

2024
2025

Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers

ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT

**Boys & Girls Clubs of Lower Bergen
County**

October 1, 2025



**Laurus Grant Writing
& Evaluation Services**



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Executive Summary

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Lower Bergen County (BGCLBC) Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC) program began its first year of afterschool programming on September 30, 2024 at Thomas Jefferson Middle School and November 1, 2024 at Wallington Junior/Senior High School. Students were provided with a robust afterschool program for the entirety of the school year, concluding on June 5, 2025, with an additional 4 week summer program held from July 7, 2025 to August 1, 2025.

Laurus Grant Writing & Evaluation Services (Laurus) prepared this evaluation report to provide program leadership and stakeholders, including the Advisory Board, with insights that can guide future programming and support the program's continuous improvement efforts. The report offers an overview of program implementation and presents evaluation findings from year 1. It describes the types of data collected, highlights what that data means for program improvement, and identifies trends in program attendance, academic performance, and other possible impacts to program attendees. Ultimately, this report supports the program's ongoing improvement efforts and contributes to a comprehensive longitudinal analysis to be completed at the end of the five-year grant cycle.

Key findings in year 1 are as follows: The program served a total of 289 students, with 134 students who attended the program for 30 days or more, exceeding its target enrollment. The program offered activity hours in an array of activity categories, including but not limited to academic enrichment, academic improvement/remediation, recreation, tutoring/homework help, youth development/learning activities, and parental involvement activities.

Stakeholder feedback was solicited via surveys from students and parents. Survey results showed that stakeholders were highly satisfied; at the end of the school year and the summer, 100% of responding parents said that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the quality and variety of activities provided by the program. Similarly, 96% of responding students said they liked the summer program activities very much or a good amount. An analysis of student report cards showed that students attending the 21CCLC program saw positive trends in academic achievement over the course of the year, either increasing their grades or maintaining their existing grades in math and ELA. Furthermore, school day attendance records for students attending the 21CCLC program at TJMS showed lower average absence rates when compared to school peers.

With these findings in mind, the focus of recommendations for the program in year 2 include establishing the 21CCLC Advisory Board to gain stakeholder feedback, continuing WHS student recruitment efforts, increasing the number of stakeholder surveys collected, and engaging in program planning.

Program Overview

Lead Agency	Boys and Girls Clubs of Lower Bergen County (BGCLBC)
Project Director	Kiersten Jones
Program Sites	Thomas Jefferson Middle School (TJMS) <i>Site Coordinator: Sonia Verde (interim)</i>
	Wallington Junior/Senior High School (WHS) <i>Site Coordinator: Brooke Kennedy</i>
Grant Year	Year 1 of 5
Program Theme	STEAM
Target Enrollment	126 students in grades 6-12

Methodology

This evaluation draws on both quantitative and qualitative data collected throughout grant year 1. Data sources for the report include: data obtained from the New Jersey PARS21 database; in-person program observations conducted on January 16, 2025, January 22, 2025, June 2, 2025, June 3, 2025, and July 15, 2025; review of program materials; interviews with the Project Director, Site Coordinator, and other staff; surveys completed by students, parents, and staff; student report cards; quarterly narrative summary reports; and other supplemental data sources. All programmatic data included in this report was obtained via the State of New Jersey's PARS21 database on August 21, 2025.

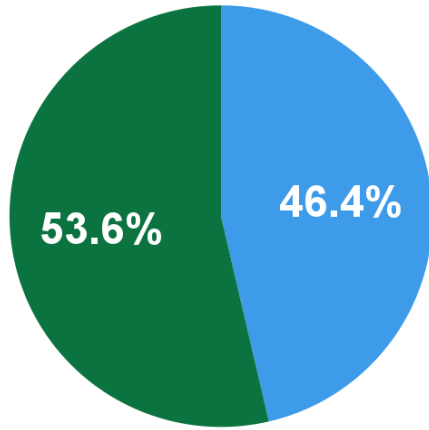
Enrollment and Attendance

Participant Attendance

The program's target enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year was 126 students. This year, the program served a total of 289 students across both sites. In the state of New Jersey, a regular attendee is defined as a student participating in program activities for 30 or more days. 134 students attended the program for 30 or more days, exceeding the program's target. 190 of the enrolled participants - 65.7% - attended 15 days or more, indicating high retention.

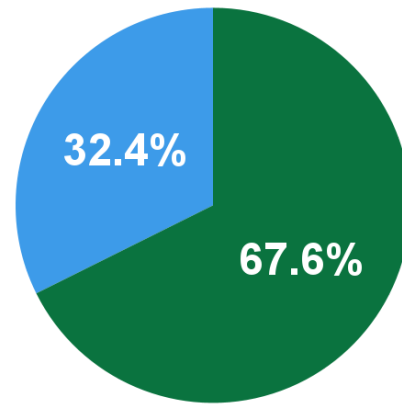
Program Enrollment	TJMS	WHS	Total 21CCLC Program	
Target Enrollment			126	-
Regular attendees (30+ days)	114	20	134	106% of target
Total Participants	234	55	289	229% of target

- Regular Attendees**
- Regular Attendee (30+ days)
 - Attended less than 30 days



Students with 15+ Attendance Days

- Attended 15+ days
- Attended less than 15 days

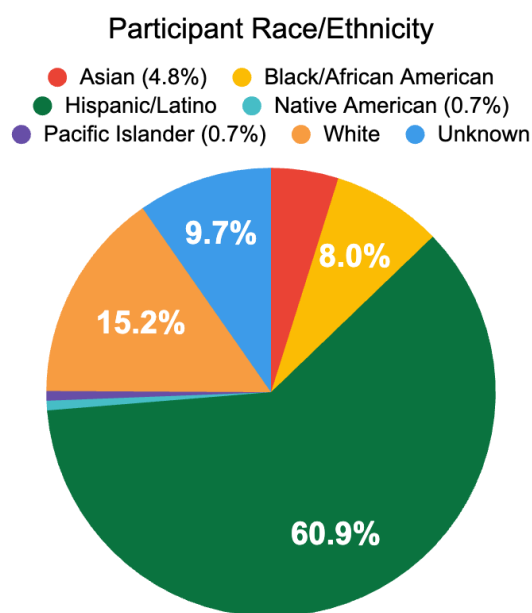
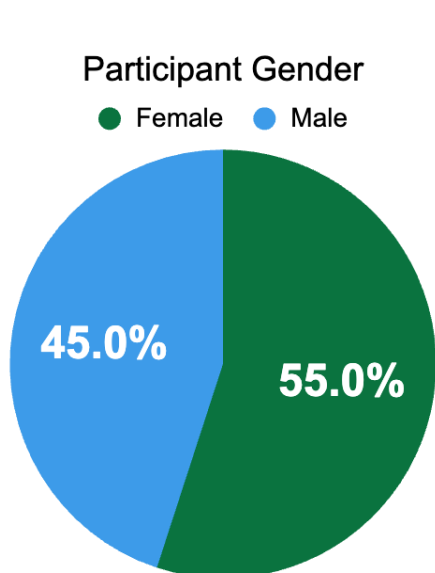
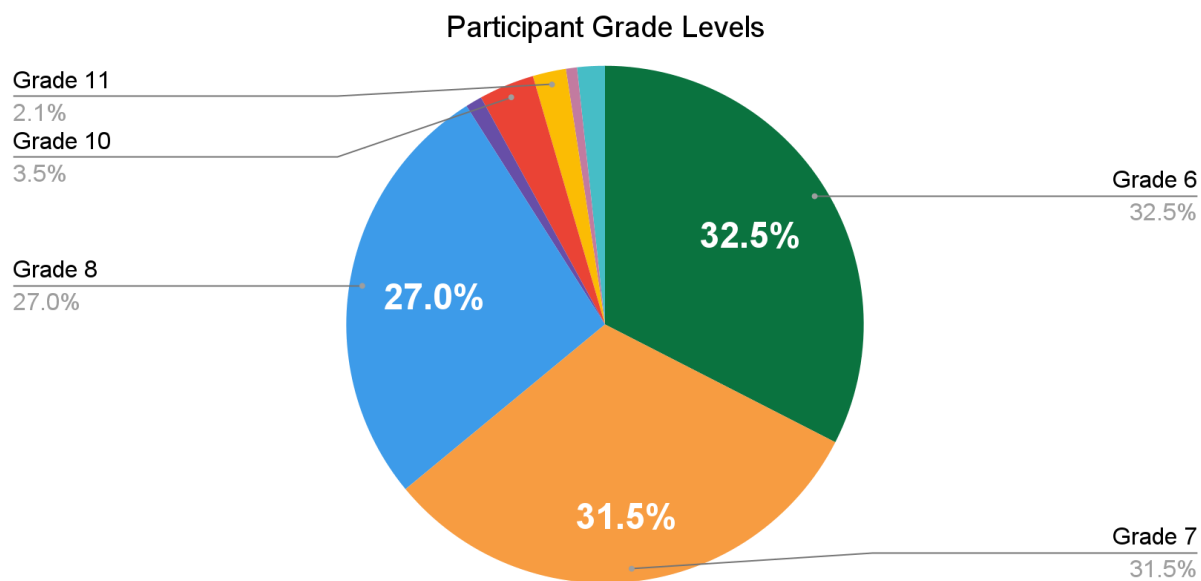


Regular Attendees	TJMS	WHS	Total 21CCLC Program	
Regular attendees (30+ days)	114	20	134	46.4%
Attended less than 30 days	120	35	155	53.6%
Total Participants	234	55	289	

15+ Days of Attendance	TJMS	WHS	Total 21CCLC Program	
Attended 15+ days	166	24	190	65.7%
Attended less than 15 days	68	31	99	34.3%
Total Participants	234	55	289	

Participant Demographics

The BGCLBC 21CCLC program serves students in grades 6 through 12 from both genders and from various race/ethnicities, as detailed below. Most students qualify for free or reduced price lunch, which is New Jersey's measure of family income level.



Grade Levels	TJMS	WHS	Total 21CCLC Program	
Grade 6	93	1	94	32.5%
Grade 7	83	8	91	31.5%
Grade 8	58	20	78	27.0%
Grade 9	-	3	3	1.0%
Grade 10	-	10	10	3.5%
Grade 11	-	6	6	2.1%
Grade 12	-	2	2	0.7%
No Data	-	5	5	1.7%
Total Participants	234	55	289	

Gender	TJMS	WHS	Total 21CCLC Program	
Female	130	29	159	55.0%
Male	104	26	130	45.0%
Total Participants	234	55	289	

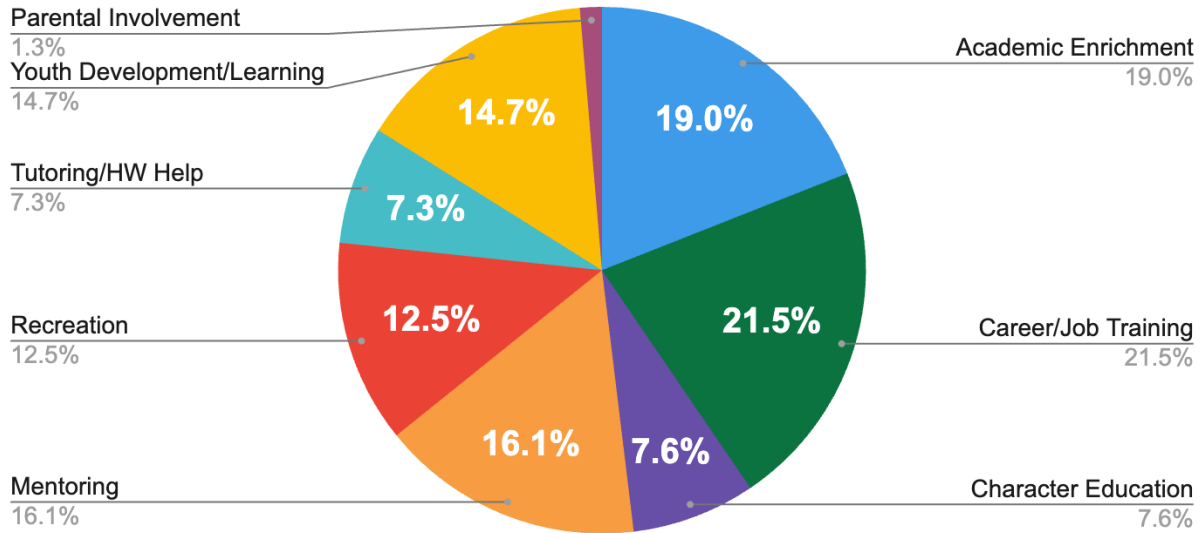
Race/Ethnicity	TJMS	WHS	Total 21CCLC Program	
Asian	10	4	14	4.8%
Black/African American	18	5	23	8.0%
Hispanic/Latino	154	22	176	60.9%
Native American	1	1	2	0.7%
Pacific Islander	1	1	2	0.7%
White	24	20	44	15.2%
Unknown	26	2	28	9.7%
Total Participants	234	55	289	

Programming and Activities

Service Hours

The program offered 1,469.25 (duplicated) hours of student services during the afterschool and summer program. Activities are grouped by 21CCLC categories in the PARS21 database, as outlined below. The 21CCLC program also provided 20 hours of parent and family engagement services throughout the year, which are detailed in the next section of this report.

Service Hours by Category



Service Hours by Category	Total 21CCLC Program		TJMS	WHS
Academic Enrichment	283.00	19.0%	209.00	74.00
Career/Job Training	320.00	21.5%	200.00	120.00
Character Education	113.00	7.6%	111.00	2.00
Mentoring	240.25	16.1%	169.75	70.50
Recreational Activities	185.50	12.5%	178.50	7.00
Tutoring/Homework Help	108.00	7.3%	84.00	24.00
Youth Development/Learning Activities	219.50	14.7%	215.50	4.00
Parental Involvement Activities	20.00	1.3%	16.00	4.00
Total Service Hours	1,489.25		1,183.75	305.50

Student Services

The 21CCLC program provided a wide range of program activities, serving students five days per week for three hours daily after school. Activities were held in multi-week cycles, expanding the number of activities each student could participate in over the course of the year. Field trips were held to expose students to new experiences outside of the classroom; during the school year, students attended trips to Lodi Lanes and Rock Clay Pottery. The program also hosted special events, such as student showcases. Other events are further detailed in the Parent/Families Activities and Engagement section of this report.

The following tables provide a detailed overview of the 21CCLC activities offered by each site this year.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School (TJMS) Student Activities

Student Activity	# of Participants	Service Hours
Academic Enrichment		
24-25 Lego Design	75	46.00
24-25 Robotics	34	26.00
24-25 STEAM	124	24.00
24-25 Tech Sprouts	56	8.00
PY 2024-2025 - Summer 2025 - Book Club with NJ4S 2	21	11.25
PY 2024-2025 - Session 4 - Health	13	33.00
PY 2024-2025 - Session 4 - STEM	15	24.00
PY 2024-2025 - Summer 2025 - Book Club with NJ4S 1	28	11.25
PY 2024-2025 Summer 2025 - STEM 1	28	11.25
PY 2024-2025 Summer 2025 - STEM 2	25	11.25
PY 2025 Summer - TechSprout 1	10	3.00
Career/Job Training		
24-25 Business	71	58.00
24-25 Mosaics	45	32.00
24-25 Photography	72	56.00
PY 2024 - 2025 - Summer 2025 - Field Trip: Cross River Bank - 7/23/2025	11	3.00
PY 2024 - 2025 - Summer 2025 - Field Trip: Cross River Bank - 7/9/2025	17	3.00
PY 2024-2025 - Session 4 - Culinary Arts	24	25.50
PY 2025 Summer - Culinary	30	11.25
PY 2025 Summer - Culinary 2	24	11.25
Character Education		
24-25 SEL	67	7.00
7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens 24-25	19	12.00
PY 2024-2025 - Session 3 - Student Council	7	0.50
PY 2024-2025 - Session 4 - Arts, Crafts & Mosaics	50	46.50
PY 2024-2025 Summer 2025 - Money Matters	26	11.25
PY 2025 Summer - Money Matters 2	27	11.25
PY 2025 Summer - Poetry 1	28	11.25
PY 2025 Summer - Poetry 2	29	11.25
Mentoring		
PY 2024-2025 - Summer 2025 - Team Builders & Ice Breakers Group 1	10	7.50
PY 2024-2025 - Summer 2025 - Team Builders & Ice Breakers	10	7.50

Group 2		
PY 2024-2025 - Summer 2025 - Team Builders & Ice Breakers Group 3	10	7.50
PY 2024-2025 - Summer 2025 - Team Builders & Ice Breakers Group 4	8	7.50
PY 2024-2025 - Summer 2025 - Team Builders & Ice Breakers Group 5	9	7.50
PY 2024-2025 - Summer 2025 - Team Builders & Ice Breakers Group 6	10	7.50
PY 2024-2025 - Summer 2025 - Team Builders & Ice Breakers Group 7	10	7.50
PY 2024-2025 - Chat & Chew (Main Attendance)	159	62.00
PY 2024-2025 - Session 3 - Positive Action Mentorship	13	3.00
PY 2024-2025 - Summer 2025 - Chat and Chew	67	7.50
PY 2024-2025 - Summer 2025 - SMART Girls	21	11.25
PY 2024-2025 Summer 2025 - SMART Girls 2	32	11.25
PY 2025 Summer - Mindfulness Club	16	11.25
PY 2025 Summer - Mindfulness Club 2	20	11.00
Recreational Activities		
2024-2025 Branch Brook Park Field Trip	42	8.00
2024-2025 Science Liberty Center Field Trip	44	3.00
2024-2025 Urban Air Field Trip	51	3.00
24 Lodi Lanes	33	3.00
24-25 Fitness	143	57.00
24-25 Halloween Bingo	28	3.00
PY 2024-2025 - Session 4 - Field Trip: Rock Clay Pottery Studio Glen Rock, NJ	8	3.50
PY 2024-2025 - Session 4 - Fitness	26	48.00
PY 2025 Summer - Fitness	30	11.25
PY 2025 Summer - Fitness 2	27	11.25
PY 2025 Summer - Video Game Club	24	11.25
PY 2025 Summer - Video Game Club 2	23	11.25
PY 2025 Summer Trip - Turtle Back Zoo 7/11/25	45	5.00
Tutoring/Homework Help		
24-25 Homework Help	71	2.00
24-25 Tutoring	154	48.00
PY 2024-2025 - Session 4 - Power Hour	52	34.00
Youth Development/Learning Activities		
24-25 Art	30	12.00

24-25 Candy Making	75	36.00
24-25 Club Activity	147	55.00
24-25 Pottery	40	32.00
PY 2024-2025 - Session 4 - Candy Making	44	35.50
PY 2024-2025 Summer 2025 - Project D.I.Y.	30	11.25
PY 2025 Summer - DIY 2	26	11.25
PY 2025 Summer - Dance	17	11.25
PY 2025 Summer - Dance 2	12	11.25
	Total Hours	1,122.75

Wallington Junior/Senior High School (WHS) Student Activities

Student Activity	# of Participants	Service Hours
Academic Enrichment		
STEAM 24-25	29	74.00
Career/Job Training		
2024-2025 - Summer 2025 Cyber Security Summer at Felician University - Field Trip: Bristol Myers Squibb	12	3.50
2024-2025 - Summer 2025 Lab Sciences Summer at Felician University	18	32.50
2024-2025 - Summer 2025 Lab Sciences Summer at Felician University - Field Trip: UPS	14	3.50
Culinary 24-25	28	48.00
PY 2024-2025 - Summer 2025 - Cyber Security Summer at Felician University	12	32.50
Character Education		
SEL 24-25	17	2.00
Mentoring		
2024-2025 - Summer 2025 Chat and Chew Main Attendance	23	8.00
PY 2024-2025 - Chat & Chew (Main Attendance)	34	62.50
Recreational Activities		
24 Lodi Lanes	10	4.00
Pool	15	3.00
Tutoring/Homework Help		
Tutoring 24-25	26	24.00
Youth Development/Learning Activities		
Club Activity 24-25	23	4.00
	Total Hours	301.50

Summer Program

The BGCLBC 21CCLC summer program was held at TJMS from July 7, 2025 to August 1, 2025, operating from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Monday through Thursday, students participated in a rotation of Art, STEM, Physical Education, and SEL activities. At TJMS, field trips were held weekly on Fridays. These included Turtle Back Zoo, Urban Air, Liberty Science Center, and Branch Brook Park. Students who signed up for the Money Matters activity during the summer attended two additional trips to Cross River Bank. During the summer program, students received breakfast and lunch each day, funded by the school district.

Summer programming was offered to WHS students through a collaboration with Felician University. The summer program was implemented on two track options: Cyber Security and Lab Sciences. Students attended 2 field trips, which included UPS and Bristol Myer Squibb to see what they learned in action. Seniors attending the summer program were eligible to earn up to 3 college credits through their consistent attendance at the program.

Parent/Family Activities and Engagement

Parents and families were encouraged to participate in the program through 21CCLC events and activities. The program held a total of 20 hours of parent and family programming, including Parent Orientation, In-Person Registration, Back to School Night, Feed the Needy food distribution, College 101 Parent Workshop, and 2 summer activities, discussed below. 21CCLC program staff maintained regular communication with parents and families via phone calls, text messages, emails, social media, newsletters, and conversations during student dismissal.

As part of the parent handbook, the program provided parents with an annual calendar at the beginning of the year to share important program information, such as days the program was closed, had extended hours, or was hosting a parent event. This handbook was also available to parents and families via the BGCLBC website.

During the summer program, two parent activities were offered at TJMS. At the end of the summer, the program held a Summer Showcase which gave students the opportunity to share projects and new skills with peers and parents/families. The BGCLBC program also attended Lodi's National Night Out, where staff connected with new and existing families in the community.

Parent engagement at the WHS site was notably challenging in year 1. This is fairly typical in serving middle school and high school students; because students are at an age where they are more independent and can decide whether or not to participate in the afterschool program themselves, parents may engage less. In addition, the 21CCLC program was new to the school and the process of building relationships with parents and families takes time. Staff recognized this and worked continuously over the year to ensure parents and families became familiar with 21CCLC staff and the program's goals.

The table below details parent engagement hours entered into PARS21 for grant year 1.

Parental Involvement Activity	# of Parents	Service Hours
TJMS		
24-25 Back to School Night	9	3.00
24-25 Feed the Needy	9	3.00
24-25 In Person Registration	5	4.00
24-25 Program Orientation	7	2.00
PY 2024-2025 - Summer 2025 - Summer Program Showcase	21	2.00
PY 2024-2025 - Session 4 - Parent Workshop: College 101	5	1.00
PY 2024-2025 Summer 2025 - National Night Out	9	1.00
WHS		
Feed the Needy 24-25	1	3.00
Lunchroom Presentations	6	1.00
Totals	72	20.00

21CCLC Advisory Board & Student Council

Due to staff turnover in February, the program was not able to establish its Advisory Board in year 1. However, the Project Director did distribute a newsletter with identified Advisory Board members in January in order to share program news and updates. The program was able to establish its Student Council during the second half of the year. Students participated in an election to become Student Council members. Following this, the program hosted an induction ceremony to recognize those students that were elected. The Student Council then met weekly, providing insight to staff about which parts of the program students were enjoying and what areas needed improvement.

Staff and Professional Development

BGCLBC 21CCLC program staff consisted of the Project Director, a site coordinator at TJMS and lead Youth Development Professional at WHS, a data entry staff member, certified teachers, and Youth Development Professionals.

Professional development opportunities were provided to program staff throughout the year starting with Staff Orientation, held prior to the start of the program. Staff were trained in all required topics as part of the NJ Child Care Licensing process. Staff meetings were held monthly during the first half of the year and weekly after March 2025. The Project Director attended all required state meetings and multiple trainings hosted by AIR, the 21CCLC statewide evaluator, as well as NJSACC's Annual Conference.

Collaborative Work

Partnerships and Collaborations with Local Organizations

The 21CCLC program collaborated closely with local organizations to ensure that program students received high-quality programming. In addition to Lodi and Wallington Public School Districts, the program worked with the following organizations this year:

- NJ4S
- Felician University
- Tech Sprouts
- Little Dance Project
- Music Makers

Services provided by partners and collaborators this year included:

- Volunteer staff
- Student programming, including social-emotional learning, dance, music, and STEM
- Field trips
- Parent workshops

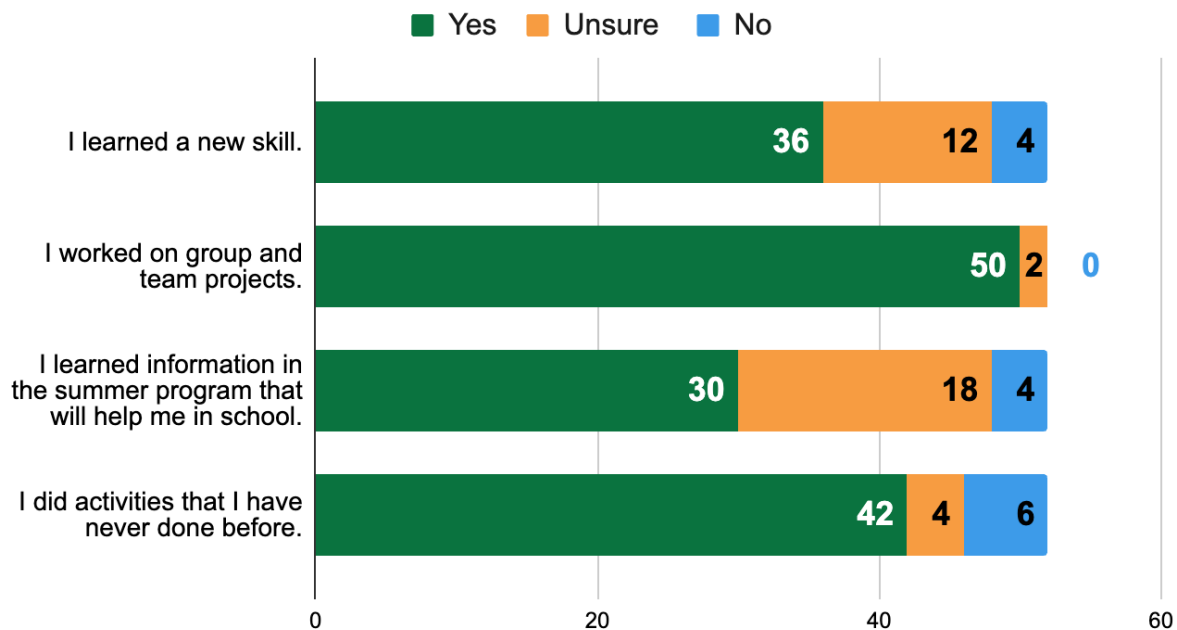
The program also received funding from the Boys and Girls Clubs of America to host the 2 additional field trips during the summer program at TJMS for students who participated in Money Matters as previously mentioned. Boys and Girls Clubs of America also provided funding for snack each day, as required by the 21CCLC grant.

Outcomes and Evaluation

Student Surveys

In addition to the required Department of Education pre- and post-student surveys, staff also distributed a survey developed by the local evaluator at the end of the summer program to gain feedback about student experiences. The survey was completed online via Google Forms (see *Appendix 1* for a link to access this survey). 52 students who attended the summer program at TJMS completed the survey. Student responses were positive, with 96% of students sharing that they liked program activities very much or a good amount. When asked what their favorite activities were, students indicated they enjoyed Culinary, STEM, Poetry, and Fitness/Gym the most.

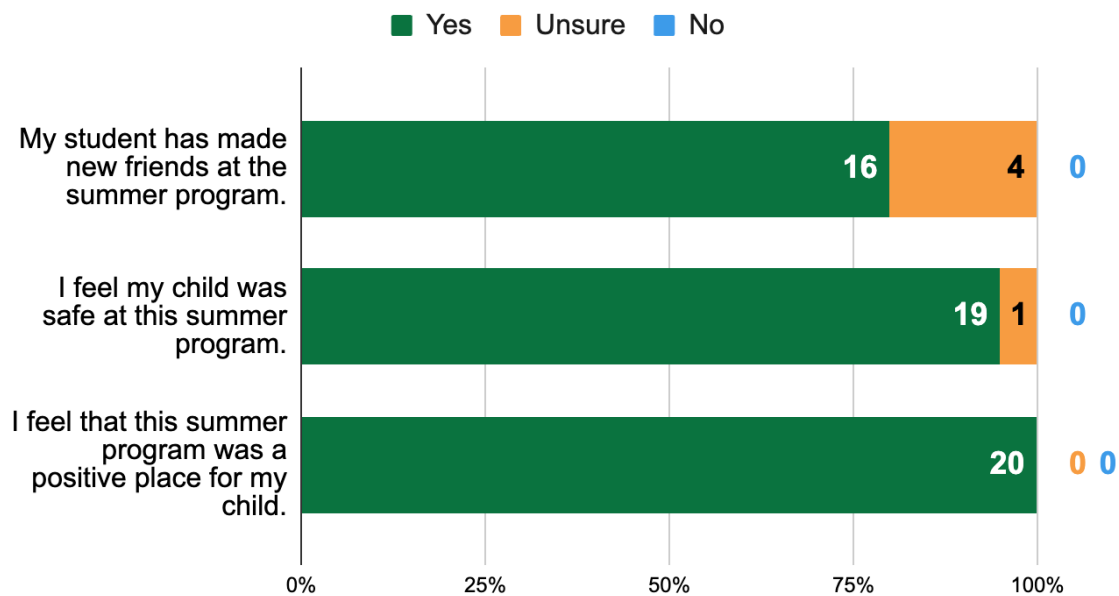
Some of the other highlights from the student survey results are illustrated in the chart below.



Important to note was that a significant amount of students (56%) indicated that they did not attend the afterschool program during the school year. Staff should consider this in the recruitment process and program planning and implementation, as the summer program may serve as a recruitment tool for the afterschool program.

Parent Surveys

The program distributed parent surveys at the end of the school year and at the end of the summer to gather feedback from families about the program. Both surveys were distributed electronically through Google Forms (see *Appendix 2* for a link to access these surveys). In total, 19 parents of students attending the program at the TJMS site completed the survey at the end of the school year and 20 parents completed the survey at the end of the summer (19 parents from students at TJMS and 1 parent from a student at WHS). Overall, parent responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the program. For example, when asked to rate their satisfaction with both the afterschool and summer program, 100% of responding parents indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the program. Similarly, when asked to rate communication with program staff, over 90% said communication was good or excellent during the school year and summer. In the end of year survey, parents indicated that they enrolled their student in the afterschool program for enrichment activities. However, the vast majority of parent respondents also said that they enrolled their student in the program so that they could work or attend school themselves. This data highlights the importance of having programming available to families in the community. Other feedback from parents about student impact are detailed below.



NJ Department of Education Surveys

21CCLC programs are required to complete pre- and post-surveys for students through the new NJ DataHub system that replaced ETRS. The program collected 92 pre-surveys and 29 post-surveys in year 1 across both program sites. Although 12 pre-surveys were collected at the WHS site, no post-surveys were collected; therefore, this data could not be analyzed. A full reporting of these results is available via the NJ DataHub system for program staff to review.

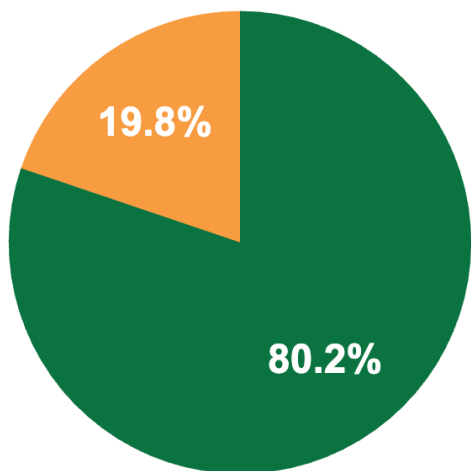
Report Cards

Report cards were collected for a total of 108 students who attended the program for 30 days or more at the TJMS site. Grades for Math and ELA were analyzed. Some students did not have grades for one or both marking periods in one or both of these subjects; these students were not analyzed and are identified as “N/A” in the table below. Overall, students who attended the program showed a positive trend in academic progress from the beginning of the school year to the end of the school year; 80.2% of students increased or maintained their existing score in Math and 81.9% of students increased or maintained their score in ELA. The following table and charts summarize this data.

Math			ELA		
Increase	38	37.6%	Increase	35	33.3%
Decrease	20	19.8%	Decrease	19	18.1%
Maintained	43	42.6%	Maintained	51	48.6%
N/A	7		N/A	3	

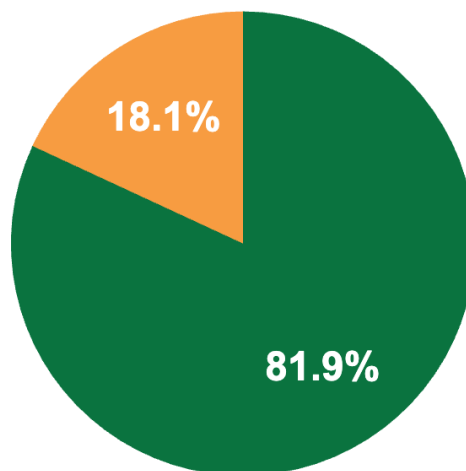
21CCLC Student Progress - Math

● Increase/Maintain ● Decrease



21CCLC Student Progress - ELA

● Increase/Maintain ● Decrease



Student School Day Attendance

In addition to student report card grades, absentee rates were also reviewed. Chronic absenteeism is an issue across the Lodi Public School Districts. Absenteeism not only impacts a child's ability to learn during the school day, but also to attend the program regularly. According to the NJ School Performance Reports, during the 2023-2024 school year, the chronic absentee rate at TJMS was 9.6%, compared with a statewide rate of 14.9% for all students. For 21CCLC students, these numbers were lower in 2024-2025; TJMS program participants had an average absenteeism rate of 4.4%. Schoolwide data for the 2024-2025 school year is not yet available, and exact comparisons are therefore not possible. However, these rates provide a useful general benchmark for comparison regardless.

Limitations

- Due to Project Director staff turnover in Spring 2025, although the program distributed teacher surveys, no surveys were received back. Receiving feedback from the school day teacher perspective can help to triangulate data results for accuracy across stakeholders.
- The program received 2 surveys back from staff. Because of this low response rate, results were not published in the ETRS system and could not be incorporated into this evaluation.
- Report cards and school day attendance records were collected for students attending the program at TJMS, but not WHS. Therefore, this data is not completely representative of the entire 21CCLC program.

Conclusions

Successes

- **Establishing the Program** Program staff have been successful in establishing the 21CCLC afterschool program at TJMS and WHS. Although technically in year 1, the program did have a previous 5 year grant round at the TJMS site which enabled staff to more easily engage students and families. Student enrollment in the new grant round started strong overall; of the 289 attendees this year, 190 students attended 15 days or more and 134 students attended 30 days or more, exceeding the program's 126 enrollment target. Although enrollment at the WHS site was low, program staff have identified numerous recruitment and retention strategies to be implemented as soon as school starts in the Fall in order to increase these numbers.
- **Project-based, Hands-on Learning** The program utilizes project-based, hands-on learning in program implementation. Program staff prepare well-designed, intentional activity plans which consist of hands-on activities with high quality materials. At both site visits, the evaluator observed activities that illustrated this core value. Students were engaged and staff guided youth to problem solve when they experienced challenges without taking control.
- **Student Voice & Choice** Program staff, particularly following staff turnover in March, made student voice and choice a cornerstone of the program. Not only did the Student Council meet weekly following induction, but the Project Director also conducted frequent informal check in's with Student Council members in order to gain feedback about the schedule, its structure, and what aspects of the program needed adjustment. This feedback assisted staff in planning the summer program and will continue to be an asset moving forward.

Recommendations

- **Advisory Board** The 21CCLC Advisory Board should be established, meet at least quarterly each year, and include key stakeholders including the Project Director, Site Coordinators, school staff, program staff, parents, students, the local evaluator, and representatives from partnering organizations. These meetings provide valuable feedback from stakeholders to inform continuous improvement efforts.
- **WHS Student Recruitment** The BGC LBC 21CCLC program utilized various recruitment strategies in year 1. However, the program's late start at the WHS site coupled with not having a previously established afterschool program at the site has made recruitment difficult, as evidenced by student enrollment numbers. The program should continue to recruit new students and implement identified strategies to encourage regular attendance of existing students in year 2.

- **Teacher Feedback** As previously mentioned, the program was not able to collect teacher surveys in year 1. In year 2, the program should focus on collecting teacher surveys to gain feedback about student's academic and behavioral progress.
- **Program Planning** Program staff should review this evaluation report at the first Advisory Board meeting and schedule a planning meeting to review the goals, objectives, and indicators of the grant, assess progress, and formulate an action plan to meet all goals, objectives, indicators, and evaluator recommendations in year 2.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Student Survey

The Google Form used for the summer student survey can be found here:

<https://forms.gle/yBnbijVB7JpGy5bf8>

Appendix 2: Parent Survey

The Google Form used for the end of year parent survey can be found here:

<https://forms.gle/1HVADd59xuWXRpeEA>

The Google Form used for the summer parent survey can be found here:

<https://forms.gle/AuZfQJ9qwfALyWiW9>