PROGRESS BRIEF
from PROGRAM DIRECTORS
Key Findings selected from the 2020 Mid-Year Report (MYR)

Guidance for Reading this Brief

What is the *Progress Brief from Program Directors?*

This Brief presents a selection of results from the Mid-Year Report (MYR). The MYR is an online, annual reporting requirement of all 21CCLC sub-grantees, completed by Program Directors at or near the mid-way point of each program year. The MYR is designed to gather information for two main purposes:

(1) to **monitor implementation progress and assess needs of programs** at the statewide collective, or whole-group, level, with the objective of sharing meaningful findings to use for benchmarking and for distributing guidance and technical support;

(2) to gather data related to quality indicators from each individual program as part of the State's accountability management system (along with the risk assessment, Site Monitoring Visit, and other review mechanisms that help NYS maintain compliance with federal and state regulations). *See page 16 for more information about the Mid-Year Report.*

This Brief contains information related to purpose (1). It is intended to **share key findings and recommendations** with all NYS 21CCLC stakeholders, based on the combined data provided from every Program Director across the State. The purposes of reporting these findings are to promote reflection by providing greater awareness of statewide trends, and to help drive collective improvement efforts.

How to use this Brief

(1) Self-Reflection Tool. This Brief provides an opportunity for programs to reflect upon their progress and practices in relation to the statewide trends, while also reviewing their level of implementation in accordance with the quality standards and expectations. It celebrates winning ways, while also satisfying curiosity about what others may be doing.

(2) Help Inform Program Management & Improvement. Taking it a step further, programs can identify areas for improvement within their organizations. They may consider incorporating new insights or exploring efficiencies and opportunities to update or refine program management policies, structures, and practices.
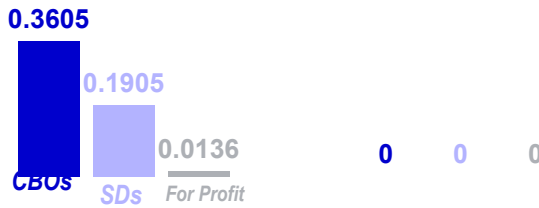
Guidance related to implementing practices aligned with the quality standards and expectations have been sprinkled throughout; these will appear as *Tips* alongside the findings, and in a few sections they have been gathered into a highlighted box called Program Tips. These tips invite readers to consider *what is important about these findings?* and *how can this information be useful for me and my program?*
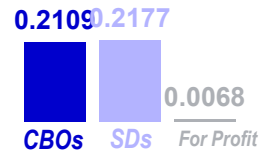
MYR Respondents

- **147** respondents representing **99%** of the sub-grantee programs statewide completed their Mid-Year Reports.[1]

More Community Based Organizations (CBOs) than school districts (SDs) operate programs in New York City. The distribution is more even in the Rest of State.

New York City
56%

0.3605
CBOs

0.1905
SDs

0.0136
For Profit

0   0   0

Rest of State
44%

0.2109   0.2177
CBOs   SDs

0.0068
For Profit

- **Most programs (58%) operate multiple sites**, compared to 42% of programs that operate a single site.

58%

Five-10 **12%**

Four **13%**

13% *Two*

20% *Three*

One Site **42%**

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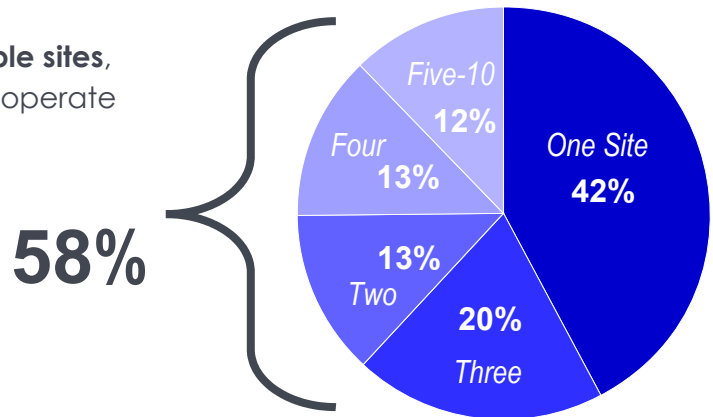
[1] These responses represented 137 programs; it is not clear why some programs sent more than one response.

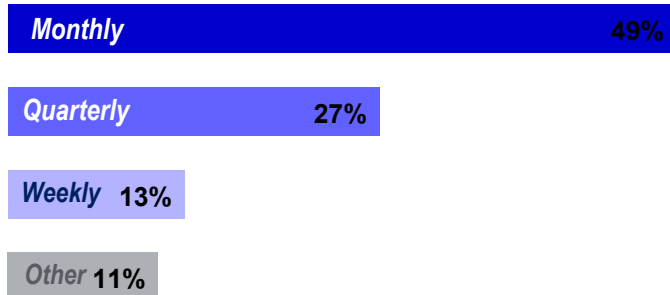## Staff Turnover & Professional Development

Turnover

- **Over two thirds of Program Directors (68%) reported turnover in key staff positions over the past year[*]. Over half** of all programs reporting turnover had to replace pivotal, frontline leaders – Program Directors, Managers, and Site Coordinators.

  Note: For this question there were 93 Respondents and 139 Responses, indicating that some programs had turnover in more than one position.
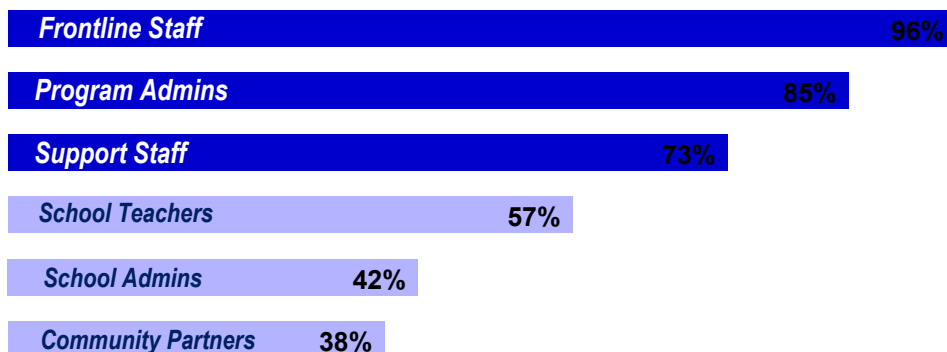
Site Coordinator	57%
Program Dir./Mgr.	51%
School Admin.	16%
Fiscal Mgr.	15%
CBO Exec.	10%
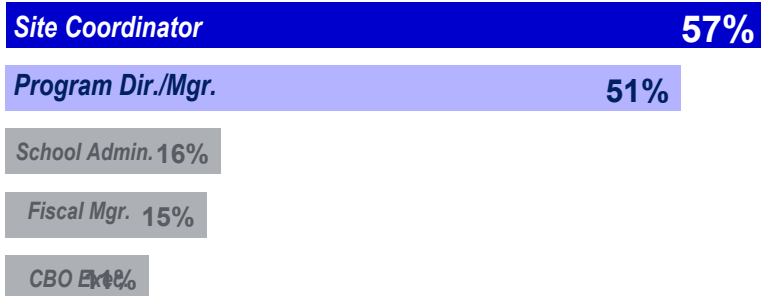
Professional Development (PD) frequency & availability

- **About half of programs provided monthly PD training to their staff.**

Monthly	49%
Quarterly	27%
Weekly	13%
Other	11%

- **Professional Development was made available to a variety of stakeholders, prioritizing frontline staff.**
  Some programs worked to design PD that would include partners from the schools and community – a strategy shown to help strengthen relationships and build support capacity.

Frontline Staff	96%
Program Admins	85%
Support Staff	73%
School Teachers	57%
School Admins	42%
Community Partners	38%

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Professional Development (PD) topics offered

■ **Most Program Directors reported offering PD focused on the topics of Youth Development and Social Emotional Learning.** These broad subject areas are central to the domain of afterschool programming and likely include a constellation of sub-topics within them.
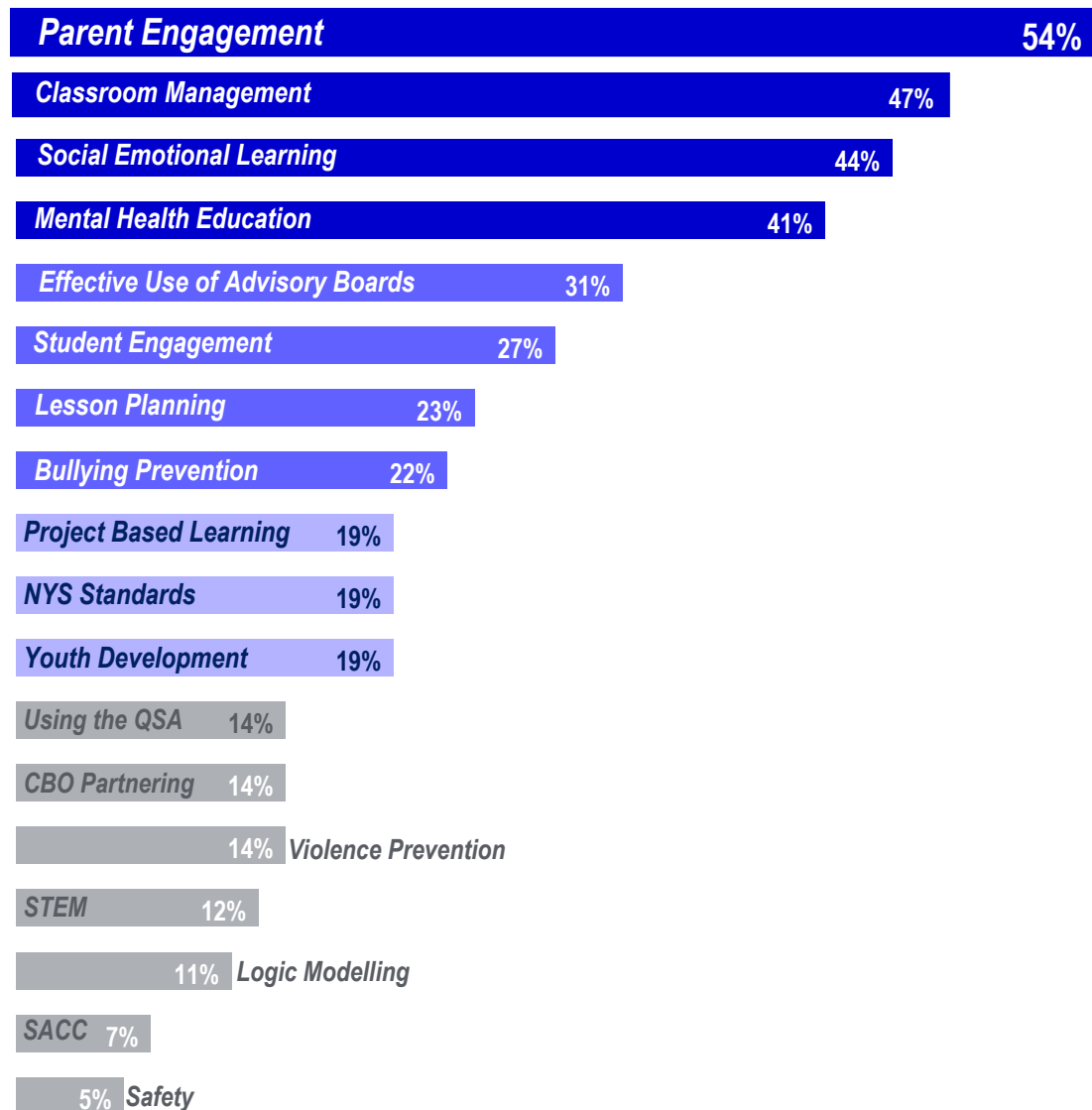
■ **An average of three-quarters reported providing training for staff in the critical front-line skills of Classroom Management, Safety, and/or Student Engagement.**

■ Training focused on specialized skill areas – STEM, Mental Health, and/or Bullying Prevention, for example – were each reported by a little over half of all Program Directors; and expectedly fewer reported offering training on operational/technical topics (e.g., effectively using Advisory Boards) which may be targeted for a more limited audience of administrative staff/site leaders.

Topic	Percentage
Youth Development	90%
Social Emotional Learning	86%
Classroom Management	81%
Safety (CPR/First Aid/AED)	77%
Student Engagement	71%
Lesson Planning	69%
Parent Engagement	67%
STEM	60%
Mental Health Education	58%
Using the QSA	57%
Project Based Learning	52%
Bullying Prevention	52%
SACC Mandated Training	44%
NYS Learning Standards	44%
Violence Prevention	43%
	39%
Logic Modelling	23%

Partnering w/ CBOs

Advisory Boards

Professional Development (PD) needs identified

- **Program Directors identified Parent Engagement as the top training need.** While **Classroom Management, SEL,** and **Mental Health Education** were already provided by many, they were still identified as needing more attention. Training in these persistently challenging and/or high-priority areas needs to be consistently reinforced or deepened, at regional and statewide learning events, perhaps as a continuing series.

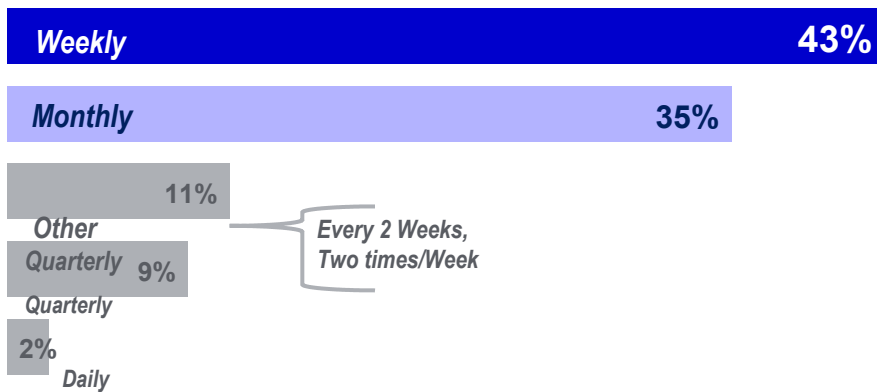| Category	Percent
Parent Engagement	54%
Classroom Management	47%
Social Emotional Learning	44%
Mental Health Education	41%
Effective Use of Advisory Boards	31%
Student Engagement	27%
Lesson Planning	23%
Bullying Prevention	22%
Project Based Learning	19%
NYS Standards	19%
Youth Development	19%
Using the QSA	14%
CBO Partnering	14%
Violence Prevention	14%
STEM	12%
Logic Modelling	11%
SACC	7%
Safety	5%

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Program Tips

#1: Tap 21CCLC Network resources for turn-key training in critical topics to build, reinforce, and supplement staff skills

➤ While the primary services 21CCLC programs provide are designed for students and their families, programs are also responsible for selecting, preparing, training and actively supporting staff members. Because it is an additional function – critical but not within the primary scope/purpose of the program's mission – it may be useful to **outsource or team up with a provider** who designs adult learning materials.

➤ Training that targets the critical point-of-service skills needed by frontline staff makes sense to prioritize in terms of time and budget. But what about other training needs that may need attention? Training on things such as management/operational strategies, data collection, compliance, etc. can be designed for select groups of stakeholders and developed from previously prepared content. Access the Resources Centers' archives for subject-specific presentations delivered at conferences and virtual learning symposia.

➤ The Resource Centers offer orientation trainings for new program leaders via conferences and webinars. Contact your regional RC and/or check the NYS 21CCLC Website for available recordings & resources from these trainings. The RCs also offer Technical Assistance support on an as needed basis. If you need personalized, specific guidance on staff recruitment and training, reach out to schedule a technical assistance call.

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Partnership with Local Evaluator

Communication with Evaluator

- **Most Program Directors (78%) communicated with their Evaluator on a Weekly or Monthly basis.**

Weekly	**43%**
Monthly	**35%**

11%
Other

9%
Quarterly

Every 2 Weeks, Two times/Week

Quarterly

2%
Daily

Using Evaluation to Support Program Improvement

- **Program Directors reported that they use evaluation findings and recommendations, as required, to drive improvement.** They captured the evidence of this data-based improvement planning in the following forms:

 **78%** in *Notes/Minutes* from Advisory Board or other meetings

  56% in *Correspondence Records* between program staff, school staff, local evaluator and/or community partners discussing improvement

  54% in *Action Plans*

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Budgeting for Evaluation

- **Programs Directors' reported annual investment in evaluation services averaged $60,581.**

- **The highest reported investment was $1,200,000 (*see Note, below*), the lowest was $5,000.**

- The most commonly occurring single amount was **$93,000** (11 occurrences), while the median (the middle value) was $33,181.

- One third of all programs invested more than $50,000 on evaluation, compared to two-thirds (67%) who invested $50,000 or less.

Annual Amount Invested in Evaluation
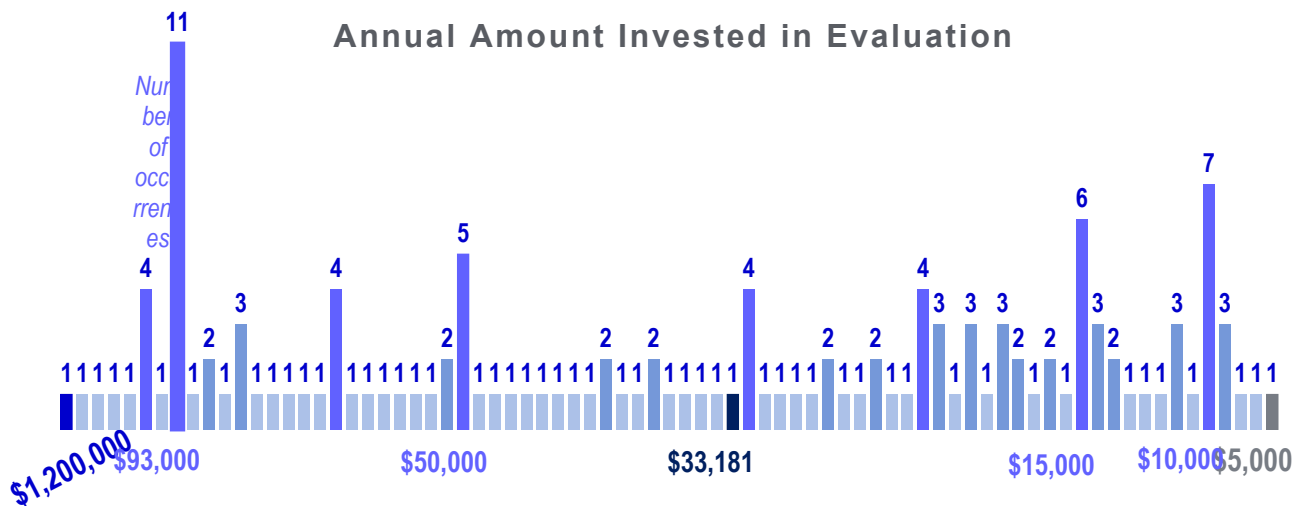
NOTE:

The evaluation budgets reported above have not been compared against each program's total operating budget. This comparison will be performed for the 2021 Report, both to help verify the accuracy the reported budgets (all should be within the 8% cap of their total program budget), and to provide a comparison among programs based on the proportion of total budget allocated to evaluation rather than the total dollar amount. This proportional comparison would effectively put all programs of different sizes on a level playing field in order to compare how much they committed to the evaluation.

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Program Tips

#1: Use evaluator findings and recommendations to drive program improvement.

➤   Maintaining communication with your evaluator is important to facilitate collaboration on data collection, to schedule visits, meet deliverables and engage in discussions.

➤   Programs are required to communicate with stakeholders about evaluation findings and to provide evidence of these publications/communications for compliance *with SMV Report Indicator H-7*. This is part of the expectation of programs to inform stakeholders about program progress, accomplishments, and improvement efforts using up-to-date data. Beyond compliance, the use of data to communicate program performance can be leveraged strategically in efforts

  ✓ **to help recruit and retain participants**

  ✓ **to solidify school and community partnerships,**

  ✓ **to help support fund-raising efforts, and**

  ✓ **to broadly promote the quality and sustainability of the program brand**.

➤   Local evaluators should provide the most recently gathered, relevant information in **consumer-friendly formats** for Program Directors to distribute or embed in program publications/brochures, meeting agendas, etc.

#2: Value your Evaluator.

➤   It is critical to understand how integral evaluation is to your program, not simply as a required component, but how it contributes to its success. Your evaluator should keep track of how closely you are implementing what you proposed in your grant, the progress you are making toward your goals, and suggest strategies for continuous improvement. All of these roles help your program to stay on track, grow stronger and more effective, all while helping to meet reporting requirements. Your evaluator should be helping you do the good, hard work you do better.

➤   Evaluators receiving lower amounts have the same responsibilities for data collection, analysis, and reporting as those receiving higher amounts. Even if your budget decreases due to enrollments below your target, your evaluator is still required to do the same amount of work to document your program's implementation and outcomes.

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Engaging Program Stakeholders

- **Program Directors reported large and small group meetings and check-ins for convening staff, partners, and other stakeholders to discuss programming.**

Large Group Collaborative Meetings for data review and strategic planning

- Annual Trainings/Retreats (during summer, or holidays/vacations)
- Bi-annual Program Review & Planning
- Quarterly Advisory Meetings
- Monthly Stakeholder Meetings

Small Group Collaborative Meetings for short-cycle feedback and activity planning

- Weekly Activity Planning Sessions
- Daily Pre-Program Staff & Partner "Micro" Meetings
- Team Leaders'/Coordinators' Meetings, weekly/bi-monthly, as needed
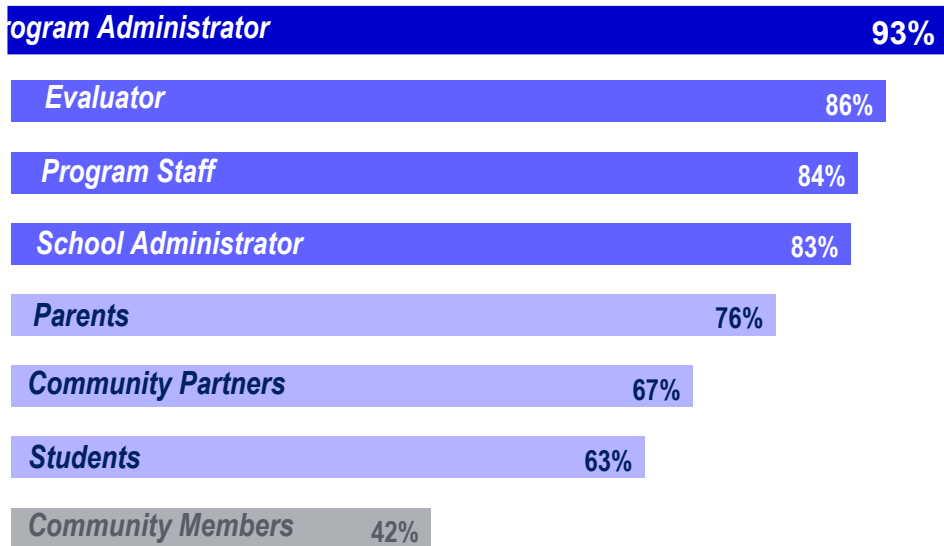
Communication Check-In Systems for schedule, resource, and curriculum updates
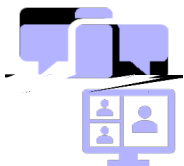
- In-person, phone, or email conversations between program leaders, school leaders, and/or community partners
- Program Director attending community meetings to share highlights, gather input, solicit services & supports
- Parent check-ins at pick-up/drop-off

Advisory Board

- **Advisory Board participation generally represented most of the key stakeholders, including Program Administrators, Evaluators, Program Staff, School Administrators and/or Partners.**

- Student participation at meetings was reported by close to two-thirds of Program Directors.

Stakeholder	Percentage
Program Administrator	93%
Evaluator	86%
Program Staff	84%
School Administrator	83%
Parents	76%
Community Partners	67%
Students	63%
Community Members	42%

Family Involvement in Program Design
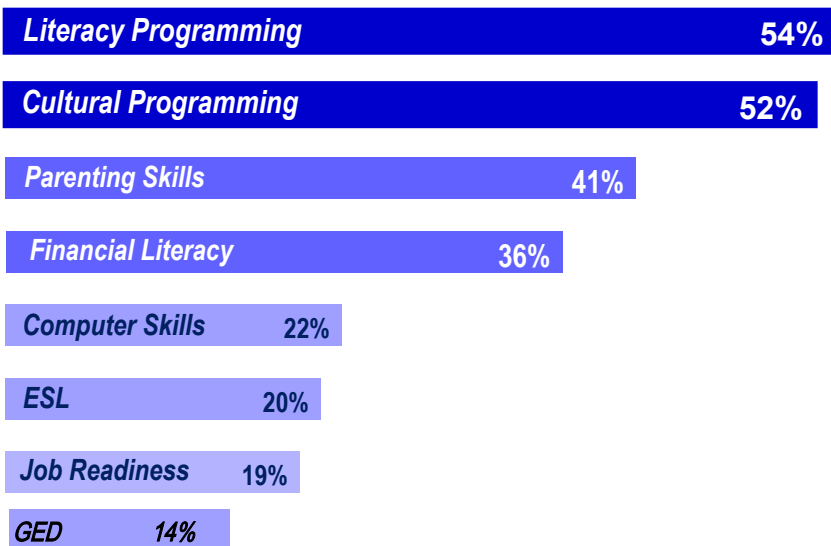
- **The large majority of Program Directors reported using surveys and meetings to keep families** meaningfully involved with the program design and policies.[2]

Tip: While meetings invite exploration through dialogue and opportunities to gather feedback through live interaction, surveys invite a potentially larger number of stakeholder voices to weigh in on pre-selected and open-response questions. Both methods can be used together to collect insightful information about families' satisfaction and needs.

Family/Parent Surveys	85%
Advisory Board	74%
Family/Parent Meetings	73%
Needs Assessment	39%
Focus Groups	18%
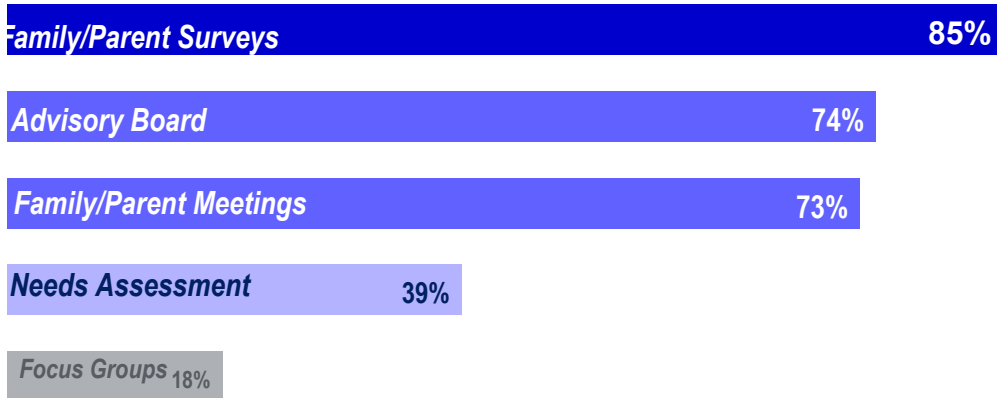
Programming for Families

- **Over half of Program Directors reported offering Literacy and/or Cultural Programming** to families of participants.

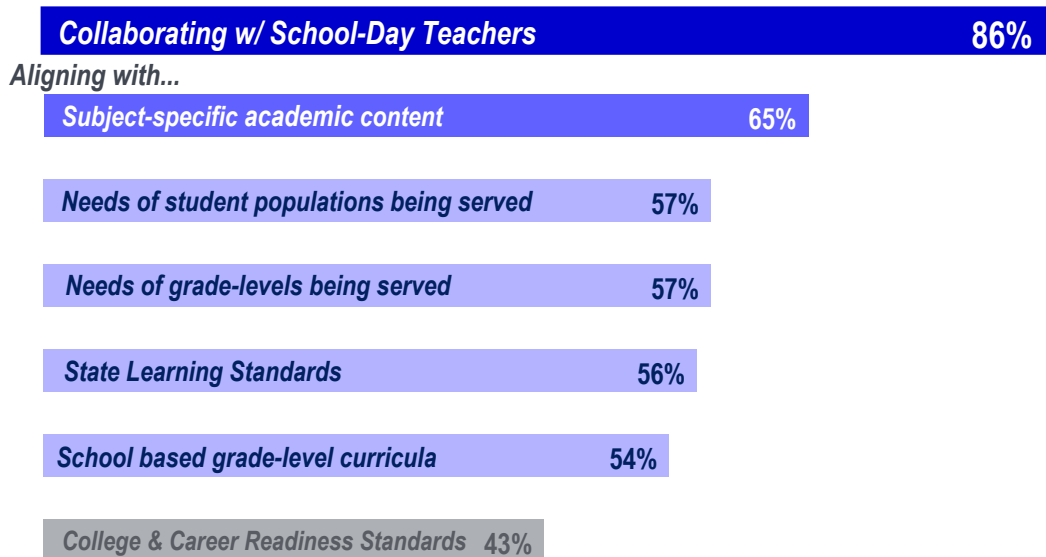|	
Literacy Programming	54%
Cultural Programming	52%
Parenting Skills	41%
Financial Literacy	36%
Computer Skills	22%
ESL	20%
Job Readiness	19%
GED	14%

[2] While the proportion who reported that they conducted Needs Assessments is low, it should be noted that assessing family needs is frequently among the major purposes of meetings and, especially, surveys.

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Collaboration with School Day Leaders & Staff

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Strategies for Linking Programming with the School Day

- **Active collaboration with teachers** was **the most reliable strategy used by Program Directors to link their programming with the school day.** However, over half reported using one or more of five other alignment strategies. College & Career Readiness was the least frequently used alignment strategy reported (43%).
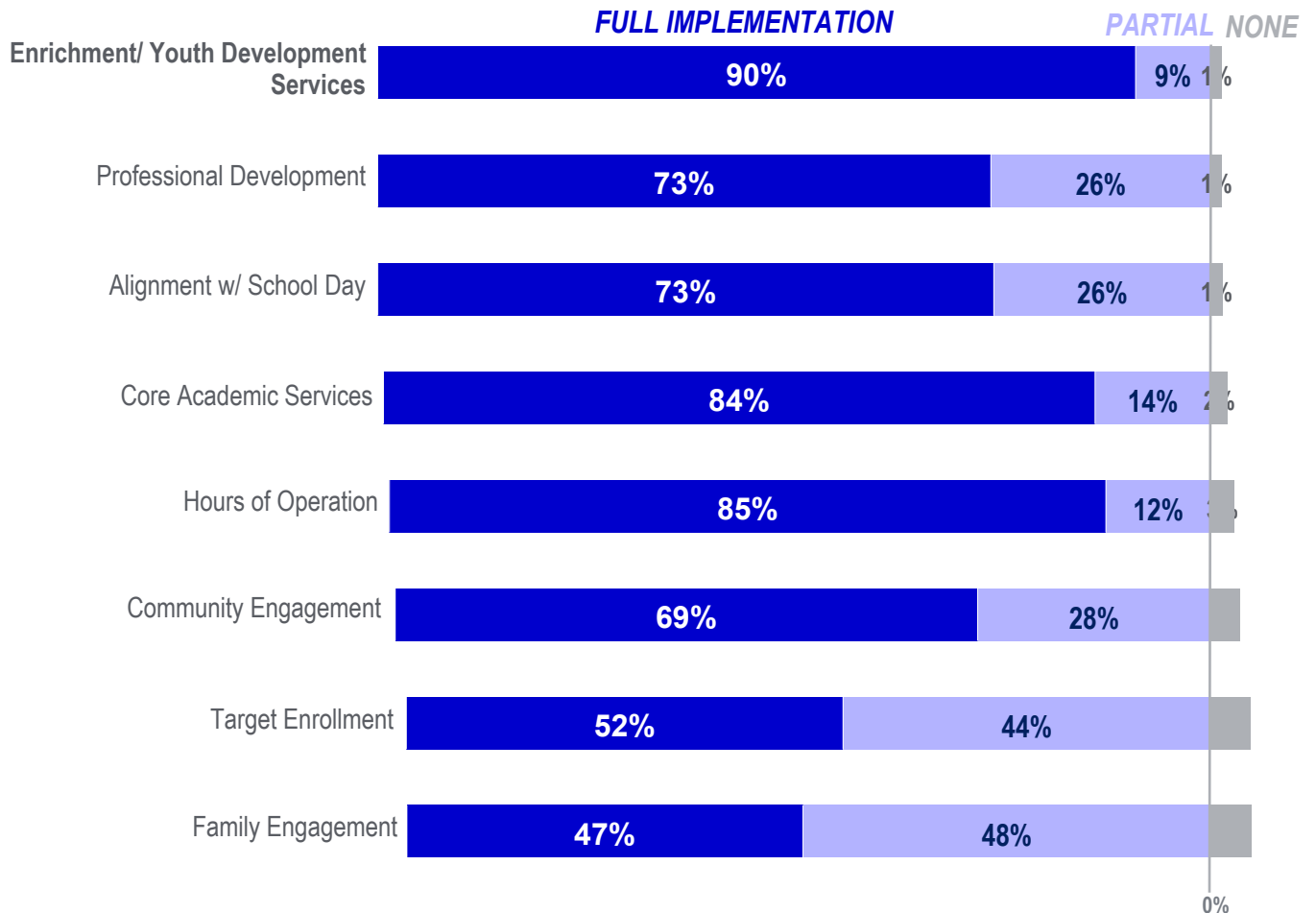
Collaborating w/ School-Day Teachers	**86%**

Aligning with...

Subject-specific academic content	**65%**
Needs of student populations being served	**57%**
Needs of grade-levels being served	**57%**
State Learning Standards	**56%**
School based grade-level curricula	**54%**
College & Career Readiness Standards	**43%**

- **Best practices for facilitating program linkages to the school day include:**

  ➤ The appointment of a staff member who serves, at least in part, as a liaison between the program and the school day staff/leaders. The title and role of these specialized staff members vary across programs. Some activity leaders or mentor teachers, who also belong to the instructional staff at partner schools, assume this liaison responsibility. At programs (such as those run by CBOs) that do not have staff who also work at the partner schools, the ideal would be if the schools can also appoint a liaison.

  ➤ Dedicating a set time on a daily, weekly, or bi-weekly basis for the specific task of communicating with school day staff/leaders to strengthen the partnership and align supports.

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> *Tip:* Remember to document these meetings as evidence of compliance with *SMV Report Indicator F-1.*

Fidelity of Implementation

- **Almost all Program Directors reported they were either fully or partially implementing the required components of 21CCLC** (these components are specified in their grant and tracked on the *Template for Goals and Objectives*). A small percentage (1-5%) revealed they had not yet implemented one or more of these key components at the time of reporting.

- The components most often fully implemented were Enrichment/ Youth Development Services, Hours of Operation, and Core Academic Services.

- Areas in which more programs struggled included reaching Target Enrollment and Family Engagement, for which only about half reported full implementation, and seven programs (5%) reported no implementation of these components at all.

Component	FULL IMPLEMENTATION	PARTIAL	NONE
Enrichment/ Youth Development Services	90%	9%	1%
Professional Development	73%	26%	1%
Alignment w/ School Day	73%	26%	1%
Core Academic Services	84%	14%	2%
Hours of Operation	85%	12%	3%
Community Engagement	69%	28%	
Target Enrollment	52%	44%	
Family Engagement	47%	48%	

0%

Promoting Successes & Promising Practices

■ Program Directors described the successes and promising practices that emerged this past year. Despite – and in some cases as a consequence of – the challenges posed by the pandemic, it was perhaps not surprising to see from reports that **Relationships** played a vital role in program success.

Family Engagement

➢ *Creative out-reach and responsiveness to family needs*

➢ *Program communication and presence that demonstrates consistency, dependability, and compassion*

➢ *Involving parents/ caregivers, volunteering time & providing feedback*

School Day Linkage

➢ *Strong partnerships between program and school personnel*

➢ *Events, meetings, and relationship-building activities to create stable, sustainable bonds*

Staff Recruitment & Development

➢ *Program personnel with talent, passion, dedication*

➢ *Strong attunement with students*

➢ *Social Emotional Learning and Trauma-Informed Care trainings*

Comprehensive Student Support

➢ *Innovative, culturally relevant, student-centered programming, including social-emotional development*

➢ *Engaging students in leadership*

Community Building

➢ *Cultural and economic inclusion activities*

➢ *Multi-lingual programming*

Purposes of the Mid-Year Report (MYR) for Program Directors

(1)   **Progress Update & Needs Assessment**

Internal & External | Collective | Formative
Who is the collected information accessible to/used by: *Internal* state-level teams & *external* program-level stakeholders | How is it reported: In aggregated, or combined, form representing the whole-group as a collective | When is it studied: At a mid-point as part of a formative review

The State and sub-contracting partners are interested in examining the aggregated results from a number of items on the MYR to learn more about the trending perceptions and experiences of Program Directors; this is used in state-level Program planning in the following ways:

➤   The State Program Coordinator's Office uses this information, as needed, to issue guidance to the field (e.g., policy updates, clarifications) and to celebrate Program-wide successes.   This includes sharing key findings and recommendations with the collective stakeholders for deeper reflection: this is the focus and intent of the *Progress Report from Program Directors.*

➤   The Regional Technical Assistance Resource Centers (TARCs) use this information as one of multiple sources from which to identify high-priority professional learning needs and opportunities for sub-grantees. This helps them design and deliver responsive support.

➤   The Statewide Evaluator uses this data in combination with other sources to examine high-level trends impacting programs across the state, and to use findings to provide research-informed recommendations.

(2)   **Accountability Snap-shot**

Internal | Individual | Intervals, As Needed
Who the collected information is accessible to/used by: *Internal* state-level teams | How it is reported: In disaggregated form at the *individual* program-level | When it is studied: At *intervals* or *as needed* as part of a case-by-case review

The questions in the MYR are aligned with the NYSED & Federal Quality Standards & Requirements* specified in the RFP, Site Monitoring Visit (SMV) Report, and other policy documents. They ask for Program Directors to respond, using the most accurate information currently available to them, about their progress achieving and maintaining compliance with these expectations.

The State Program Office and Resource Centers can use this information discerningly to assess the relative levels of progress and need at the regional and individual sub-grantee levels for monitoring purposes. MYR data is incorporated into Site Monitoring Visit preparation and review processes and used to design targeted training and technical assistance and support to address the specific needs of individual programs. Although the report references compliance documents, disaggregated information obtained via the MYR is **not used to determine compliance** nor is it attached to any punitive measures; it is one source among many used to monitor a sub-grantee's progress and current efforts towards achieving the quality standards & Requirements of the grant. *

* The quality standards & Requirements are derived from US-DOE and NYS accountability directives and linked with evidence-based practices of successful afterschool/OST programming.