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21st Century Community Learning Center Expanded Learning Opportunities in NE Spokane

Year 2 Progress Report

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Background

The ZoNE (www.thezonespokane.org) leads an effort to bring expanded learning opportunities to students in five elementary and two middle schools in Northeast Spokane through participation in the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21CCLC) program. This federally funded program provides up to 5 years of funding to improve outcomes for students in high poverty schools by offering quality, academically focused programs on-site during before and after school hours. The Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) administers the grant and monitors student progress at the state level.

Each local program works with an independent evaluator to track student outcomes at the district level. The ZoNE selected Urbanova, a nonprofit civic research center in Spokane, Washington to serve as the local evaluator to assess student outcomes for participants in four schools – Garry Middle School, Shaw Middle School, Logan Elementary and Lidgerwood Elementary. This report serves as a progress update for **Year 2** of the program, covering the 2021-2022 academic school year.

This report is also intended as a first step for school staff, program administrators and site coordinators to determine the ongoing reporting and assessment indicators that will be valuable for the initiative. The entirety of the 2021-2022 school year was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The year included school shutdowns mandated by the local health district as well as elective decisions by parents to keep children at home as each family and school building decided how to respond to new variants and community risks. The disconnection experienced with remote learning and the ongoing stress for young children watching the community respond to a public health crisis was profound. Thus, it is not realistic to think of student ‘progress’ in the same terms as we may have pre-pandemic.

The logic model was developed during Year 1 of the program that links program activities to expected student outcomes. Many of the assumptions (and data) that were built into this original logic model may not be ideal for examining the effectiveness of the program, given the COVID-related challenges experienced in the schools and communities (including attendance, health concerns, learning loss and program staffing issues to name a few). Consequently, this report takes two approaches to address unanticipated changes in the program landscape. First, we identify a comparison group of non-participating students with similar characteristics as program students. While both groups faced challenges during this period, we hope to assess if expanding learning programming may have reduced impact on participating students to some extent. Second, we also suggest new indicators and approaches that can be considered in the context of a formative evaluation. A formative evaluation is a process for working alongside stakeholders to address key questions with ongoing feedback and assessment that can be utilized by in a dynamic way to improve program effectiveness.

The progress report includes the following sections:

- I. Site Programming and Student Participation
- II. Student Outcome Measures
 - a. Academic Progress
 - b. Family Engagement and Wellness
 - c. Social-Emotional Learning and Positive Behavior
- III. Program Adaptations and Recommendations

In addition to navigating expanded learning programming during the pandemic, there is notable progress achieved as a result of this initiative that is not directly covered in this report:

- First, the ZoNE successfully applied and received funding from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief 3 Fund (ESSER3) to activate expanded learning programming at three additional school locations in NE Spokane. Outcomes for these students are included in a separate report.
- Second, the ZoNE also applied for and received funding for a fourth year of private funding from the Steve and Connie Ballmer Foundation to support four community groups providing quality programming for students in this region (students participating in funded programming from these sources are not included in the comparison groups presented in this report).
- Third, during Year 2, 21CCLC program partners worked with staff at Spokane Public Schools (SPS) to design and deploy an online community partner tracker (<https://webb.spokaneschools.org/CommunityPartnerTracking/>). This portal allows approved staff from community-based organizations to establish events and have students easily ‘checked-in’ for an activity. The integration of this system (in Year 3) will streamline reporting processes and provide useful ongoing feedback to site coordinators about student participation.

While the development of this program continues to evolve, the progress in the first two years is notable. The following sections detail both the progress achieved in Year 2 and areas for improvement going forward.

I. Site Programming and Student Participation Levels

The 21CCLC programming and activity varied across supported programs in four sites – two middle schools and two elementary schools.

Garry Middle School operated the Raven Circle, an academic and learning support program with both morning (1 hour) and after-school (2 hours) activities. Generally, students arrive in a multipurpose room with 10-12 tables for smaller student groups. Students begin working on homework and assignments at each table following attendance and snack. Two or three certificated teachers typically walk between tables and assist students requiring additional assistance. Some students may work on a computer station completing Lexia Reading or math

tutorials. In the second half of the session, students may go to a sports/recreation activity or to a supervised game club.

In 2021-2022, the Raven Circle program at Garry served 68 students with 1,350 student-participation hours each month. An average of 30 students typically attended on a given day. About one third of students were regular attenders (more than 10/half of available days in a given month). Students attended programming for 23 days, on average.

Shaw Middle School was by far the most active site among 21CCLC programs. The Shaw program focused on academic preparation and high school readiness. Students arrive to a large, open air multipurpose room that sits in the center of the school, serving as a ‘hub’ for surrounding activity. There are four to five certificated teachers that staff the afterschool time. Each teacher typically works in one or more subject areas (science, math, English) and remains in a fixed location. Students are divided into three working groups and may consult with a teacher for assistance with homework or extra academic support. Students may also participate in arts (anime, art journaling, music/theater arts), recreation (sports, joyful movement, hype squad) or interactive programming (chess, makers club, nutrition club).

During the school year, Shaw had 409 students in 21CCLC-funded activities with a total of 5,863 reported participation days. This was impressive participation level for a school with an enrollment of 534 students. About 1 in 6 students (17%) attended for 30 or more days. Average attendance exceeded 75 students per day by the end of the school year (see Exhibit 1). Students attended for 15 days on average over the course of the school year.

Exhibit 1: Shaw Middle School 21CCLC Monthly Participation—2021-2022 school year

Month	Total Student Participants	Avg Daily Attendance	Daily Attendance Range	Students Attending 50% or more
Sep	30	8.9	5-13	20%
Oct	114	23.7	9-41	8%
Nov	152	45.9	22-72	20%
Dec	118	39.2	30-52	19%
Jan	86	30.4	18-39	19%
Feb	162	38.0	13-66	12%
Mar	261	66.3	33-92	16%
April	198	72.2	27-85	29%
May	247	83.6	39-105	28%
Jun	159	78.2	58-86	43%

Lidgerwood Elementary also had active programming that focused on needs of students in grades K-6. Programming included interactive educational STEM curriculum (robotics, math tutoring club, and computer club) as well as sport and recreation (running, basketball, soccer, and dance club) and social activities (craft, kindness, and multicultural club). Programming typically runs 5 days per week during after school hours (3pm-5pm).

Over 200 students participated during the school year, representing more than half of the school enrollment (389). On average, about 35 students attended each day, with a total of 1,494 student participation days recorded. The intensity of student participation varied over the course of the year with just 12 students attending for 20 days or more (7 days on average per student). It should be noted that the mobility rate among Lidgerwood students exceeds 30%, so it is difficult to keep regular participants engaged over the course of the year.

Logan Elementary was the fourth school funded under the 21CCLC grant in NE Spokane. Unfortunately, Logan experienced programming difficulties during the course of the year. The site coordinator from the contracted Community Based Organization left in the fall and following mid-year COVID-shutdowns, it became difficult to hire a replacement coordinator. The mobility rate among Logan Elementary students is about 45% (three shelters and several group homes feed into Logan) and it is difficult to keep this student population engaged. A lack of program operation meant that there were not any recorded participants for the 2021-2022 school year. For the 2022-2023 school year, a new principal has been hired and new site coordinator is in place. Twenty students participated in summer activity at this site and 29 students were participating in programming by October 2022.

II. Student Outcome Measures

As noted earlier, the assumptions underlying the program logic model developed in 2021 were tested to some extent during the course of the 2021-2022 school year. While the desired outcomes for the program remain the same, the formulation and measurement of indicators may be revisited moving forward. For now, we report on the following indicators in the three primary domains of program focus:

- **Academic Progress** – 60% of regular participants met SBA standard
- **Family Engagement & Wellness** – parents perceive strong connection to school community
- **Social Emotional Learning (SEL)** --
 - 70% of participants with prior year discipline incidents demonstrate decrease in incidents in following year
 - Students with prior year chronic absenteeism increase attendance rate by 10%
 - At least 50% of participants demonstrate increased SEL self-perception (Fall-Spring) in one or more constructs

To evaluate the progress of students in these domains, we decided to create a comparison group of students from area schools with similar characteristics. A data sharing agreement with Spokane Public Schools allowed us to receive de-identified records for all students in 11 public schools located in the ZoNE (NE Spokane). These schools include Garry and Shaw Middle Schools and Arlington, Bemiss, Cooper, Lidgerwood, Logan, Longfellow, Regal, Stevens, and Whitman Elementary Schools. We removed students participating in afterschool programming funded by other sources (see above) and used propensity score matching techniques to create a list of peer

students according to grade level, gender, race/ethnicity, special education, English language learner, and free/reduced price lunch status, as well as level of attendance in the previous school year. In total, we assess outcomes for 714 participating in 21CCLC activity and 614 non-participating students with similar characteristics.

Exhibit 2 shows background information for both the program and comparison group of students. Note that while we were able to draw from seven non-participating elementary schools to find comparison students, we needed to find comparison students in middle schools from within the same school. Since a high percentage of students participated, there is a lower number of comparison students from middle school. In future years, we will add another comparison school for analysis of student outcomes in middle school.

Exhibit 2: Student Profile, Program and Comparison Students — 2021-2022 school year

Category	21CCLC Students	Comparison Students
Grade		
First	25	22
Second	27	23
Third	49	44
Fourth	40	46
Fifth	44	52
Sixth	48	50
Elementary	233	237
Seventh	209	135
Eighth	271	242
Middle	480	377
Total	714	614
Female	372	327
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	28	37
Asian	21	12
Caucasian	350	306
Hispanic	105	108
Multi-Racial	135	114
Native American	8	8
Pacific Islander	66	29
Free-Reduced Lunch	637	555
English Language	136	87
Special Education	118	103
Total	714	614

a. Academic Progress

Like many student outcome measures, COVID-related interruptions create difficulty evaluating progress in test assessment scores. The Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) tests, given to Washington students in grades 3-8, were not administered in the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school years. Even if prior year tests were available, for example, school shutdowns and shifts to remote learning during this period would make any year-to-year comparisons problematic.

Given these constraints, we decided to compare results for participating and comparison students taking the SBA test in 2021-2022. We examine the number of students that ‘met’ or ‘exceeded’ standards in both English Language Arts and Math.

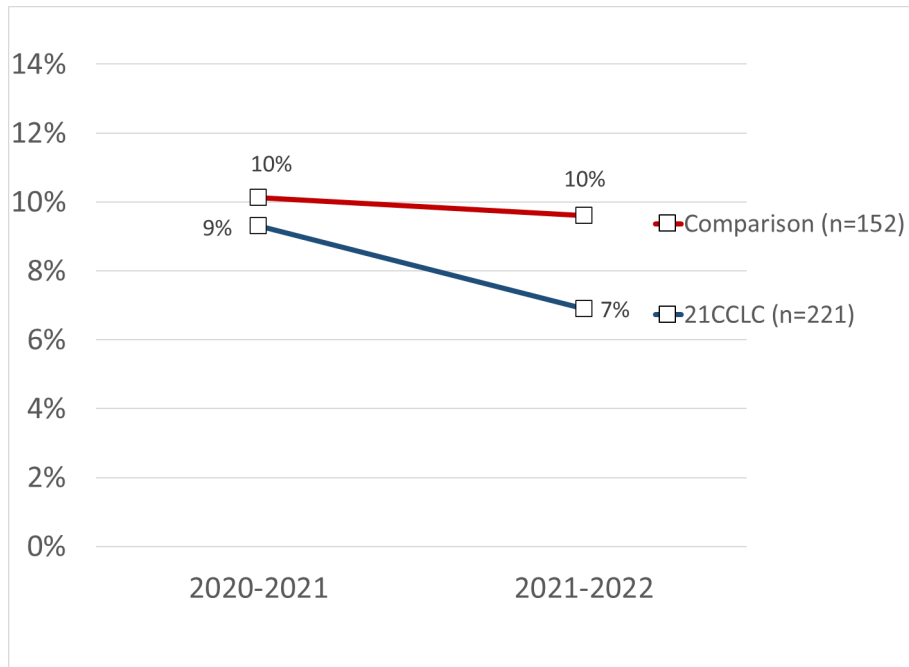
**Exhibit 3: SBA Met/Exceeded Standard, Program and Comparison Students
2021-2022 school year**

Category	21CCLC Students	Comparison Students
English Language Arts Met Standard	173 (29%)	171 (36%)
Total ELA Test Takers	594	474
Math Met Standard	101 (17%)	101 (22%)
Total Math Test Takers	610	463

As shown in Exhibit 3, a lower percentage of participating students met standard in ELA and Math relative to comparison students. Assessment test scores, however, were a very unstable and unpredictable measure during this time period. According to statewide figures, between 2019 and 2021, the overall percentage of students who met SBA math standards fell by 20 percentage points while students meeting English standards fell by 9 percentage points.

The 21CCLC academic programming activity focused particularly on direct assistance and tutoring with class assignments and homework. A better measure, therefore, may be student letter grades (or pass/fail) by the end of the year. On this measure, 21CCLC participating students showed improvement, both relative to comparison students and from year-to-year. As Exhibit 4 shows, in the previous school year, 10% of grades for the average 21CCLC program and comparison student were an ‘F’. During following year, the level of failing grades (‘F’) fell to 7% of grades for program participants but remained at 9% for the comparison group.

**Exhibit 4: Percentage of Failing ('F') Grades Program and Comparison Students
2020-2021 & 2021-2022 school years**

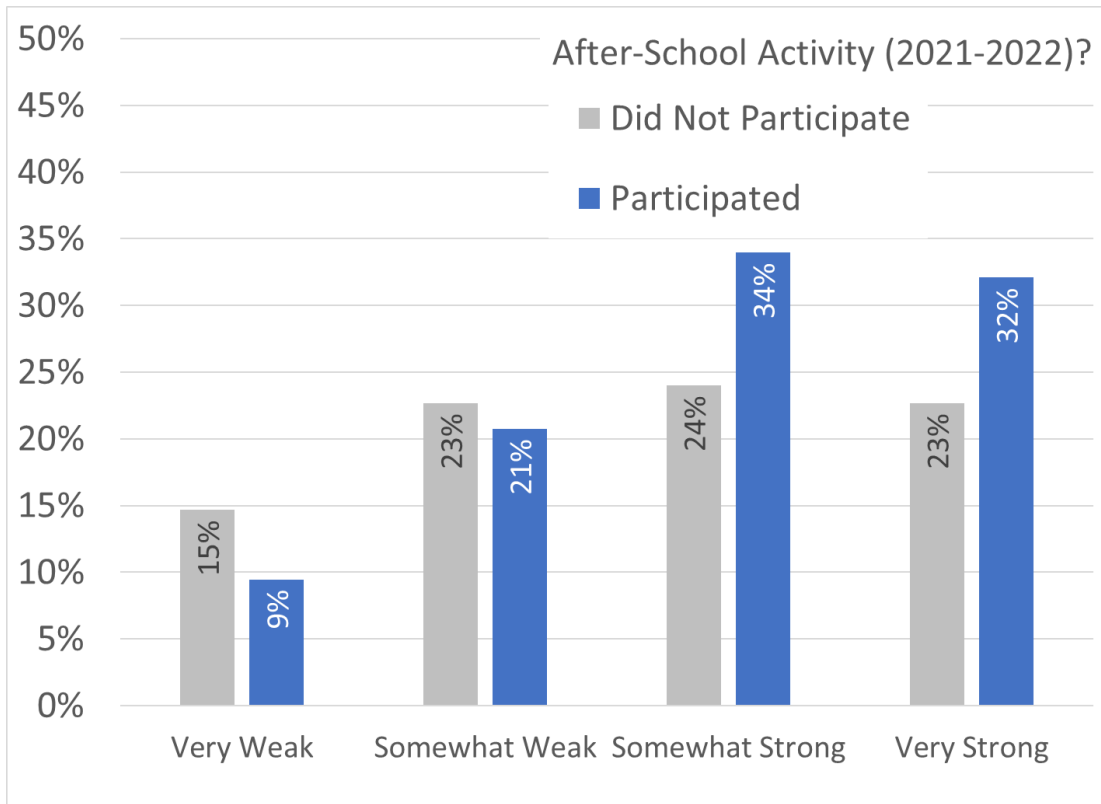


b. Family Engagement and Wellness

Parent and family programming was put on hold for 2021-2022 school year as a result of public health guidance on in-person gatherings, staffing challenges and other pandemic-related uncertainties. Family-related programming has resumed for the 2022-2023 school year. In addition to engagement in planned activities, one of the key outcomes for the program is that parents have a strong connection to the school community. To assess parent and caregiver perceptions around school programming, the ZoNE conducted a satisfaction survey following the 2021-2022 school year. The survey was fielded at evening welcoming events in all 11 schools and 293 parent/caretakers completed the voluntary survey.

We filtered the survey responses and selected cases where a parent reported that their child attended a 21CCLC school (Logan Elementary, Lidgerwood Elementary, Garry Middle, or Shaw Middle). For the 128 parents with children in these schools, 75 reported that their child *did not* participate in after-school programming, while 53 (41%) reported that their child was involved. As Exhibit 5 shows, 66% of parents with children in after-school programs reported a ‘very strong’ or ‘somewhat strong’ sense of belonging to school compared to 47% of parents without a child in programmed after-school activities. In addition, 27% of parents with participating children reported a ‘very strong’ sense of belonging to their **local neighborhood**, compared to 18% of parents with non-participating children.

Exhibit 5: How would you describe your sense of belonging to your child's school?
2021-2022 school year



The survey also asked parents and caretakers about the type of evening programs they may like to attend. The top two choices involved activities for the whole family, with additional interest in programming related to household and parenting support. These responses will guide program planning for the 2022-2023 school year.

Some evening programs will also be provided for parents (childcare available). Which of the following would you be likely to attend?

1. Cooking classes/access to healthy food (66)
 2. Family-student learning activities and projects (61)
 3. Community resource fair (45)
 4. Finances/Family budgeting support (37)
 5. Housing assistance (35)
 6. Parent support groups (32)
 7. Parenting classes (27)
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c. Social-Emotional Learning and Positive Behavior

A student's sense of connection and belonging to school, as well as social and emotional well-being is an important goal for the 21CCLC-funded programming and initiatives supported by the ZoNE in general. The initial outcomes established by 21CCLC schools and partners in NE Spokane focused on three outcomes related to school connection and well-being:

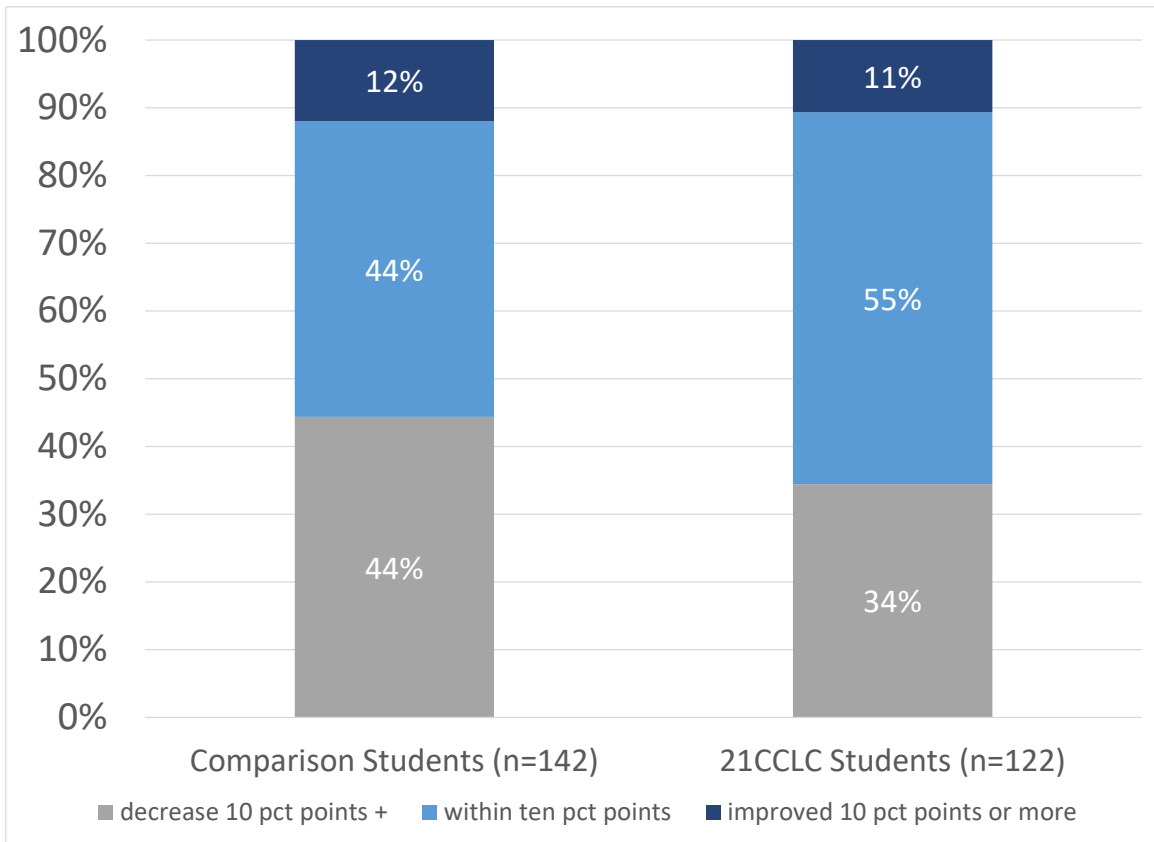
- Students with prior year chronic absenteeism increased attendance rate by 10 percentage points
- 70% of regular participants with prior year discipline incidents demonstrated a decrease in incidents in the following year
- At least 50% of regular participants demonstrated increased SEL self-perception Fall-Spring in one or more constructs

Like the situation with standardized assessment testing, the 2-year long interruptions that occurred as a result of COVID also make analysis of longitudinal changes in attendance and discipline incidents problematic. Absenteeism rates across both years were unpredictable and the uncertain school environment for students make it difficult to truly gauge progress in behavior-related incident. Nevertheless, we present both figures as a way to assess the status of students during this period and determine how best to evaluate these outcomes going forward.

Absenteeism

For the analysis of school attendance, we selected students that were absent (excused or unexcused) for more than 10 percent of available enrollment days or periods (chronic absenteeism) in the previous school year (2020-2021). We then examined how absenteeism levels changed for both 21CCLC participants (n=122) and comparison students (n=142) in the school year of interest (2021-2022). As Exhibit 6 shows, there was no difference between the students in the 21CCLC and comparison groups for improved attendance in the 2021-2022 school year (10 percentage points or more). However, a lower percentage of 21CCLC participants had reductions in attendance (34% vs 44%) the next year, and more than half (55%) showed no significant shifts in absenteeism over the two school years. It should be noted that hybrid learning environments and public health-related shutdowns (e.g., Omnicron-related shutdowns in January 2022) make assessments of absenteeism over this period difficult.

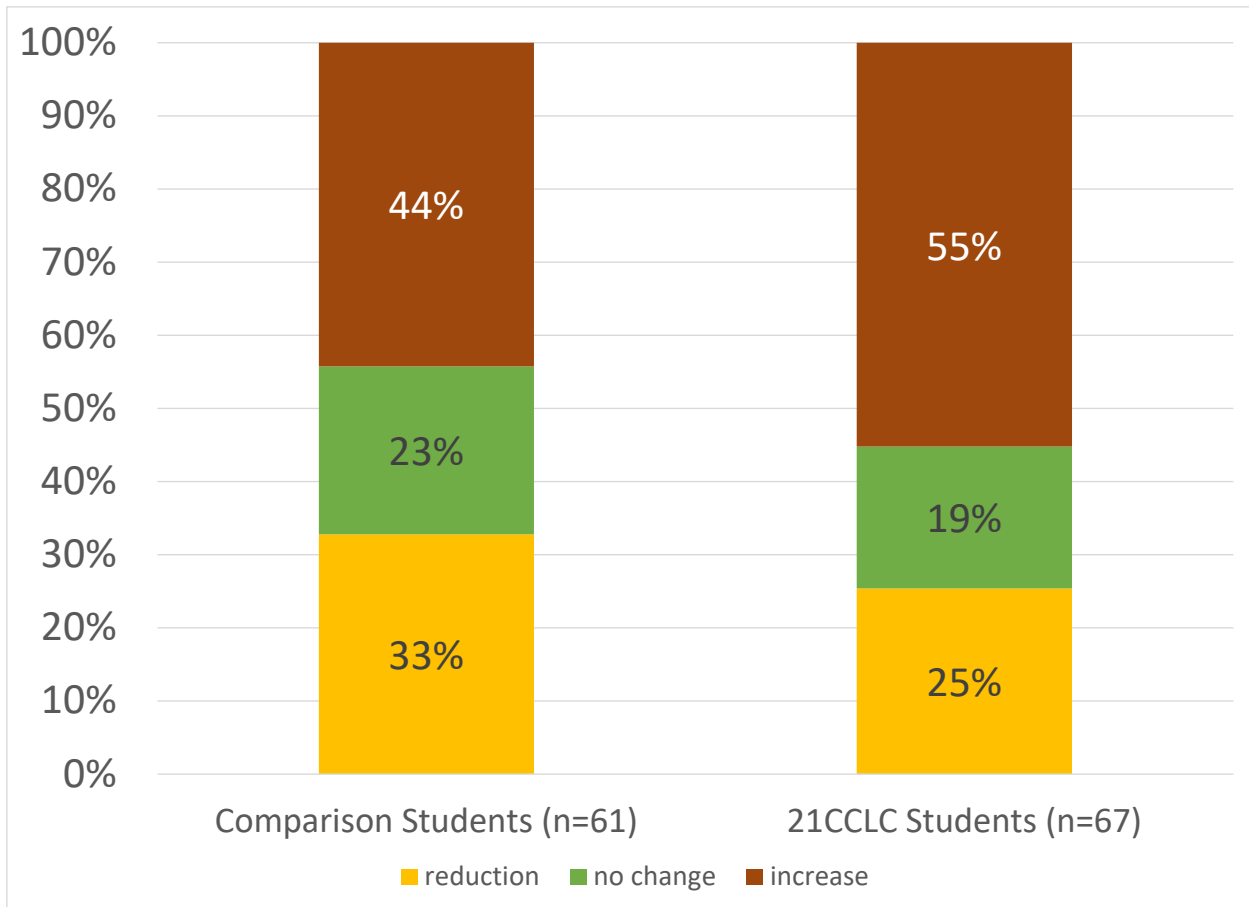
Exhibit 6: Students with prior year chronic absenteeism, change in 2021-2022 school year



Discipline

Ten percent of students in both the 21CCLC and comparison groups had a recorded discipline incident in the prior school year (2020-2021). For both groups, we examined the percentage of students the same number of discipline incidents in 2021-2022 (no change) and the percentage with a reduction or increase in discipline incidents in the subsequent year. As Exhibit 7 shows, a higher percentage of students in the 21CCLC group had an increase in discipline incidents, although this difference was not statistically significant. While program partners set a goal for 70% of students with prior year incidents to have subsequent discipline reductions, this degree of change appears ambitious, and would require two- to three-times as many students with year-to-year improvements.

Exhibit 7: Students with prior year discipline incidents, change in 2021-2022 school year



Social Emotional Learning

Spokane Public Schools students in fourth grade and above take an annual social emotional learning (SEL) assessment, developed by [Panorama Education](#). The survey measures a number of factors related to social-emotional factors, including grit, growth mindset, learning strategies, school belonging and engagement, teacher-student relationships, self-management and valuing of school. The 21CCLC partners determined what a desired outcome would be for students to improve increased SEL scores in one or more of these constructs over the course of the school year (Fall to Spring). The administration of this survey, however, is not a required activity from SPS teachers, and only 40% of middle schoolers and 15% of students in grades 4-6 completed both the Fall and Spring SEL surveys during the 2021-2022 school year. Exhibit 8 shows the percentage of students in the 21CCLC and comparison groups with *improvements* in SEL scores between Fall and Spring.

**Exhibit 8: Students with improved Social Emotional Learning (SEL) scores
Fall to Spring 2021-2022 school year**

Student Attribute	21CCLC Students (n=73)	Comparison Students (n=41)	Difference
Self-Management	22 (30%)	7 (17%)	13%
Growth Mindset	32 (44%)	14 (34%)	10%
Grit	27 (37%)	11 (28%)	9%
Social Awareness	24 (33%)	10 (24%)	8%
Self-Efficacy	32 (44%)	15 (37%)	7%
Learning Strategies	19 (26%)	12 (29%)	-3%

Student Climate	21CCLC Students (n=264)	Comparison Students (n=122)	Difference
School Rigorous Expectations	116 (44%)	45 (37%)	7%
School Climate	90 (34%)	36 (30%)	4%
School Belonging	125 (47%)	55 (45%)	2%
Valuing of School	105 (40%)	47 (39%)	1%
School Engagement	97 (37%)	44 (36%)	1%
School Teacher-Student Relationships	104 (40%)	49 (40%)	-1%

* bold indicates statistically significant difference

As Exhibit 8 indicates, 21CCLC participants demonstrated noticeable improvements in SEL assessments relative to comparison students. The differences between groups were greatest in the personal dimensions of social emotional learning: social emotional learning (30% v 17%), growth mindset (44% v 34%), grit (37% v 28%), social awareness (33% v 24%) and self-efficacy (44% v 37%). Smaller, but statistically significant, differences were evident on school-related dimensions including rigorous expectations, climate and belonging.

The programming for 21CCLC activities emphasizes building the confidence and capabilities of students for both academic and social intelligence. The gains in self-reported SEL perception among participating students are encouraging. Future reports will examine specific sites and programming to determine activities that may be related to the greatest improvements in student social emotional learning.

III. Program Adaptations and Recommendations

During the formative adolescent years, students living in high-poverty neighborhoods often fall behind in learning – both in school and in the opportunity to experience learning outside the classroom. Quality expanded learning programming (ELP) is meant to provide academic assistance and developmental activities, like sports and music lessons to students that may not otherwise receive these types of supports. While ELP activities take place during a short window during the before and after school hours, these programs can meaningfully work alongside teachers, community members and parents to support student growth and development.

Given limited time and resources, it is worthwhile to periodically examine progress and determine what is working and what may need adjustment in ongoing ELP efforts. This report provides an assessment of progress in four 21CCLC sites offering expanded learning programming in NE Spokane. After a turbulent, often unpredictable year, it is clear that many of the previously established growth measures should be reconsidered. While there were notable gains in student growth observed in Year 2, it would be worthwhile to think about additional ways to assess the effectiveness of ELP efforts. Potential measures include:

- ***Short-term academic assessments*** – standardized tests represent a longer-term gauge of student learning. For shorter measures of growth, formative assessments (like [STAR assessment](#)) could be adopted to track student progress on a daily or weekly basis.
- ***Functional behavior assessment*** – measurably reducing student disciplinary incidents over the course of the school day and year may be an outsized expectation for ELP efforts operating voluntary programs during the before and after school hours. A more suitable measure could be for ELP staff to work together with school teachers and administrators and contribute to functional behavioral assessments ([MTSS plans](#)) that identify problem behaviors and develop interventions to improve or eliminate those behaviors. Progress could be tracked for identified students where ELP staff are playing a role in behavioral supports.
- ***Expand family programming*** – it is clear from the survey of student parents and caregivers that there is a high level of interest in family programming. While pandemic-related considerations made planning family activity difficult in 2021-2022, planned events should be more feasible this coming year. The ZoNE has committed to a ‘two-generation’ approach to supporting students and it would be worthwhile to follow student outcome measures based on family participation levels.
- ***Tailor SEL programming*** – current outcomes call for half (50%) of regular participants to demonstrate SEL growth in one or more constructs. During the past school year approximately 30-40% of participating students did show improvement in SEL perceptions between Fall and Spring. Rather than track SEL progress in *any* domain, 21CCLC sites could choose to focus programming in a given year on *one* domain and assess student improvement in that particular domain at the end of the year.

- *Follow students that disengage*– A student’s decision to participate in expanded learning programs raises the question about whether these programs are attracting the most motivated youth. The students that may have infrequent (or no) engagement with the program should be a population of interest. In this third year of funded activity, an expanded effort could be made for outreach and enrollment for students with limited participation in Year 2. Following the outcomes for these students would provide additional learning about how to truly extend expanded learning opportunities.
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