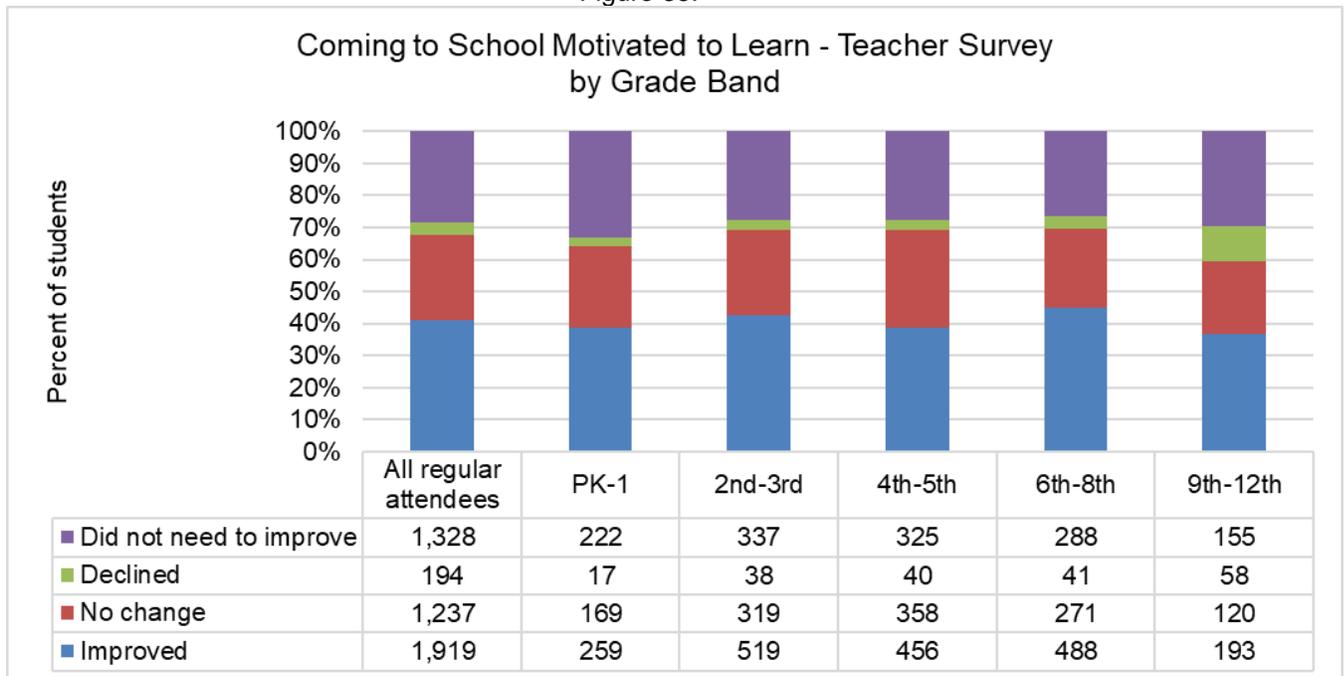
Increased program attendance appears to have little influence on improvement; 40 percent improved in the 30 days group, 40 percent improved in the 60 days group, and 44 percent improved in the 90+ days group. However, by cohort, Cohort 9 had the highest improvement percentage in the 90+ days group at 55 percent, which was 15 percentage points higher than the 30 days group (40 percent).

Figure 34.



Results by grade band for motivation to learn showed that students in grades 6-8 were the most likely group to improve (45 percent). High school students were somewhat more likely than other groups to decline, with 11 percent declining compared to between 3 and 4 percent for the other grade bands.

Figure 35.



## School Behavior/Discipline and Attendance

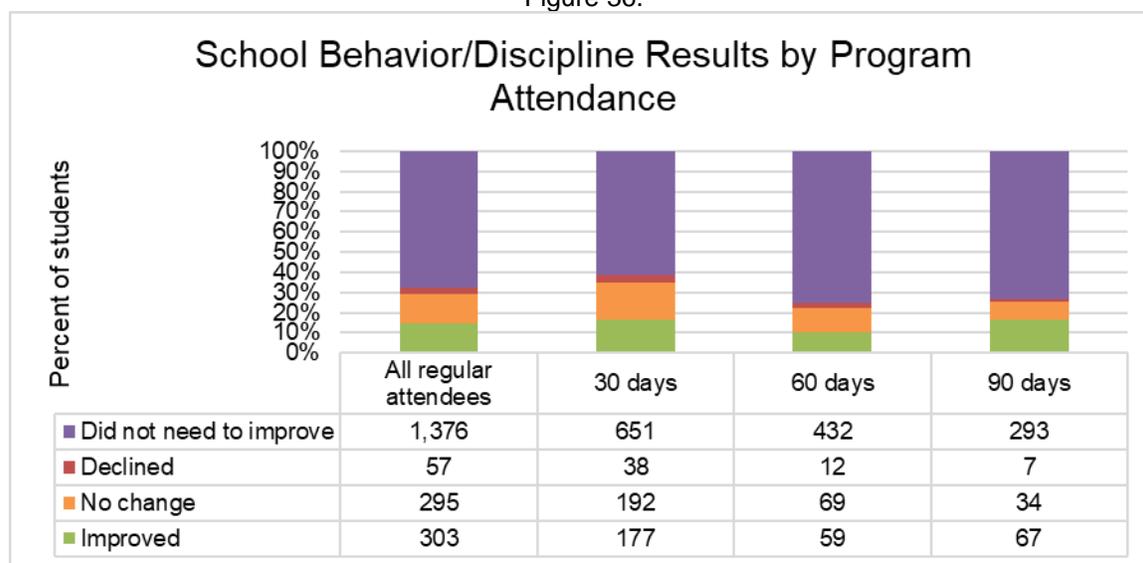
Results provided in this section address the program performance measure “Students participating in the program will show improvement in the performance measures of school attendance, classroom performance, and reduced disciplinary referrals.”

Each reporting grantee established performance indicators in slightly different ways, so grantees were allowed to report results in the general change categories, having freedom to define how change would be calculated for themselves. Grantees were only obligated to report these results if school behavior and discipline indicators were part of their application.

Grantees reported student behavior and discipline results in the four general change categories for 2,031 students (27 percent of regular attendees). Overall results indicated that 68 percent of regularly attending students did not need to improve in the area of school behavior and discipline. The remaining categories showed similar results: 15 percent improved, 15 percent showed no change, and 3 percent declined according to grantee-defined change. Looking just at students who needed to improve, overall, 46 percent improved. Cohorts 7 and 8 had the highest percentage (100 percent and 69 percent, respectively) improving when considering just those students who needed to improve. However, Cohort 7 only had seven students overall who needed to improve. Cohort 9 had 37 percent improve and Cohort 10 had 42 percent improve.

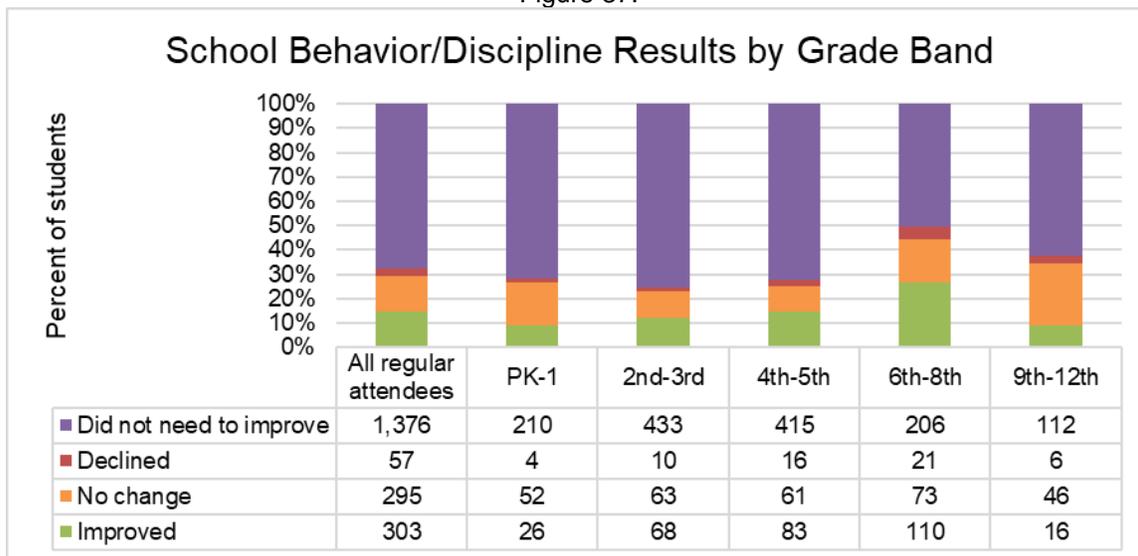
Considering program attendance, greater percentages of students did not need to improve with each greater program attendance category. The decline percentage decreased slightly from 4 percent to 2 percent with greater attendance.

Figure 36.



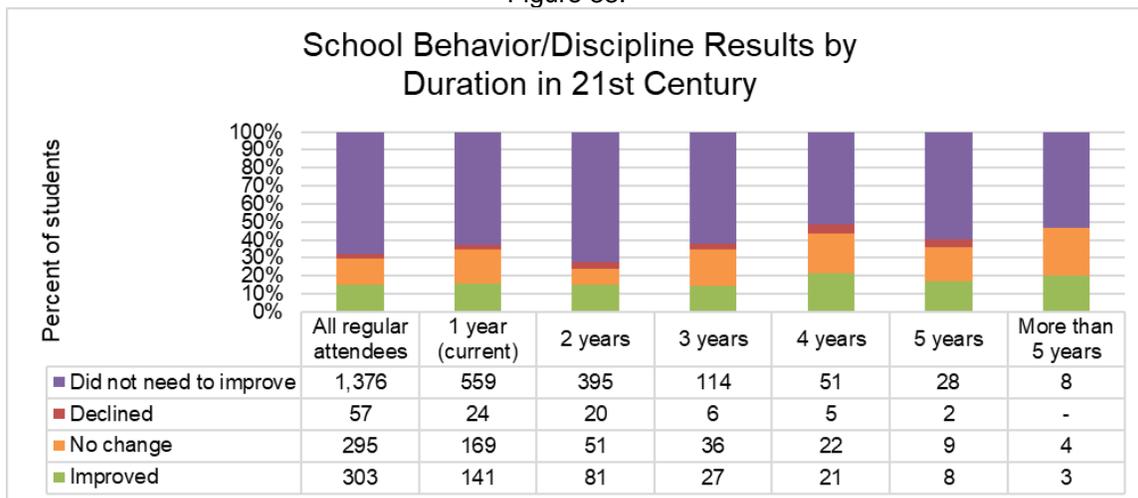
School behavior and discipline were also examined by grade band. Approximately three-fourths of students in grades pre-K through fifth did not need to improve in this area. For middle school, half of students needed to improve, along with 62 percent of high school students. Middle school students (grades 6-8) were mostly likely to improve (27 percent) compared to the other grade bands. They were also most likely to decline (5 percent).

Figure 37.



Evaluators also conducted historical presence analysis for school behavior, with 88 percent of students with school behavior data also having historical participation information. This analysis showed increasing improvement percentages; however, it is important to note that the number of students in each increasing year category decreases. Increased program attendance may indicate a positive program influence on school behavior.

Figure 38.



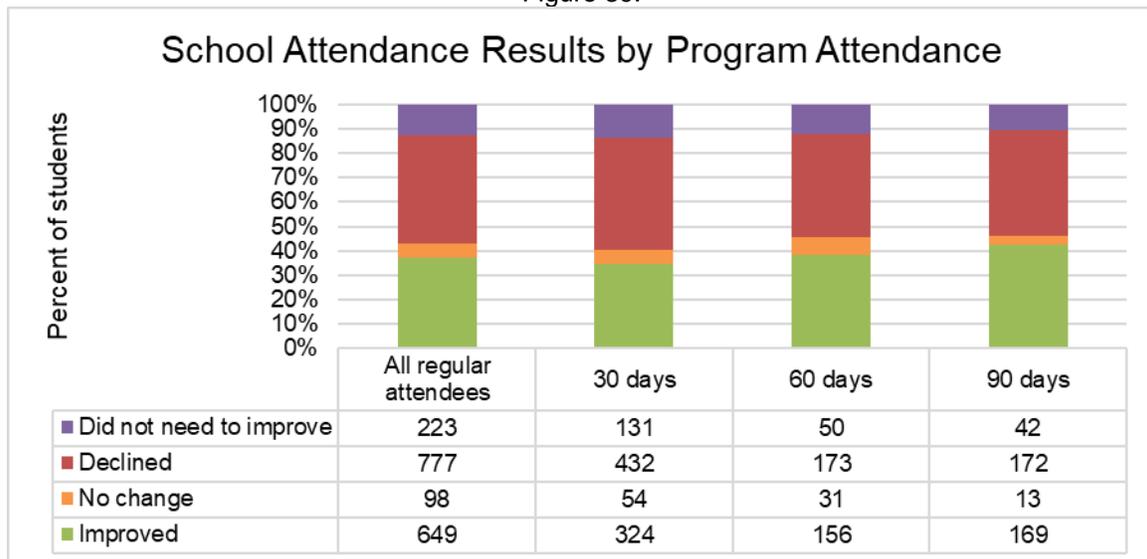
In order to analyze changes in student behavior, evaluators also retrieved in-school suspension data from PIMS for students with a provided PAMailID. This information was available for 3,587 regular attendees (47 percent). Nearly all students (98 percent) with in-school suspension data did not need to improve between the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, receiving zero days of in-school suspensions between the two years. One percent of all students with this information improved, and one percent declined between the two years. It is important to note that it is unclear that students with zero in-school suspension days reported did not receive any days at all, their school does not have in-school suspensions, or their data was not reported.

Each grantee established performance indicators in slightly different ways, so they were allowed to report results in the general change categories, having freedom to define change for themselves. Grantees were not obligated to report school attendance results if such indicators were not part of their application.

Grantees reported school attendance results for 1,747 students, 23 percent of regular attendees, and these results showed 37 percent improved, 44 percent declined, 13 percent did not need to improve, and 6 percent showed no change. Cohort 7 had the highest improvement percentage at 47 percent, followed by Cohort 10 with 40 percent. Excluding students who did not need to improve, 43 percent of students improved, with improved percentages ranging by cohort from 41 percent (Cohort 9) to 56 percent (Cohort 7). Decline percentages ranged from 33 percent (Cohort 7) to 49 percent (Cohort 10).

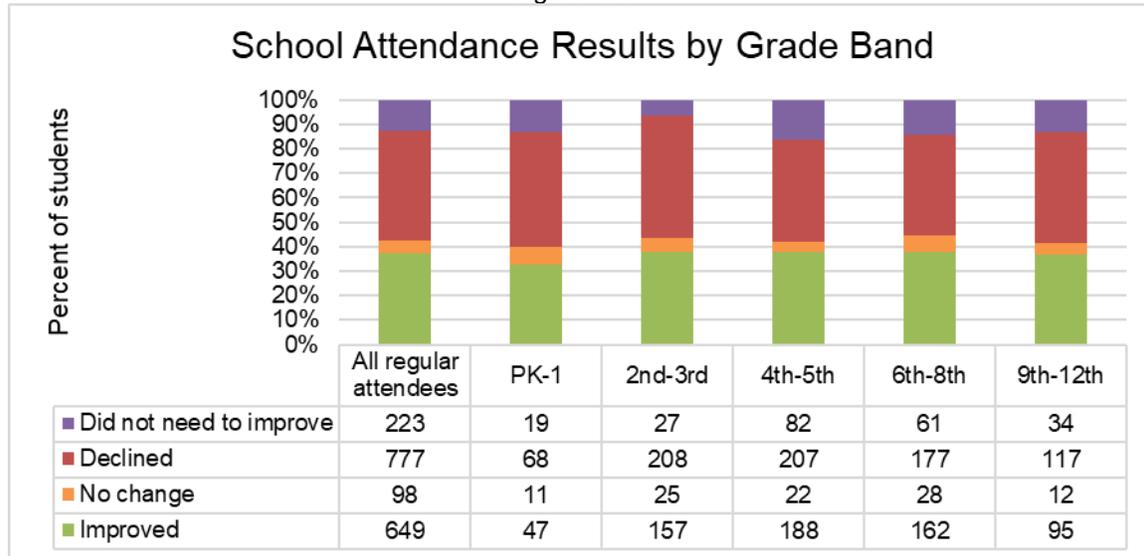
Increasing program attendance shows increasing improvement percentages, from 34 percent for 30 days, 38 percent for 60 days, and 43 percent improving at 90+ days. Cohort 10 had the highest improvement percentage for the 90+ days grouping at 45 percent and the lowest percentage declining for this same participation level (2 percent).

Figure 39.



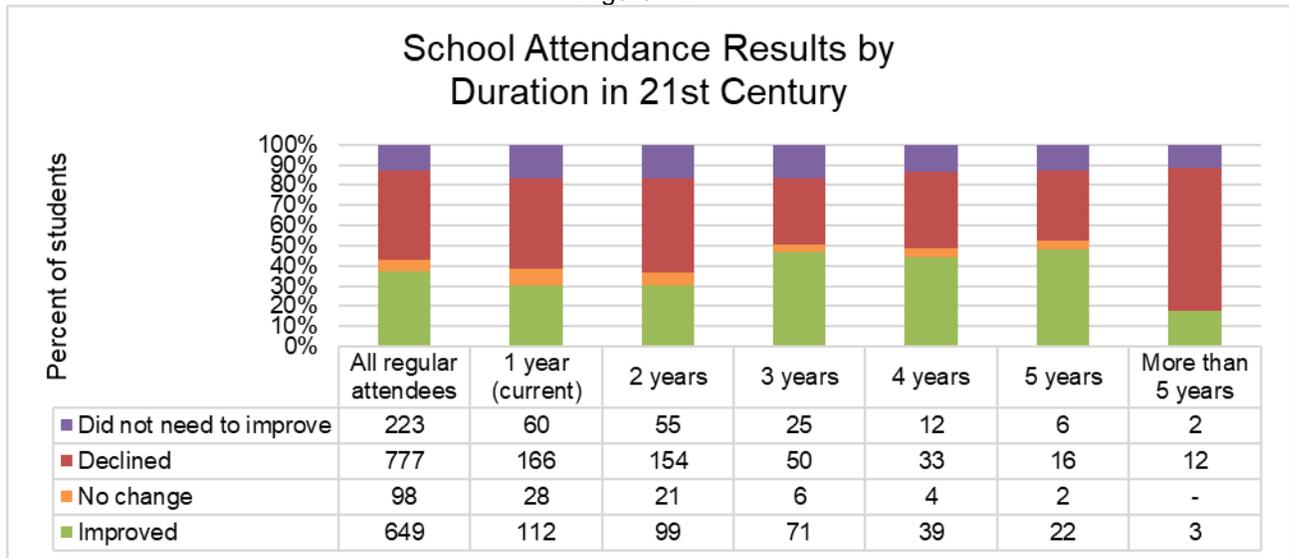
There was little variation between students' likelihood to improve their school attendance by grade band, ranging from 32 percent (PK-1) to 38 percent (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>). Younger students were somewhat more likely to decline than older students, with 47 percent of PK-1 students and 50 percent of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders declining. Forty-one percent of students in grades 4-8 declined, along with 45 percent of high school students.

Figure 40.



Historical presence analysis was also conducted for school attendance, with 57 percent of students with school attendance data also having historical participation information. Improvement percentages increase with longer participation up to five years. Increasing improvement percentages for longer participation is most pronounced when excluding students who did not need to improve – improvement percentages increased from 37 percent for one year to 55 percent for students with five years, but only 20 percent of students attending more than five years improved. It should be noted that the longer duration groups have smaller counts of students than the shorter duration groups, which may also contribute to these differences or to inherent differences in the students themselves.

Figure 41.



Evaluators were also able to retrieve student attendance data from PIMS. Prior year (2019-20) and current year (2020-21) school day attendance rates were available for 4,963 regular attendees (65 percent of all regular attendees). Evaluators analyzed this data only for students with an attendance rate at or below 90 percent in the prior year, in accordance with the new GPRA measures released in summer 2021.<sup>21</sup> Of the 4,963 regular attendees with prior and current year data, 489 (10 percent) had a rate at or below 90 percent in the 2019-20 school year. Of these 489, 70 percent improved their school day attendance rate and 30 percent declined.

### Promotion

Evaluators collected information from grantees about student promotion. Grantees were asked to report whether each regular attendee was promoted to the next grade (or graduated) at the end of the 2020-21 school year. For students whom grantees reported PAsSecureIDs, evaluators used the promotion status retrieved from PIMS.

Promotion status was available for 6,981 students (72 percent of regular attendees across 111 grantees). These results revealed that 99 percent of students with a promotion status were promoted or graduated. As nearly all students were promoted additional disaggregation would not add value to the finding.

### High School Credit/Course Recovery

Thirty-seven grantees reported student data showing that one or more high school

<sup>21</sup> GPRA #3 – School Day Attendance: *Percentage of students in grades 1-12 participating in 21st CCLC during the school year who had a school day attendance rate at or below 90% in the prior school year and demonstrated an improved attendance rate in the current school year.*

students engage in course/credit recovery results through their 21<sup>st</sup> Century program (19 percent of grantees). Of these 37 grantees, 32 grantees reported course/credit recovery program details in the PA Implementation Survey.

For course/credit recovery programs occurring during the summer (28 grantees), 61 percent of the 17 reporting grantees reported that it typically took students the full term of the summer program to recover one course/credit and 39 percent (11 grantees) reported that it took less than the length of the summer program to recover a course/credit.

For course/credit recovery programs that operated during the school year (27 grantees), 70 percent of the 19 reporting grantees reported that it typically took students less than a semester to recover a single course/credit, while the remaining grantees reported that students took less than a full school year (five grantees) or less than one month (three grantees).

Grantees offered course/credit recovery instruction primarily through computer-based instruction (47 percent), followed closely by a blend of face-to-face instructions and computer-based instruction (44 percent), and then primarily through face-to-face instruction (nine percent).

Nineteen grantees indicated that students who participated in course/credit recovery also participated in other 21<sup>st</sup> Century activities. Of those indicating that students did not typically participate in other 21<sup>st</sup> Century activities, the most prevalent reasons included other family, home, school, or work obligations or that students had so many courses/credits to recover that there was not an opportunity for them to participate in other 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC activities.

Grantees reported that 1,534 high school students participating in course/credit recovery, with 192 of these being regular attendees and 1,342 (87 percent) attending the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program fewer than 30 days. Of these 1,534 students participating in course/credit recovery activities, 1,127<sup>22</sup> recovered one or more courses/credits (73 percent).

These 1,127 students recovered a total of 1,872 total courses/credits:

- 526 literacy courses/credits (108 from regular attendees and 418 from non-regular attendees),
- 454 math courses/credits (65 from regular attendees and 389 from non-regular attendees), and
- 892 other courses/credits (198 from regular attendees and 694 from non-regular attendees).

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<sup>22</sup> The total number of credits recovered was not provided for 62 students who grantees reported as participating in credit recovery activities.

## Results by Locale Type

With a recent priority focus on engaging rural and underserved portions of the commonwealth in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program, the question of results by different program locale types became relevant. As outlined earlier in this report, 59 percent of grantees identified their program as operating in an urban setting, 24 percent identified their program as operating in a rural setting, 6 percent reported their program as suburban, and 10 percent reported their program operated in a combination of these settings.

The proportionality of 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs by locale type is not reflective of the proportionality of Pennsylvania school-age youth by such classifications. According to locale classifications by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data, 53 percent of students are from suburban settings, 23 percent are from city/urban settings, and 24 percent are from town/rural settings. A comparison of these locale designation distributions with those in the previous paragraph suggests that 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs were successful in reaching students in urban and rural settings. However, it is important to remember that student need is a greater factor in grantee selection than locale distribution.

Evaluators asked grantees to make this determination rather than use a grantee's or program's mailing address to determine setting type because programs may operate in a different location than the grantee; a school district may operate in some, but not all schools; and different schools may have different settings. Also, this provided some insight into how the programs may classify their identity, versus how they may be classified by others.

First, evaluators classified each regular attendee based on their grantee-reported setting. In doing so, evaluators found the proportion of students in urban and rural settings varied greatly from the distribution of programs by those settings. Thirty-five percent of regular attendees were from programs reported as urban, compared to 59 percent of grantees, and 41 percent of regular attendees came from programs reported as rural, compared to 24 percent of grantees. The proportion of students in a combined setting was 21 percent, compared to 10 percent of grantees and the proportion of students in a suburban setting was the same as the percentage of suburban programs (4 percent).

Evaluators then connected academic performance data elements to grantees' reported program classification to determine the extent to which results may differ by program context. In the following graphs, the overall regular attendee results are included along with the same data source for each setting type.

- For reading report card grades, programs with a combination of locales had the highest improvement percentage (33 percent), and suburban programs had the highest decline percentage (33 percent).

- For reading report card grades, the spread between the locale type with the highest improvement percentage (combination of types, 33 percent) and the lowest improvement percentage (urban, 27 percent) was 5 percentage points.
- For math report card grades, suburban programs had the highest improvement percentage (32 percent) but also the highest decline percentage (32 percent).
- For math report card grades, the spread between the locale type with the highest improvement percentage (suburban, 32 percent) and the lowest improvement percentage (rural, 22 percent) was 10 percentage points.
- For the teacher survey academic indicator, suburban programs had the highest improvement percentage (67 percent) and one of the lowest decline percentages (3 percent).

Graphs of each result are included in the following pages.

Figure 42.

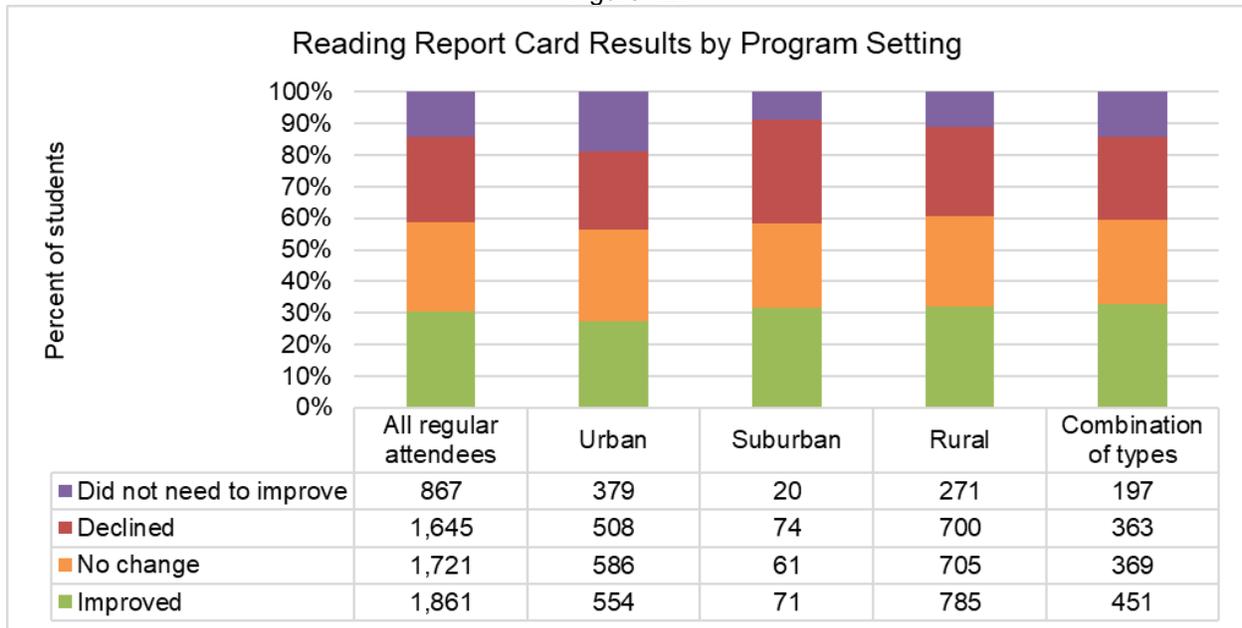


Figure 43.

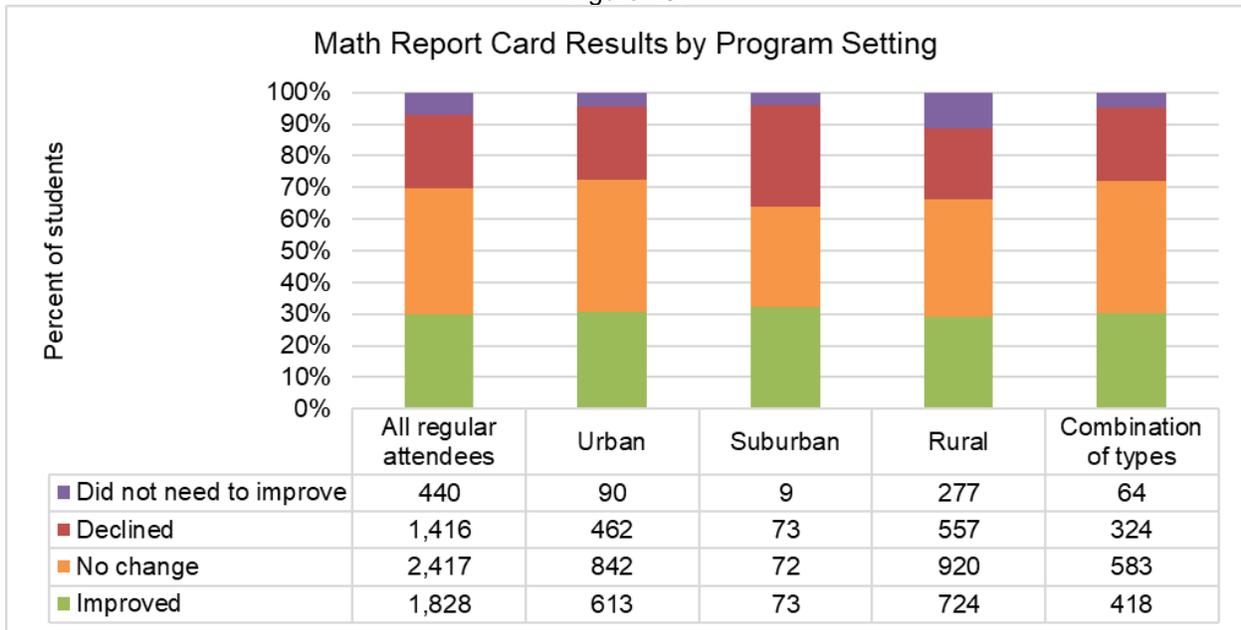
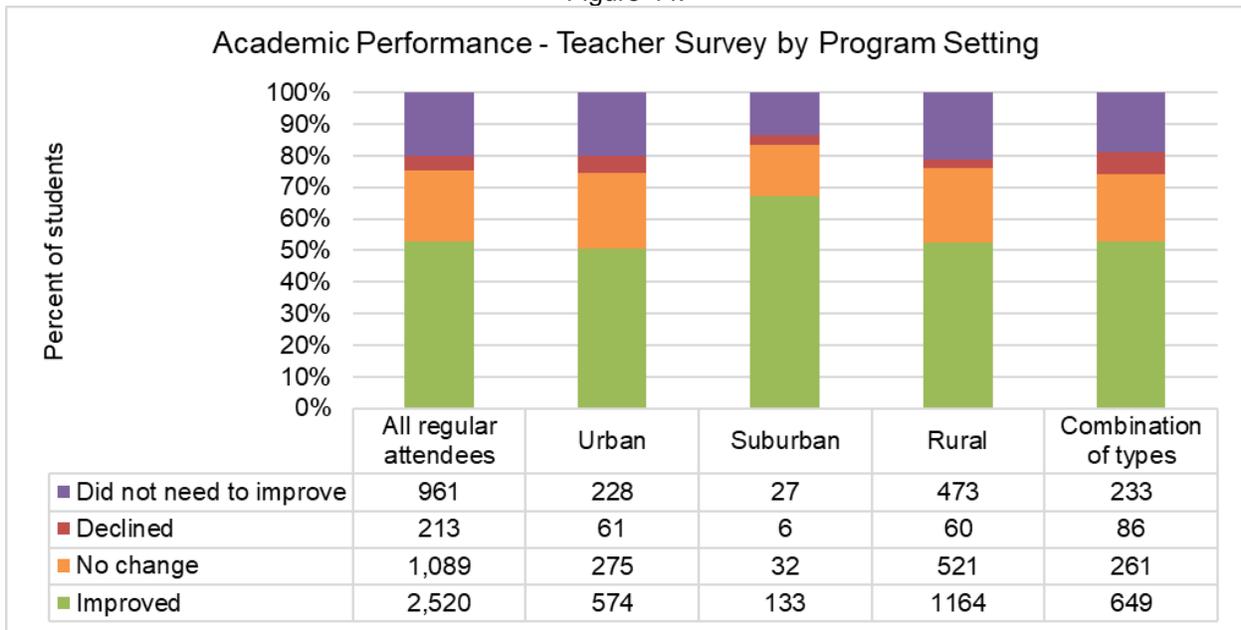


Figure 44.



## Results by Program Operation

While student results are considered by degree of student attendance, evaluators were also interested in whether scope of program operation may have influenced results. As such, evaluators classified programs as school year only or both summer and school year, in order to consider if grantees that operate a summer component in addition to

the school year might have more positive results than those without a summer component. Evaluators used program operation data to identify regular attendees as belonging to a grantee that operated during school year only or both summer and school year. In doing so, evaluators found that 55 percent of regular attendees belonged to grantees that operated summer and school year, while 45 percent belonged to grantees that only operated during the school year. This is perhaps not a surprise, given that grantees with summer components would have more possible days of programming, allowing students more opportunity to participate.

Evaluators then connected academic performance data elements to grantees' reported program classification to determine the extent to which results may differ by program operations. In the following graphs, the overall regular attendee results are included along with the same data source for each operation type.

- For both reading and math report card grades, students attending grantees that operated both summer and school year showed slightly lower improvement percentages than students who attended school year only programs: 28 percent for programs offering both summer and school year for both reading and math, compared to 31 percent and 30 percent, respectively, for school year only programs. However, for reading report grades, summer and school year students were more likely to not need to improve by three percentage points.
- For both reading and math report card grades, students attending grantees that operated both summer and school year showed nearly the same decline percentages than students who attended school year only programs: 26 percent for programs offering both summer and school year for reading and 24 percent for math, compared to 27 percent for reading and 23 percent for math for school year only programs.
- For academic performance on the teacher survey, students attending grantees that offered both summer and school year were slightly less likely than school year only grantees to improve – 53 percent compared to 58 percent. However, summer and school year students were more likely to not need to improve by three percentage points. Both summer and school year grantee students and school year only students had the same likelihood of decline: 4 percent.

Evaluators also looked at differences by student attendance type. In other words, did a given regular attendee attend during both summer and school year, or just school year only?<sup>23</sup>

In analyzing the outcome data based on student participation type, a similar trend is observed.

- For both reading and math report card grades, students who attended during both summer and school year were slightly less likely than school year only

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<sup>23</sup> Students who attend only in the summer generally do not have reported outcomes, as teacher surveys and report card grades are measures that consider growth only during the school year. Summer only students make up less than 4 percent of regular attendees.

students to improve – 28 percent for both reading and math summer and school year attendees compared to 31 and 30 percent, respectively, for school year only attendees. Summer and school year attendees were less likely to need to improve by two percentage points. Decline percentages also differed little. For reading, 26 percent of summer and school year attendees declined, compared to 27 percent of school year only attendees. For math, the decline percentages were 24 percent and 23 percent, respectively.

- The difference between summer and school year and school year only participation was more pronounced for the academic performance teacher survey indicator: 65 percent of students who attended summer and school year improved on this measure compared to 58 percent for school year regular attendees. However, the 17 percent of school year only students did not need to improve percent compared to 5 percent of summer and school year students.

Overall, the outcome percentages suggest that there is little difference between how successful programs that operate during the summer and school year are compared to those that operate during the school year only.

Graphs of each result are included in the following pages.

Figure 45.

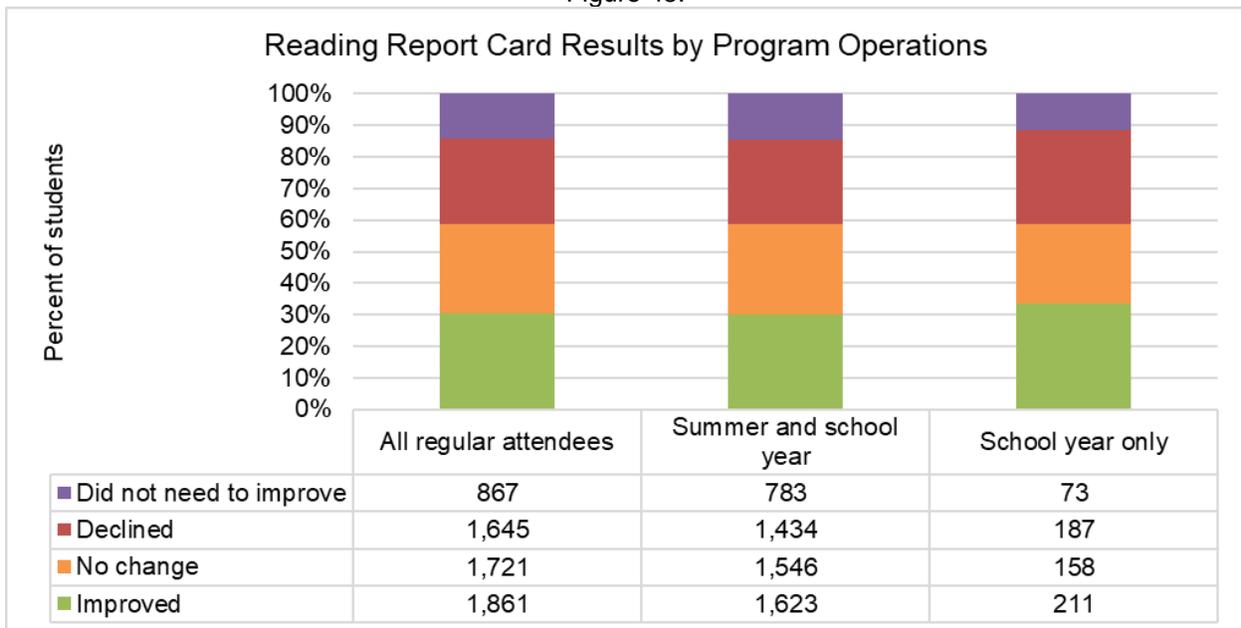


Figure 46.

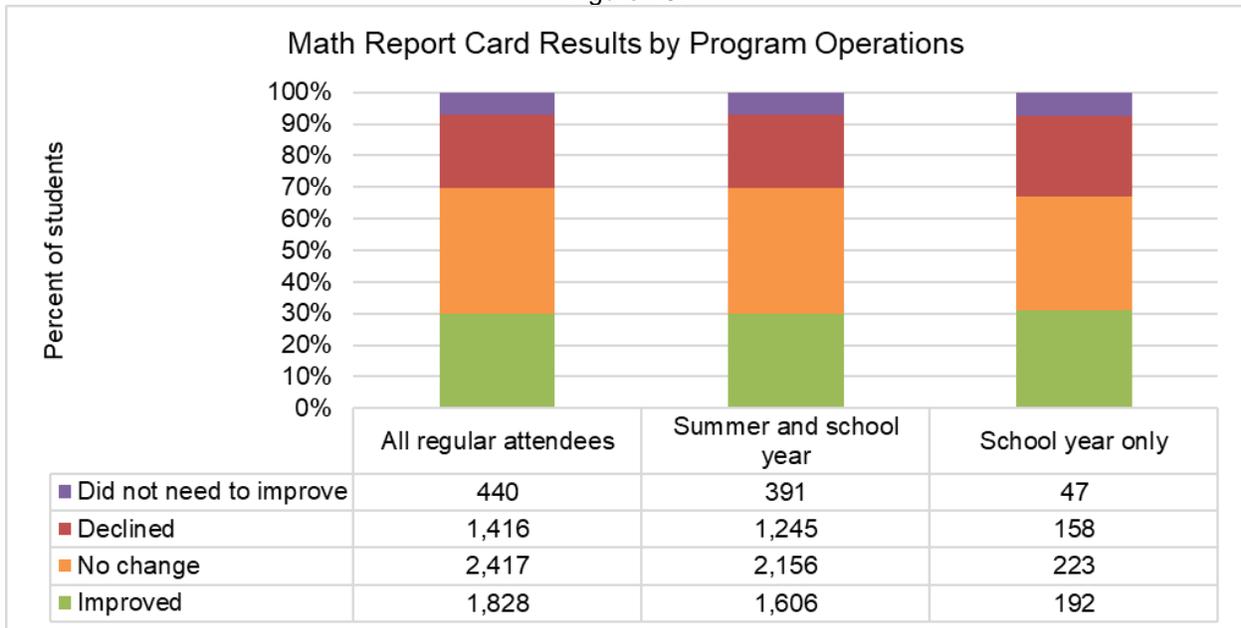


Figure 47.

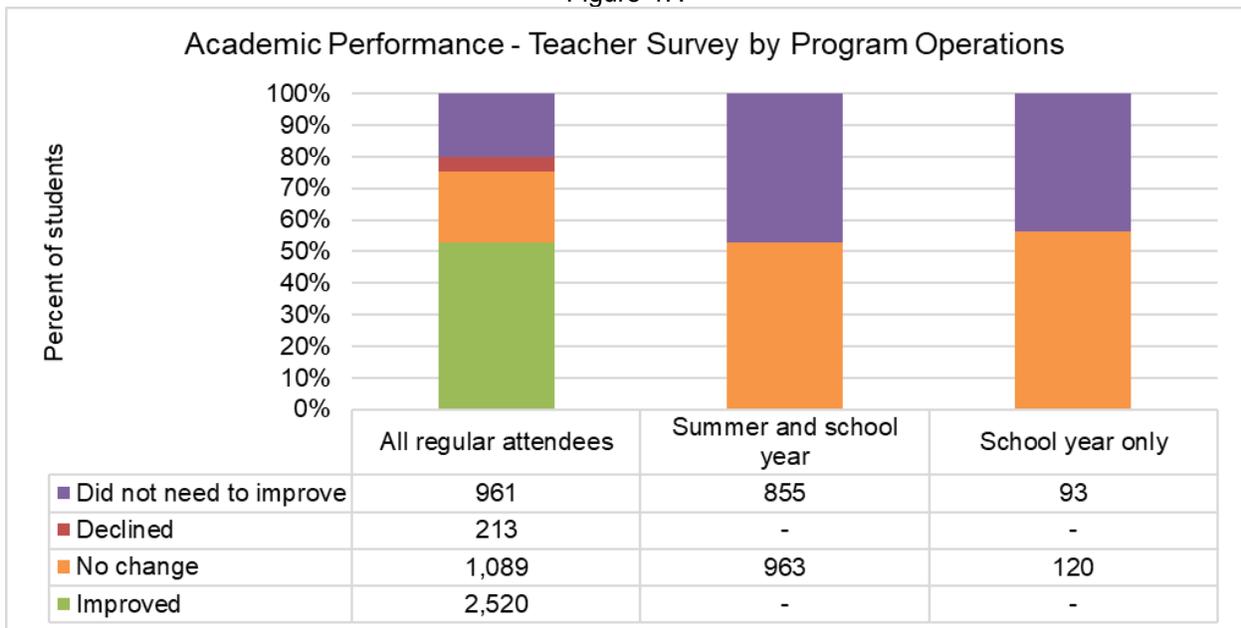


Figure 48.

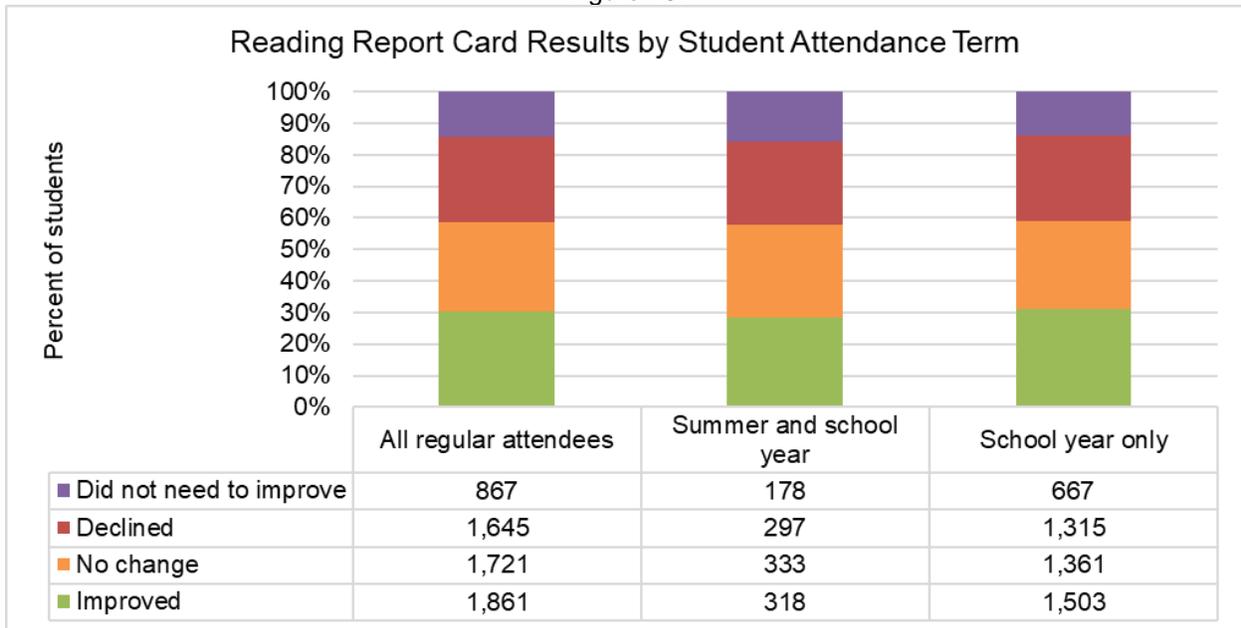


Figure 49.

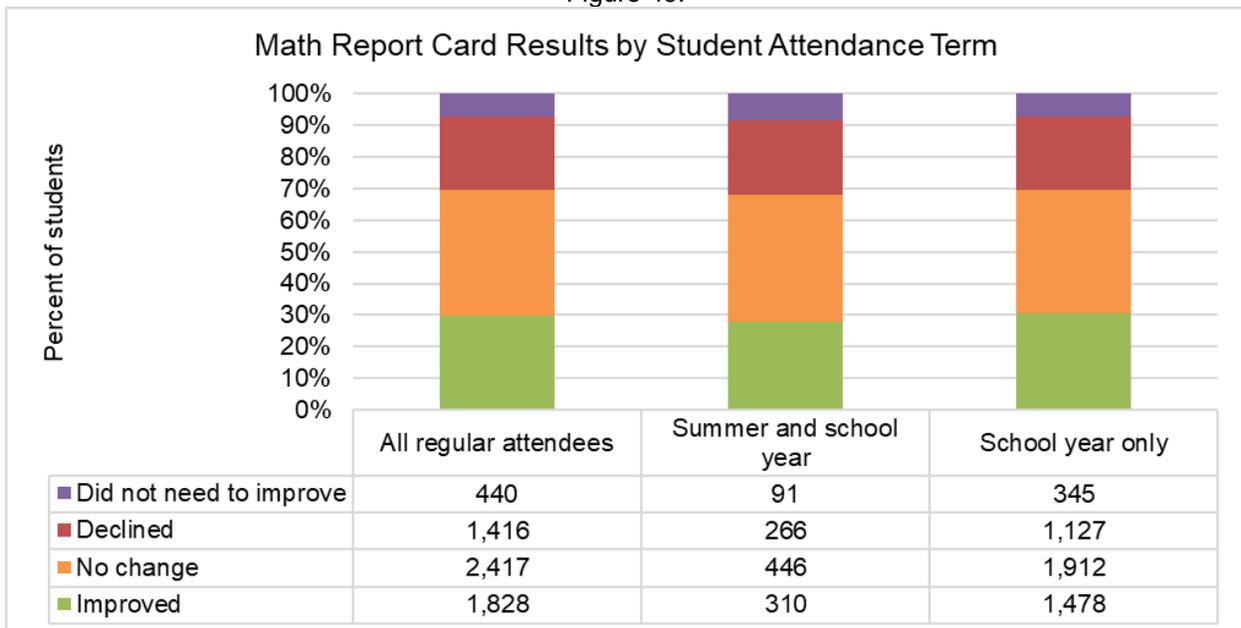
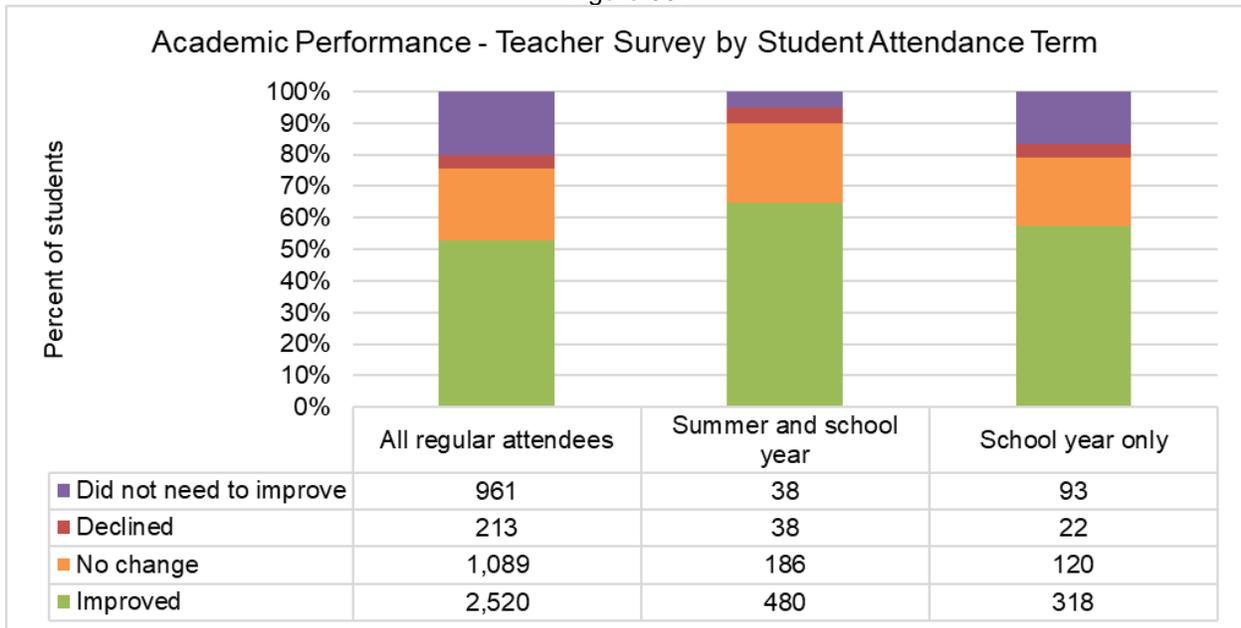


Figure 50.



## 2020-21 Government Performance and Results Act

The federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century program established performance objectives as part of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).

The indicators addressed here are related to and could be addressed within Pennsylvania's three performance measures:

1. Participants in 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes;
2. Increasing percentages of students **regularly** participating in the program will meet or exceed state and local academic achievement standards in reading and math; and
3. Students participating in the program will show improvement in the performance measures of school attendance, classroom performance, and reduced disciplinary referrals.

In previous years, evaluators pulled GPRA results from the 21APR system, which is the state's performance based on data that grantees entered in the federal data reporting portal. However, this data was not available to evaluators for this year. Previous years' results for Objective 1 have been included for context.

**Objective 1:** Participants in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes.

Table 5: GPRA Results (2017-2021)

Indicator	2017-18 Result	2018-19 Result	2019-20 Result	2020-21 Result
1.1 The percentage of students who improved their math grade from fall to spring.	44%	46%	49%	Not available
1.2 The percentage of students who improved English (reading) grade from fall to spring.	44%	46%	49%	Not available
1.3 The percentage of students who improved from not proficient to proficient or above in reading on state assessments (elementary).	21%	31%	No 2020 assessment	No 2020 assessment
1.4 The percentage of students who improved from not proficient to proficient or above in math on state assessments (middle and high school).	12%	14%	No 2020 assessment	No 2020 assessment
1.5 The percentage of students who improved homework completion and class participation (teacher-reported).	52%	49%	57%	Not available
1.6 The percentage of students who improved behavior (teacher-reported).	41%	40%	45%	Not available

**Objective 2:** 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers will offer high-quality enrichment opportunities that positively affect student outcomes, such as school attendance and academic performance, and result in decreased disciplinary actions or other adverse behaviors.

Indicator 2.1: The percentage of 21<sup>st</sup> Century centers reporting emphasis in at least one core academic area.

Indicator 2.2: The percentage of 21<sup>st</sup> Century centers offering enrichment and support activities in other areas.

Information for these indicators has not been available in previous years because of changes in federal reporting. These elements are not explicitly included in 21APR reports. However, based on Implementation Survey data, 96 percent of grantees offered programming related to STEM content. The second indicator is particularly broad. As such, it could be argued that 100 percent of grantees offer enrichment and support activities. Further definition is needed.

NOTE: Federal GPRA measures will change with the 2021-22 program year.

## Reflections, Implications, and Recommendations for Improvement

Overall, evaluation processes and grantee submissions continued to improve, which is likely due to prior grantee experience and changes to state reporting structures and deadlines made in the prior year. Evaluators believe this year's data and results are the most accurate to date, given additional validity checks put in place.

Based on evaluation findings and implementation of the state evaluation, evaluators offer recommendations for improvement of Pennsylvania's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program and its evaluation.

### Considerations for the State Team

1. Grantees shared feedback about challenges they experienced during this program year and needs that they have moving forward. Certainly, these challenges included continued issues brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. But they also continued to have more traditional needs, some of which have persisted for several years, such as parent involvement, staff turnover, and student retention and consistent attendance.

**Recommendation:** The state team should continue to collaborate to ensure that professional development through webinars, regional trainings, grantee meetings, and the Extended Learning Opportunities Conference address areas where grantees report challenges and interests. Where possible, additional resources should be considered and developed to support grantees as they effectively implement programs that are designed to positively influence change. The state team should continue to use state evaluation findings to identify and address areas of need and consider offering professional learning opportunities that match needs and interests.

2. Grantees (Cohorts 8-10) served approximately 66 percent less than their proposed total number of students throughout the 2020-21 year. Over three-fourths (85 percent) of these grantees served less students than they had proposed. For 2020-21, all grantees (Cohorts 7-10) served approximately half of the total number of students in the previous year and one-third of the total number of regular attendees. This reduction in students served may be influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Recommendation:** The state team should consider reducing the number of students grantees propose to serve, thus placing further emphasis on volume of programming attended versus volume of students served. Evidence in this report indicates that a greater volume of program attendance may have a positive impact on several student outcomes. Additionally, the state team should consider ways in which grantees can

recruit new students, recruit students that may have left programming due to COVID-related reasons, and increase students' overall attendance.

3. Several years' results have been fairly consistent, despite changing grantees. Also, current year-only results make it difficult for long-term gains to be observed.

Recommendation: The state team and state evaluators should collaborate to identify state program priorities or special interest areas in order to: a) plan state-wide training or enrichment opportunities such as webinars, b) use grantee-level results to formally identify grantees that appear to be excelling or struggling so that follow-up can occur, and c) encourage grantees to examine their local results and take action for program improvement and enrichment. The state team may want to consider a formal process or structure wherein grantees reflect on and respond to their local findings, perhaps using the PA Grantee Report Card that state evaluators prepare for each grantee and share with PDE and technical assistance providers. Further, the state team and state evaluators should consider whether additional longitudinal data analysis should be formally required and the methods by which such reporting could be done efficiently and without adding considerable data burden on grantees.

## Considerations for Grantees

1. Grantees reported that they most often use school, teacher, or parent recommendations to identify and enroll students in programs and similar sources for identifying student needs.

Recommendation: While programs are designed to serve primarily high-needs schools with high-needs students, grantees should consider using more objective sources of data and/or determine the extent to which objective sources of data are the bases for school, teacher, or parent recommendations. Data-sourced identification information can be used as baseline information to provide targeted student instruction and evaluate outcomes more accurately.

2. Less than half of students served attend Pennsylvania 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs regularly, which has been the trend for several years and was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This raises several important considerations for grantees, program leaders, and policymakers: 'Are students attending enough?' and the related, 'Should we put more effort and emphasis on retaining students and encouraging greater attendance?' and, 'Are we addressing the more basic need of students from at-risk or high-needs areas/populations by engaging them in safe, structured, educational, and enriching programs and protecting them from the vulnerabilities of a block of time after school where they may be unsupervised (at home or elsewhere) and/or potentially engaged in unhealthy or even dangerous activities?'

To the first point, current levels of participation may be insufficient for programs

to make an impact on student academic and behavior improvements. Thirty days over the course of a nine-month school year is only 3.3 days per month; 90 program days is only 10 days per month, or 2.5 days per week. Knowing that most programs, when they were operating in person, offered four or five days per week, this means even the most engaged students may be attending only about half the time the program is being offered. This raises the question of whether an afterschool program, at roughly two to three hours per day a few days per month can have a measurable impact on student outcome improvement in the short term. If the answer is no, but that the program is more likely to have a long-term impact, then the reporting structure of 21<sup>st</sup> Century – based on the federal GPRA measures and federal reporting system – is not set up appropriately; we are measuring the wrong things at the wrong time. Side note: GPRA measures will be changing for the 2021-22 program year, but are still based on annual growth, not longitudinal growth.

This idea is supported by results that typically show greater improvement percentages for teacher survey results than report card grades, and then state assessments (when administered). Classroom teachers may notice subtle improvements before they show up on other measures. Coupled with historical presence results that show some larger percentages improving with longer duration in 21<sup>st</sup> Century, this suggests that short-term measures may not adequately capture the program's true impact.

As for the more basic need of having a safe place to go after school, even if they may not influence academic needs (though this is a primary focus of 21<sup>st</sup> Century based on its performance measures), if students are not attending on an ongoing basis throughout the year, then programs are not really addressing that need. If a student attends moderately, for example 75 days, then they are attending approximately 8 days per month during the school year. In an ordinary 4-week month with five days of school per week, a program might be open for 20 days. This means that the moderate attender only attends 40 percent of the days offered in a given month and may be unsupervised, unsafe, and/or potentially engaging in less-than-desirable activities afterschool the other 60 percent of the time. Or, a student may attend consistently and on a daily basis for a few weeks, and then not participate the rest of the year. Either way, the student is not benefitting from ongoing and sustained participation. Certainly, older students, particularly, may have afterschool jobs, afterschool sports, and/or responsibilities at home. However, less than half of grantees serve high school students.

**Recommendation:** Grantees should put more emphasis on student retention and repeated attendance. It may be to students' and programs' advantage to serve slightly fewer students with greater intensity and duration. Further, repeated and consistent attendance addresses the last point above related to students engaged in safe and productive activities afterschool, which is a positive outcome itself. The state team and evaluators should collaborate to identify and implement options to capture more long-

term data to determine the extent to which impact may be seen beyond the single program year measures.

3. Historically, outcomes findings have shown that students who attend in the greater program attendance category (90+ days); students who attend both summer and school year programming; and students who attend grantees that offer summer and school year programs are more likely to show improvement on multiple measures. This year's findings indicate that there is little difference in improvement percentages when results are disaggregated by these categories. Continued education disruptions and challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic may have influenced students' results.

Recommendation: Given the consistency in pre-COVID results indicating that greater attendance and attending summer and school year programming have a positive effect on students, evaluators think it is likely that COVID-related effects have contributed to declines in student performance. Evaluators suggest grantees consider how they might adapt their programs to address potential learning loss, student burnout, and other effects the pandemic may have had on students, especially as programs transition back to in-person programming. It is very likely that students have different needs than prior to the pandemic, and grantees should not assume that returning to their pre-pandemic operations and programming will meet students' needs.

Additionally, grantees should consider following up with students who stopped coming to the program during the pandemic to reengage them and determine why they stopped attending. Finally, grantees should consider which aspects of their pandemic programming were most successful and how they might be continued parts of future programs.

4. While outcomes for this 2020-21 year are not comparable to prior years because of the continued disruption in "normal" operations and use of remote and virtual programming, grantees can still find value in their results.

Recommendation: Grantees should review their local evaluation findings, perhaps with the assistance of their local evaluator, to ensure that they understand what their program results mean. They should then identify areas of strength – and ensure that those areas are continued and possibly expanded and replicated – as well as areas where results are not as positive and identify and implement strategies that are designed to influence positive outcomes for those areas. Grantees should take an active approach to using the wealth of program information and student data available to them as well as the expertise of their local evaluator in order to make informed decisions about program improvement. Grantees may also want to consider comparing their results to those presented in state evaluation reports for both context and determining areas of local interest that they may not currently examine. Grantees should consider stronger or more intensive activities/strategies that may be more likely to contribute to positive student outcomes and pay particular attention to students whose results show a decline and those with the most significant needs in order to

provide targeted, intensive strategies designed to support improvement. A possible approach might include the following steps:

- a. Review the grantee's local evaluation report and/or results/data.
  - b. Identify the areas where the grantee is seeing the most positive results. Explore what the grantee is doing specifically to influence that area or possible influences for the results if the grantee is not deliberately targeting that component. Take steps to ensure that the grantee continues to do what it may be doing that is positively influencing those results.
  - c. Identify the areas where the grantee is seeing the least positive results or where larger portions of students are declining. Explore what the grantee is doing specifically to influence that area or possible influences for the results if the grantee is not deliberately targeting that component. Explore the extent to which the program's approach or instruction in that area is complementing or contradicting school-day instruction.
  - d. Use findings or data to identify areas of continuing or new needs.
  - e. Compare grantee results to performance indicators.
  - f. List all concern areas from c, needs identified in d, and indicators not yet achieved from e, as well as any other items that concern the grantee or program staff. Organize these items by importance and assign a priority ranking to each item.
  - g. Choose the top three or so items to focus on first. Focusing on just a few of the top priority items will prevent overwhelm that may stall progress.
  - h. Develop an action plan for each of the selected priority items that outlines specific strategies that the grantee or program staff will take to positively influence that item. Include a timeline for completion and evidence source to examine progress and achievement. Monitor progress and course correct as necessary.
  - i. Once an item has been resolved, move on to the next priority item.
  - j. Repeat as needed.
5. While not all grantees reported historical presence information, findings indicate that outcomes may be positively influenced by multiple years' participation in the program.

**Recommendation:** Grantees should reinforce multiple years of participation with students when the grade levels served by the grant permit it. State evaluators will continue to collect this information and reinforce grantee submission. For those students who participated multiple years but are not showing improvement, grantees should examine program strategies to ensure that these students' specific needs are being addressed. The state team might also explore altering data collection components to allow evaluators to collect student data more efficiently at the state level and draw on multi-year, state-level data sources to conduct longitudinal analysis.

The evaluation of Pennsylvania's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers programs is intended to provide program results and information that PDE can use to plan for the future and provide technical assistance to grantees. Results are based upon the data available and provided by the program and its grantees.