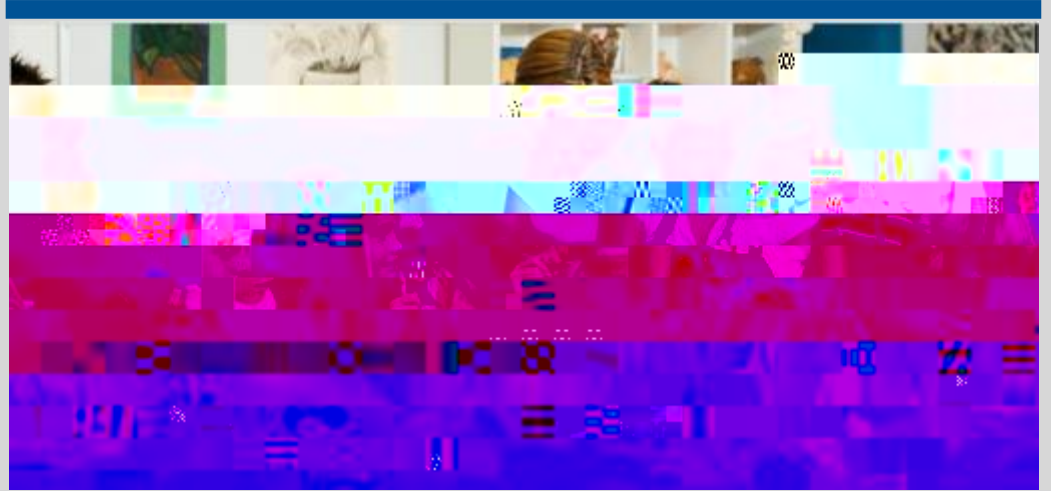


Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Interim Evaluation Report: Executive Summary



Prepared for: Texas Education Agency



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Interim Evaluation Report Executive Summary

April 2012

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Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

List of Acronyms

21st CCLC	21st Century Community Learning Center
ACE	Afterschool Centers on Education
AIR	American Institutes for Research
AEIS	Academic Excellence Indicator System
APT-O	Assessment of Afterschool Practices Observation Tool
CSF	Critical Success Factor
CSM	Critical Success Model
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
HLM	Hierarchical Linear Modeling
MRFM	Multi Facet Rasch Measurement
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
OCE	Observation of Child Engagement
PAMS	Profile Analysis via Multi-dimensional Scaling
PEIMS	Public Education Information Management System
PPICS	Profile and Performance Information Collection System
PQA	Program Quality Assessment
SEA	State Education Agency
TAKS	Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills
TEA	Texas Education Agency
TX21st	TX21st CCLC Student Tracking System

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based, innovative instructional techniques and include opportunities that encourage student and family engagement.

- x CSF2 addresses student involvement in school, exemplified through more participation in extracurricular activities, and more students becoming mentors. The milestone for this CSF emphasizes the role of adults as advocates for students.
- x CSF3 addresses the use of assessment data to re-evaluate and revise student services. A milestone program strategy is for program staff to conduct ongoing and continuous assessments to identify student needs and ways program activities and services might be improved.
- x CSF4 addresses staff professional development. The milestone program strategy is for

To gain a better understanding of how well ACE grantees are implementing programs that are consistent with the CSM, TEA contracted with American Institutes for Research (AIR) and its partners, Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. (Gibson Consulting) and the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality (the Weikart Center), to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the ACE programs, beginning with programs that were awarded grants during funding Cycles 5 and 6.⁴ The evaluation began in January 2011 and will continue through August 2012, with the possibility of additional funding through August 2015.⁵

The overarching goal of the evaluation is to determine which program strategies and approaches (milestones) are most effective within particular contexts in encouraging student and adult behaviors (CSFs) that lead to improvement in student performance. The evaluation is designed to address two primary research objectives:

- x **Research Objective 1.** To conduct a statewide assessment of ACE programs, operations, participation, and student achievement;
- x **Research Objective 2.** To identify and describe innovative strategies and approaches implemented by successful Cycle 5 and Cycle 6 grant-funded programs.⁶

With respect to the first objective, the findings in this interim report indicate student participation in ACE programs is associated with higher scores on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in reading and mathematics. All students who participated in the 2009. 10

⁴ A cycle represents a cohort of grantees that receive funding for five years. Cycle 5, for example, represents the fifth such cohort to receive funding since TEA has began funding for this grant. Cycle 5 and Cycle 6 programs are the focus of the evaluation because they have been introduced to and/or required to consider (Cycle 5) or implement (Cycle 6) the CSM.

program year (no matter by which cycle the ACE program attended was funded) were included in the impact analyses.⁷ When compared with non-participating students, ACE student participants had fewer assigned disciplinary days during the regular school day, fewer disciplinary incidences in Grades 9, 12, and fewer absences during the regular school day. It is important to note that while the findings are statistically significant,⁸ the effect sizes are quite small.⁹ However, they are still consistent with what would be expected for afterschool programs of this type (Kane, 2004).

Initial efforts to identify and describe innovative strategies and practices related to the second research objective focused on the variation in program quality among the ACE programs funded in Cycles 5 and 6. The two cycles were provided the CSM, with the Cycle 5 programs asked to consider the CSM in their implementation, and the Cycle 6 programs required to implement the CSM. Analyses of programs operating in 2010. 11

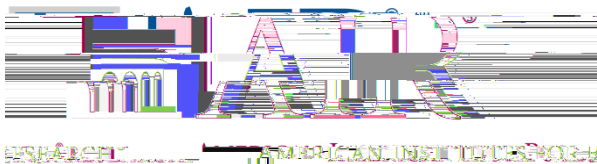
- x Youth ownership- that is, youth having a role in selecting and shaping program activities- was more evident in the high school programs than other programs, and student-reported engagement in program activities was higher. There is particular interest among the evaluation team in further understanding the relationship between youth ownership and student engagement.
- x Academic content and academic climate were found to be higher in academic enrichment and tutoring activities than in non-academic enrichment and homework help activities. Non-academic activities were not necessarily designed to build academic knowledge and skills (though they may). Homework help was an activity that was not planned. The finding in relation to homework help suggests that more could be done to enhance the supportive and interactive elements of

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