



STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)

Federal Program Design

Under Title IV, Part B of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, 21st CCLCs are defined as centers that provide opportunities for academic enrichment, including providing tutorial services to help students meet the challenging State academic standards and offer a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, such as youth development activities, service learning, nutrition and health education, drug and violence prevention programs, counseling programs, arts, music, physical fitness and wellness programs, technology education programs, financial literacy programs, environmental literacy programs, science, mathematics, career and technical programs, internship or apprenticeship programs, and other ties to an in-demand industry sector or occupation for high school students that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students and their adult family members when school is not in session.

New Jersey's Program

During the 2018-2019 program year, New Jersey provided \$27,139,099 in federal funding to support 63 programs, in 156 sites, serving approximately 16,000 youth in grades 3 through 12. Grantees include 33 school districts, 22 community-based agencies, six institutions of higher education, one faith-based organization, one for-profit and one non-public school.

The NJ 21st CCLC programs serve youth who primarily attend schools implementing comprehensive or targeted support and improvement activities or schools in need of intervention and support and the families of such students.

The grants are awarded for a five-year period with annual approval. Programs operate for a minimum of three hours per day, five days per week during the school year and four hours per day, five days per week for four weeks in the summer.

Evaluation

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) contracts with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to evaluate NJ's 21st Century Community Learning Centers. The 2016-2017 evaluation analyzed impact between 21st CCLC participants versus nonparticipants and found the following positive findings:

- For youth below proficiency in the prior year who attended a 21st CCLC program for *30 days or more*, the relationship between participation in 21st CCLC and state assessment scores was statistically significant and indicative of 21st CCLC potentially having a positive effect on **English language arts** and **mathematics assessment outcomes**.
- The most notable results were obtained in **English language arts** by **eleventh grade** 21st CCLC participants and in **mathematics** by **fourth** and **eighth grade** 21st CCLC participants who had scored below proficient the prior year.
- 21st CCLC participants have lower unexcused school-day absence rates than do non-attending peers. Likewise, higher attending 21st CCLC participants have lower school-day unexcused absence rates than do lower-attending 21st CCLC youth.

The full report is located on the NJDOE website at www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/afterschool/eval/

NJ's Key Components

- Remedial education (including tutoring) and inquiry-based activities to increase students' career and college readiness;
- A broad array of creative activities (art, music, dance, recreational and cultural) that complement the school day and equalize enrichment opportunities;
- Parental involvement activities that engage adult family members and assist families in becoming full partners in the education of their children;
- Social and emotional learning, character development supports, and activities that deter problem behaviors and build individual assets;
- Partnerships and collaborative relationships that ensure participants' access to all available resources, and help sustain programs;
- Measurable objectives and performance indicators designed to meet the NJDOE established program goals;
- Certified teachers providing academic remediation;
- Full-time program director and coordinator at each site;
- Advisory board and student council to provide feedback on the program; and
- Independent evaluations.

Research - Based Elements

- Project activities aligned with school-day learning through intentional planning and ongoing communication between program and school-day staff to provide more time for youth to practice skills and expand knowledge;
- Combined opportunities for program and school-day staff including use of professional learning communities to develop staff capacity and promote networking;
- Youth-centered environment and learning experiences designed with the input of participating youth to sustain interest, participation, and attendance;
- Focus on themes such as STEM, civic engagement, career awareness and exploration, or visual and performing arts to integrate cross-content information and skills and make activities relevant;
- Opportunities for experiential learning, creativity, exploration, problem solving, self-direction, and expression, by using a guided-inquiry based approach to promote perseverance, self-confidence, responsibility, curiosity, and leadership;
- Four-week summer program to keep youth engaged in learning and reduce summer learning loss; and
- Partnerships that produce tangible resources that will directly benefit 21st CCLC program participants.

Technical Assistance and Training

The New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition (NJSACC), under contract with the Department, provides technical assistance and training opportunities to grantees and to potential grantees statewide. Quarterly project director's meetings provide the opportunity for networking and promote program improvement through a variety of topics targeted to program needs. For more information about NJSACC go to <http://www.njsacc.org/>

For More Information

New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Student Support Services, 609-376-9109

Email 21stCCLC@doe.nj.gov

21st CCLC website <http://www.nj.gov/education/21cclc>

Keeping Kids Safe, Healthy and In School website <http://www.nj.gov/education/students/safety/afterschool>