

RESEARCH WORKS, INC.

Summary of State Evaluation Processes

New York State's 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program

**Prepared by Research Works, Inc. for the New York State Education Department
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This report summarizes the purpose and key findings of the statewide evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program in New York State to date. It spans the first three years of the original statewide evaluation contract as well as the two additional extension years of the contract up until June of 2011. A final summary report will be provided to the NYSED managers in October of 2011.

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INTRODUCTION

This study summary presents information on the process and some of the key findings of an evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) programs in New York State. This is not an evaluation report. What the State evaluators have prepared is the requested summary of the State evaluation process in New York between October 2006 and June 2011. The summary is divided into seven sections. The title and a brief summary of each section are provided here.

Section One: The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program as a Performance Based System

This section provides a review of the legislative intent of this federally funded program, as well as federal evaluation requirements and the New York State Evaluation original design. Also included in this section is a description of the relationship between traditional education goals and objectives and those required in the performance based accountability system.

Section Two: Findings of the Secondary Analysis of Annual Performance Report (APR) Data Entered into the Profile and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS)

Section Two is the first of two sections presenting the process and a sample of interim findings within the original evaluation design. It also outlines recommendations for modification of that design.

This section presents findings from a secondary analysis of the APR data entered by local programs into the PPICS system in New York. The findings of this analysis provided evaluative information on the limitations of this specific state evaluation activity and limited evaluative information on program performance statewide.

Section Three: 2008-2009 Program Site Visits and Supporting Data

The evaluation design required in response to the contract request for proposals included two data source elements: a secondary analysis of the APR data and a random selection of ten unique program sites to visit each year. This section presents an example of the evaluation process and typical findings from the ten required annual site visits using the 2008-2009 visits. This is the second evaluation activity required under the original state evaluation contract.

Section Four: State Evaluator Review of Local Program Evaluation Narrative Reports

This section discusses findings from one of the data collection strategies that were implemented by Research Works, Inc. (RWI) in addition to the original evaluation's scope to supplement and support findings from the required evaluative activities summarized in Sections Two and Three of this report.

Programs had been using external evaluators on a voluntary basis for a number of years before The New York State Education Department (NYSED) hired RWI as their first state evaluators of this program in October 2006. A request to those external evaluators to share those local reports with RWI was sent out by the Project Director early in the state evaluation. The purpose of that request was to catch-up on the condition of the program as

it was operating in the state. Beginning with the second contract year (2007-2008) the state evaluators requested the local evaluation reports from the ten sites randomly selected for a site visit as part of their site background review process. Conclusions and discussion of the recommendations in this section include data collected over the first three program years.

Section Five: Survey Regarding Strength of Partnerships and Services to Parents

This section presents the findings from one of a set of more than twenty targeted surveys of key program stakeholders carried out within the emerging evaluation design. The targeted surveys have been used to triangulate on data collected through other data collection strategies, to clarify findings by seeking ‘further information’, or to verify initial evaluative interpretation of data collected in the ongoing evaluation study. Two sets of illustrative data are presented here. The first data set discussed focused on the strength of program management designs by requesting information about program inter-agency partnerships. The second data set was collected to ascertain the degree and extent of core services provided for parents by local programs.

Section Six: Study of the Effectiveness of the State Technical Assistance Center

Provision of technical assistance to programs funded under this federally funded program is strongly recommended by the funder. For the original contract period of this evaluation (2006-2009), the Technical Assistance Center (TAC) in New York was tasked to operate through an existing network of Student Support Services Centers (SSSC’s). The initial scope of the evaluation summarized in this document included its assessment of the effectiveness of the TAC in building the capacity of the SSSC’s to provide technical assistance to local programs. The summary of process and findings provided in this document are drawn from that period of the evaluation.

Section Seven: Summary of Key Findings, Recommendations and Resulting Changes for the State Evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers in NY

A selected list of findings, recommendations by the evaluators and actions by the state managers based on those recommendations is presented in this section.

Section One

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program as a Performance Based System

This section provides a review of the legislative intent of this federally funded program, as well as federal evaluation requirements and the New York State Evaluation's original design. This section includes a description of the relationship between traditional education goals and objectives and those required in the performance based accountability system.

Legislative Background of the Program and Its Evaluation

Two separate pieces of legislation set the requirement for the evaluation of this program. First, Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, reauthorized in 2001 as the No Child Left Behind Act is the funding legislation for this competitive grant program. Second, the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 set the performance based requirements for federally funded programs. This section sets out the individual and collective requirements of those two pieces of legislation and the reflection of their requirements throughout this program.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program (21st CCLC) is a federally funded competitive grant under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (as amended) which is managed by the State Education Departments on behalf of the Federal Department of Education. As stated on the Federal Department of Education website the purpose of this program is the following:

(The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program)... supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high poverty and low performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children.

US Department of Education, *Part B – 21st Century Community Learning Centers*. US Department of Education, downloaded June 10, 2011, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg55.html>

The Act also sets aside up to 3 percent of the total amount made available to each state for monitoring and evaluation of programs or comprehensive evaluation (directly or through a grant or contract) of the effectiveness of programs and activities funded under the grant.

The legislation establishing this program also outlines the importance of performance based assessment of local program activities. Under 'Principles of Effectiveness', for local program activities, the above cited Act states that, in general: all program activities must be based on data indicating their need; designed using an established set of performance measures to ensure that high quality academic enrichment opportunities are available; and when

appropriate be based on scientifically based research. It goes on to state that the (local) program must undergo a periodic evaluation to measure progress in achieving the provision of high quality opportunities for academic enrichment. The results of these measures are then to be used to refine and strengthen the (local) program and its performance measures. In other words, the 21st CCLC Program is mandated to operate at the Federal, state and local levels as a performance based system.

Performance measurement in the US was first mandated in the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA). The Government Performance and Results Act itself was enacted to establish the effective use of public funds through wider application of performance measurement. Performance measurement is defined by the US GAO (Government Accountability Office) thus:

Performance measurement is the ongoing monitoring and reporting of program accomplishments, particularly progress towards pre-established goals. It is typically conducted by program or agency management. Performance measures may address the type of level of program activities conducted (process), the direct products and services delivered by a program (outputs), and/or the results of those products and services (outcomes).

US General Accounting Office, "Performance Measurement & Evaluation: Definitions and Relationships, GAO 11-616-SP, downloaded July 15, 2011.
<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d11646sp.pdf>

Measureable Goals and Objectives at All Levels

Program goals and objectives are a foundation of the grant funded universe in education. Beginning in the last two decades of the Twentieth Century, these terms as applied in Education have suffered from 'multiple definition'. 'Multiple definition' is a situation where there are at least two definitions of a single term being used in the same system, usually occurring because some users of the terms carry forward a past definition, and other users apply newer ones. In Education specifically, the earlier definitions of goals and objectives were based in educational psychology, which began in the early 20th Century, and was formalized with the publication of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, the First Handbook of which was published in 1956. More recent definitions have come from a number of sources, such as the Performance Based Accountability System which uses business/organization definitions of the same terms.

Definitions of goals and objectives that migrated to the public sector and thus Education from business/organizational management began to be used in the late 1980's. Application of business definitions which differ considerably from the earlier psych-based definitions has confused things somewhat in Education in general, and in the design and evaluation/measurement of education-based programs¹.

While it uses the terms 'goal' and 'objective', the logic of a performance based system is that results/outcomes are treated as operating in a progressive sequence, meaning that the results are both ordered (coherent) and inter-dependent. For that reason, a system of

¹ See Appendix 1 for more details on goals and objectives in performance based accountability.

reference has been adopted that infers their probable sequence. As noted in the GAO definition, this divides results/outcomes into three categories: those expected to be achieved in the short-term; those expected to take a bit longer and are therefore, interim, and; those that will take the longest time and are thus, long-term. The progressive nature of the sequence means that there is an assumption that the short-term outcomes have to be achieved before the interim outcomes will be achieved and that the achievement of the long-term outcomes is dependent on the achievement of the interim-outcomes. In this report, RWI will refer to **short-term** outcomes as **outputs**, **mid-term** outcomes as **interim outcomes**, and **long-term** outcomes as **long-term outcomes**. For purposes of program and evaluation design, then, outputs precede interim outcomes, and interim outcomes precede long-term outcomes.

The New York State Education Department identified NY State Objectives and Sub-Objectives for this program. These State Objectives and Sub-objectives reflect the Federal Education Department's GPRA Measures. The following table shows the program analysis provided by Research Works, Inc. in their original ©*Proposal to Evaluate the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program for New York State*. In addition to showing the relationship between the Federal and State performance based systems the grid identifies the initial evaluation plan as it was linked to both of them. The Request for Proposals (RFP) referenced was for an evaluation that would provide information on the achievement of the NYSED Objectives and Sub-Objectives. This would be done using a combination of a secondary analysis of the Annual Performance Reports (APR) entered into an electronic data capture system by each program and a required set of ten site visits to a stratified random sample of programs each year of the evaluation contract. As can be seen, the initial analyses of the two sets of performance setting criteria (the GPRA Measures and NYSED Objectives and Sub-Objectives) are closely related. The State Objectives and Sub-objectives are more specific than the federal level of the system, i.e., Sub-Objectives 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 have no parallel GPRA Measure.

This Federal linked State performance based system for the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program in New York formed the basis of the design for its evaluation by Research Works, Inc. In the original evaluation design, RWI expected to find that at the local level, the performance strands established by these two stages of the program system would be operationalized by the goals and objectives of individual 21st Century Community Learning Center Partnership programs.

As the evaluation contract proceeded it became clear that the secondary analysis of APR data would prove problematic (see Section Two of this report). Individual site visits; however, did provide the evaluation with robust data, as discussed in Section Three. In addition, RWI developed a number of surveys to use with project directors and evaluators over the period of the evaluation, and conducted periodic focused individual and group interviews of key program stakeholders that were used to confirm, clarify or establish information emerging from both required data sources, as described in Section Five.

TABLE 1: NYSED OBJECTIVES AND SUB-OBJECTIVES, GPRA AND RWI INDICATORS/MEASURES, EVALUATION PLAN A, EVALUATION PLAN B (FROM ORIGINAL EVALUATION PROPOSAL/2006)

²NYSED Objective 1: Regular attendees at 21st CCLC programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes.			
NYSED Sub-Objectives	Federal Government GPRA Indicators/Measures	System Level Analysis of APR Data: Meeting Objectives: Evaluation Plan A	Evaluation Activities: In-depth Study of 10 Sites Evaluation Plan B
1.1 Regular attendees participating in the program will show continuous improvement in achievement through measures such as test scores, grades, and/or teacher reports.	<p>Outputs: (3) Percentage of regular program participants with teacher-reported improvement in homework completion and class participation.</p> <p>Interim Outcome: (1) Percentage of regular program participants whose math/English grades improved from fall to spring.</p> <p>Long-term Outcome: (2) Percentage of regular program participants who meet or exceed the proficient level of performance on State Assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics.</p>	<p>Secondary analysis of teacher survey data.</p> <p>Secondary analysis of reported data fall and spring report card.</p> <p>Secondary analysis of reported data NYS assessments, other standardized assessments.</p> <p>Include explanatory questions on surveys, interview protocols, and online questions/discussion.</p>	<p>Same analysis of APR data, but at site level.</p> <p><u>Site Visit and Follow-up:</u></p> <p>Interview of regular school program teachers and administrators.</p> <p>Discussion with parents or survey.</p> <p>Reported observation by program staff</p>
1.2 Regular attendees in the program will show continuous improvements on measures such as school attendance, classroom performance, and decreased disciplinary actions or other adverse behaviors.	<p>Outputs: (4) Percentage of students with teacher-reported improvements in student behavior.</p> <p>Interim Outcome: Improved school attendance and decreased disciplinary actions.</p> <p>Long-term Outcome: Higher promotion rates; credit accrual among high school students; higher graduation rate</p>	<p>Secondary analysis of teacher surveys.</p> <p>Secondary analysis of school attendance data.</p> <p>Secondary analysis of disciplinary action data.</p>	<p>Same analysis of APR data, but at site level.</p> <p><u>Site Visit and Follow-up:</u></p> <p>Interview of regular school program teachers and administrators.</p> <p>Discussion with parents or survey.</p> <p>Reported observation by program staff.</p>
³NYSED Objective 2: 21st CCLC will offer a range of high quality educational, developmental, and recreational services for students and their families.			
NYSED Sub-Objectives	Federal GPRA Measures/Indicators	System Level Analysis of APR Data: Meeting Objectives: Plan A	Evaluation Activities: In-depth Study of 10 Sites: Evaluation Plan B
2.1 100% of Centers will offer high quality services in core academic areas, e.g., reading and literacy, mathematics, and science.	5. Percentage of 21 st CCLCs reporting emphasis in at least one core academic area.	Secondary analysis of APR data on academic areas supported by the NY programs.	<p>APR data analysis at site level.</p> <p><u>Site Visit and Follow-up:</u></p> <p>Collect and review completed Program Quality Self Assessment Tool information and ascertain what they</p>

² NYSED Objective 1 and Sub-objectives 1.1 and 1.2 focus on participant outcomes. Measurement will include, but will not be limited to, the Federal Government GPRA Indicators/Measures and RWI indicators/measures as agreed with NYSED managers. GPRA Indicators/Measures are included in the grid, printed in black with its number from the RFP in parentheses. RWI proposed Indicators/Measures are printed in blue in the same column.

³ NYSED Objective 2 and Sub-objectives concern themselves with the quality of the services provided, including the links between the 21st CCLC Programs and the school instructional program, community agencies and the families of the participants. GPRA Measures/Indicators 5 – 7 will be used with measurement of the achievement of this objective along with Measures/Indicators developed by RWI in collaboration with NYSED managers.

			<p>have done with the results of these bi-annual assessments.</p> <p>Review program component materials.</p> <p>Interview school administrator, teachers.</p>
<p>2.2 100% of Centers will offer enrichment and support activities such as nutrition and health, art, music, technology and recreation.</p>	<p>6. Percentage of 21st CCLC offering enrichment and support in technology.</p> <p>7. Percentage of 21st CCLC offering enrichment and support activities in other areas.</p>	<p>Secondary analysis of APR data on enrichment and support areas supported by the NY programs.</p>	<p>APR data analysis at site level.</p> <p><u>Site Visit and Follow-up:</u> Collect and review completed Program Quality Self Assessment Tool information and ascertain what they have done with the results of these bi-annual assessments. Review program component materials. Interview school administrator, teachers, and program staff.</p>
<p>2.3 Centers will establish and maintain partnerships within the community that continue to increase levels of community collaboration in planning, implementing and sustaining programs.</p>	<p>None stated.</p> <p>Percentage of 21st CCLC which have collaborative partnerships.</p> <p>Percentage of 21st CCLC which report collaborative program planning, implementation and sustaining.</p>	<p>Secondary analysis of APR data on community partnerships.</p> <p>N.B. If collaboration information not available on APR, targeted questionnaire of all programs on this objective, asking for information from their PQSAT.</p>	<p>APR data analysis at site level.</p> <p><u>Site Visit and Follow-up:</u> Collect and review completed Program Quality Self Assessment Tool information and ascertain what they have done with the results of these bi-annual assessments.</p> <p>Interview of collaboration partners.</p> <p>Interview of program staff re: partnerships.</p>
<p>NYSED Sub-Objectives</p>	<p>Federal Government GPRA Indicators/Measures</p>	<p>System Level Analysis of APR Data: Meeting Objectives: Evaluation Plan A</p>	<p>Evaluation Activities: In-depth Study of 10 Sites Evaluation Plan B</p>
<p>2.4 100% of Centers will offer services to parents of participating children.</p>	<p>None stated.</p> <p>Percentage of 21st CCLC which have services for parents.</p> <p>Percentage of parents reporting achievement of performance goals in the program.</p>	<p>Secondary analysis of APR data on services for parents as recipients.</p> <p>N.B. If services to parents information not available on APR, targeted questionnaire of all programs on this objective asking for scope, purpose and frequency of this programming.</p>	<p>APR data analysis at site level.</p> <p><u>Site Visit and Follow-up:</u></p> <p>Collect and review completed Program Quality Self Assessment Tool information and ascertain what they have done with the results of these bi-annual assessments.</p> <p>Review program component materials.</p> <p>Interview parent service recipients.</p> <p>Interview program staff.</p> <p>Interview school administrator.</p>
<p>2.5 More than 75% of Centers will offer services at least 15 hours a week on average and provide services when school is not in session, such as during the summer and on holidays.</p>	<p>None stated.</p> <p>Percentage of programs that offer services for 15 hours or more per week.</p> <p>Spread of service provision schedules across in session and out of session school times.</p>	<p>Secondary analysis of APR data on the schedules of all programs.</p>	<p>APR data at site level.</p> <p>Verify with staff during site visit and that the schedule they are following is the one they want to follow.</p>

Coordinating Measurement

One of the key findings of this state level evaluation was the measurement inefficiency of the effects for program intervention. Measurement in evaluation follows the same rules as measurement in research. All aspects of the intervention, its components, their assumed interactions and effects have to be clearly defined in terms that are specific, clear and not contradictory. Most evaluations begin with a 'literature review', which is a method whereby the cause → effect assumptions of the program are researched. That research will provide the evaluators with information on everything from variables used in previous studies of similar program interventions to accepted data analysis strategies to measure intervention effects.

Articulating the program theory, whereby the cause → effect assumptions of the program are detailed is a typical first step for evaluators, and was the process followed in this evaluation. During that process the state evaluators found a number of program assumptions that are not defined clearly enough to be measureable. As a value-added component of their evaluation, RWI included collection of information to inform State managers' decisions regarding how to address this barrier to high quality evaluation throughout the 21 Century Community Learning Centers Program system in New York State.

Summary of Section One

In summary, Research Works, Inc. designed a statewide evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program in New York based on the information contained in a Request for Proposals issued by NYSED. In their design, RWI merged Federal GPRA measures with NYSED Objectives and Sub-Objectives in order to create a chart identifying the strong relationship between the Federal and State program parameters. The RFP specifically requested an evaluation that would perform a secondary analysis of the APR data housed in the federal database, the Profile and Performance Information Collection System, that would assess the level of achievement of the NYSED Objectives and Sub-Objectives; and, visit ten program sites each year to ascertain the quality of the programming being delivered in New York State. This report summarizes some of the activities, including periodic state evaluation plan reviews, redesign and implementation of five years of evaluation study of this complex program area. It also contains some of the key conclusions and recommendations of that study as they were presented to NYSED managers and information on any actions taken based on those recommendations.

Section Two

Findings of the Secondary Analysis of Annual Performance Report Data (APR) in the Profile and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS)

Introduction

This is the first of two sections of this summary presenting the process and a sample of interim findings from within the original evaluation design. It also outlines recommendations for modification of that design based on the experience of the RWI team with the required process.

This section presents findings from a secondary analysis of the Annual Performance Report (APR) data entered by local programs into the Profile and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS) in New York. The findings of this analysis provided evaluative information on the limitations of this specific State evaluation activity and limited evaluative information on program performance statewide.

The Research Works, Inc. Statewide Evaluation Design was based on the requirements stated in the Request for Proposals issued by the New York State Education Department. The required design parameters included two required components: a secondary analysis of the Annual Performance Report (APR) and ten site visits to a random sample of programs each contract year. This section of the evaluation summary details the secondary analysis of the APR which was carried out on information in the system from 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008. The decision to construct the analysis in a longitudinal design was taken because of the flaws found in the APR 'data' set. These emanated from the fact that most of the 'data' in the system is actually information. When speaking of evaluation, it is important to distinguish between 'data' and 'information'. Data is raw collected material that is readily available for analysis. Information is a term that describes the findings from the revelation of data through analysis. It is not possible to do a secondary analysis on information. Change over time can be established to a limited extent using the same information for specific periods of time.

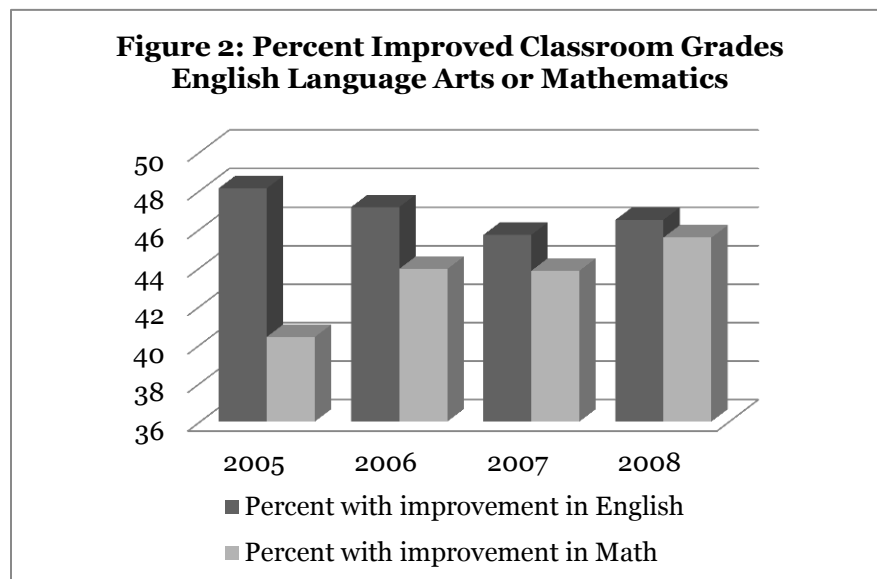
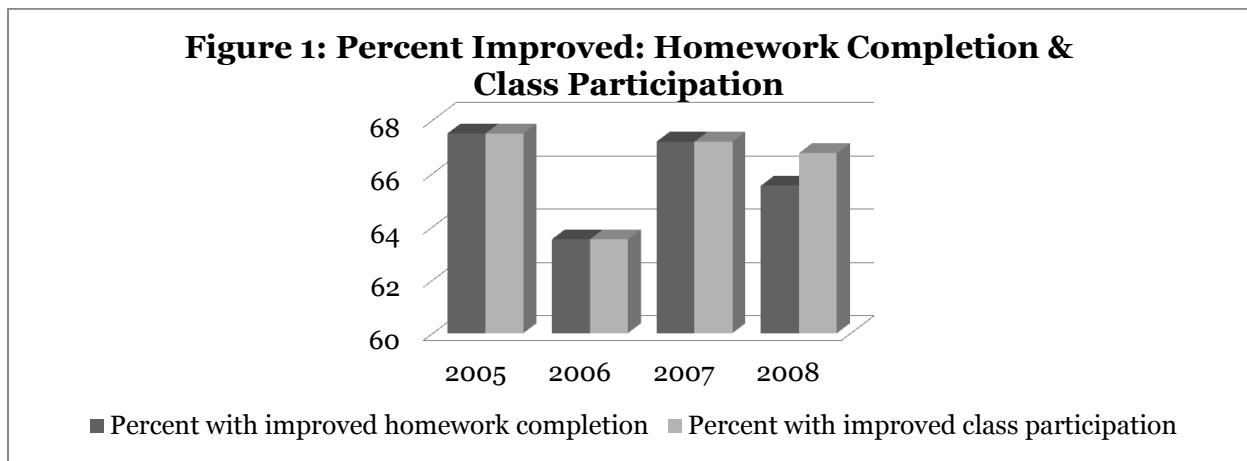
Based on these findings regarding the data present in the APR system, NYSED did not require RWI to continue with secondary analysis of the APR information. Instead, the evaluation moved to identifying and clarifying areas in which collection of specific data elements could be introduced into a statewide evaluation system.

Results of Analysis

Longitudinal analysis allowed the evaluators to examine changes in program performance over time. This type of analysis was most valuable when looking at how well certain parts of the New York State objectives had been met. In order to conduct this analysis, results from each year (2005-2008) were downloaded and entered into a separate database and

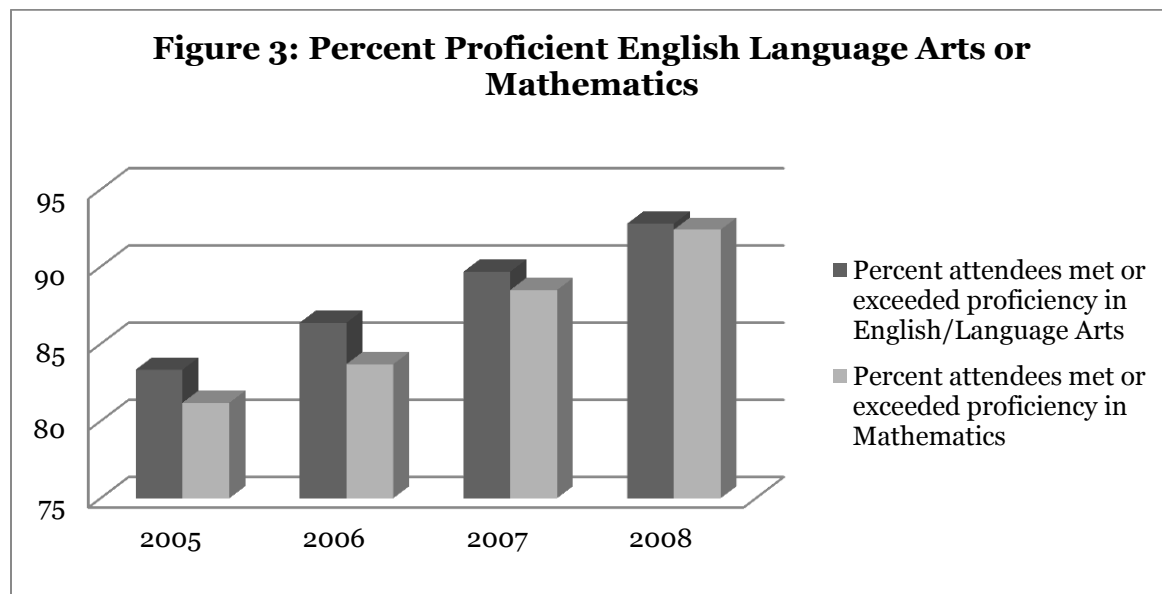
examined for changes over time. One important caveat must be stated here. There was no way of knowing whether or not the same students had attended the program each year, and it was likely that there was some variation in the student populations who attended over the three year period at any single program. It was also likely that programs could have evolved over that time. Changes in population make-up, teachers contacted, and program operations and activities may have had a large impact on changes in outcomes over the three year period. Because of the architecture of the PPICS/APR system the secondary analysis could not control for any of these mediating factors. Figures 1 thru 3 provide examples of this type of longitudinal analysis. Each figure was based on APR information from 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008.

Figure 1 presents the percentage of teachers indicating improvement in homework completion and class participation over time. This figure shows little change in these percentages over time, with the most improvement being 67.5%, and the least being 63.5%.



In **Figure 2**, the percentage of students whose classroom grades in English and Math improved each year is shown, with improvement in English staying relatively stable while a higher percentage of students showed improvement in Math each year.

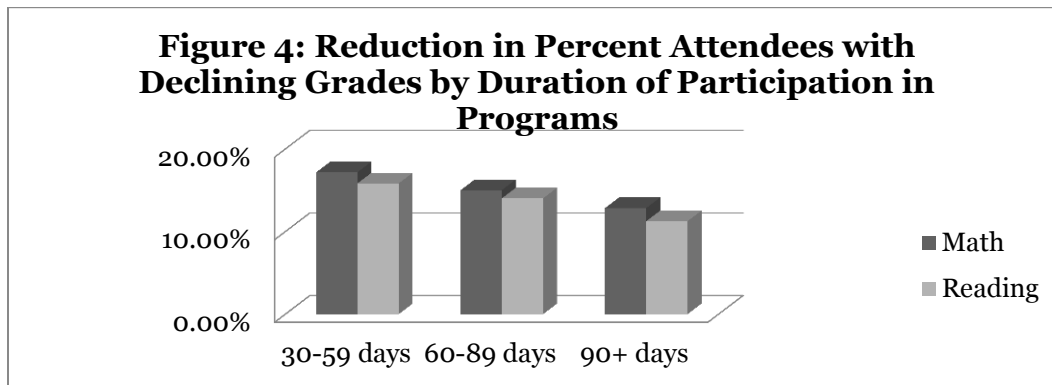
In **Figure 3**, the percentage of students who scored proficient or above in English Language Arts and Mathematics each year is indicated in the bar chart. It is important to also look at the relationship between **Figure 2** and **Figure 3**, as this comparison shows that approximately one half of the number of students who achieved a score of proficient or above also showed improvement in their classroom performance. The remaining students showed no improvement in their grades, yet still achieved a score of proficient or above on state exams. This may signify that they did not need to improve in order to be proficient. If that is the case, it may be an indicator that a significant proportion of program participants are not the target population envisioned in the legislative intent.



Further analysis of student classroom grades indicated there was a strong correlation between improved scores in math and reading and the amount of time students spent in a program. The correlations between math and reading scores for students attending between 30 and 59 days was 0.604; while the same correlation for students attending between 60 and 89 days was 0.680; and for students attending 90 or more days was 0.768. All three of these correlations were found to be statistically significant at $p < .05$. **These correlations show that there is an effect on performance dependent on time in the program.** This is because the strength of this relationship becomes stronger (going from 0.604 to 0.680 and finally to 0.768) when a student is involved in a program for increasing periods of time.

As an additional secondary analysis of the student grades, RWI used an analysis of variance (ANOVA) between groups of students clustered using the three dosage periods of program participation (30-59, 60-89, and 90+ days). This analysis indicated that, for students whose grades were already at risk when they entered the program; there was a statistically significant decrease in their decline in grades if they attended the program for 90 or more days. In other words, academically at-risk students on entry who attended the programs for 90 or more days were found to be less likely to have a decline in their math and/or

reading grades; therefore, halting further decline in their academic performance. This is a positive finding for these programs. See **Figure 4** below for further illustration of this finding.



Secondary Analysis of Teacher Survey Information from the APR

Federal reporting requires programs to survey participants’ teachers using a retrospective survey that the United States Department of Education (USDOE) provides. The results of those surveys are also entered into the PPICS by 21st Century Community Learning Centers in New York. When RWI downloaded this information, the teacher surveys showed that 449 sites completed the APR for this year. Of those, 31 reported that they did not attempt to collect teacher survey information for unspecified reasons. Of the 418 reporting that they sent out surveys, there were 12 sites that sent out surveys with a 0% response rate. Several of these sites commented that the school did not return the surveys or that the surveys were lost in the mail. Thus, there were a total of 406 sites with actual responses, with response rates varying from 1.92% to 100% of the surveys sent. RWI then eliminated sites with responses equaling less than 30% of the surveys sent.

RESPONSE RATES	NUMBER OF SITES	SECONDARY ANALYSIS
Less than 30%	31	Eliminated from secondary analysis
30% to 50%	44	Included in secondary analysis
50% to 75%	83	Included in secondary analysis
75% to 90%	97	Included in secondary analysis.
90% to 99.9%	75	Included in secondary analysis
100%	76	Included in secondary analysis
TOTAL INCLUDED IN ANALYSIS	375	

Thirty-one sites had response rates under 30%; 44 sites had responses rates between 30% and 50%; 83 sites had response rates between 50% and 75%; 97 sites had response rates

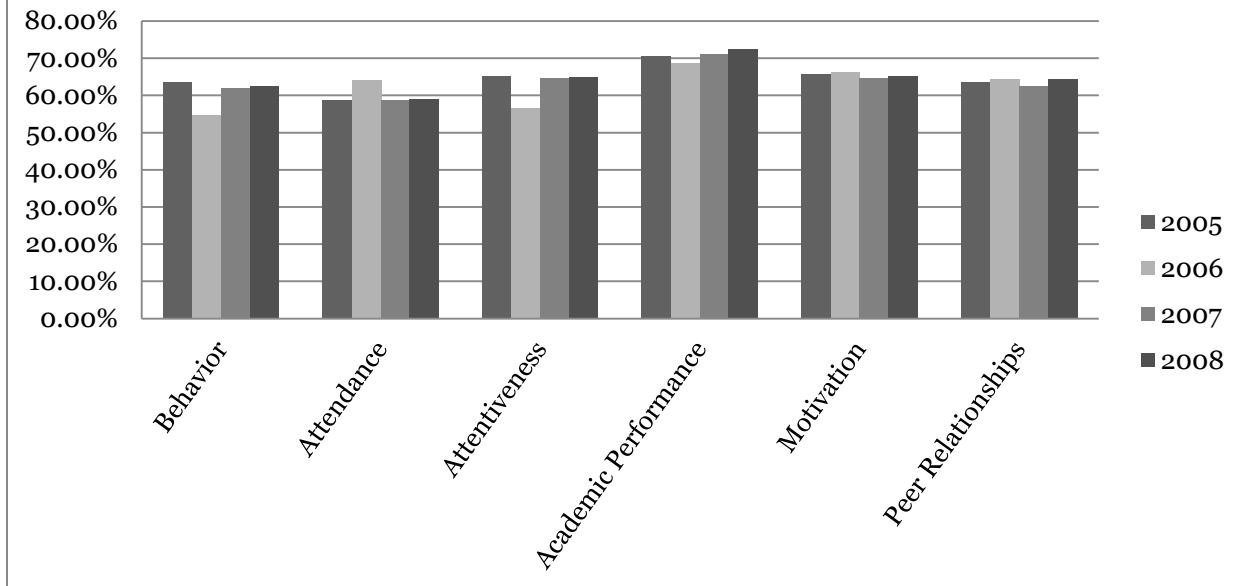
between 75% and 90%; 75 sites had response rates between 90% and 99.9%; and 76 sites had response rates of 100%. Due to the poor quality of information collected from sites with a response rate lower than 30%, these sites were eliminated from the secondary data analysis.

Summary survey information received from the teacher survey downloads is reported as frequency of response in the categories provided on the survey instrument. These are: Strongly Improved; Moderately Improved; Slightly Improved; No Change; Slightly Decreased; Moderately Decreased; Strongly Decreased; and No Improvement Needed for each item on the survey. No student information is included in this download. Summary survey information is clustered separately for students attending programs 30-59 days, 60-89 days, and 90 or more days. Because the PPICS/APR had collected only summarized information from the program data sources, a true secondary data analysis of the survey information was not possible. The information could only be compared to state and national averages.

Summary Finding Using Teacher Surveys

The Teacher Survey is a retrospective report by participants' teachers in which they are asked to think of the state of the student's performance at the beginning of their participation in the program and then to compare those levels of performance to those at the time of completion. However, research has shown that retrospective surveys have little reliability and are difficult to validate. The findings of this analysis would indicate these concerns are justified in the case of the Teacher Survey. The percentage of students with teacher-reported improvements in student behavior and attentiveness decreased slightly between 2005 and 2006, but steadily rebounded after that time during the period included in this analysis. While teacher surveys indicated that teachers perceived improvements in each area, each year, there was little actual change from year to year on the percentage of students showing improvements in each area (see **Figure 5** below). It is interesting to note that while approximately 70% of responding teachers indicated a belief that there was academic improvement, empirical evidence reported elsewhere in this summary suggests that only about 45% of those same students had improved classroom grades.

Figure 5: Retrospective Teacher Perception of Student Change Over Time



In order to facilitate some form of analysis and to equalize the three, separately aggregated time-in-program groups, frequency information was further aggregated into four groups: improved, no change, decreased, and no improvement needed. Data was then converted into percentages to allow comparison between responses of teachers with students attending for different numbers of days and to compare data across items. The evaluators found that there was a high degree of correlation between items on the survey, with teachers indicating improvement in one area also being likely to indicate improvement in other areas. This presents a question of the validity of the survey.

Stepwise regression analysis indicated that teachers' believed there was a strong relationship between improved academic performance and improved participation in class, completion of homework, and improvement in motivation to learn. Slightly weaker relationships existed between improved academic performance and improved behavior in class, improved attendance, improved classroom attentiveness, getting along better with other students, and turning homework in on time. The strength of the relationship between these variables differed slightly depending on the number of days students participated in programs (see **Table 2**). The correlations within the table are rank ordered with one being the variable with the highest correlation.

Table 1: Association of Improved Academic Performance and Other Survey Items Rank Ordered by Number of Days in Program (n=375 sites).

<i>Improved academic performance is associated with improvements in:</i>	30 – 59 days	60 – 89 days	90+ days
Completing homework to teacher’s satisfaction	1	2	2
Motivation to learn	2	3	5
Participation in class	3	1	1
Behaving well in class	4		
Regular attendance in class	5		3
Being attentive in class			4
Getting along well with other students		4	6
Turning in homework on time		5	

Among the teachers who had students attending programs for 30 – 59 days, responses indicated that improvement in the completion of homework to teacher’s satisfaction” was most strongly associated with beliefs about improved academic performance. Beliefs regarding improved motivation to learn, improved participation in class, improved classroom behavior, and improved classroom attendance were also associated with beliefs about improved academic performance.

Among the teachers who had students attending programs for 60 – 89 days, responses indicated that beliefs about increased student participation in class were most strongly associated with beliefs about improved academic performance. Beliefs about improved completion of homework to teacher’s satisfaction, increased motivation to learn, getting along better with other students and turning homework in on time were also associated with believes about improved academic performance.

Among the teachers who had students attending programs for 90 or more days, responses again indicated that the belief that students were participating more during class was most strongly associated with beliefs about improved academic performance. Beliefs about improved completion of homework to teacher’s satisfaction, better class attendance, increased attentiveness in class, improved motivation to learn, and getting along better with their peers were also associated with beliefs about improved academic performance.

Overall review of the APR data indicated that *dosage*, or length of time spent in the program, seems to be an important contributor to student improvement. Although these findings may seem notable, it is important to know that teacher responses from the surveys were based on self-reported data.

The secondary analysis was meant to provide information on how well 21st CCLC programs within New York State were performing with relation to the objectives specified by the State for these programs. **Table 3** presents New York State’s Objectives and Sub-Objectives, along with measures used, a brief synopsis of findings and the method of analysis used.

Summary APR Analysis Findings on NYSED Objectives

Table 2 - 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program Objectives, Findings and Analysis Method

NY Sub-Objective	Summary Findings August 2009	Analysis Method 8/09
NY Objective 1: Regular Attendance at 21st CCLC programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes		
<p>1.1 Regular attendees participating in the program will show continuous improvement in achievement through measures such as test scores, grades, and/or teacher reports.</p>	<p>According to teacher surveys, homework completed to teacher satisfaction and class participation had remained consistent. The percentage of regular program participants whose math and/or English language arts grades improved from fall to spring remained consistent for language arts, but improved in math over the period of four years.</p> <p>The percentage of regular program participants who met or exceeded State Assessment proficiency in reading/language arts and math had steadily improved over the period from 2005-2008.</p>	<p>Longitudinal analysis of survey data as reported through the APR. Longitudinal analysis of improved student grades from fall to spring as reported through the APR. Longitudinal analysis of NYS test data as reported through the APR.</p>
<p>1.2 Regular attendees in the program will show continuous improvement on measures such as school attendance, classroom performance, and decreased disciplinary actions or other adverse behaviors</p>	<p>The percentage of students with teacher-reported improvement in student behavior and attentiveness decreased slightly between 2005 and 2006, but had steadily rebounded since that time. While teacher surveys indicated that teachers saw improvements in each area for each year, there had been little change from year to year on the percentage of students showing improvements in each area. It was interesting to note that while approximately 70% of responding teachers</p>	<p>Longitudinal analysis of teacher survey data as reported through the APR.</p>

NY Sub-Objective	Summary Findings August 2009	Analysis Method 8/09
	indicated a belief that there was academic improvement, empirical evidence suggested that only about 45% of students had improved classroom grades.	
NY Objective 2: 21st CCLC programs will offer a range of high quality educational, developmental, and recreational services for students and their families		
2.1 100% of centers will offer high quality services in core academic areas such as reading and literacy, math, and science	As of 2008, 95.02% of centers were offering activities and/or services in reading, 90.27% were offering activities in mathematics, 79.19% were offering activities in science, and 83.48% were offering activities in social studies and culture. Quality of programming could not be measured through the APR information.	Analysis of APR reports.
2.2 100% of centers will offer enrichment and support activities such as nutrition and health, art and music, technology and recreation.	As of 2008, 75.79% of programs were offering activities in nutrition/health, 85.75% were offering activities in the arts, 67.19% were offering activities related to technology, and 83.48% were offering recreational programs. Quality of programming could not be measured through the APR information.	Analysis of APR reports
NY Sub-Objective	Summary Findings August 2009	Analysis Method 8/09
2.3 Centers will establish and maintain partnerships within the community that continue to increase levels of community collaboration in planning, implementing and sustaining programs.	APR data on community partnerships was limited to lists of partners, which sometimes included vendors as well as partners.	There is currently no agreed upon measure for increasing levels of community collaboration in planning, implementing and sustaining programs.
2.4 100% of Centers will offer services to parents of participating students	88% of centers provided services to adults during the 2007-2008 school year. Programs with components aimed at families (such as family literacy components) and adults (such as adult career components) were offered by 87.9% of programs. Programs aimed	It was not possible with the data provided to discern how many centers actually offered

NY Sub-Objective	Summary Findings August 2009	Analysis Method 8/09
	specifically at families were offered by 84% of programs during the 2007-2008 school year.	services to parents of participating children, as that specific data was not reported
<p>2.5 More than 75% of centers will offer services at least 15 hours a week on average, and provide services when school is not in session, such as during the summer and holidays.</p>	<p>66.6% of centers offered services 15 or more hours a week on average. 37% of centers offered services during the summer. There was no reporting of services on holidays.</p>	<p>Analysis of APR reports</p>

Noted Limitations of the Information Available Within the APR Reporting System

A note about the validity of data: Through a review of the information downloaded from the APR system at the individual program level, several issues were noted.

1. There are many instances where the distribution of data is noted to be skewed. Close scrutiny of the program level information entered into the system raises some important questions. For example, one program provided information indicating that all students who attended a program for 30-59 days had the same results academically. The same program indicated that those students all received the same ratings from teachers on specific survey items.
2. Numbers often appeared to be rounded off rather than exact.
3. There was a great deal of missing information. Although New York State has achieved 100% 'complete' APR data, complete means only that all fields are completed. In many cases, that means that it contains a 0 when asked for a numeric value. Quite a few reports indicated that goals and/or objectives were 'not measureable'. On closer study these statements appeared to be inaccurate.

Section Three

2008-2009 Program Site Visits and Supporting Data

The evaluation design required in response to the contract request for proposals included two data sources: a secondary analysis of the APR data and a random selection of ten unique program sites to visit each year. This section presents an example of the evaluation process and typical findings from the ten required annual site visits using the 2008-2009 visits. This is the second evaluation activity required under the original State evaluation contract.

Introduction

The Research Works, Inc. (RWI) Statewide Evaluation Design was based on the requirements stated in the Request for Proposals (RFP) issued by the New York State Education Department. The design; therefore, included the two required evaluation components: a secondary analysis of the Annual Performance Report (APR) and site visits to ten programs each contract year, resulting in a total of thirty site visits with supporting data over the initial three year contractual period. Stratified random sampling of all possible sites was used to determine the visited sites. Once the sample was chosen, programs were notified that they would be visited, but the visits themselves were unannounced.

The Federal legislation that provides funding for this program and the New York State Education Department Objectives for this program both indicate that the program will offer **high quality** services for students and their families. There was no clear definition on what would represent 'high quality services' and what would be considered indicators that services are of high quality. Since one of New York State's two main objectives states that 100% of Centers will offer *high quality services* it was the responsibility of this statewide evaluation to begin the task of defining the State's expected result (high quality programs) and articulation of its indicators. This is because RWI believed that to be able to provide feedback to programs concerning the quality of their services; local evaluators would need to agree with the indicators that would define its quality. In being able to communicate with the state if their **Sub-Objective 2.1** had been achieved, a definition and agreed indicator and measurement of quality services would have to be established. The purpose of the site visits in the original evaluation design was to gain some understanding of the quality of programming offered by local programs. The state evaluators also sought input on this task from local project directors and local evaluators. Based on their past experience, RWI knew that quality is a term for which there are a number of accepted meanings in regard to education programs. And that in addition to multiple accepted definitions, in most service delivery environments the functional definition of quality is accepted as a combination of more than one bounded definition.⁴

This is a timely concern for evaluation in this program area. Recent research in the area of out-of-school time programming has suggested that program quality is where one main evaluation focus should be. That research notes that there is evidence that in order for out-

⁴ See Appendix Two for a discussion of defining quality so it can be measured consistently across programs.

of-school time to demonstrate positive impacts on students' academic and personal progress, the establishment of what constitutes quality programming is critical for replication, establishment of best practice and the system's ability to provide targeted improvement support. In consultation with NYSED managers at the start of the evaluation contract, it was decided that RWI should use the definition of 'quality' to mean at least that the program that was implemented was close in both format and function to the program design submitted as part of the funding application. For that reason, in the first two years of the evaluation, the State Evaluators used these visits to attempt to determine fidelity of implementation of programs to their original design, with the intention of linking those measures to performance information in the PPICS/APR system.

This initial strategy did not succeed. Ascertaining sufficient data and insight to provide fair and balanced evaluative information on fidelity of implementation of programs at the local level through one site visit proved to be impossible. RWI found that establishing the fidelity of implementation for a program with the varying nature of the program activities offered by many grantees made it impossible to verify program delivery with just one site visit. Looking at schedules is one way of assessing what programming is offered but it is only as reliable as the program's record keeping. In addition, the PPICS/APR system review reported in the previous section of this report indicated that the ability of the State evaluators to link measures of implementation fidelity to student performance data by program would be limited, if possible at all. By the end of 2008 (the second year of the contract) RWI had determined that local evaluators were better positioned for the monitoring of fidelity of implementation, and presented this to the NYSED managers at a quarterly meeting. The question of how to collect the fidelity information through the local evaluations was discussed at that time.

Example Findings from 2008 - 2009 Site Visits

In the beginning of the third year of the evaluation contract (October 2008-September 2009), the State evaluators redesigned the site visit portion of the evaluation and discussed the next steps in this process with NYSED managers. Exploring the best way to measure quality in this program was still to be the purpose of the site visits, but a different focus during the site visits was agreed. The State evaluators agreed to focus on the identification of a set of recommended activities that local evaluators would be recommended to consider to ensure that program data included some measure of the quality of the program intervention. This took into consideration some related discussions around program 'dosage', or time within program activities, and the concern that requiring minimum hours of participation to count as each program day ought to be linked to expectations that the activities be of high value and worth.

By the beginning of the third year of the evaluation contract in October 2008, both RWI and the State managers had moved from compliance measurement concerns to a greater focus on the exploration of the scope and form of program data necessary to support efficient management and effective delivery of the 21st CCLC programs in NY. The evaluators had already recommended that the State require each program to use an external evaluator. It was important to establish the role of these local evaluators to support that efficient management and effective delivery of the 21st CCLC programs. In consultation with NYSED, ten sites were chosen to be visited by the State evaluators in the 2008-2009 contract year.

After two years of reviewing all available local evaluation reports (discussed in the next section of this summary), the State evaluation project director noted that a number of local evaluators were using an observation protocol that they reported worked well for them. She proposed to the State managers that the third year site visits should include the use of that protocol. It was agreed that a presentation on its field usefulness would be provided at the quarterly management meeting immediately following the completion of the site visits.

The State evaluation site visits included the use of that research-based observation instrument, The Out-of-School Time (OST) Observation Instrument developed by Policy Studies Associates. The protocol uses six domains with a total of 32 items rated on a Likert-type scale from 1 to 7, where 1=no evidence of the indicator and 7=consistent evidence of the indicator. Using that protocol, the State Evaluators rated programming at the ten 2008-2009 case study sites.

Table 1 shows the strengths and weakness of the ten observed program sites in six domains with a total of 32 items, (relationship building – youth; participation youth; relationship building – with all youth, staff; instructional strategies – staff; content and structure – activity; and rating of SAFE [sequenced-active-personally focused-explicit] features). The 32 items were separated by the relationship building (youth) containing 5 items; participation (youth) containing 5 items; relationship building (youth and staff) containing 7 items; instructional strategies (staff) containing 7 items; content and structure (activity) containing 4 items; and rating of SAFE features containing 4 items. The ratings for each item ranged from 1 through 7, where 1 indicated “*there is no evidence of the indicator*” and 7 indicating “*it is consistently evident*”. Ratings are given as an average of observations of several activities at the ten annual sites.

Results of those visits are reported here by RWI’s Visited Site Numbers. The findings here and in the next section, Review of the Case Study Evaluation Reports, include the results of on-site observations using the OST instrument, and a review of the local evaluation reports for each of the sites, if one was available. These two sets of information were reviewed to provide specific information to the evaluation; they are not representative of cross-validation. The State evaluators were establishing if the OST instrument could be recommended for more general use, and collecting information on the scope and depth of evaluative information simultaneously available to the sites visited. No correlations or cause → effect relationships were hypothesized or tested.

Following the tabular presentation of site by site results using the OST, is a general discussion of those results.

Table 1: 21st CCLC Site Visit Point of Service Ratings using the Policy Studies Associates developed OST Observation Instrument

(Cells highlighted in green indicate little or weak evidence)

Domain Item Rating (All ratings are average score across activities, scale mid-point = 4.0)	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5	Site 6	Site 7	Site 8	Site 9	Site 10	Range All Sites
Relationship Building: Among Youth											
Youth are friendly and relaxed with one another	5	5.5	5.6	6	6	5	5.5	5	6.75	5	5.5-6.75
Youth respect one another	5	6	5.7	5	5.25	4.75	5.5	5	3.6	4	3.6-6.75
Youth show positive aspect to staff	5	6.5	4.9	6	5.5	4.75	5	5	5	5.2	4.75-6.5
Youth assist one another	4	5	3.3	6	3.25	4	1	5	4.3	2.8	1-6
Youth are collaborative	4	6.5	4	7	5.5	1	1	4.5	4.3	3.4	1-7
Range Relationship Building – Youth This Site	4-5	5-6.5	3.3-5.7	5-7	6-3.25	1-5	1-5.5	4.5-5	3.6-6.75	2.8-5.2	
Mean Score Site: Relationship Building - Youth	4.6	5.9	4.7	6.0	5.1	3.9	3.6	4.9	4.79	4.08	
Participation: By Youth											
Youth are on-task	6	5.5	5.3	6	7	4	6	5	5	4.8	4-7
Youth listen actively and attentively to peers and staff	5	6.5	5.7	5.5	5.75	3.25	6.5	5.5	5	4.4	3.25-7
Youth contribute opinions, ideas and/or concerns to discussions	4	6	3.5	5.5	4.75	1	5.5	4.5	3.75	1.4	1-6
Youth have opportunities to make meaningful choices	7	6	2.8	6	4.3	1	5	6	3.3	3.5	1-6
Youth take leadership responsibilities/roles	3	6	2.3	6.5	4.5	1	3	5	2	2.6	1-6.5
Range by Site: Participation - Youth	3-7	5.5-6	2.3-5.7	5.5-6	4.3-5.75	1-3.5	3-6.5	4.5-6	2-5	1.4-4.4	
Mean Score by Site: Participation-Youth	5	6	3.92	5.9	5.26	2.05	5.2	5.2	3.81	3.34	

Domain Item Rating (All ratings are average score across activities, scale mid-point = 4.0)	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5	Site 6	Site 7	Site 8	Site 9	Site 10	Range All Sites
Relationship Building: Staff with all youth											
Staff use positive behavior management techniques	6	6	5.3	6	6	4.75	5	5	4.6	5.4	4.6-6
Staff are equitable and inclusive	6	5.5	5.8	6	5.5	4.75	6	5	4	4.8	4-6
Staff show positive affect towards youth	6	6.5	5.2	6	6.75	5	6	5.5	6	6.25	5-6.75
Staff attentively listen to and/or observe youth	7	6	6.1	6	6.75	4.75	6	5.5	5.3	5.4	4.75-7
Staff encourage youth to share their ideas, opinions and concerns	6	6.5	3.7	5.5	5	3	6.5	6.5	2.6	3.25	2.6-6.5
Staff engage personally with youth	5	6.5	3.3	6.5	4.5	3	6.5	6	4.6	3.2	3-6.5
Staff guide for positive peer interactions	3	5.5	4.2	5.5	6	1	6	3	2	5	1-6
Range by Site: Relationship Building Staff with Youth	3-7	5.5-6.5	3.7-6.1	5.5-6.5	4.5-6.75	1-5	5-6.5	3-6.5	2-6	3.25-6.25	
Mean Score by Site: Relationship Building Staff with Youth	5.57	6.07	4.8	5.93	5.79	3.75	6	5.21	4.16	4.76	
Instructional Strategies: Staff											
Staff communicate goals, purposes, expectations	5	5.5	5.8	5	5	2.6	6.5	5	4.3	5.25	2.6-5.8
Staff verbally recognize youth's efforts and accomplishments	6	5.5	5.1	6	6.5	3.6	5.5	5.5	5.3	5	3.6-6.5
Staff assist youth without taking control	7	6	5.4	6.5	6.6	2.3	6	5.5	5	5.25	2.3-7
Staff ask youth to expand upon their answers and ideas	7	4	4.2	6.5	6	2.3	5	5.5	3.6	3	2.3-7
Staff challenge youth to move beyond their current level of competency	7	6	5.3	6.5	6	2.3	5	3	2.6	3.5	2.3-7
Staff employ varied teaching strategies	5	3	3.8	5.5	4.6	1.6	1	4	2.3	1.5	1.5-5.5
Staff plan for/ask youth to work together	3	5.5	4	6.5	5.75	2.3	1	5	1.6	3.75	1.6-6.5

Domain Item Rating (All ratings are average score across activities, scale mid-point = 4.0)	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5	Site 6	Site 7	Site 8	Site 9	Site 10	Range All Sites
Range by Site: Instructional Strategies	3-7	3-6	3.8-5.8	5-6.5	4.6-6.6	1.6-3.6	1-6.5	3-5.5	1.6-5.3	1.5-5.25	
Mean Score by Site: Instructional Strategies	5.71	5.07	4.8	6.07	5.78	2.43	4.29	4.79	3.53	3.9	
Content and Structure: Activity											
Activities are well-organized	5	5	6	5	5.25	1.5	7	4	2.2	5	1.5-5.25
Activities challenge students intellectually, creatively, developmentally, and/or physically	6	6	5.8	5.5	6.25	1	5	3.5	2.5	5.25	1-6.25
Activities involve the practice and/or progression of skills	5	5	5.4	6.5	6	1	5	4	2.5	5	1-6.5
Activities require analytic thinking	6	5	6	6.5	5.75	1	5	3	2.5	4.5	1-6.5
Range by Site: Activity	5-6	5-6	5.4-6	5.5-6.5	5.25-6.25	1-1.5	5-7	3.5-4	2.2-2.5	4.5-5.5	
Mean Score by Site: Activity	5.5	5.25	5.8	5.9	5.8	1.13	5.5	3.63	2.43	4.94	
Rating of SAFE Features											
Sequenced – The activity builds progressively sequenced and advanced skills and knowledge and challenge youth to achieve goals	6	6	6	5	6	2	6	3.5	2.6	5.3	2-6
Active – Youth actively engaged in learning. They lead/participate in discussions, develop or research a product, contribute their original ideas, work together, take on leadership roles, and/or are highly oriented toward completing tasks	6	4.5	6	6	6.25	1.6	6	3.5	2	5.5	1.6-6.25
Personally focused – The activity strengthens relationships among youth and between youth and staff	3	5.5	5.5	6	5.5	3.6	6.5	4	2.3	4.5	2.3-6.5
Explicit – The activity explicitly targets specific learning and/or developmental goals	6	6.5	6	6	6.5	2	5.5	4	2.3	5.3	2-6.5
Range by Site: Safe Features	3-6	4.5-6.5	5.5-6	5-6	5.5-6.5	1.6-3.6	5.5-6.5	3.5-4	2-2.6	4.5-5.5	
Mean Score by Site: SAFE Features	5.25	5.63	5.88	5.75	5.94	2.3	6	3.75	2.3	5.15	

Discussion of Ratings - Relationship Building: Among Youth

All sites except Site 9 scored at or above the scale mid-point on the three first indicators, which focus on the youth to youth and youth to staff behaviors. All but three sites (numbers 6, 7 & 10) continue to show strong evidence of the next two indicators of students assisting one another and student collaboration. It is noted that the final two indicators are more reliant on the mode of program delivery than they are on the attitudes of the students. Results of the observation's focus on the other areas of this instrument confirm the inter-relationship of the constructs measured.

Discussion of Ratings - Participation: By Youth

Participants were observed to be on task at all observed sites, and to listen attentively to peers and staff at all but one site (#4). As with the Relationship Building indicators, in the three indicators more reliant on the mode of program delivery than on the attitude of the participants, four of the ten sites fail to show strong indications of participants contributing ideas and opinions, having opportunities to make meaningful choices, or to take leadership roles and responsibilities ranging from levels where the exemplar is not present (Scale = 1) to that the exemplar may occur once or twice but is not maintained throughout the observation (Scale=3). Four of the sites have an overall mean score on this part of the scale which falls below the scale mid-point. All four of those sites are below the scale mid-point on four of the five indicators. Youth participation measures are weak, which may indicate instructor centered control in activities in these programs.

Discussion of Ratings - Relationship Building: Staff with Youth

All programs show strong indications on the first four of these indicators showing that staff is positive, equitable and inclusive towards all youth. Four of the sites show patchy evidence of encouragement of youth to share ideas, three of whom also show sporadic personal engagement with program youth. Staff guiding of positive peer interactions is very weak in four sites. Program sites showing broad ranges on these measures should consider interventions to build on their strengths to address their weaknesses.

Discussion of Ratings - Instructional Strategies by Staff

Site 6 did not reach the scale mid-point on any indicators in this domain and continues to have a mean score below the scale mid-point. Sites 9 & 10 continue to show weaknesses in indicators referencing instructor centered environments, and both also did not achieve a mean score above the scale mid-point. Sites 1, 2, 3, 7 & 8 continue to present reasonable scores, with some notable points of weakness. Sites 4 and 5 score above the scale mid-point again here, and for the rest of the reported observations.

Discussion of Ratings - Activity

Weakest again are Sites 6 & 9, with observation data indicating their activities are not well organized, do not challenge students, do not involve the practice or progression of skills or analytic thinking. Site 8 is the weakest of the remaining eight sites, with a mean score just below the scale mid-point. Quality does matter, and the component attributes of the program activities recorded by this part of the observation scale can serve to explain some of the previous observation data. Sites 1, 2, 3, 7 & 8 have their issues, but the activities they deliver are organized, challenging and include the development of skills and the practice of higher order thinking. It is probably the information on this and the following report grid (on SAFE program features) that provide some insight into the previously reported observation data for each of these sites.

Discussion of Ratings - SAFE Activity Features (Activities are – Sequenced, Active, Personally Focused, and Explicit)

Sites 6 & 9 continue to show the weakest activity attributes, both scoring a mean of 2.3 (2=Exemplar may occur momentarily but is not sustained). Site 8 is the weakest of the remaining eight. All other sites achieve a mean score of 5 or greater, indicating that the exemplar is evident or strongly evident.

General Findings on Establishing Program Quality Measures

Following the site visit observations where data was collected using the OST instrument, the data was compiled and analyzed. Program managers at each site were offered summary reports of the data that had been collected at their site. When requested, a summary report for each site was written and provided to program managers to support their program improvement efforts. The OST tool that was used was shared on site with site directors in an effort to be both transparent about what was being observed and also to offer the tool for them to use in their local evaluation. Site managers reported to the State evaluator that they would find the information collected using the OST tool helpful in their planning of future staff development foci. Many site managers expressed their appreciation for being provided with the tool and thought it could be a useful guide for staff development. Areas for improvement identified during the observations were discussed with the site coordinator during the site visit debrief, along with possible ways to address the identified issues.

The summary site visit reports provided to program directors were written to be helpful to the individual grantee and were not part of the State evaluation contract. Program managers were assured that while the names of their programs were known to NYSED, site specific data and information would not be reported individually to NYSED managers. Rather the data collected from all sites would be aggregated and be provided to the State managers to provide information regarding point of service quality that could be addressed by the Statewide Technical Assistance Center in future trainings.

The purpose of these State evaluation activities was to explore strategies for collecting and compiling data on the quality of the programs being funded through this grant. As a result of the data collection summarized above and discussion with some of the local evaluators at one NYSAN Annual conference, the State evaluators recommended that the NYSED managers consider requiring that local evaluators visit their program sites at least twice each year for observations of program activities using a research-based protocol such as the OST Observation Instrument. This data thus collected could be compiled as part of a State evaluation to ascertain the level and intensity of program quality in the 21st CCLC programs across the State. [This proposed requirement is included in the Evaluation Manual currently being prepared by Research Works and under consideration by the NYSED managers.]

Section Four

State Evaluator Review of Local Program Narrative Evaluation Reports

This section discusses findings from one of the data collection strategies that were implemented by RWI as additional to the original evaluation's scope to supplement and support findings from the required evaluative activities summarized in Sections Two and Three of this report.

Programs had been using external evaluators on a voluntary basis for a number of years before NYSED hired RWI as their first State evaluators of this program in October 2006. The roles and responsibilities of those local evaluators varied widely across the programs. While not all local evaluators at the time were actually hired to do extensive evaluations of the local programs (many were hired only to complete the data entry into the PPICS for the APR), RWI was aware of some implementation and impact evaluations that were being carried out. A general request to all external evaluators to share any local narrative reports with RWI was sent out by the Project Director early in the State evaluation in 2006. The purpose of that request was for the new State evaluators to use the local evaluation information to catch-up on the condition of the program as it was operating in the State. A number of local evaluators and their project directors graciously shared their local evaluation information with the RWI State evaluators. Beginning with the second contract year (2007-2008) the State evaluators decided to use information from local evaluation reports to support their data collection, analysis and reporting responsibilities regarding the ten required site visits each year. For that reason, they requested the local evaluation reports from the ten sites randomly selected for a site visit as part of their site background review process. This section presents data collected in the 2008-2009 evaluation contract year (Year 3 of that contract). However, the conclusions and discussion of the recommendations in this section draw on data collected over the first three program years.

Introduction

In each of the first three years of the statewide evaluation (2006-2009), Research Works reviewed local program evaluation reports. Initially, this review was to get a sense of what kinds of data was being collected, and for what purpose, by the local evaluators and to assess the degree to which the evaluations themselves, based on the reports provided to their clients, appeared to be useful to the client. In 2008-2009 (Year 3), RWI created a checklist to use in the review of these evaluation reports in an attempt to clarify an understanding and a means of reporting to the NYSED managers, some of the disparity found among local program evaluations. Based on this assessment, the local reports of the evaluations of the ten case study sites in 2008-2009 ranged from very poor to very high quality. The types of data that were collected varied widely as did the amount of useful information provided to the client.

Summary of Review of Local Evaluation Reports 2008-2009

This following table presents a snapshot overview of the eight local evaluation reports that were reviewed by the statewide evaluators to get an idea of the quality of the evaluations that sub-grantees were receiving. In particular, RWI was interested in what types of data was collected for what purpose, and if the purpose of their data collection activities were made explicit in the reports that were presented to grantees. In other words, did the evaluation reports provide useful information to grantees to inform their ongoing program improvement efforts?

As can be seen, five of the eight reports did not address the program's implementation. Implementation evaluation monitors (among other things) the adherence of program roll-out to the original intervention design included in the grant proposal. This is important because the program's funding was awarded primarily because their proposed goals, objectives and supporting activities were judged to fit the goals and objectives of the program's funders (in this case the United States Congress). This absence of implementation evaluation was of particular concern to the State evaluation and the NYSED managers because the site visits of case study programs during years one and two (ten each year) suggested that not all programs were being implemented as designed, and that the programs as implemented at times bore little resemblance to the program design that was approved for funding.⁵ If the local program evaluators' roles included addressing fidelity of implementation as part of their evaluations, there might have been fewer programs where lack of fidelity was an issue. Evaluations that address outcomes only without addressing implementation are not useful on the local, state or national level. This is for a number of reasons. The primary reason is that if a program shows positive (or negative) effects on the outcomes of interest, without information on **what** intervention was implemented and caused the effect, no further use of the program findings is possible. If there is no way to determine if the program was implemented as planned, if the program was reaching its target population or what the quality of the program services were, there is no way to attribute cause to either positive or negative outcomes.

⁵ Case study analyses in all three years of the statewide evaluation included reviews of original grant proposals, reviews of program schedules and calendars, site visit observations, interviews with program directors and reviews of evaluation reports.

Table 1: Data Collected by Local Evaluators of the 10 Sites In Addition to Data for the APR

Grantee	Report on Implementation	Student Survey and Clear About Purpose	Parent Survey and Clear About Purpose	Site Visit/ Observation and Clear About Purpose	APR data Analyzed for local purpose	Local APR use clear	Data on All Program Objectives	Made appropriate recommendations
Site 1	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	-	No	No
Site 2	Yes	Yes (2)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Site 3	No Data Provided to the State Evaluators by Local Evaluator of This Program							
Site 4	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	-	No	No
Site 5	No	No	No	Yes but limited usefulness	No	-	No	No
Site 6	No	No	No	No	Yes	Not entirely	Yes	Not entirely
Site 7	No Data Provided to the State Evaluators by Local Evaluator of This Program							
Site 8	No	Yes	Yes	No	No, APR data only reported in bar graph form	-	No	No
Site 9	Yes, extensive	No program in Year 1	No program in Year 1	No program in Year 1	No	-	No program in Year 1	Yes
Site 10	Yes. somewhat	No	No	No	Yes	Not entirely	Yes	Not entirely

Conclusions and Recommendation for Further Data Collection

Only four of the eight evaluation reports included any data or analyses on the local program's objectives and only two of the eight evaluation reports made recommendations to inform the program managers on strategies to consider in meeting its program's objectives. This raised some serious concerns regarding how local program managers and their evaluators understood the role and function of evaluation in the performance based accountability environment to establish program value and worth. The State evaluation data shows that some of the evaluators were untrained or unqualified as evaluators and provided their project directors with poor advice on the functional usefulness of evaluative information. In other cases, the State evaluation data indicates that some local managers hired 'evaluators' only to provide compliance reporting in the APR. The State evaluators recommended to State managers that a more comprehensive data set would be necessary to establish the quality and utilization of local evaluative information in New York.

In order to get an overview of local evaluation statewide, a reporting template was used in Year 4 (2009-2010), the first of two extension years to the statewide evaluation contract. Originally designed by RWI in an attempt to provide a way for the NYSED managers to standardize local evaluation reporting, the Evaluation Reporting Template was designed by RWI and approved by the State managers. The final template provided a mechanism whereby all local program evaluators would be required to report on their evaluation services. The template, and its mandated use, was put into effect in Year 4 (2009-2010) of the State evaluation. A review of the information collected on these self reported templates, indicated a much higher percentage of evaluators than the site visit data indicated, reporting that they did monitor implementation, they did visit sites, and they did monitor the quality of services. However, when evaluators were asked on the same templates how they measured their program objectives, their responses appeared to be inconsistent. In a slight majority of those reporting, evaluators reported that the collection of only the data elements required for the APR were sufficient to measure their local objectives. Review by the State evaluators revealed that the objective named as thus measured often could not be measured using the identified APR data element(s).

The review of the Evaluation Report Templates submitted by local program evaluators also provided information indicating that some evaluators were evaluating a large number of local programs. It is assumed that if the evaluator is, in fact, a large evaluation company or organization, such as one in New York which evaluates 30 programs involving over 100 sites that several evaluators would be assigned to the evaluations. It is interesting to note that in the case of that same large organization only one person was given the responsibility of completing and submitting the Evaluation Report Templates for those 30 programs. In other instances of multiple local evaluation contracts, it is clear that different evaluators are assigned to the evaluations of different programs under the same umbrella organization. There was also an individual evaluator who submitted evaluation reports for 20 programs. After this circumstance regarding the evaluation of a large number of programs in the State was verified, RWI cautioned the NYSED managers that if evaluator requirements were mandated that provided for a comprehensive, utilization focused evaluation to be provided, it would not be possible for one individual to conduct 20 evaluations, and that their recommendation was to make the field aware of possible changes to the State requirements regarding local evaluation of these programs.

The End Product - Concerns about Evaluation Value for Money

Based on reviews of local evaluation reports to clients during the first three years (2006-2009) of the statewide evaluation and reviews of the Evaluation Report Templates submitted by 146 of the 170 grantees in Year 4 (2009-2010), it was the State evaluators' contention that if grantees were required to hire a local program evaluator they should be assured of value for that program expenditure. RWI reported this concern to the NYSED managers regarding the quality of the evaluations being provided. As a result, the NYSED managers responded by requesting that RWI develop an evaluation manual that explains evaluation best practices in general and evaluation requirements for this program in New York State specifically. The development of this manual has been the major focus of the statewide evaluation in Year 5 (2010-2011).

In addition, during the development of the **Program Evaluation Manual** for local evaluators it became clear to the evaluators at RWI that project managers (directors and program coordinators, specifically) could also benefit from a manual for clarification; therefore, RWI has worked on the development of the **Project Managers' Guide to Evaluation**. This became clear as they reflected on the Evaluation Standards and Guiding Principles of the American Evaluation Association (AEA) and their own extensive experience as professional evaluators. Evaluation provides information based in data to decision-makers who should use that clear, unbiased information to inform high stakes and high impact decisions. It seemed obvious to the team at RWI that to get the most for their evaluation dollar, program managers would have to know what to ask, expect and demand from their evaluators. The Manual and The Guide are being developed in parallel, with some of the same information. Drafts of both have been given to local program reviewers: local evaluators have reviewed the first draft of the **Evaluation Manual** and local project managers have reviewed the first draft of the **Guide to Evaluation Handbook**. Expected completion date is August 15th for submission to NYSED for review, revision and approval.

Section Five

Surveys Regarding Strength of Partnerships and Services for Parents of Participants

This section presents the findings from a set of more than twenty targeted surveys of key program stakeholders carried out over the period of the state evaluation. The targeted surveys have been used to triangulate on data collected through other data collection strategies, to clarify findings by seeking ‘further information’, or to verify initial evaluative interpretation of data collected in the ongoing evaluation study. Two sets of illustrative data are presented here. The first data set discussed focused on the strength of program management designs by requesting information about program inter-agency partnerships. The second data set was collected to ascertain the degree and extent of core services provided for parents by local programs.

Introduction

Two New York State Sub-Objectives for which there is no APR/PPICS data collected are: **Sub-Objective 2.3**, *Centers will establish and maintain partnerships within the community that continue to increase levels of community collaboration in planning, implementing and sustaining programs*, and **Sub-Objective 2.4**, *100% of Centers will offer services to parents of participating students*. A survey for program directors concerning their programs’ partnerships and parent participation in their program was administered online in July of 2009. Each of the first three years of the statewide evaluation has included surveys addressing the issues of partnerships and activities for parents, but this survey attempted to also explore grantees’ perceptions about the strength of their partnerships and the extent of their services to parents of participants. Since the response to these surveys has been poor, and because self report is not a very robust evaluation technique, the survey was not as informative as it had been hoped. The issue of poor response to State evaluator surveys was discussed in some detail annually with the State managers. An inability or unwillingness on the part of local programs to provide information voluntarily led to a final set of decisions that will put in place required reporting of information that is critical to the ability of the New York State Education Department to measure its achievement of its own Objectives and Sub-objectives for this program. This is especially the case where there is not data that can be used to measure the State Objectives and Sub-objectives included in the data capture for the PPICS/APR.

Findings from 2008-2009 Program Director Survey

Grantees were asked about their partners. The request for proposals that was answered in order to receive funding from this grant stipulated that each program had to have at least one partner. Community based organizations (CBO’s) that received grants were required to have an education partner (school or school district). For education organizations the requirement was at least one CBO partner. The survey asked programs to report the number of community partners they had. With 79 responding (N=79), the range was between 0 and 24, the most common response was 3 and the average response was 4.6.

To clarify whether the programs differentiated between community partners and vendors of services to the program, program directors were asked to report how many of their community partners were also vendors. 79 directors responded, with 37 indicating that they had no community partners who were also vendors to the program. Remaining responses ranged from 1 – 7, with the most common response being 3 and the average being 1.5. Analysis also revealed:

- 37 reported having no community partners who were vendors to the program
- 14 reported that *all* of their community partners were also vendors
- 28 reported that some of their partners were vendors and some were not.

Grantees were also asked to rate the strength of their relationship with their community partners. With an N of 77, 25 reported *Very strong*, 43 reported *Strong*, and 9 reported *Moderate*, with none reporting weak or very weak. However, as these findings were self-reported, they are not strong reliable measures.

Other questions designed to elicit more information on this topic had to do with advisory boards. Of the 79 responding to the question: *Do you have an advisory board for your 21st CCLC program?* 55 (70%) responded *Yes* and 24 (30%) responded *No*. The 55 grantees who reported having an advisory board were asked: *Do any of your community partners serve on that advisory board?* 43 responded ‘*Yes*’ and 12 responded ‘*No*’. It is often the case that partner groups are made up of agency representatives that do not have decision-making power within their organization. Since partner organizations usually do not have any power either in reference to the program or in reference to their own agencies and their role in the partnership, attendees/members being drawn from mid-management is not surprising. Advisory Boards are different in most public sector environments. Advisory Boards often have agency representation from upper management within their own organization, bringing with it the power to speak on behalf of their organization. Advisory Boards can have some fiscal say in the running of programs, although this is not often the case in this program area.

Therefore it is difficult to report on the strength of the community partnerships, which was one of New York State’s Objectives. RWI has offered to design a generic instrument or instruments for local evaluators to use to measure the initial, then ongoing, strength of local partnerships. Non-required instruments will be included in the Evaluation Handbook and is discussed elsewhere in this summary.

The other area that this survey was designed to inform was the extent of services provided for parents of participants. As noted by analysis of the APR data, 88.8% of centers provided services to *adults* during the 2007-2008 school year. It is not possible with the data provided in the APR to discern how many centers actually offered services to *parents of participating children*. In order to better determine the extent of services offered to parents, program directors were asked:

Do you offer services to parents of participating children? 72 responded ‘*Yes*’ and 7 responded ‘*No*’.

Program directors were asked: *On average how often do/did you offer services specifically designed for parents this program year?* Only 13 % reported offering services for parents

more often than weekly. 32% (the mode) reported offering services to parents monthly. The breakdown can be seen in the table below.

Table 1: On average how often do/did you offer services specifically designed for parents this program year?

	Number of Responses
Offered services for parents more often than weekly	14 (18%)
Offered services weekly	2 (3%)
Offered services monthly	25 (32%)
Offered bimonthly services	13 (17%)
Offered services quarterly	12 (15%)
Offered services annually	2 (3%)
Total Number of Responses	78

Program directors were also asked to rate the strength of parent involvement with their programs. With 78 responding, 6 reported *Very strong*, 49 reported *Moderate*, 11 reported *Weak*, and no one reported *Very weak*. Although this is self-report it does indicate that many program directors acknowledge room for improvement here with nearly 75% acknowledging that the parent involvement in their programs is moderate or weak.

Conclusions

This section was included in the Evaluation Summary in order to illustrate some of the challenges that faced the state evaluators in this program. It could be argued that without an external evaluation being carried out at the state level programs focused largely on the compliance reporting requirements. While important to a national evaluation, many of the data elements collected and reported in that system are not useful to local evaluations. This survey and others used by the State evaluators provided information regarding the likelihood that programs would report specific information voluntarily to the State evaluators and led to some decisions regarding required reporting to the State evaluation.

Questions regarding the nature, strength and function of community partnerships, advisory boards and parent focused program activities may seem at first to be unrelated. However, they do all concern the relationship between these programs and adults in their community. As the program name implies, the relationship between this program and its community is expected to be a focus of local programs. Unclear purposes for community partners, advisory boards and the primary caregivers of program participants risk undermining the foundation cause → effect assumptions of the program’s theory of change.

Section Six

Study of the Effectiveness of the Statewide Technical Assistance Center (TAC)

Provision of technical assistance to programs funded under this federally funded program is strongly recommended by the funder. For the original contract period of this evaluation (2006-2009), the Technical Assistance Center (TAC) in New York was tasked to operate through an existing network of Student Support Services Centers (SSSC's). The initial scope of the evaluation summarized in this document included its assessment of the effectiveness of the TAC in building the capacity of the SSSC's to provide technical assistance to local programs. The summary of process and findings provided in this document are drawn from that period of the evaluation.

Introduction

In its original three year contract with the New York State Education Department, Research Works was to measure the effectiveness of the Statewide Technical Assistance Center (TAC) in Years 2 and 3 of the evaluation (2007-2009). In order to measure the effectiveness of TAC's efforts to build the capacity of the Student Support Services Centers to provide meaningful professional development experiences for grantees, RWI examined the extent and quality of the support the Student Support Services Centers (SSSC's) were providing to programs and the extent and quality of support provided to the SSSCs by the Statewide Technical Assistance Center. It should be noted that, although the TAC was required to provide technical support to local programs through the SSSC's, it has no managerial authority relative to the SSSC's. In other words, the TAC could request that the SSSC's perform certain services, but did not have the authority to insist. RWI also evaluated the four bi-annual conferences, "The After-School Experience (TASE)" held during those two years which were planned and executed by the TAC.

Capacity Building of the Regional Student Support Services Centers

In order to determine the Statewide Technical Assistance Center's (TAC's) effectiveness in building the capacity of the Student Support Services Centers (SSSCs), RWI examined the extent and quality of the support the Student Support Services Centers were providing to programs and the extent and quality of support provided to the SSSCs by the Statewide Technical Assistance Center. To that end, the following data collection activities took place in Years 2 and 3 (2007-2009):

- ⊕ Interviews were conducted with the TAC staff in Years 2 and 3 asking them about the support they have provided the SSSCs and other issues regarding their role.
- ⊕ A survey was distributed in Year 2 to program managers/directors asking them about the support they have received from the SSSCs.

- ⊕ Individual interviews were conducted in Year 2, a group interview was conducted in Year 3 and a survey was conducted in Year 3 for the SSSC directors asking them both about the support they had received from TAC and the support they had provided to programs.

As reported by the TAC director in interviews with the State evaluators, the TAC had been successful in building relationships with the Centers (SSSCs) and through these relationships the TAC was able to keep track of what was going on in the field.

Regarding what **areas the TAC is most often contacted for help by the SSSCs**, the Director reported these to be:

- ⊕ Roll-outs, initiatives, and clarification of information from the NYSED.

The TAC Program Manager was asked about the amount and type of support the TAC provides to the SSSCs.

- ⊕ Regarding resources and consultation, she reported that they provide assistance several times a week, sometimes several times per day depending on the time of year. During the summer it is mostly help with the APR reporting process.
- ⊕ Regarding training, she reported they provide training two times per year at the TASE Conferences (these conferences have since been suspended).
- ⊕ The major areas of need include FS-10 (NYS Budget Form) questions, and
- ⊕ During the regional trainings provided by the SSSCs the TAC might do a piece of the training. The areas of training that they typically will provide include: family involvement; and, use of the NYSAN QSA.

The Executive Director of the TAC reported that having ongoing telephone conference meetings with the SSSCs was critical as a means of sharing their needs and concerns with the TAC. She said that has been the glue and has provided them with the sense of pulling together.

*The State evaluators noted that this is an inefficient management model. The Technical Assistance Center should have managerial responsibility for **all** technical assistance provided to 21st Century Community Learning Centers using federal flow-through dollars. This responsibility should include fiscal tracking, targeted evaluation of success, and ongoing monitoring of capacity building within local programs and regions of programs.*

All six directors of the Student Support Services Centers responded to an online survey distributed in March of 2008. Asked about how often they have contact with the Technical Assistance Center, five out of six reported they had contact about once every 2-3 weeks with one reporting contact 1 or more times per week. Five of the six responded that contact was initiated equally between the TAC and the Centers. One said that it was the TAC who more often contacted them. All six said the TAC was extremely responsive to their requests for assistance.

The SSSC directors also participated in a group interview conducted by RWI in July of 2009. Asked to describe the mission of the Student Support Services Centers, directors said it was to provide capacity building and linkages that support academics and address barriers to learning. They also facilitated development and maintenance of optimal learning

environments “where individuals are valued”. The SSSCs helped with conflict resolution, mentoring and teaching.

The directors were asked about the support provided to them by the TAC. All the directors were in agreement that the TAC’s support to them has been tremendous and that there is great value in what the Center does. They believed that the semi-annual conferences are essential and needed by the grantees. They found the TAC to be responsive, saying that you can call them anytime. They also reported that the TAC staff has a broad perspective, understanding rural, suburban and small city, as well as New York City.

In summary: The original model of the Technical Assistance Center working through the SSSC’s was an inefficient means of delivering much needed support to grant funded programs. Program needs emerged as quite different from those usually supported by the Centers. Regional technical assistance consultants trained in project management, budget and human resource support could be more effective than experts in academic support and strategies to address barriers to learning.

This model may also have put undue stress on the staff of the Technical Assistance Center and prevented their full attention to be focused on other pressing circumstances that arose within the program delivery environment.

The After School Experience (TASE) Conference Evaluations

As part of their State contract, the Technical Assistance Center was responsible for the event management of two state conferences per year for 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs. One conference was held in New York City and the second was held in ‘upstate’ New York. Officially, these conferences were held in order to provide professional development opportunities for grantees. These conferences have since been curtailed.

Beginning in Year 2 of this evaluation (2007-2008), RWI evaluated the usefulness of these events by surveying participants both on site and four months following the Fall TASE (The After-School Experience) Conference. A four month follow-up survey was not done following the Spring conference as the Technical Assistance Center felt that as it would occur in October of the next program year many participants would no longer be available to answer the surveys. Research on evaluation indicates that ‘day of’ surveys of participant response to conference (or professional development) activities is less reliable than information collected some weeks following the experience. This is because of a number of human and professional characteristics, ranging from incorrect judgments regarding how useful any particular information presented will be back in their everyday environment to being ‘caught up in the moment’ of positive feelings due to the mood of the conference or professional development activity.

Approximately four months after attending, conference attendees were asked for feedback on both the usefulness of the information provided to them at the Fall 2007 conference and to provide information on what aspect of the conference they found most useful to their work in the program. A very brief summary of these two areas of inquiry regarding usefulness of information and training participants took away from the Year 2 Fall 2007 TASE Conference, four months later, appears in the tables below. Following those two

tables is one presenting responses regarding the usefulness of the Fall 2008 conference information.

Table 1: Usefulness of Fall 2007 TASE Conference (n=137)

Usefulness	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Extremely Useful – I have applied much of what I learned at the conference	36	26%
Fairly Useful – I have applied some of what I learned or plan to in the future	90	66%
Not Very Useful	8	6%
Not Sure	3	2%
Total	137	100%

Only 8% of participants responding to the survey indicated that they found the information they received at the conference not very useful or were not sure what to do with the information. As can be seen from Table 5 below, respondents indicated they found the opportunity to network and the information presented in workshops the two most useful aspects of the conference.

Table 2: What Was Most Useful About the Conference? (n=115)

Most Useful Aspect of Conference	Number of Respondents	Percentage
The opportunity to network	40	35%
The workshops	37	32%
Access to resources	23	2%
Inspiration & motivation from keynote speakers	10	9%
Did not find the conference to be very useful	5	4%

At approximately four months following the Fall TASE Conference in Year 3 (2008), participants were again asked to respond to a survey regarding its usefulness. Participants were asked to reflect for a moment and consider whether they had used any materials, strategies, ideas or information gained from their attendance at the conference in their current work with 21st CCLC programming. The responses were as follows:

Table 3: Usefulness of Fall 2008 TASE Conference (n=108)

Usefulness	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Extremely useful. I have applied much of what I learned at the conference	26	24%
Fairly useful. I have applied some of what I learned or plan to in the future	68	63%
Not very useful. I haven't really applied anything	7	7%
Not sure	7	6%
Total	108	100%

Participants were also asked to report on what they found to be the most useful aspect of the conference. The most common response given to the question about usefulness of the conference was, again, “Networking with other program managers/grantees”, with 22 responding thus. The second most given response, with 13, was the unspecified response of workshops. Eleven identified the key note speakers as useful and added that they were inspirational. Another 11 referred to the perspective gained by sharing ideas and challenges from across the state and informal conversations which could be considered a type of networking. Seven found the evaluator sessions, overview of the statewide evaluation or networking with other evaluators to be the most useful aspect of the conference.

The results of these four month follow-up surveys, as well as the on-site surveys, were reported to the Technical Assistance Center, with NYSED’s permission, for their future planning purposes.

Findings and Follow-up

The evaluation addressed the statewide technical assistance model already operating when the evaluators were hired. The use of legacy support systems was assessed initially within the existing parameters of the State program. This included using state conferences for the bulk of the technical support offered to programs, with the programs traveling to the support providers.

As the Student Support Services Centers were defunded at the State level, funds no longer provided for two State conferences per year and the contract for the Technical Assistance Center came up for rebidding, the evaluation turned its attention to the other recommendations made and acted on by the State managers.

A number of initial findings still stand. First, the Technical Assistance Center should be given managerial authority regarding all technical assistance provided in New York using federal pass through funds. Second, the network of support professionals should be trained in program management including human resources and budget, and professional social networking. And finally, that the Technical Assistance Center should position itself as a leader in this area in order to provide information and resources to the field on all aspects of the complex theory of change that is the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.

Section Seven

Summary of the Statewide Evaluation's Purpose and Key Findings of the Statewide Evaluation of 21st CCLC Program in New York State 2006-2011

Purpose of State Evaluation Years 1-3 (2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009)

- ⊕ Measure the extent to which the New York State Education Department (NYSED) has met its objectives related to effectiveness and services provided.
- ⊕ Measure the performance of a sample of thirty 21st CCLC case study programs selected by NYSED to be studied, ten programs per year, over the three years of this initial contract period.
- ⊕ Address the effectiveness of the 21st CCLC Statewide Technical Assistance Center (TAC) with regard to high quality statewide professional development events for 21st CCLC grantees each year; provision of high quality technical assistance to the Regional Centers that provide 21st CCLC services; and in completing their responsibilities for the Annual Performance Report (APR).

Key Findings of the State Evaluation (Years 1 - 3):

- ⊕ Following a review of the information available in the PPICS, it was determined that the state level evaluation would not be able to adequately report on the degree to which the NYSED is meeting some of its identified objectives. **Recommendation:** *Through ongoing discussions with NYSED during Years 1-3 of the statewide evaluation, RWI had promoted the possible benefits of collecting additional data elements, including the possibility of collecting student level data using a unique student identifier. To explore the usefulness and feasibility of collecting this student level data, RWI proposed a composite case study of 15 sites in Year 4 of the statewide evaluation. NYSED Response to Recommendation:* NYSED agreed to the composite case study of 15 sites as part of the Year 4 evaluation activities to determine the usefulness and feasibility of collecting student level data to better inform New York State's objectives.
- ⊕ The federal legislation and related GPRA measures define a 21st CCLC program participant as someone who attends the program for 30 days or more. They require that programs report the number of days which participants attend as number of participants in each of the three day-keyed spans: 30-59 days; 60-89 days; and 90 days or more. The federal reporting system then links performance data to these spans of days attended. In the first three years' of this NY State Evaluation, it was learned through surveys and case study site visits that grantees varied widely both in how they identified a participant and how they calculated a day of participation. **Issue 1** – Some grantees count students as program participants who are “on site” but not necessarily participating in 21st CCLC funded activities. **Issue 2** – Because there is no ‘standard day’ identified by either the

federal or State managers, some grantees count as little as 20 minutes of participation on a particular day as '1 day'. Therefore, a regular attendee could be someone who comes for as little as 10 hours over the course of a year. As noted by the evaluators, it seems unlikely that participation at that 'dosage' level would be at a high enough level to expect measurable change in student performance. Conversely, there is also programming that can last for 6 or more hours on a particular day, such as a Saturday or vacation day but which is also considered one day of participation. The 'day' of participation, in that case, would be an under-representation of how much program time participants were receiving. Rather than operating in the performance based system as a discrete measure of intervention delivery or 'dosage', the program day was found to be a continuous measure that covered a span of intervention time (dosage) from one quarter hour to more than six hours. **Recommendation:** *RWI recommended that the State Education Department managers establish guidelines for grantees regarding who may be considered a 21st CCLC attendee and the parameters of what constitutes a day of participation in terms of number of hours equated with one program day. Based on the federal legislation which offers a guideline of 3 hours of programming 5 days a week, it seems that the legislative intent was that a day of participation would be 3 hours in duration, and that 30 days would be at least 90 hours of participation over the course of a year. However, that has not been confirmed at the federal level. RWI therefore recommended that NYSED consider a slightly lower number, or two hours of participation required before 'a day' of participation can be accrued.* **NYSED Response to Recommendation:** *The NYSED has agreed that standardization of what constitutes '1 day' of participation should be established. While it is anticipated that the NYSED may establish a definition regarding what constitutes 'a day' of participation in terms of time, in the future, there has been no change to date. The NYSED highly encourages grantees to take attendance in each activity and to track dosage by activity at the student level. Grantees will continue to be required to report data on regular attendees, that is, students attending for 30 days or more, in the APR.*

- ⊕ Prior to 2008, an external evaluation was not required by grantees. Case study site visits, survey data and a review of evaluation reports from case study grantees that had an evaluator informed RWI's recommendation to the NYSED that grantees be required to have an external evaluator. **Recommendation:** *NYSED to mandate the use of an external evaluator beginning in the 2008-2009 program year.* **NYSED response to the Recommendation:** *Beginning with Cohort 4 (funded in 2008), NYSED mandated all grantees to hire an external local evaluator.*
- ⊕ A review of evaluation reports from case study sites from the 2008-2009 program year revealed that there was an issue with regard to the quality of evaluations being provided to grantees. There were a number of reasons for this initial finding. For example: use of the services of external evaluators by program management was a new process to many; and, some of the local evaluators were new to the practice and in need of support. Based on the measured weaknesses of the evaluation reports reviewed, the RWI evaluators identified the need to provide local evaluators with more structured requests for the data needed by the State. **Recommendation:** *RWI offered to design an evaluation reporting template which all local program evaluators would be required to complete and submit to the statewide evaluator.* **NYSED Response to the Recommendation:** *the NYSED managers agreed that RWI would develop and pilot the use of an evaluation reporting template to further explore the issue of local evaluation quality in the 2009 – 2010 program year. A review of these reports helped*

to inform RWI's writing of the Evaluator Manual which has been in development in Year 5 (2010-2011) of the statewide evaluation.

- ⊕ RWI interviews with the Statewide Technical Assistance Center (TAC) staff in Years 2 and 3 revealed the following beliefs: the TAC has been successful in building relationships with the Student Support Services Centers (SSSCs); through these relationships the TAC is able to keep the pulse of what is going on in the field; the TAC provides the SSSCs with support regarding resources and consultation several times a week, and sometimes several times per day, depending on the time of year; and the TAC provides training twice a year at the TASE Conference. A survey of SSSC directors indicated that all six reported that the TAC was extremely responsive to their requests for assistance. **No recommendation as SSSC's were defunded by the State.**
- ⊕ During Years 2 and 3 of this evaluation, RWI evaluated the usefulness of the bi-annual TASE (The After School Experience) Conference by surveying participants both on site and four months following the conference events. Results from the four month follow-up surveys indicated that the majority of participants found the conferences to be fairly useful, with approximately 25% finding the conferences to be extremely useful. The opportunity to network was identified by the majority of participants as the most useful aspect of the conferences. **No recommendation as conferences suspended.**

Purpose of State Evaluation - Years 4 & 5 (2009-2010, 2010-1011):

- ⊕ RWI to conduct a composite case study of 15 grantee sites (9 in NYC and 6 rest of state) in Year 4 of the Statewide Evaluation which has continued into Year 5.
- ⊕ The collection of qualitative data took place during two rounds of site visits. This qualitative data was to be used in conjunction with the quantitative data which was compiled during Years 4 & 5 of the statewide evaluation.
- ⊕ The quantitative data elements which RWI attempted to collect consisted of student level data from the 15 composite case study sites and included:
 - attendance by activity in hours for the year,
 - demographic information, and
 - pre/post data on school attendance, discipline, report card grades (1st and last quarter), State Assessments in ELA and math (previous and current year scale scores and levels) for elementary and middle school students, and credit accrual (previous and current year) for high school students.
- ⊕ Additionally, RWI attempted to collect, at three different time periods, teacher survey data at the student level, providing information on student behavior and achievement from participants' classroom teachers' perspectives.
- ⊕ At the conclusion of Year 4 and into Year 5, RWI reviewed the local program evaluation reports from local program evaluators of all 21st CCLC programs using a RWI designed Evaluation Report Template. A review of these reports informed the statewide evaluation as to what the local evaluators were including in their evaluation services. These evaluation reports were not designed to provide information regarding the outcomes of program participants but to report on data collected, its purpose and evaluation services provided.
- ⊕ As we reach the fourth quarter of Year 5, RWI is preparing a New York State 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program Evaluation Manual that includes proposed new data collection and reporting requirements and which includes proposed local program evaluation requirements.

Key Findings (Years 4 and 5):

- ⊕ The composite case study data analysis of the 15 case study sites was designed to provide in-depth information regarding program factors present in those programs with better student outcomes. In addition, RWI wanted to begin to establish if participation in certain types of activities or combinations of activities produced stronger student outcomes than others across all programs. Through the analysis of this data, RWI also would have provided initial information to establish if participation in some types of activities had more impact with certain types of students than with others. Analysis of Year 4 composite case study data has continued into Year 5 of this statewide evaluation as the State evaluators experienced protracted difficulties in collecting the necessary student level data. In spite of significant effort to get the required data, RWI was unable to get a significant portion of the data to answer the research objectives stated above

with as much rigor as was hoped. The barriers encountered with regard to the collection of this data have not only diminished how informative the data will be but has also informed recommendations to the NYSED regarding additional state-level data collection and reporting requirements. The composite case study analysis will be completed in the Summer of 2011. Reporting on the composite case study findings will be included in the Annual Report which will be made available to the NYSED in October 2011. **Recommendation:** *RWI proposed to meet with local program evaluators from across the state to explore issues they may have encountered and perhaps overcome with regard to data collection and to get their feedback regarding possible new data collection and reporting requirements to be imposed by the State.* **NYSED Response to the recommendation:** *NYSED and RWI came to the decision to seek advice and counsel from the field of current local program evaluators simultaneously. They agreed that RWI would proceed to acquire input from sources in the field as these were people who were familiar with various contexts and barriers encountered in the various contexts and could provide useful insight about data collection and reporting.*

- ⊕ In Years 4 & 5 of the state level evaluation RWI explored the idea of additional state-level data collection, first through its composite case study of 15 sites where additional student level data was collected using a unique student identifier as a pilot to determine feasibility and informative value. To further explore additional data collection requirements on the state level, in Year 5 evaluation activities included RWI meeting with local evaluators from across the state to get their feedback regarding what data elements they thought would be most useful to both a local and state level evaluation and the feasibility and potential reliability of the proposed data collection and reporting. **Recommendation:** *NYSED to consider additional data collection and reporting requirements as proposed by RWI based on RWI's own experience attempting to gather additional data from the composite case study sites and recommendations from local program evaluators.* **NYSED Response to Recommendation:** *The NYSED has been open to the possibility of imposing additional state level data collection requirements. Their primary concern has consistently been concern regarding the additional burden this would place on grantees and whether that burden is worth what the additional data will be able to inform the statewide evaluation and thus, the State. As RWI approaches the final quarter of the final year of its statewide evaluation contract, the NYSED is reviewing a first draft of the Evaluation Manual which outlines proposed new data collection and reporting requirements for grantees and additional requirements for local program evaluations. Decisions regarding additional state level requirements for data collection and reporting and local program level evaluation requirements will be made by October 2011.*
- ⊕ Year 4 evaluation activities (2009-2010) included the collection and review of local evaluation reports from all New York State program evaluators using the RWI designed Evaluation Report Template. This review revealed widely disparate services being provided. While some evaluators were providing very high quality evaluations others revealed that they lacked a basic understanding as to what their role as the local evaluator was. **Recommendation:** *RWI recommended that NYSED put in place local evaluation requirements.* **NYSED Response to the recommendation:** *NYSED asked RWI to write the Evaluation Manual in Year 5 which would state local program evaluation requirements and additional data collection and reporting requirements.*

⊕ Information from the analysis of the evaluation reports, the composite case study data collection barriers, analysis of the Evaluation Report Templates from all local program evaluators and conversations with local program evaluators from across the state has informed RWI's Year 5 task which has been the creation of the Evaluation Manual articulating both requirements for all local program evaluators and new state-level data collection and reporting requirements. **Recommendation:** *RWI's recommendations for local program evaluation requirements and additional state-level data collection and reporting requirements appear in the draft of the Evaluation Manual for Local Program Evaluators currently being reviewed by the NYSED managers and volunteer local program evaluators.* **NYSED Response to the recommendation:** *NYSED is reviewing a draft of the evaluation manual prepared by RWI and considering the proposed state-level data collection and reporting requirements and local program evaluation requirements contained therein.*

⊕ The timeline for the review of the Evaluation Manual is as follows:

- **June 2011** – First draft of Evaluation Manual provided to both local program evaluators who agreed to read and provide their feedback and to the NYSED administrators. Evaluators have been asked to provide their feedback by late June at which time RWI will bring their feedback to the discussion with NYSED administrators for their consideration.
- **Mid-August 2011** – Second draft to be prepared by RWI based on discussion with NYSED regarding the first draft document. Second draft to be made available to other entities as recommended by the NYSED for further review and advisement.
- **Late August 2011**- Final draft to be approved by NYSED. RWI to advise on formatting graphic considerations of Manual for production that could be distributed to grantees and evaluators across New York State. RWI is willing to take the lead or step back on this production aspect of the project depending on NYSED's edits and recommendations.

Appendix 1: Goals and Objectives in Evaluating Programs in Education

Education versus Organizational Definitions of Goals and Objectives

Program goals and objectives are a foundation of the grant funded universe in education. Beginning in the last two decades of the Twentieth Century, these terms as applied in Education have suffered from ‘multiple definition’. ‘Multiple definition’ is a situation where there are at least two definitions of a single term being used in the same system, usually occurring because some users of the terms carry forward a past definition, and other users apply newer ones. In Education specifically, the earlier definitions of goals and objectives were based in educational psychology, which began in the early 20th Century, and was formalized with the publication of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, the First Handbook of which was published in 1956.

Thus, in the latter half of the Twentieth Century, **objectives** were defined and applied as noted here by the *International Dictionary of Education*⁶, (they include both British and American English spellings of behavior/behavior) thus:

In curriculum development, educational psychology or educational technology the term is normally synonymous with behario(u)ral objectives, that is, specific statements of observable behario(u)r which a learner displays. (p. 247)

During the same period, **goals** were linked in their definition as:

In curriculum development goals are either high-level generalizations (aims) or specific statements of behavio(u)r which students are expected to display (objectives). (Ibid., p. 149)

Definitions of goals and objectives that migrated to Education from business/organizational management began to be used in the late 1980’s. Application of business definitions which differ considerably from the earlier psych-based definitions has confused things somewhat in Education in general, and in the design and evaluation/measurement of education-based programs.

A **goal in the business universe** is a ‘desired result a person or organization envisions, plans for and commits to achieve’⁷. In education-based books and articles from the 1990’s and later, we are asked to make sure goals follow the SMART System (for example), where goals are Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely. This has meant that the **difference between goals and objectives has become less clearly defined**. For example, one definition of objectives states that they are ‘goals that are reasonably achieved within an expected timeframe and with available resources’⁸. Other business/organizational based definitions reviewed lump together goals, objectives and targets.

⁶ G. Terry Page and J.B. Thomas, 1977, *International Dictionary of Education*. Kogan Page, London/Nichols Publishing Company, New York.

⁷ Wikipedia, downloaded July 11, 2011, crosschecked at businessdictionary.com.

⁸ www.businessdictionary.com/definition/objective.html, downloaded July 11, 2011.

Why are sorting these terms and their use important to us here? Enter the performance-based (or results-based) system now being implemented throughout the public sector in the US, including in the area of Education. The performance-based system is meant to be applied without prejudice throughout the public system and is therefore generic. That is important because the performance based system we are using has come to Education rather than having been developed from within it. The definitions that this system uses for goals and objectives are those drawn from the business/organizational management sector. ***The first point is that, within the Education sector, the move to a performance based (or results based) environment means that goals and objectives, as traditionally defined, are no longer viable in program design, program management and program evaluation.***

This does not negate the concepts of traditionally defined goals and objectives as important and necessary to any Education program, its purpose is to be functional and thereby useful to project management, management and evaluation has to adopt the monitoring system's definition of terms and their different perspective. ***The second point is that to clarify the application of goals and objectives in the new performance based accountability environment these new definitions have to be made explicit to program managers.***

The other definition that has changed in this new environment is the definition of the term **program**. In Education, a program has been (and usually still is) defined as: (1) A curriculum or combination of courses in a particular field of study; (2) An instructional sequence; or (3) A plan of procedure or events. (*International Dictionary of Education*, p. 274). The State evaluation has found that the 21st Century Programs in New York have most widely used the third definition in their program design and delivery. Compare this to a definition of program from within the same business/organizational context and from which the performance based system draws its definition a program: A program is a plan of action aimed at accomplishing a clear organizational objective, with details on what work is to be done, by whom, when, and what means or resources will be used⁹. ***Education programs in the public sector have to transition their program designs to this new definition of what constitutes a program, and to incorporate the performance based (or results based) requirements being set in place by public sector funding mechanisms, including benevolent funding sources.***

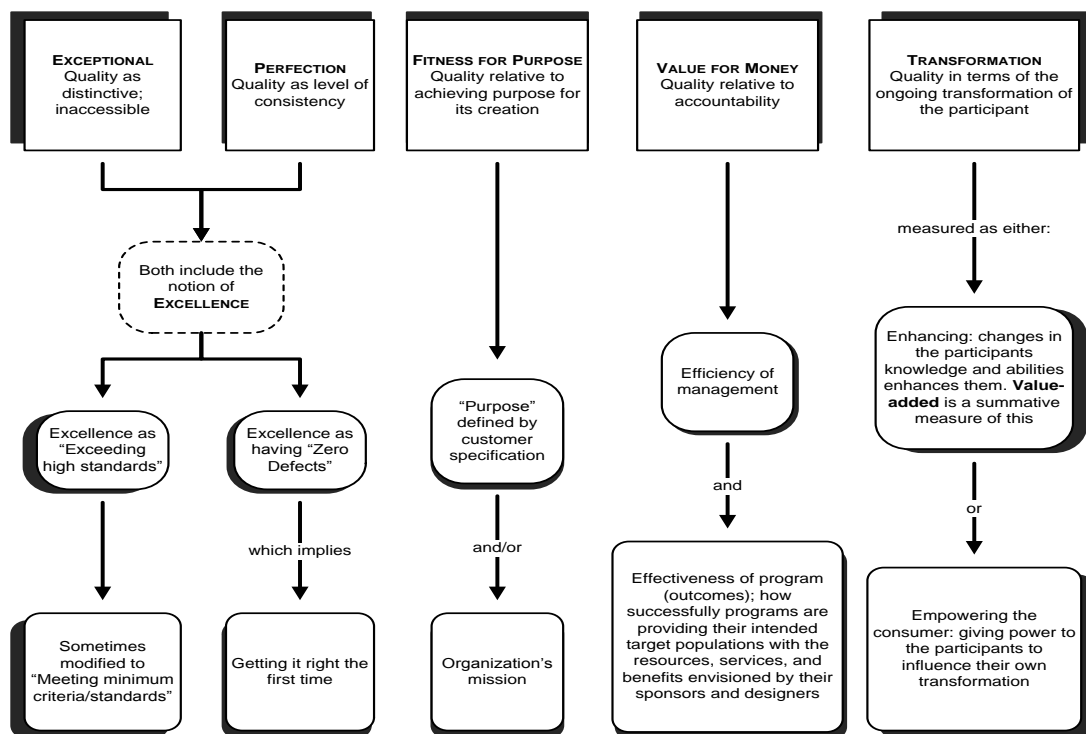
⁹ From <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/program.html>. Downloaded July 11, 2010

Appendix 2: Definitions of Quality

Both the Federal GPRA Indicators and the New York State Objectives and Sub-Objectives include the notion of **high quality** local 21st CCLC Programs. In order for this to be measured, it has to be clearly defined. Quality is one of those terms whose definition most people believe is without question. A dictionary may define it as: “*the standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something; general excellence of standard or level*”. In evaluation, there must be an agreed upon definition of the term quality before its presence (or absence) can be measured.

Harvey and Green (1993) outlined five discrete and interrelated ways in which different interest groups might view quality in education. These are, quality as: *exceptional*, *perfection*, *fitness for purpose*, *value for money*, and *transformational of participant*. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – FIVE WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT QUALITY



According to the authors, the term *exceptional* refers to a traditional notion of quality, including distinctiveness and inaccessibility so that it does not have benchmarks and is therefore difficult to measure. It also refers to excellence as it means ‘with zero defects’. In operationalizing the word standard, it differentiates into two types: high standards which have to be exceeded or minimum (or checking) standards that act as criterion that have to be attained thus being designed to reject defective items. The standard approach to quality implies that quality is improved if standards are raised. However, for example,

a concern that increased participation rates (improved attendance) will threaten quality is also part of the standards approach.

In the second definition, the term *perfection* includes the concept of consistency, which indicates two interrelated dictums: zero defects and getting things right the first time. Zero defects refer to the conformance of specification delivered consistently through prevention rather than inspection. This is intrinsically aligned with a quality culture that is inclusive. According to Harvey and Green (ibid.), getting it right the first time means to place “the emphasis on democratizing quality by making everyone involved in a product or process responsible for quality at each stage”. In measurement, however, this does not allow comparison with external specifications.

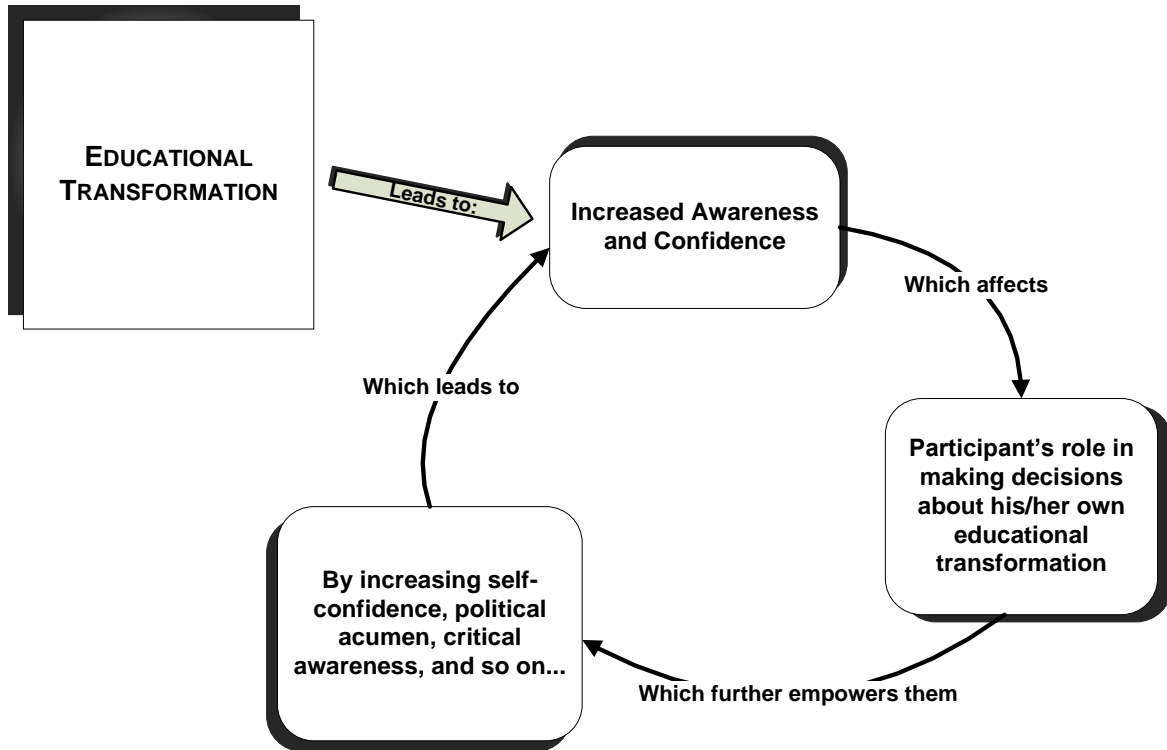
Fitness for purpose refers to quality having a particular significance. Its meaning relates to the purpose of a specific product or service, and so is measured by the extent to which the specific product or service fits its purpose. It is also removed from notions of quality as something special, distinctive, elitist, conferring status, or difficult to sustain. Fitness for purpose is inclusive, meaning “that every product or service has the potential to fit its purpose and thus be a quality product or service” (Ibid.) The ultimate measure of perfection, zero defects, may be excellent as a definition of quality but runs the fatal risk of being perfectly useless. If the product does not fit its purpose, then its perfection is irrelevant. When the purpose is defined by customer specification, the customer is sovereign – customer requirements become the specification and the outcome reliably matches these. A quality product being one that meets customer requirements assumes that the customer can indicate in advance what is required. In fact, specification originates with the customer, but is mediated by cost, available technology, time, and program design expertise. When the purpose is defined by organization mission, quality can be defined in terms of the institution fulfilling its own stated objectives or mission. Quality assurance, which can be defined as a systematic approach to doing the right things in the right way every time and getting them right; it is making sure that there are systems in place to deliver the right things every time to meet customers’ requirements. It is also about ensuring that there are mechanisms, procedures, and processes in place to ensure that the desired quality, however defined and measured, is delivered.

Quality as value for money signifies to accountability. This means for both efficiency and effectiveness measures, with a leaning toward quality as fitness for purpose by mission (see above). Recently, this has meant a separation in public sector audit and evaluation between efficiency (of management) and effectiveness (of program treatment). Measures of these are typically cost benefit analysis (efficiency) and cost effectiveness analysis (effectiveness).

Quality as transformation refers to education and training. It is not a service for customers, but it is an ongoing transformation of the participant. There are two notions of transformative quality here: enhancing and empowering. Enhancing the consumer through quality education and training could produce changes in the participants that may result to improvement. With value-added notions of quality providing a summative approach to enhancement, it also becomes a measure of quality in terms of the extent to which the educational experience enhances the knowledge, abilities, and skills of participants. Measuring this relies heavily on output assessment which belies the qualitative transformation, therefore, leading to place the participant at the center shifts

from value-added measures of enhancement to empowerment. In empowering the consumer, it involves giving power to participants to influence their own transformation. The participant must take control of the learning process including responsibility for determining the style and mode of delivery, and the transformation process itself provides the opportunity for self-empowerment with consequent impact upon decision-making processes that affect them.

Figure 2 – EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION



In **Figure 2**, an individual's educational transformation results to an increase of self-awareness and confidence that directly affects their role in making choices leading to educational transformation. Once an individual understands their role through this transformation, an individual would have gained self-confidence, political acumen, self-awareness, and etc.

As they summarize, Harvey and Green note that for practical purposes any functional definition of quality will have to include a combination of at least two of these.