Nevada Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Statewide Evaluation

2020–21 Program Year

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Nevada Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Statewide Evaluation

2020–21 Program Year

Contents

Executive Summary

For more than a decade, the Nevada Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program has provided afterschool and expanded learning programming to enhance the academic well-being of youth who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) requested that the American Institutes for Research (AIR) conduct a research-based, statewide evaluation to explore the ways in which centers are having an effect on participating youth and the necessary components that lead to that effect, offering a comprehensive look at the Nevada 21st CCLC program. The purpose of the evaluation is to explore program quality, monitor progress on youth outcomes, assess program effectiveness, and monitor NDE involvement in supporting centers.

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted traditional 21st CCLC program operations. State and federal guidance instructed local education agencies (LEAs) and their associated afterschool and expanded learning programs to close in-person activities and transition to remote instruction. Nevada government-mandated school closures began on March 16, 2020. On April 21, 2020, schools closed for the remainder of the 2019–20 academic year, impacting 473,744 students in 657 public schools in the state.

In the summer of 2020, NDE issued guidance for all school districts and charter schools to develop reopening plans for the 2020–21 school year. Plans not only took into consideration offering in-person instruction, distance education, or a combination of these learning modes, but also addressed multiple reopening scenarios as the circumstances surrounding the pandemic continued to evolve. Data presented in this report are reflective of 21st CCLC programming as centers adapt to and work through these challenges.

This evaluation report presents program implementation characteristics, such as youth and staff characteristics, and baseline data on youth outcomes, youth program attendance, program target and goal completion, and NDE's contribution to supporting the successful administration of 21st CCLC programming. It is important that readers consider the contextual implications of the COVID-19 pandemic when reviewing data, key findings, and recommendations in the forthcoming pages. Key findings and recommendations for the 2020–21 program year are as follows.

Findings on Program Implementation Characteristics

- All 21st CCLC programming (100%) took place in school-based locations (95% in public schools and 5% in charter schools), even if the funding agency was not school based.

- The majority of paid staff (79%) were school-day teachers or other nonteaching school staff.

- Almost all centers (at least 89%) reported offering physical activity, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), and art and music activities in all program years, but representation of most activity types declined from the prior year. There were slight increases in the percentage of centers providing tutoring and counseling activities.

- Programs mostly served youth in first through sixth grades, with 79% of all youth in these grades.

- Programs served a large Hispanic population (54%).

- The vast majority of program participants (at least 95%) were eligible for and received free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL).

- Many program participants scored below proficient in mathematics (82%) and English language arts (72%) on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC).

- Almost one fifth (18%) of program participants were chronically absent (i.e., absent 10% or more of enrolled days) during the 2020–21 school year.

Aligned recommendations
• Consider the different training and technical assistance needs of subgrantees based on their maturity, staffing model, and location.
• Given the higher concentration of elementary-age programs, consider conducting an assessment to understand the needs of 21st CCLC-eligible middle and high schools and how 21st CCLC funding could support those needs.
• In future evaluation work, explore reasons why centers focus on physical activities, STEM programming, and arts and music, and how those types of activities vary across centers. It also may be worth exploring how programming continues to evolve in response to the pandemic.
• In future evaluation work, consider examining variation in implementation and other process-based characteristics across centers that may impact student experiences in programming.

Findings on Program Attendance and Youth Experiences

- About half (51%) of program participants were regular attendees (attending 30 days or more) during the 2020–21 program year.

- Programs across the state had a wide range in terms of students served, from five to 735 students.

- Although the percentage of nonregular participants (49%) increased in 2020–21, the percentage of students attending 90 days or more (16%) also increased compared with the previous year. Changes in participation could be a result of the pandemic.

- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students (58%), White students (56%), and Hispanic students (52%) attended programming more regularly than students of other races or ethnicities.

- Students receiving FRPL were more likely to participate in STEM activities (56%) and attended for more total hours on average (37 hours) compared with students without this status (50% and 22 hours, respectively).

- Students receiving special education were more likely to participate in physical activity (58%) than students not receiving special education (53%). However, the average total hours spent in physical activity by students in these two groups did not differ significantly (37 hours and 35 hours, respectively).

- A smaller percentage of students receiving FRPL (49%) participated in tutoring than students without this status (68%). However, students receiving FRPL participated in tutoring for more total hours, on average (43 hours compared with 37 hours).

- A greater percentage of students in special education (44%), receiving FRPL (42%), or with limited English language proficiency (44%) participated in literacy activities than students without these classifications (42%, 40%, and 41%, respectively).

- Students who spent more time in each of these activity types—STEM, physical activity, tutoring, arts and music, and literacy—had fewer school-day absences in the school year.

Aligned recommendations

- Continue to express the importance of students consistently attending programs, especially as the pandemic persists.
- Explore what strategies have been successful in retaining students, and document these best practices.
- Continue to monitor the extent to which students from low-income families and those who are academically at risk are being served in the program.
- Explore ways to promote youth choice in programming that allow youth to self-direct into activities that represent their interests.
- For any future evaluation, it may be useful to more robustly explore how youth participation level—specifically, participation in STEM, physical activity, tutoring, arts and music, and literacy activities—is related to youth experience and/or youth outcomes.

Findings on Program Target and Goal Completion

- Statewide indicators point to strong performance across centers related to program implementation.
- Student program attendance decreased across indicators from the prior year, which may be due, in part, to continued challenges in adapting to the pandemic.

Aligned recommendations
• Statewide indicators point to moderate performance across centers related to program implementation; however, it important to consider the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic in programs' ability to meet performance indicators as originally operationalized.

Findings on NDE Supports to Subgrantees

- NDE provides subgrantees with a useful program calendar at the beginning of the year, but this appears to be a static document and it is unclear how often it is updated and re-sent to subgrantees.

- Content provided on the NDE 21st CCLC website primarily contains resources related to grant funding and compliance. Links to additional resources provide little to no context about how that resource can be helpful.

- NDE's monitoring tool appears comprehensive, and associated data collection methods appear to be aligned to the tool. The monitoring tool and associated documents appear to have been last revised during the 2015–16 program year.

- When reviewing the 2019–20 trainings, we found that the content of trainings covered multiple topics and that the resources we reviewed were in alignment with the 2020–21 program calendar.

- The NDE Support Site developed by AIR might have a misleading URL given that it still references the pilot. Analytics of this website reflect that it gets the most visits shortly after providing specific reminders that it is available for use.

Aligned recommendations
• Consider a more interactive calendar design that is easily updated by NDE staff and more accessible to subgrantees. Reflect on further categorization of important events based on the type of support provided to help identify any gaps in professional development content.
• Consider a more streamlined approach to providing important resources to subgrantees (e.g., content derived from the NDE 21st CCLC website versus the Support Site). This may require updates to communication on where the resources are located.
• It would likely be beneficial to review this tool against current federal and state requirements, literature regarding best practices in out-of-school time settings, and NDE's specific goals for the 21st CCLC program, with specific focus on transparency to subgrantees.
• It may be worth investigating if and where those resources live and make them available to subgrantees.

Aligned recommendations
• It would be beneficial to review the Support Site for organization, consider how subgrantees could use it more consistently, and determine how to better integrate this content with the NDE 21st CCLC website (as noted in the second recommendation above). • If NDE is interested in exploring how these types of supports more directly contribute to programs' success, consider working with content experts to determine a sound theory of action and a logic model that makes these connections. Based on this theory of action and logic model, design a detailed data collection and analysis plan.

Introduction

For more than a decade, the Nevada Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program has provided afterschool programming to enhance the academic well-being of youth who attend high-poverty and lower performing schools. Beginning in the 2016–17 program year, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) contracted with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct an evaluation of its statewide 21st CCLC program.

Specifically, NDE requested that AIR not only measure the effectiveness of the program but also assist the state in supporting learning, and monitoring and refining its 21st CCLC programming based on performance data. The evaluation plan included the following tasks:

- Create a formal continuous quality improvement process (CQIP) for subgrantees.

- Create key performance indicators (KPIs).

- Create tools and resources to support grant-specific external evaluations.

- Complete annual evaluation reports.

The first year of the evaluation concentrated efforts on building the necessary infrastructure to fulfill these evaluation purposes, including reviewing previous quality improvement efforts, selecting a quality assessment tool, devising the CQIP, developing revised KPIs, and providing guidance on data collection systems for all 21st CCLC subgrantees in Nevada. The second and third years of the evaluation focused on continuing to build these supports as well as collecting and reporting baseline descriptive data. In the fourth year of the evaluation, the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted normal program operations, including the CQIP pilot. To the extent possible, AIR continued standard data collection practices to maintain historical evaluation questions, while also being responsive to the unprecedented interruptions in the program year. The evaluation team used available data to conduct both descriptive analyses and a dosage study during Year 4; however, results from these analyses had many caveats. During the fifth year, many programs returned to in-person programming, but program operations were challenging given the continuance of the COVID-19 pandemic, and programs had to continually adapt with changing circumstances. It is likely that the data examined from the 2020–21 program year also were impacted to some degree. The fifth year of the evaluation focused on the following evaluation questions:

- What characteristics were associated with the subgrantees and centers funded by 21st CCLC and the student population served by the program? (Chapter 1)

- What did program attendance look like? How were student characteristics related to students' level of program attendance? How was participation in different activity types related to program participation rates and student outcomes? (Chapter 2)

- To what extent did 21st CCLC programs in Nevada meet their local, state, and federal targets and goals? (Chapter 3)

- What contributions and direction did NDE provide to support subgrantees in the successful administration of their programs? (Chapter 4)

This report is based on these evaluation questions and is organized into four chapters that address each question. In each chapter, we first present the findings and recommendations, followed by the descriptive analyses that support these findings and recommendations.

Chapter 1. Characteristics of Programs

One hallmark of the 21st CCLC program is the wide diversity of (a) organizations involved in providing 21st CCLC programming, (b) approaches to the way that programs deliver services and activities, and (c) the youth population served. This chapter outlines the primary implementation characteristics associated with both subgrantees and centers funded by the 21st CCLC program and the youth population served by the program during the 2020–21 program year. Where applicable, we also present data from the 2016–17 through 2019–20 program years. It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted normal program operations during the spring of the 2019–20 program year, and these disruptions continued into the 2020–21 program year. Differences in results for this program year may be due to interruptions in data collection or transitions in normal program operations.

Definition

Program. The actual sequence of 21st CCLC activities that take place at a given center and all associated details about those activities.

Findings	Aligned recommendations
• All 21st CCLC programming (100%) took place in school-based locations (95% in public schools and 5% in charter schools), even if the funding agency was not school based.	• Consider the different training and technical assistance needs of subgrantees based on their maturity, staffing model, and location.
• The majority of paid staff (79%) were school-day teachers or other nonteaching school staff.	• Given the higher concentration of elementary-age programs, consider conducting an assessment to understand the needs of 21st CCLC-eligible middle and high schools, and how 21st CCLC funding could support those needs.
• Almost all centers (at least 89%) reported offering physical activity, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), and art and music activities in all program years, but representation of most activity types declined from the prior year. There were slight increases in the percentage of centers providing tutoring and counseling activities.	• In future evaluation work, explore reasons why centers focus on physical activities, STEM programming, and arts and music, and how those types of activities vary across centers. It also may be worth exploring how programming continues to evolve in response to the pandemic.
• Programs mostly served youth in first through sixth grades, with 79% of all youth in these grades.	
• Programs served a large Hispanic population (54%).	
• The vast majority of program participants (at least 95%) were eligible for and received free or reduced-price lunch.	• In future evaluation work, consider examining variation in implementation and other process-based characteristics across centers
• Many program participants scored below proficient in mathematics (82%) and English language arts (72%) on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC).	

Findings	Aligned recommendations
• Almost one fifth (18%) of program participants were chronically absent (i.e., absent 10% or more of enrolled days) during the 2020–21 school year.	that may impact student experiences in programming.

Subgrantee Characteristics

NDE is responsible for distributing the 21st CCLC funds it receives from the U.S. Department of Education through a competitive bidding process that results in awarding new grants to entities that propose to operate centers in low-performing and high-poverty communities. There were 25 active subgrantees during

Definition

Subgrantee. An entity that applied for and received a 21st CCLC grant from NDE and serves as the fiscal agent for the grant in question.

the 2020–21 program year, with some initially awarded in 2013 and being refunded through new grant cycles. NDE made subsequent awards each year (except for 2017–18). This section considers elements examined only at the grant level, notably grant maturity and organization type.

Data Sources for Program Characteristics

- *NDE Subgrantee and Contact List*—A spreadsheet listing subgrantee and center contact information and characteristics.

- *Cayen*—An online data collection system where subgrantees and centers submit all program-related data.

- Nevada state-maintained assessment and school-day attendance data are linked to individual youth 21st CCLC program attendance records via submitted youth identifiers.

Subgrantee Maturity

The evaluation team examined subgrantee maturity to better understand where programs are in the grant cycle (Figure 1). Often, because of their experience, mature centers have found ways to provide higher quality services, adapt more readily to budget reductions, and have plans in place to sustain programming after the grant funding ends. Also, grantees in their first year may have unique needs in terms of support required and their ability to offer high-quality programming.

Subgrantee Maturity Categories

- New—Subgrantees in their first year of 21st CCLC funding

- Mature—Subgrantees not in their first year but also not in their last year of funding

- Sustaining—Subgrantees in their last year of 21st CCLC funding

Figure 1. Among the 25 Nevada subgrantees active during the 2020–21 programming period, the percentage of sustaining subgrantees decreased, while mature subgrantees increased and new subgrantees remained the same from the previous program year.
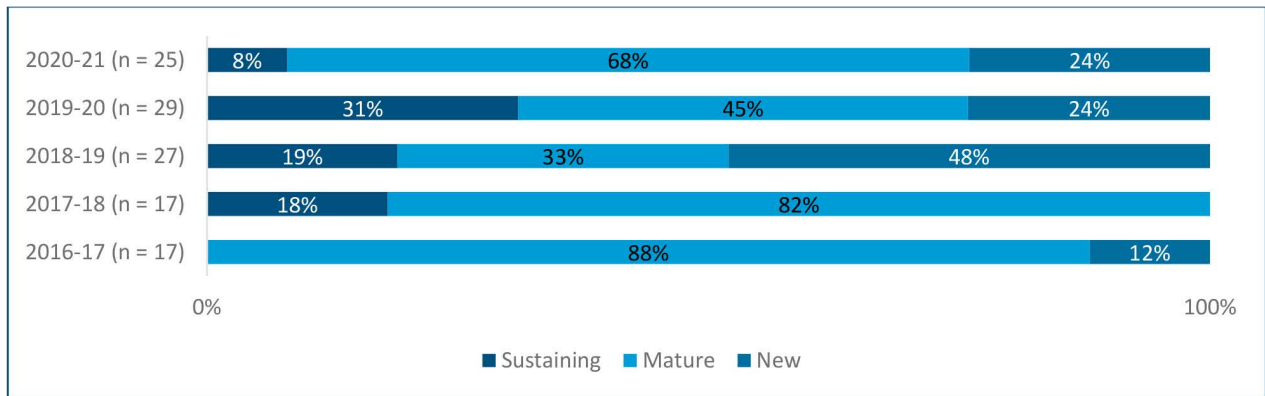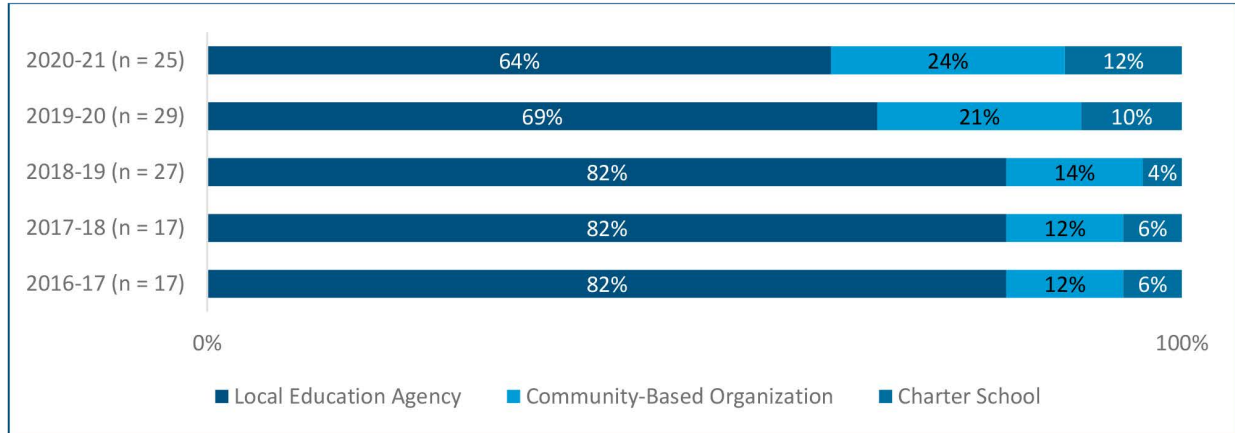

Note. NDE awarded grants for a 4-year period; however, some sustaining subgrantees were able to extend programming into a fifth or sixth year. Data are from NDE subgrantee contact information.

Subgrantee Organization Type

As established in the authorizing legislation for the 21st CCLC program, several types of subgrantee agencies may administer programs. The most relevant distinction is whether the subgrantee organization is a school-based entity. School-based organizations include districts (e.g., local education agencies [LEAs]) and charter schools (Figure 2). Non-school-based organizations include, for example, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, health-based organizations, and park districts. Both school-based and non-school-based organizations can look different in their staffing models, how they recruit and enroll youth in their program, and how they communicate with school-day staff.

Figure 2. In the 2020–21 program year, the percentage of subgrantees funded through local education agency-based entities continued to decline, while the percentage funded through community-based organizations or charter schools continued to increase compared with previous program years.

Program Year	Local Education Agency	Community-Based Organization	Charter School
2020-21 (n = 25)	64%	24%	12%
2019-20 (n = 29)	69%	21%	10%
2018-19 (n = 27)	82%	14%	4%
2017-18 (n = 17)	82%	12%	6%
2016-17 (n = 17)	82%	12%	6%

■ Local Education Agency ■ Community-Based Organization ■ Charter School

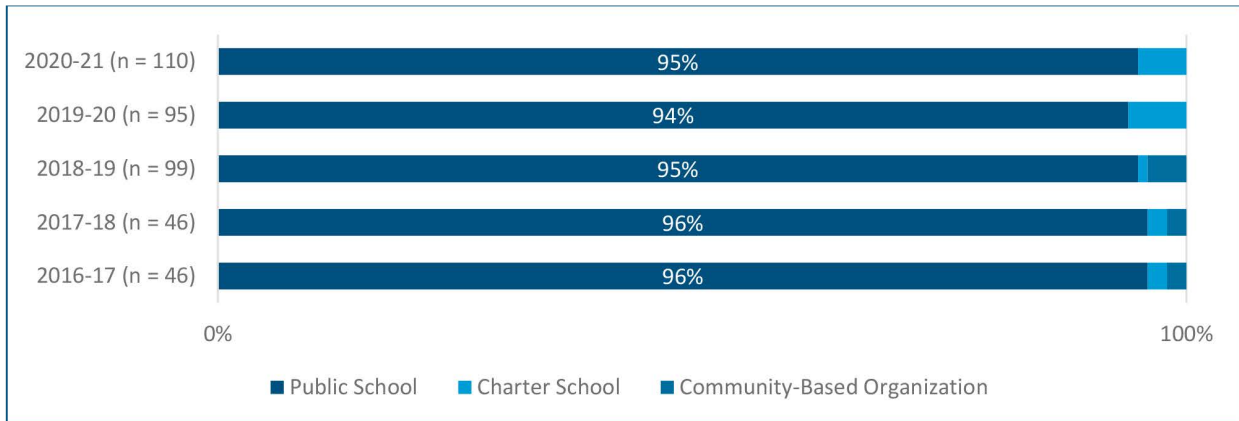*Note.* Data are from NDE subgrantee contact information.

Center Characteristics

Centers are characterized by defined hours of operation, have dedicated staff members, and usually have site coordinator positions. Each 21st CCLC subgrantee in Nevada has at least one center; many subgrantees have more than one center. During the 2020–21 program year, 110 centers provided 21st CCLC

Definition

Center. An entity that applied for and received a 21st CCLC grant from NDE and serves as the fiscal agent for the grant in question.

activities and services. Like subgrantees, centers are classified as either school-based or non-school-based centers (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Across all five program years, almost all of Nevada's centers were in schools.

Figure 3. Horizontal stacked bar chart showing center types by program year.

Year	Public School
2020-21 (n = 110)	95%
2019-20 (n = 95)	94%
2018-19 (n = 99)	95%
2017-18 (n = 46)	96%
2016-17 (n = 46)	96%

Legend: ■ Public School ■ Charter School ■ Community-Based Organization

Note. The percentage of charter schools was 2% in 2016–17 and 2017–18, 1% in 2018–19, 6% in 2019–20, and 5% in 2020-21. The percentage of community-based organizations was 2% in 2016–17 and 2017–18, 4% in 2018–19, 0% in 2019–20, and 0% in 2020-21. Data are from NDE subgrantee contact information.

Center Staffing

The quality of center staffing is crucial to the success of afterschool programming (Vandell et al., 2007), and many of the program improvement approaches currently used in the field emphasize the importance of staff for creating positive developmental settings for youth. The success of afterschool programs is critically dependent on youth forming personal connections with the staff—especially for programs serving older youth, where a much wider spectrum of activities and options is available to youth (Eccles & Gootman, 2002).

Traditionally, 21st CCLC programs employ a variety of staff, including school-day teachers, other nonteaching school staff, college and high school youth, parents and community members, and other subcontracted staff with a wide spectrum of backgrounds and training (Table 1 and Figure 4).

Table 1. Across all five program years, the majority of staff were paid staff for both school-year and summer programming.

	Summer and School-Year Staff		
	Staff	% Paid	% Volunteer
2020–21	1,421	97%	3%
2019–20	1,844	95%	5%
2018–19	2,007	95%	5%
2017–18	1,084	95%	5%
2016–17	1,089	95%	5%

Note. The number of staff reported in 2020–21 declined from the previous year, and the number of centers increased by 15. Data came from Cayen.

Figure 4. In all program years, most paid staff were school-day teachers, other nonteaching school staff, or administrators. The high school and college student volunteer groups decreased in 2020–21, while the school-day teacher volunteer group increased.
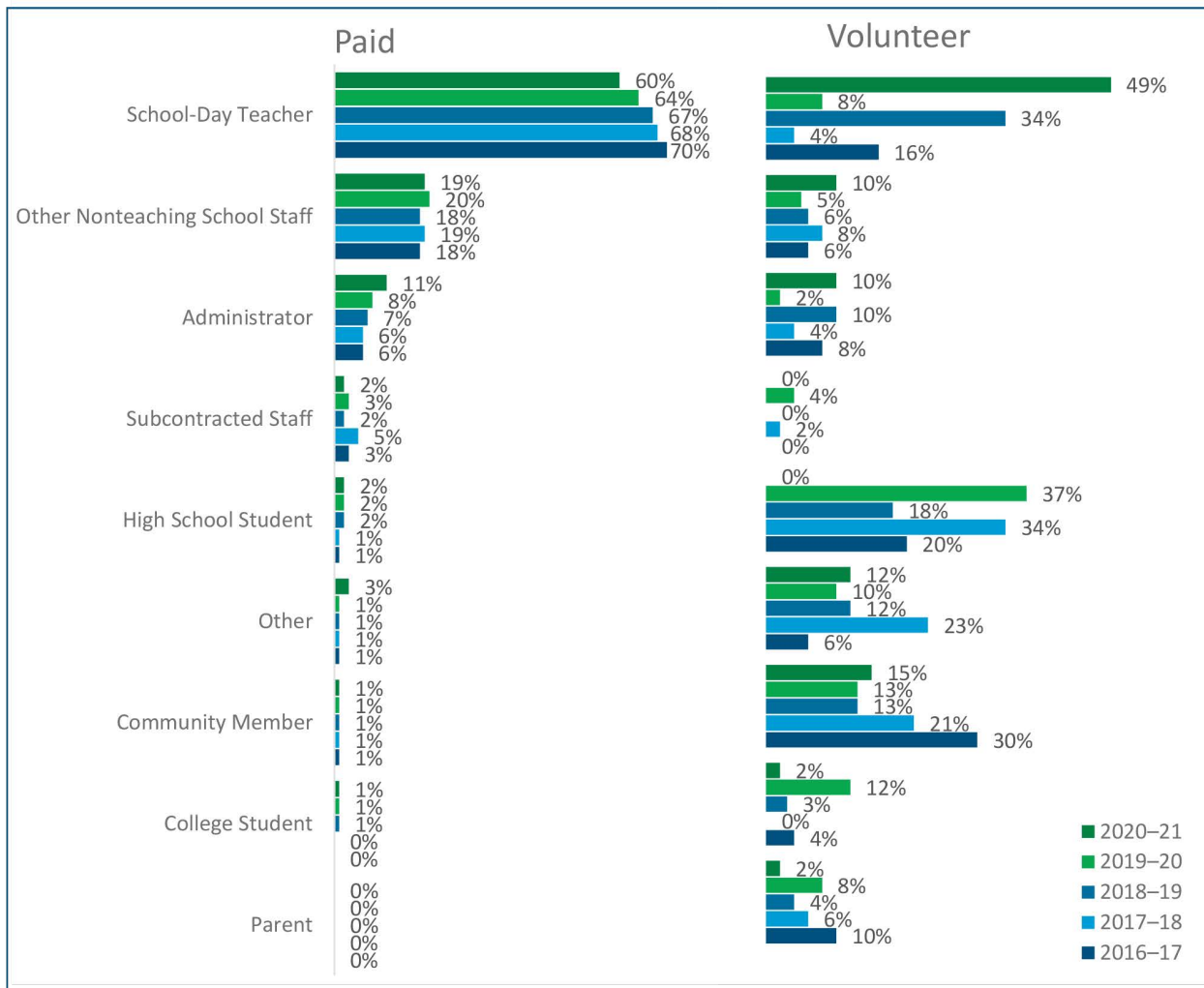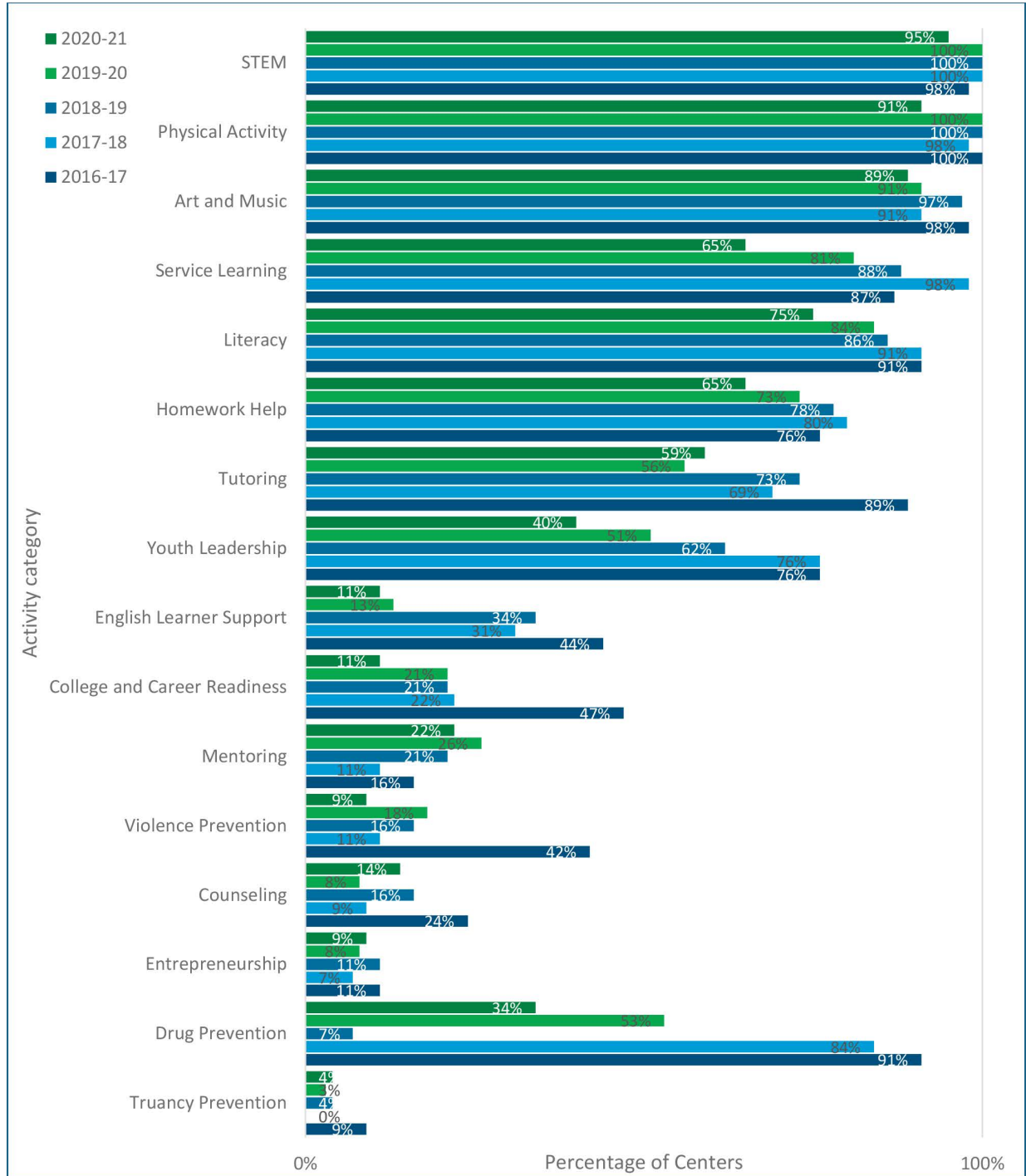

Note. Data came from Cayen.

Center Activities

Both the staff working at a given 21st CCLC program and the activities offered to youth attending it are critical elements in how youth experience and potentially benefit from their participation in 21st CCLC programming. Nationally, the goal of the 21st CCLC program is to provide academic and nonacademic enrichment programs that reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating youth. This overarching charge is broad and encompasses a host of different types of activities. Across all 5 years, STEM, physical activity, and arts and music have been the activity types to be offered by the largest percentage of sites. Since 2017–18, the percentage of sites offering service learning, literacy, homework help, and youth leadership has decreased each year (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Almost all centers (at least 89%) reported offering physical activity, STEM, and art and music activities in all five program years, but representation of most activity types declined from the prior year. There were slight increases in the percentage of centers providing tutoring and counseling activities.


Note. Programs could select more than one activity type. Data came from Cayen.

Youth Characteristics

Understanding the youth population served in 21st CCLC programs in Nevada is an important step in determining the effectiveness of the program for youth outcomes. Youth bring their own set of unique qualities and experiences that can influence how they interact with the program. Nevada's 21st CCLC programs served 10,199 youth in 2016–17, 9,358 youth in 2017–18, 16,864 youth in 2018–19, 16,181 youth in 2019–20, and 10,864 youth in 2020–21. These youth were primarily in the elementary grades (Figure 6) and of multiple races and ethnicities (Figure 7). In addition, youth had diverse needs (Table 2).

Figure 6. In all five program years, most of the youth served were in elementary school.
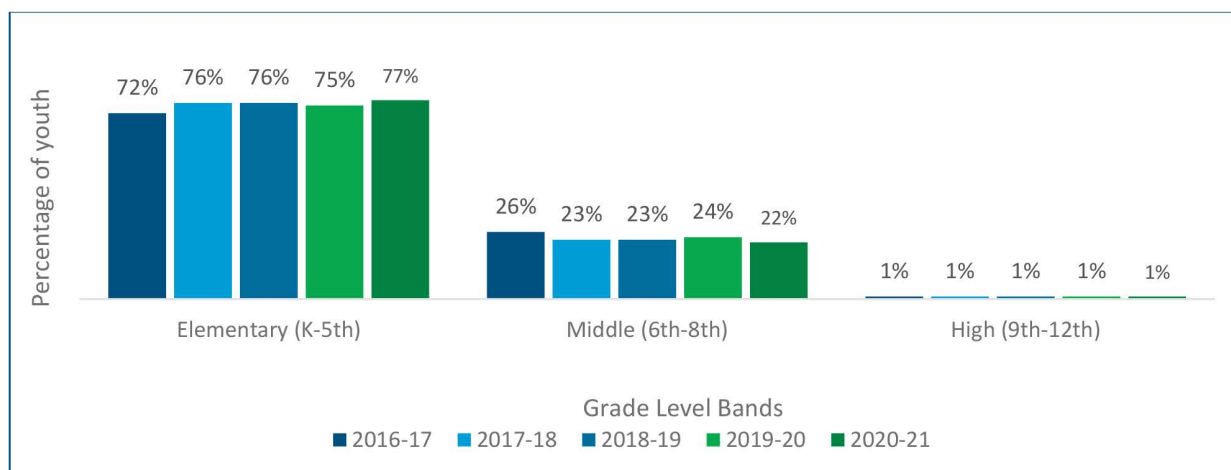
Note. N = 10,199 in 2016–17; *N* = 9,358 in 2017–18; *N* = 16,864 in 2018–19; *N* = 16,181 in 2019–20; *N* = 10,864 in 2020–21. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure 7. The largest group of youth served in all five program years was Hispanic.
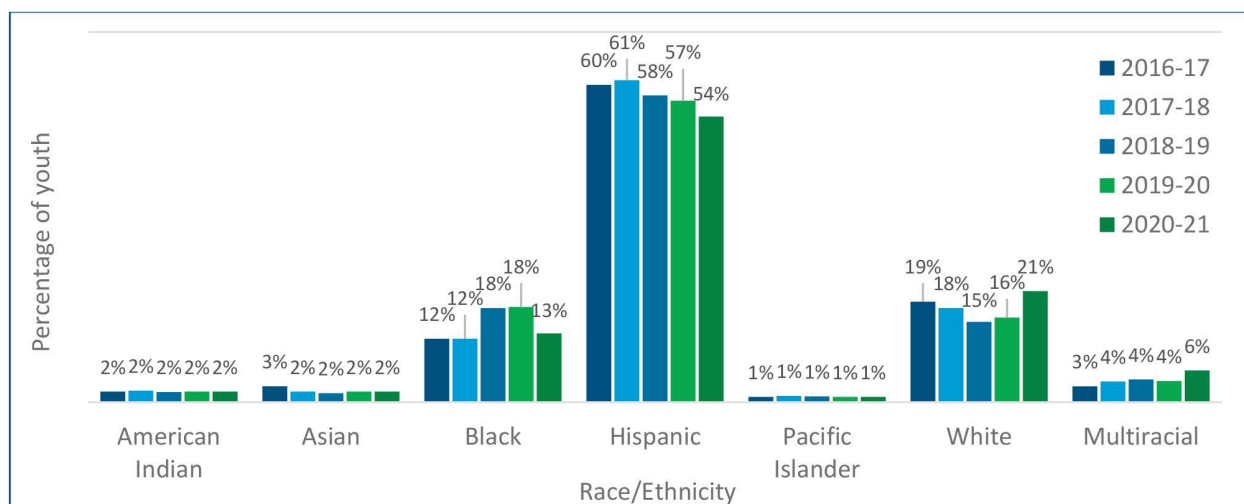
Note. N = 10,199 in 2016–17; *N* = 9,358 in 2017–18; *N* = 16,864 in 2018–19; *N* = 16,181 in 2019–20; and *N* = 10,864 in 2020–21. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Table 2. Across all five program years, Nevada 21st CCLC programs served diverse needs but overwhelmingly focused on serving youth who are eligible for and receive free or reduced-price lunch.

	% male	% female	% free or reduced-price lunch	% English learners	% special needs
2020–21	48%	52%	95%	28%	9%
2019–20	48%	52%	95%	28%	12%
2018–19	48%	52%	94%	31%	8%
2017–18	50%	50%	92%	34%	9%
2016–17	51%	49%	90%	31%	9%

Note. N = 10,199 in 2016–17; *N* = 9,358 in 2017–18; *N* = 16,864 in 2018–19; *N* = 16,181 in 2019–20; and *N* = 10,864 in 2020–21. The percentage of male and female participants did not change from the previous 2 years. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Youth Baseline Descriptive Data: School Achievement and Attendance

One of the primary goals of the 21st CCLC program is to serve youth who are academically at risk or who are otherwise struggling in school. This subsection presents school-related data for youth participants attending 21st CCLC programming in 2020–21. First, we present assessment data for the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) in English language arts (ELA) and math. It is important to note that accountability results were waived by the U.S. Department of Education, and participation on SBAC math and ELA assessments were down across the state during the 2020–21 academic year. As a result, results may not be comparable, and caution should be taken when comparing 2020–21 results with previous years. Also, due to COVID-19 school building closures, SBAC assessments were waived in the 2019–20 school year. Furthermore, the English Language Proficiency Assessment (WIDA) administration window for 2020–21 was extended to September 2021, so these data are not yet available, as it is currently going through the validation process. Following the academic data, we show data concerning school-day absence rates. Note that due to COVID-19 school building closures, chronic absenteeism was not able to be calculated in a uniform way statewide for 2019–20, and attendance data are reflected as of March 13, 2020. For 2020–21, NDE granted flexibility to districts on taking attendance due to different modes of learning (e.g., in-person, remote, hybrid), including taking normal daily attendance or taking attendance once per week. As such, attendance methods varied by district as well as by school within a district. Given these discrepancies, caution should be taken when comparing attendance data across years.

None of the data shown in this subsection relate to program impact. The data presented are indicative only of the types of youth served by 21st CCLC programming and have no bearing on program outcomes.

SBAC Baseline Data

The SBAC provides Nevada with a measure of youth academic progress in Grades 3–8. The SBAC is a computer adaptive test administered online aligned with the Nevada academic content standards in mathematics and ELA. As another way to explore the characteristics of youth served by 21st CCLC programs, this subsection presents SBAC data for all program participants for 2020–21. Level 1 indicates Minimal Understanding, as assessed by the SBAC; Level 2 indicates Partial Understanding; Level 3 indicates Proficient; and Level 4 indicates Advanced. Participants whose scores fall in Levels 1 and 2 are of primary interest here because they are performing below the Proficient level.

For 2020–21, the majority of youth participants in 21st CCLC programming who also had available SBAC scores were in Level 1 or Level 2 for both mathematics and ELA (see Figures 8 and 9). A plurality were in Level 1, the lowest performance level. This indicates that 21st CCLC programs in Nevada were serving youth in academic need during 2020–21.

Figure 8. More than three quarters of all youth participants in 2020–21 were below Proficient in mathematics on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC).
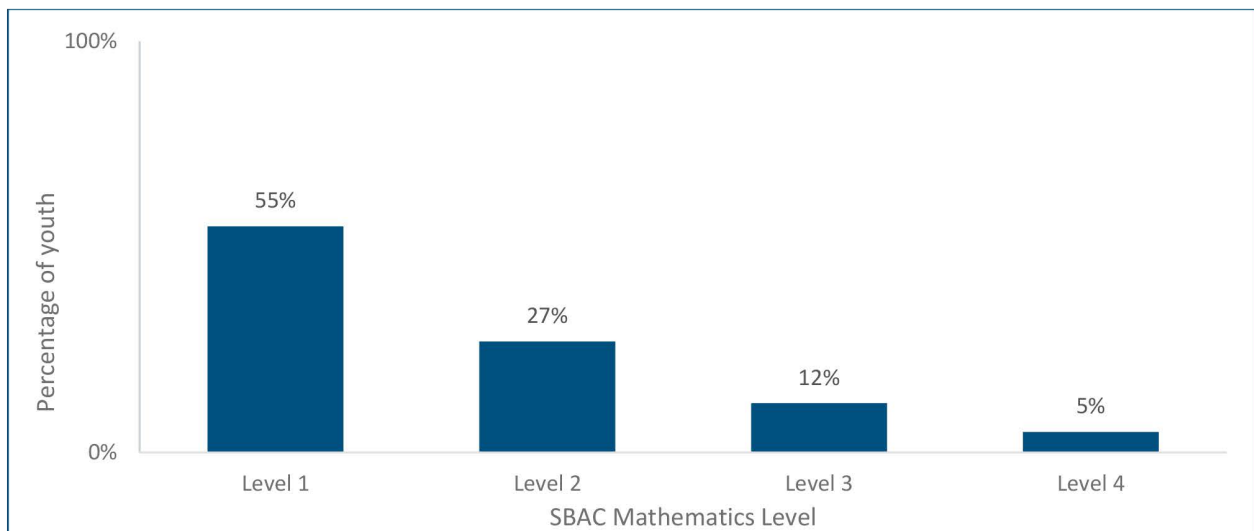
Note. N = 5,262 students. Data came from NDE.

Figure 9. Slightly less than three quarters of all youth participants in 2020–21 were below Proficient in English language arts on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC).
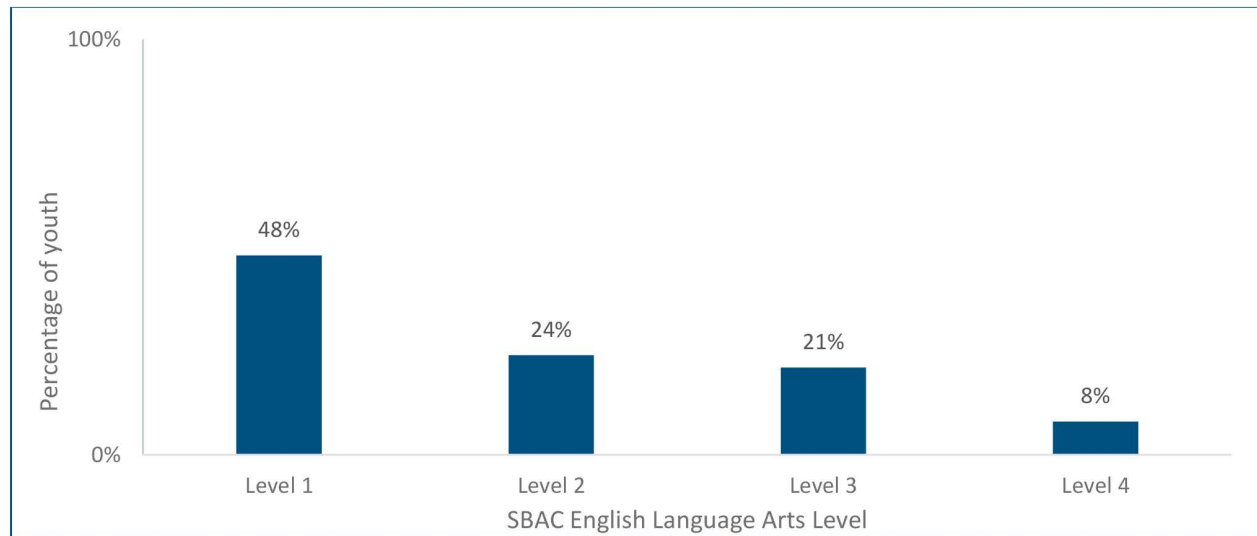
Note. N = 5,251 students. Data came from NDE.

Youth School-Day Absences

In AIR's evaluation work in other states, we have found that increased participation in 21st CCLC programs had a statistically significant impact on reducing school-day absences (Devaney et al., 2012; Naftzger et al., 2015).

Given this evidence from other evaluation work and NDE's more general interest in reducing school-day absences, this section presents a descriptive baseline of school-day absence rates for youth participants, with a particular focus on youth who are absent 10% or more

Threshold

Chronically Absent. At least 10% school-day absences in the prior year.

of the days that they are enrolled (the NDE definition for "chronically absent"). These data will help establish a picture of general 21st CCLC participant school-day absence levels, thereby providing more information about the youth population served by 21st CCLC programs in Nevada. It is important to note again that due to COVID-19 school closures, the length of the 2019–20 school year was shorter compared with previous years by roughly 45 school days, and attendance methods varied across schools and districts during the 2020–21 school year. As such, extreme caution should be made when comparing 2019–20 or 2020–21 attendance data with other school years.

Because NDE defines the term "chronic absence" as an absence rate of 10% or more during a given school year, we first examined youth participant school-day absence rates by finding the percentage of youth who meet the definition of chronically absent. To provide further insight

into absence rates, however, we also looked at the proportion of participants who had at least a 5% absence rate. Based on these analyses, we found that 21st CCLC programs are generally serving youth with modestly high school-day absence rates (that is, youth with at least a 5% absence rate), and approximately 18% of the youth participants served by 21st CCLC met the definition of chronically absent (Figure 10).

Figure 10. A larger percentage of youth were chronically absent in 2020–21 than in 2019–20.
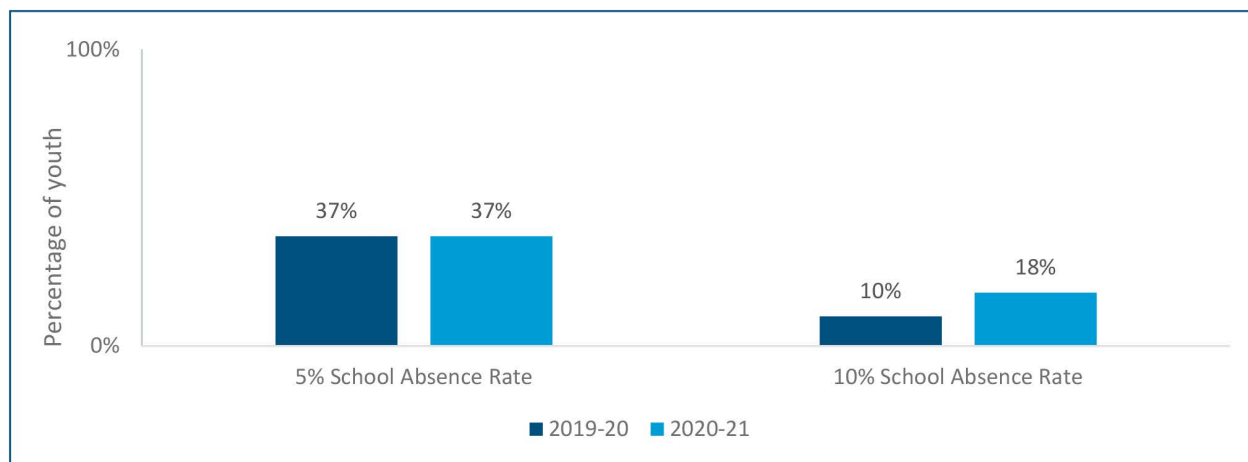

Note. Based on 8,464 youth participant records with school absence data for 2019–20 and 9,618 youth participant records with such data for 2020–21.

Beyond the proportion of youth with school-day absence rates of 5% or 10% (or more), we analyzed how youth changed from the prior year in terms of the chronic absence threshold. That is, we examined the proportion of students who moved into or out of chronic absence between years. While providing insight into the level of "churn" in the data year over year, this analysis, in particular, helps reveal what proportion of youth stay in the chronically absent category across years. No change (up or down) shown here can be attributed to 21st CCLC programming. These data are merely descriptive, showing only the absence levels of youth served by 21st CCLC programs.

When considering the entire sample of youth for which school-day attendance data were available (n = 8,464 for 2019–20 and n = 9,618 for 2020–21), the average absence rate was 4.7% in 2019–20 and 6.0% in 2020–21 (with standard deviations of 4.6% and 9.1%, respectively). There was a fair amount of movement into or out of chronic absence between years, however, with about 4% of youth staying in chronic absence status across years (Figure 11). This indicates that 21st CCLC programs are serving a subset of youth with relatively high absence rates (although the vast majority of youth participants were below the chronic absence threshold across years).

Figure 11. Compared with the prior year, a greater proportion of youth in 2020–21 became chronically absent than did youth in 2019–20, and a smaller proportion stayed below the chronic absenteeism threshold.
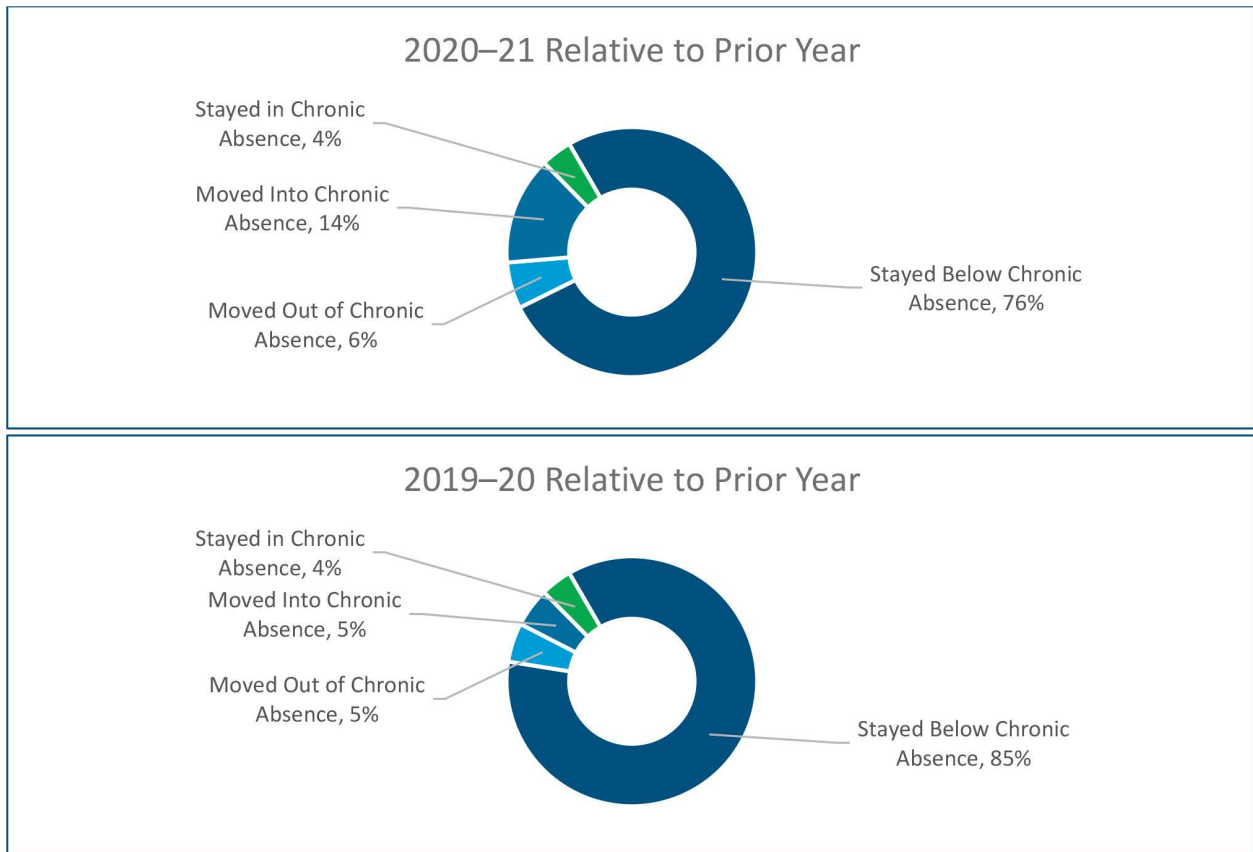
Note. Based on 12,459 youth with absence data for the prior year and current year in 2019–20, and 8,464 youth with absence data for the prior year and current year in 2020–21.

Summary

The 21st CCLC program, according to the legislation, is meant to serve youth who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. As shown by the data presented in this section, nearly all youth participants in Nevada were eligible for FRPL in each year under investigation, with a sizable minority (just under one third) in each year noted as English learners. Based on our analysis of student outcome data, many youth attending 21st CCLC programming in Nevada score below the Proficient level in mathematics and ELA on the SBAC, and many (37%) met the threshold for missing 5% of the school year. That is, the main finding of this section is that the 21st CCLC program in Nevada is serving the youth that the program is meant to serve. Of course, this says nothing about youth attendance levels or possible youth experiences in programming. We turn to these subjects next.

Chapter 2. Youth Program Attendance and Related Characteristics

Research has shown that the more a young person attends afterschool programming, the more it is possible for the person's outcomes to improve. The federal 21st CCLC program uses 30, 60, and 90 days as the attendance benchmarks on which programs must report. Research supports these figures, showing that young people can have improved outcomes after 30 days, but those who participate 60 days or more tend to have even greater outcomes (Chaput et al., 2004; Kauh, 2011; Naftzger et al., 2013). Furthermore, from AIR's statewide evaluation work, evidence suggests that youth benefit more from 21st CCLC programming the more they participate (Naftzger et al., 2015). The 60 days (i.e., 120 hours) or more threshold is predicated on evidence accumulated by AIR that program effects associated with participation are more apt to be found at this level of annual program participation.

In this chapter, we examine overall youth attendance in programming and the relationship between the level of youth participation in programming and certain program characteristics.

Findings	Aligned recommendations
- About half (51%) of program participants were regular attendees (attending 30 days or more) during the 2020–21 program year. - Programs across the state had a wide range in terms of students served, from five to 735 students. - Although the percentage of nonregular participants (49%) increased in 2020–21, the percentage of students attending 90 days or more (16%) also increased compared with the previous year. Changes in participation could be a result of the pandemic. - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students (58%), White students (56%), and Hispanic students (52%) attended programming more regularly than students of other races or ethnicities. - Students receiving free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) were more likely to participate in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) activities (56%) and attended for more total hours on average (37 hours) compared with students without this status (50% and 22 hours, respectively). - Students receiving special education were more likely to participate in physical activity (58%) than students	- Continue to express the importance of students consistently attending programs, especially as the pandemic persists. - Explore what strategies have been successful in retaining students and document these best practices. - Continue to monitor the extent to which students from low-income families and those who are academically at risk are being served in the program. - Explore ways to promote youth choice in programming that allow youth to self-direct into activities that represent their interests. - For any future evaluation, it may be useful to more robustly explore how youth participation

Findings	Aligned recommendations
without special education (53%). However, the average total hours spent in physical activity by students in these two groups did not differ significantly (37 hours and 35 hours, respectively). • A smaller percentage of students receiving FRPL (49%) participated in tutoring than students without this status (68%). However, students receiving FRPL participated for more total hours on average (43 hours compared with 37 hours). • A greater percentage of students in special education (44%), receiving FRPL (42%), or with limited English language proficiency (44%) participated in literacy activities than students without these classifications (42%, 40%, and 41%, respectively). • Students who spent more time in each of these activity types—STEM, physical activity, tutoring, arts and music, and literacy—had fewer school-day absences in the school year.	level—specifically, participation in STEM, physical activity, tutoring, arts and music, and literacy activities—are related to youth experience and/or youth outcomes. If data are available, it also may be useful to explore differences in youth participation level and activity delivery method: virtual or in-person.

Youth Program Attendance

It often has been said that "youth vote with their feet." This adage becomes apparent when examining attendance levels for the Nevada 21st CCLC program. Program attendance is an intermediate outcome indicator that reflects the potential breadth and depth

Definition

Regular Attendees. Youth who attended 30 days or more during the reporting period.

of exposure to afterschool programming. For this report, program attendance was examined by focusing on two primary types of measures: (a) the total number of youth who participated in a center's programming throughout the year (Figure 12 and Table 3) and (b) the frequency and intensity with which youth attended programming when offered (Figures 13 and 14). The total number of youth who participated is a measure of the breadth of a center's reach, whereas frequency and intensity are measures of how successful a center was in retaining youth in center-provided services and activities. It is important to note that the opportunity for youth to attend programming during the 2019–20 program year decreased due to school closures because of the pandemic—up to 2 1/2 months earlier than normal. In addition, although programs returned to in-person programming in the 2020–21 school year, persistent challenges due to the continuance of the COVID-19 pandemic likely impacted program attendance. When examining the results in this section, readers should keep this context in mind.
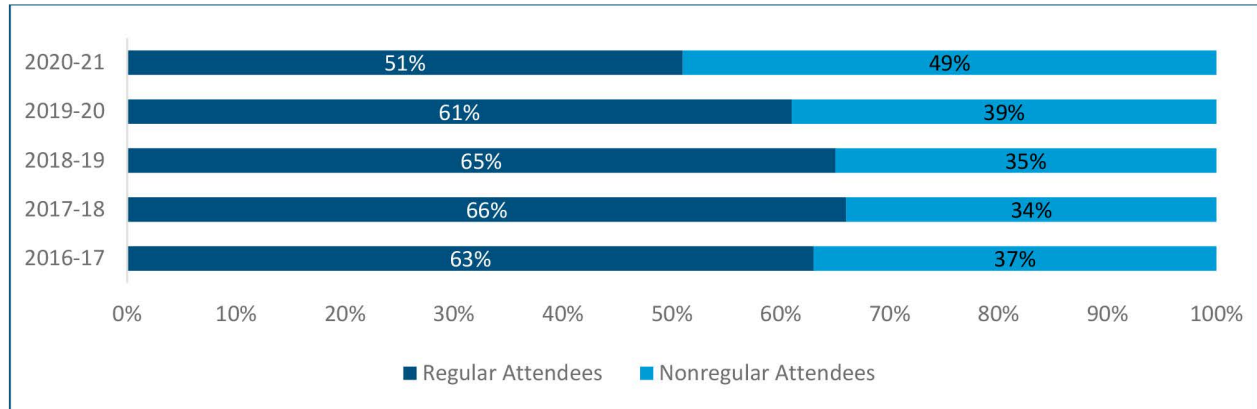
Figure 12. In 2020–21, the percentage of regular attendees decreased to 51%, the lowest percentage reported over the last 5 years.

Note. N = 10,199 in 2016–17; *N* = 9,358 in 2017–18; *N* = 16,864 in 2018–19; *N* = 16,181 in 2019–20; and *N* = 10,864 in 2020–21. Data came from Cayen.

Table 3. On average, centers served a wide range in terms of the number of youth across all program years; however, the average number of youth served by centers continued to decline in 2020–21.

	Program ear	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
	2020–21	5	735	100	103.73
	2019–20	18	856	178	130.00
	2018–19	28	766	198	125.01
	2017–18	93	801	208	117.62
	2016–17	104	710	227	114.70

Note. Data came from Cayen.

Figure 13 highlights the average number of youth served at a center during a given program year as well as how many of those students were regular attendees versus nonregular attendees.

Figure 13. In general, regular attendees were the majority of youth at each center in all program years; however, the average number of total students and regular attendees both declined in 2020–21.
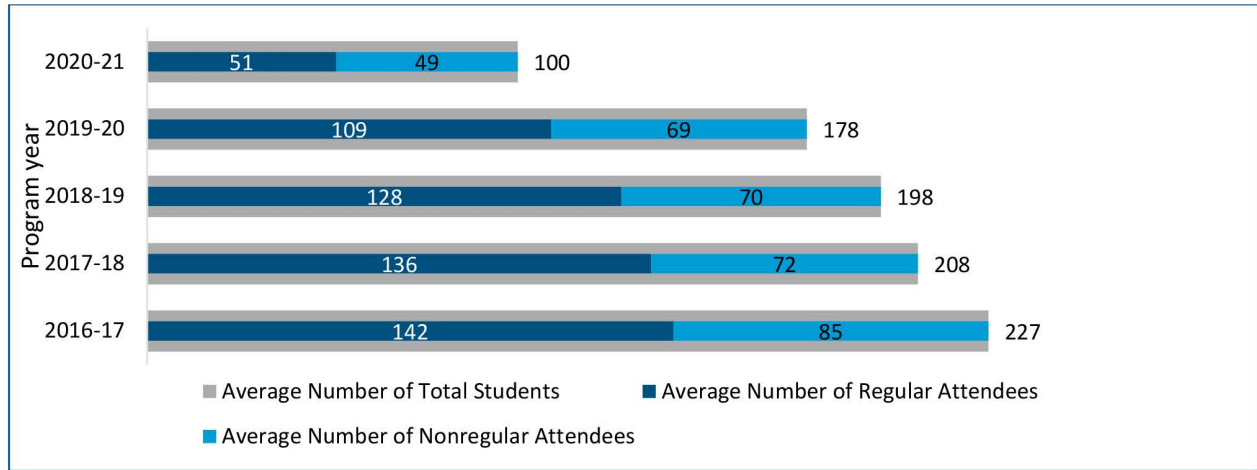
Note. Data came from Cayen.

The declining average number of students served per center summarized in Figure 13 is likely associated with the increase in the number of grantees and centers (new centers have a tendency to serve fewer students in their first year), especially the barriers to participation created by the pandemic.

Figure 14. In 2020–21, almost half of youth attended 29 days or less, while a slightly higher percentage of students attended 90 days or more compared with 2019–20.
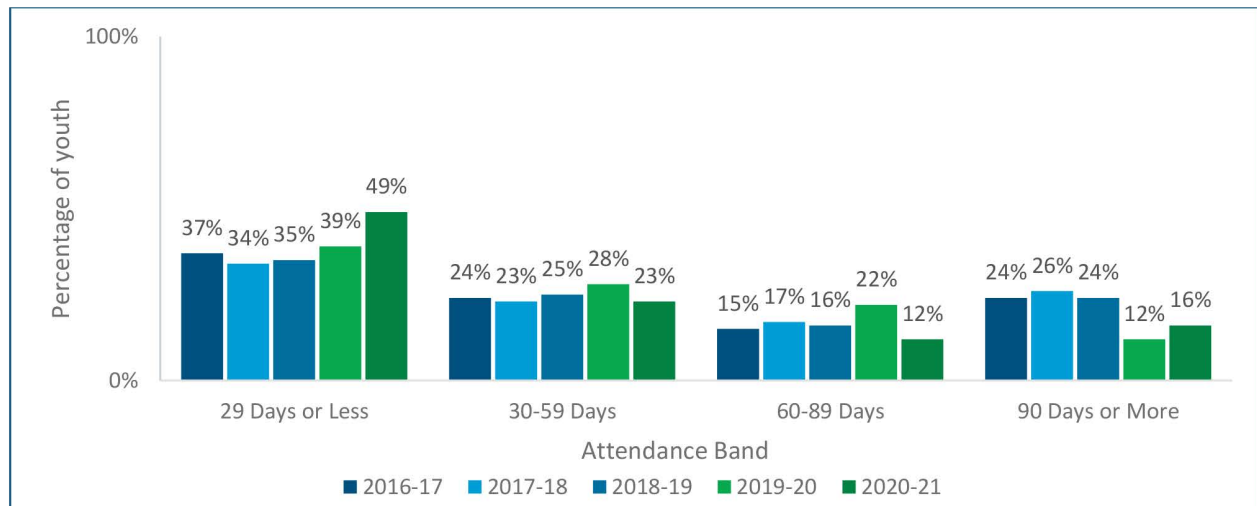
Note. N = 10,199 in 2016–17; *N* = 9,358 in 2017–18; *N* = 16,864 in 2018–19; *N* = 16,181 in 2019–20; and *N* = 10,864 in 2020–21. Data came from Cayen.

For regular attendees, average program attendance was 80 days in 2016–17, 81 days in 2017–18, 78 days in 2018–19, 66 days in 2019–20, and 72 days in 2020–21, with a median of 73, 76, 74, 64, and 65 days, respectively.

Youth Attendance and Program Characteristics

Youth attendance data, as shown in the previous section, may indicate some measure of youth engagement in 21st CCLC programming. Attendance data alone, ho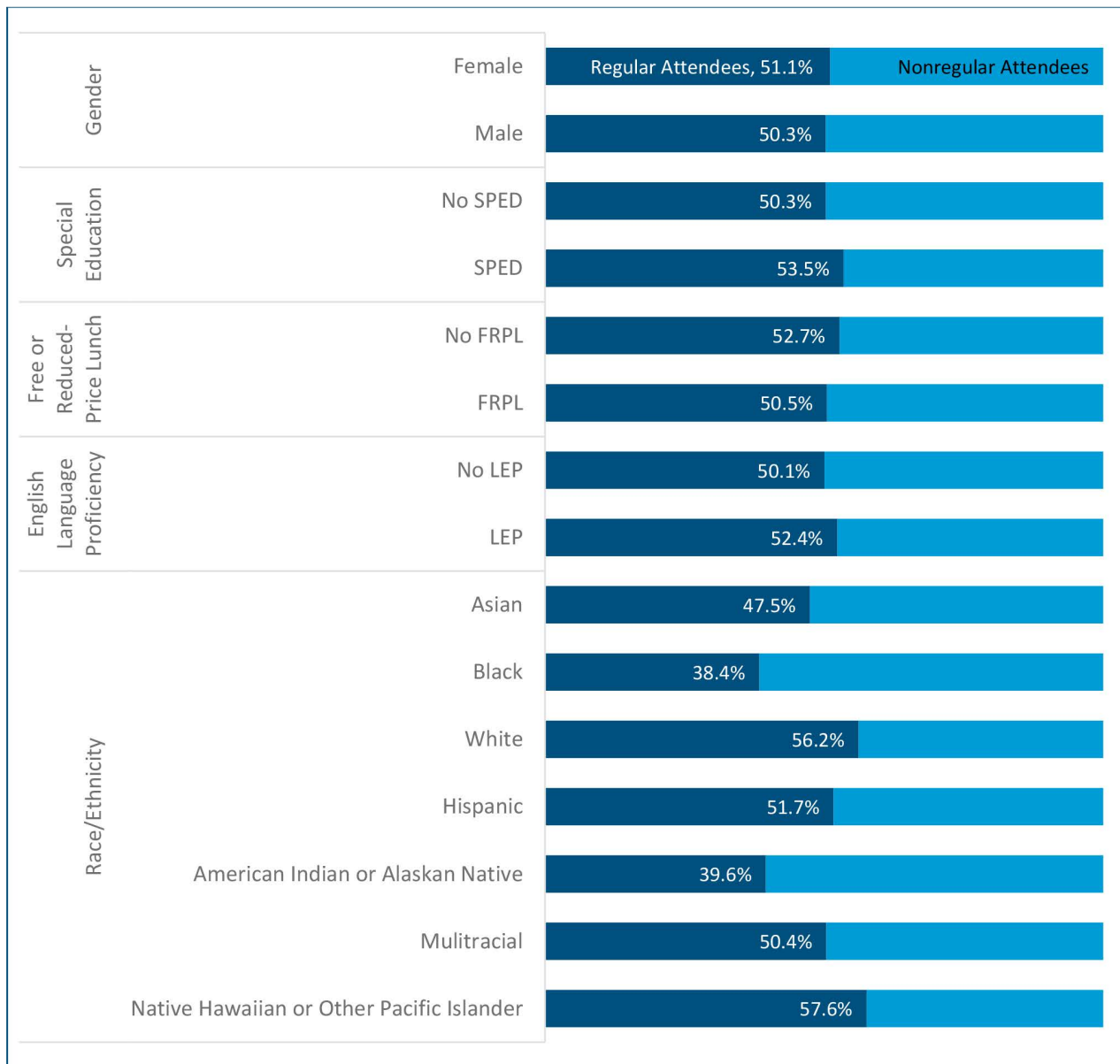wever, do not provide information concerning other factors that may play a role in how frequently youth attended programming. In this section, we examined program attendance and how it differs by demographic subgroup—including gender, race/ethnicity, special education, FRPL qualification, and English language proficiency—and participation in different 21st CCLC activities.

First, we examined whether certain groups of students attended programming more or less frequently when categorized by the demographic items listed previously (see Figure 15). Then, we explored the activity categories with the highest level of participation in more detail, namely STEM, physical activity, tutoring, arts and music, and literacy. For these five activity categories, we analyzed differences in the average total hours of participation or percentage of students participating by demographic subgroup. By doing so, we hoped to gain a better understanding of which groups of students might be more closely associated with higher or lower levels of attendance for particular activity types.

Figure 15. Slight differences exist in the percentage of regular attendees when comparing students by gender, English language proficiency, or special education or free or reduced-price lunch status. When comparing by race/ethnicity, White students and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students have the largest percentage of regular attendees.

Category	Group	Regular Attendees
Gender	Female	Regular Attendees, 51.1%
	Male	50.3%
Special Education	No SPED	50.3%
	SPED	53.5%
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	No FRPL	52.7%
	FRPL	50.5%
English Language Proficiency	No LEP	50.1%
	LEP	52.4%
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	47.5%
	Black	38.4%
	White	56.2%
	Hispanic	51.7%
	American Indian or Alaskan Native	39.6%
	Mulitracial	50.4%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	57.6%

Note. SPED = special education; FRPL = free or reduced-price lunch; LEP = limited English proficiency. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

We examined the average total hours of programming that students attended each 21st CCLC activity category as well as the percentage of student participants who participated in each type of 21st CCLC activity category at least once (see Figures 16 and 17). We also examined the average total hours of programming that students attended each activity category by overall

regular attendance status (i.e., 30 days or more compared with less than 30 days; see Figure 18). This provided further insights into both the depth and breadth of the specific activity types that make up afterschool programming. We then examined five of the activities with the highest attendance in terms of total hours and percentage of students in more detail: STEM, physical activity, tutoring, arts and music, and literacy.
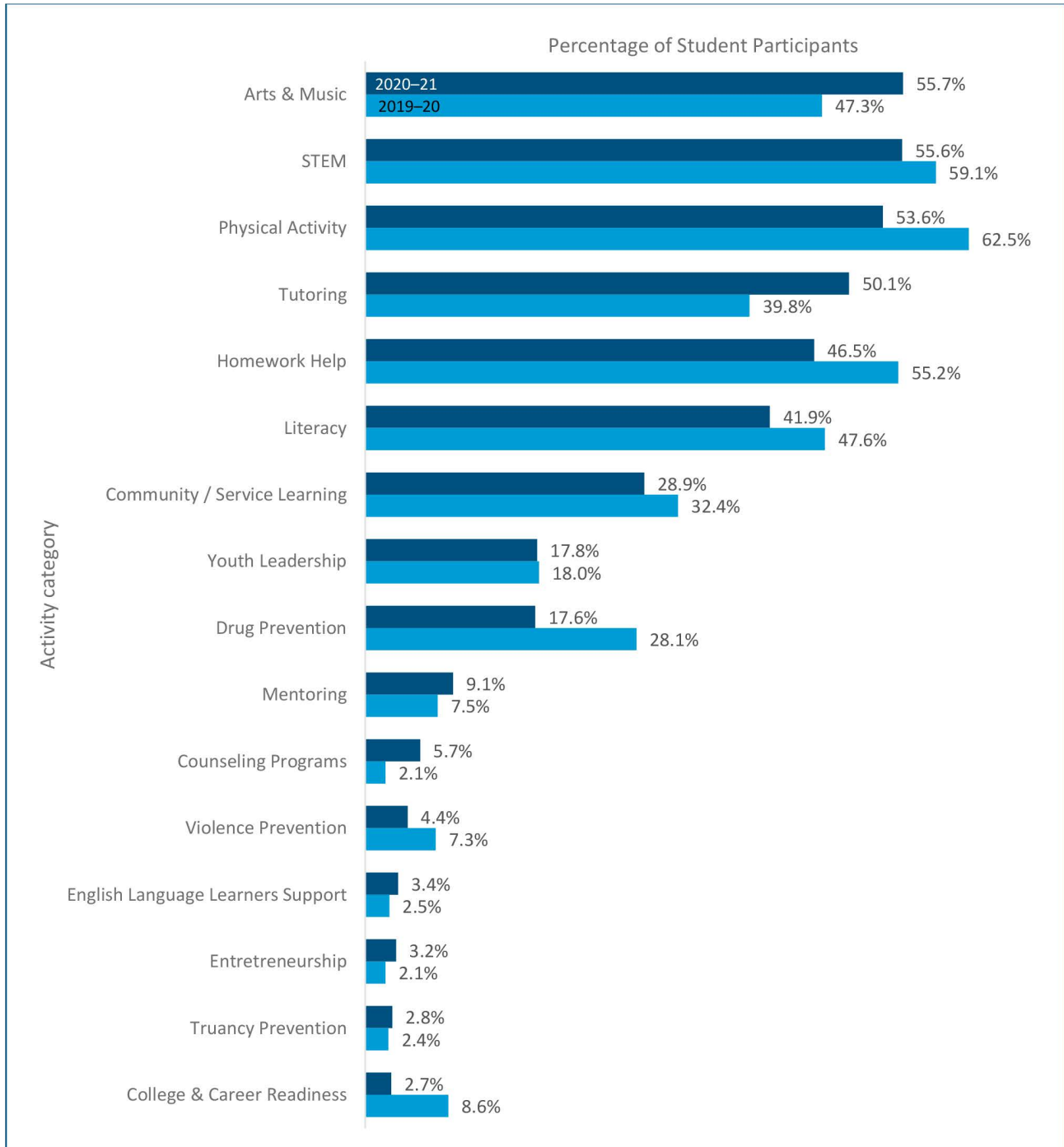
Figure 16. Tutoring, STEM, physical activity, literacy, homework help, and arts and music were the activity categories with the highest average total hours of participation, with all activity hours increasing from the prior year. Notably, there was a substantial increase in the average total hours spent in counseling program activities from the prior year.

Average Total Hours

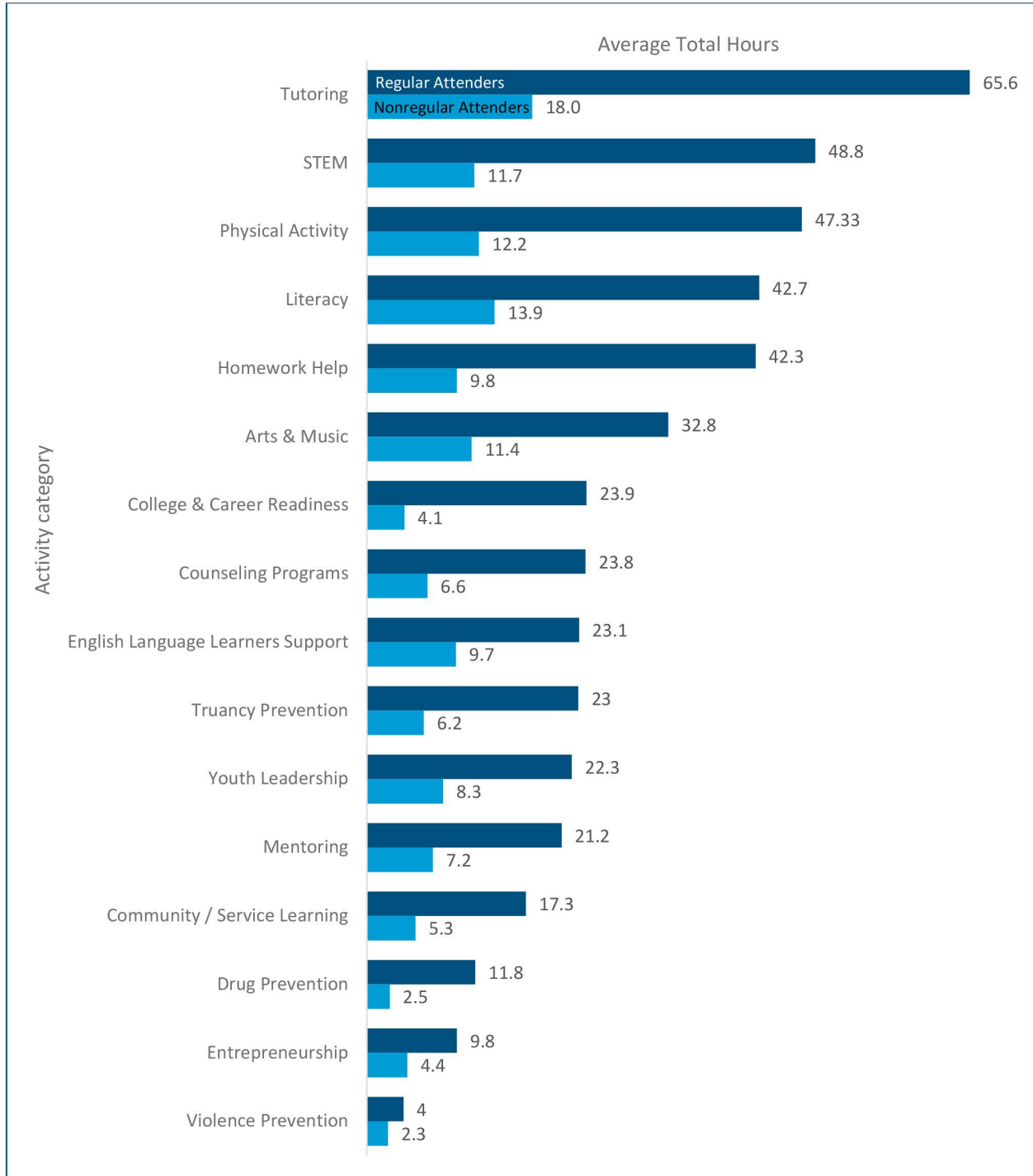| Activity category	2020–21	2019–20
Tutoring	42.7	36.8
STEM	35.9	27.6
Physical Activity	35.3	28.1
Literacy	32.3	28.7
Homework Help	29.6	29.7
Arts & Music	24.6	21.2
Counseling Programs	20.5	5.3
Truancy Prevention	20.4	14.3
English Language Learners Support	19.7	19.5
Youth Leadership	18.8	11.4
College & Career Readiness	16.8	11.6
Mentoring	16.5	14.5
Community / Service Learning	14.6	9.0
Drug Prevention	10.3	7.0
Entretreneurship	8.7	13.1
Violence Prevention	3.7	5.1

Note. Data came from Cayen.

Figure 17. Arts and music, STEM, physical activity, tutoring, homework help, and literacy were the activity categories with the highest percentage of student participants. In most activities, the percentage of students attending all other types of activities decreased from the prior year. Arts and music and counseling program activities had the largest increases from the prior year.

Percentage of Student Participants

Activity category	2020–21	2019–20
Arts & Music	55.7%	47.3%
STEM	55.6%	59.1%
Physical Activity	53.6%	62.5%
Tutoring	50.1%	39.8%
Homework Help	46.5%	55.2%
Literacy	41.9%	47.6%
Community / Service Learning	28.9%	32.4%
Youth Leadership	17.8%	18.0%
Drug Prevention	17.6%	28.1%
Mentoring	9.1%	7.5%
Counseling Programs	5.7%	2.1%
Violence Prevention	4.4%	7.3%
English Language Learners Support	3.4%	2.5%
Entretreneurship	3.2%	2.1%
Truancy Prevention	2.8%	2.4%
College & Career Readiness	2.7%	8.6%

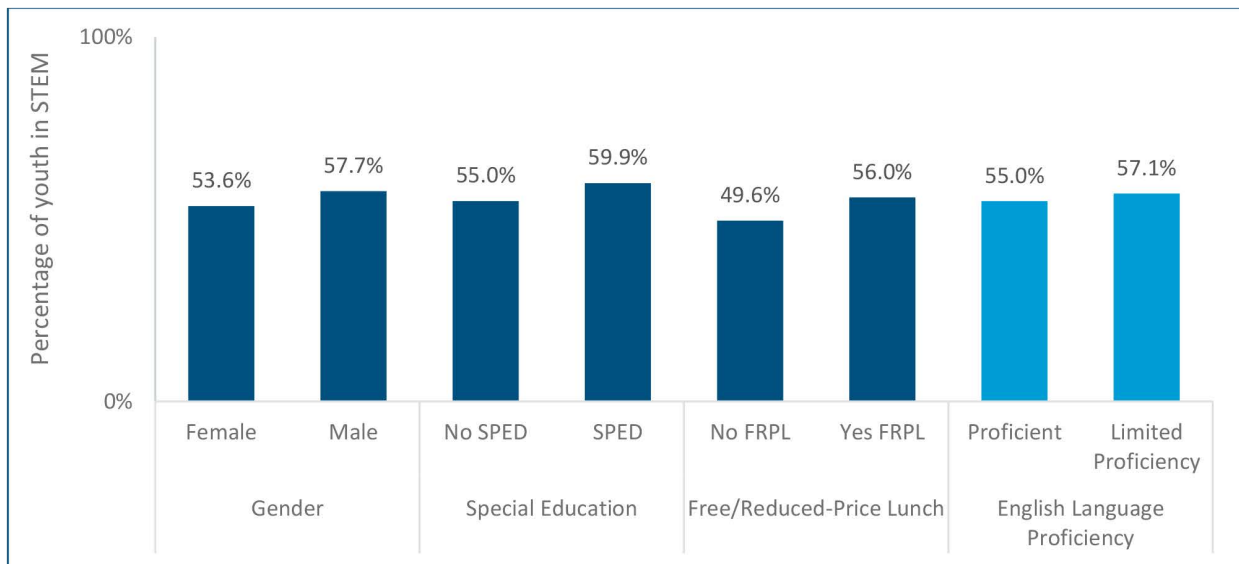*Note.* Data came from Cayen.

Figure 18. Students attending programming 30 days or more spent substantially more total hours in each activity category, with the most hours spent in tutoring, STEM, physical activity, literacy, and homework help.

Average Total Hours

| Activity category	Regular Attenders	Nonregular Attenders
Tutoring	65.6	18.0
STEM	48.8	11.7
Physical Activity	47.33	12.2
Literacy	42.7	13.9
Homework Help	42.3	9.8
Arts & Music	32.8	11.4
College & Career Readiness	23.9	4.1
Counseling Programs	23.8	6.6
English Language Learners Support	23.1	9.7
Truancy Prevention	23	6.2
Youth Leadership	22.3	8.3
Mentoring	21.2	7.2
Community / Service Learning	17.3	5.3
Drug Prevention	11.8	2.5
Entrepreneurship	9.8	4.4
Violence Prevention	4	2.3

Note. Data came from Cayen.

For the five activity categories with some of the highest levels of participation (both in average total hours and percentage of students attending), we analyzed differences in attendance based on gender, special education, FRPL classification, and English language proficiency. For STEM activities, differences based on race/ethnicity also are included, as this activity type presented the most interesting differences. In addition, we looked at school-related student outcomes for each activity type by examining student outcomes across quartiles of hours spent in each activity type (Figures 19–35). For school-related outcomes, we present findings only for school-day absences. Findings for adequate growth percentile (AGP) in ELA and math are located in Appendix A, as scores were similar across quartile groups and no groups were significantly different from each other. We look at each activity category in the following order: STEM, physical activity, tutoring, arts and music, and literacy.

Figure 19. A larger percentage of males, students with special education services, and students with free or reduced-price lunch status participated in STEM activities compared with students without these classifications.


Note. SPED = special education; FRPL = free or reduced-price lunch. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure 20. The average total hours that students attended STEM activities were higher for students in special education, receiving free or reduced-price lunch, or with limited English language proficiency.
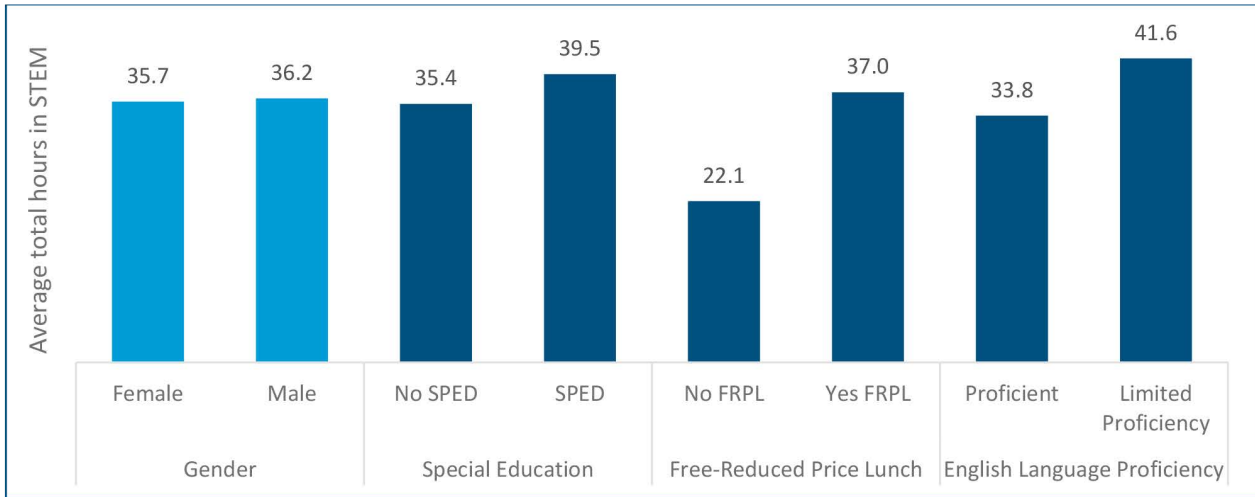

Note. SPED = special education; FRPL = free or reduced-price lunch. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure 21. When comparing race/ethnicity groups, a smaller percentage of Black students and Asian students participated in STEM activities.


Note. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Nevada 21st CCLC Statewide Evaluation 2019-20
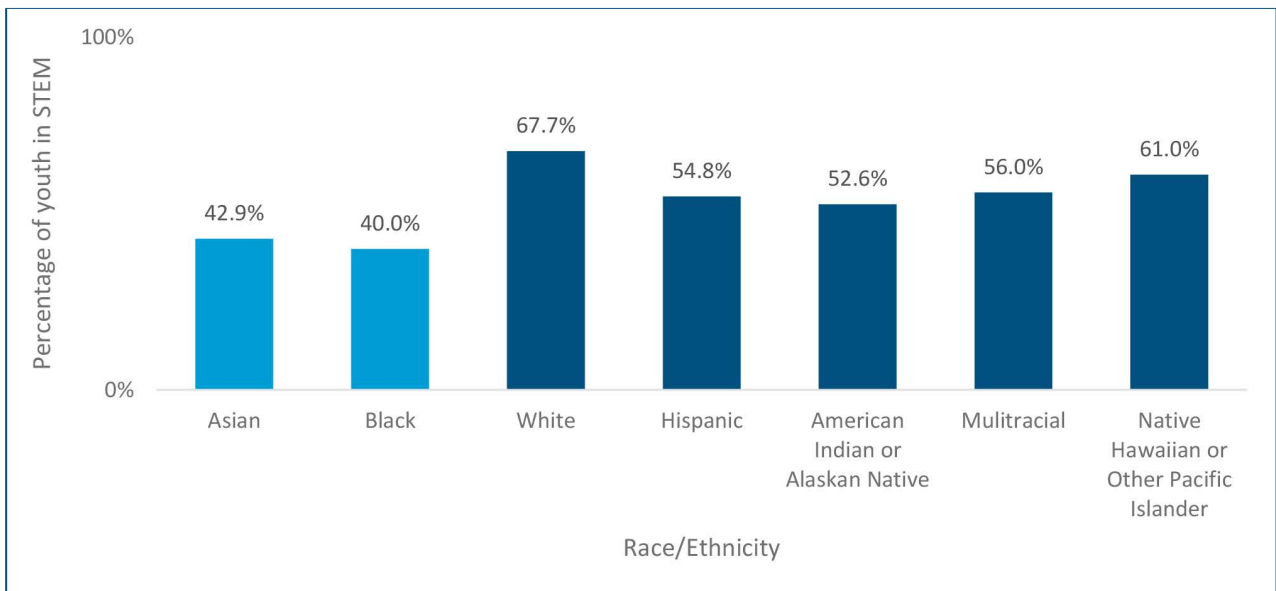
Figure 22. Although White students had the highest percentage of youth participating in STEM activities, the average total hours spent was lower than all other race/ethnicity groups except for Black students.
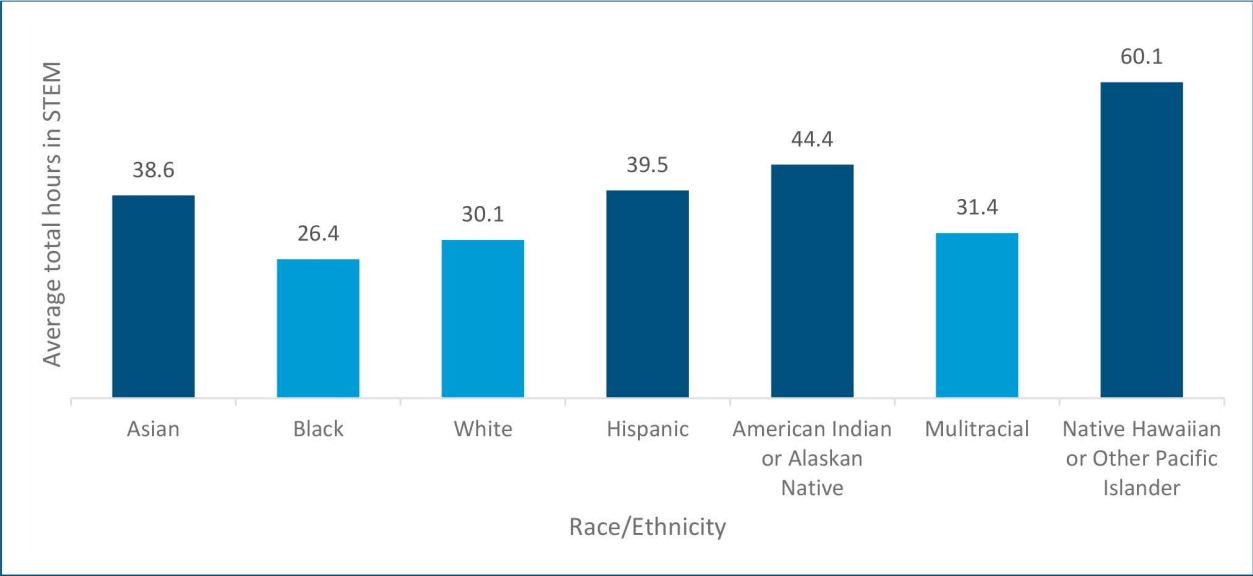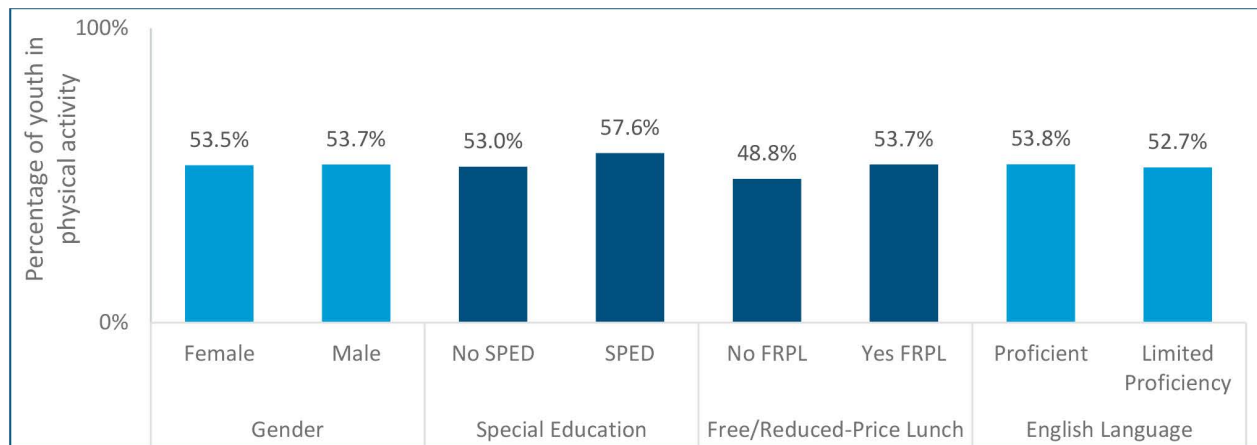

Note. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure 23. Students who spent the largest number of hours in STEM activities (more than 75% of participants) had the fewest number of school-day absences.
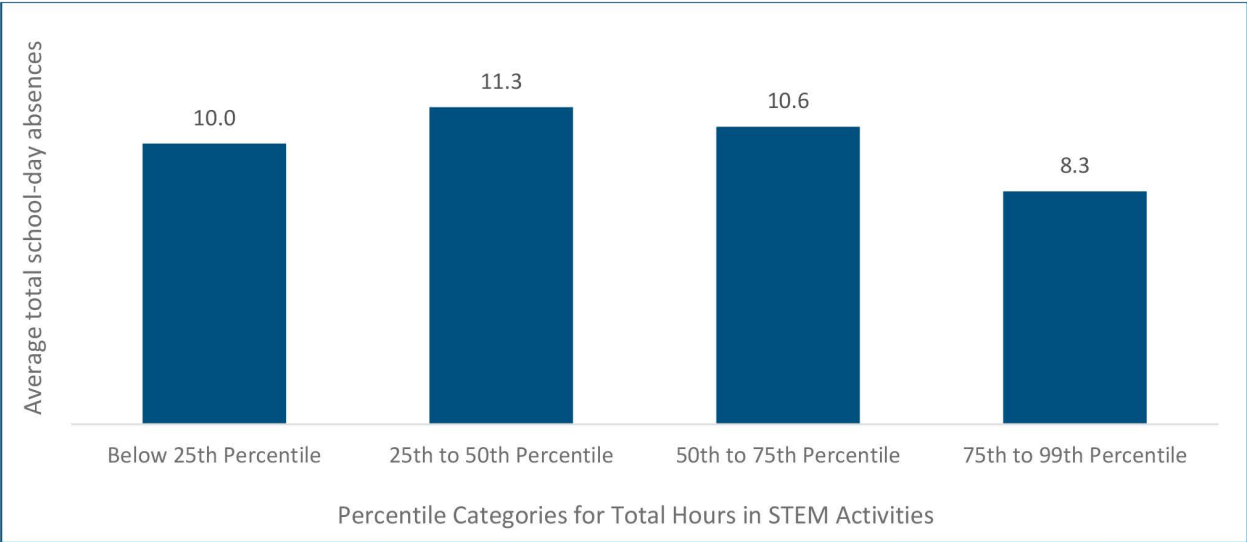
Note. We fit a one-way analysis of variance to compare differences in school-day absences across groups. All groups were significantly different from each other at $p<.01$ except for the 25th to 50th percentile compared with below the 25th percentile and the 50th to 75th percentile as well as for below the 25th percentile compared with the 50th to 75th percentile. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Next, we examined participation in physical activity. For students with FRPL status, a larger percentage participated in physical activities compared with students who do not qualify for these services, but of those students who did participate, students without FRPL attended a higher total number of hours on average.

Figure 24. A larger percentage of students in special education or receiving free or reduced-price lunch participated in physical activity than students without these services.


Note. SPED = special education; FRPL = free or reduced-price lunch. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure 25. Students with free or reduced-price lunch or limited English language proficiency attended fewer total hours in physical activity on average compared with students without these classifications.
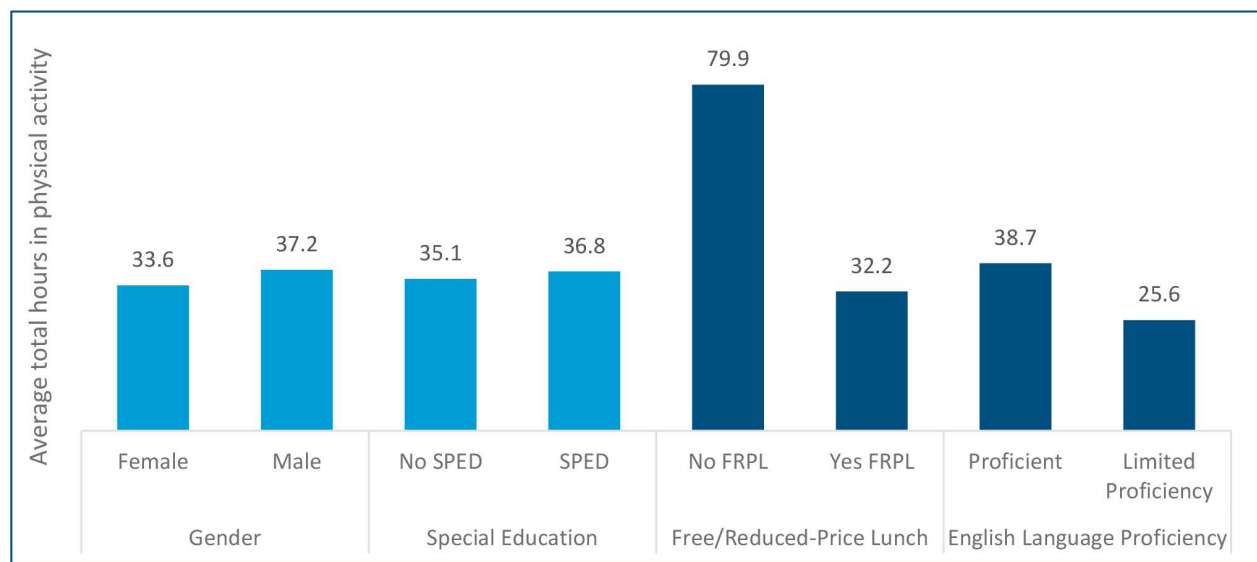
Note. SPED = special education; FRPL = free or reduced-price lunch. Data came from Cayen and NDE.
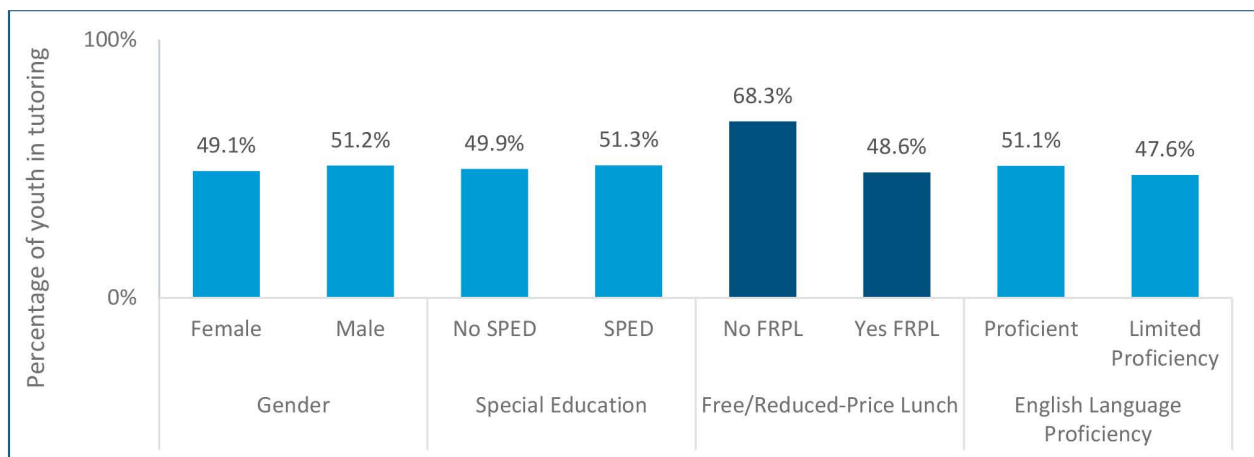
Figure 26. Students who spent the largest number of hours in physical activities (more than 50% of participants) had the fewest number of school-day absences.
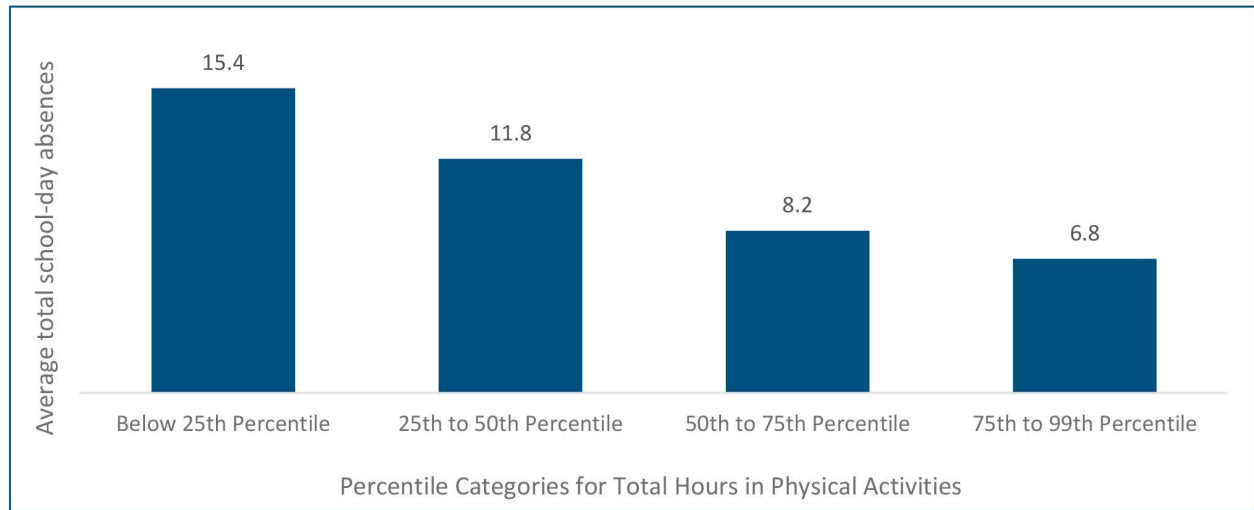
Note. We fit a one-way analysis of variance to compare differences in school-day absences across groups. All groups were significantly different from each other at $p<.001$ except for the 50th to 75th percentile compared with the 75th to 99th percentile. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

For tutoring activities, there was no real difference in the percentage of students participating in this type of activity when comparing students based on special education classification. However, students in special education attended more tutoring hours on average. When comparing students based on FRPL classification, a higher percentage of students without this service participated in tutoring activities, but students eligible for this support attended more tutoring hours on average (see Figures 28 and 29).

Figure 27. A smaller percentage of students with free or reduced-price lunch participated in tutoring activities than students without this service.
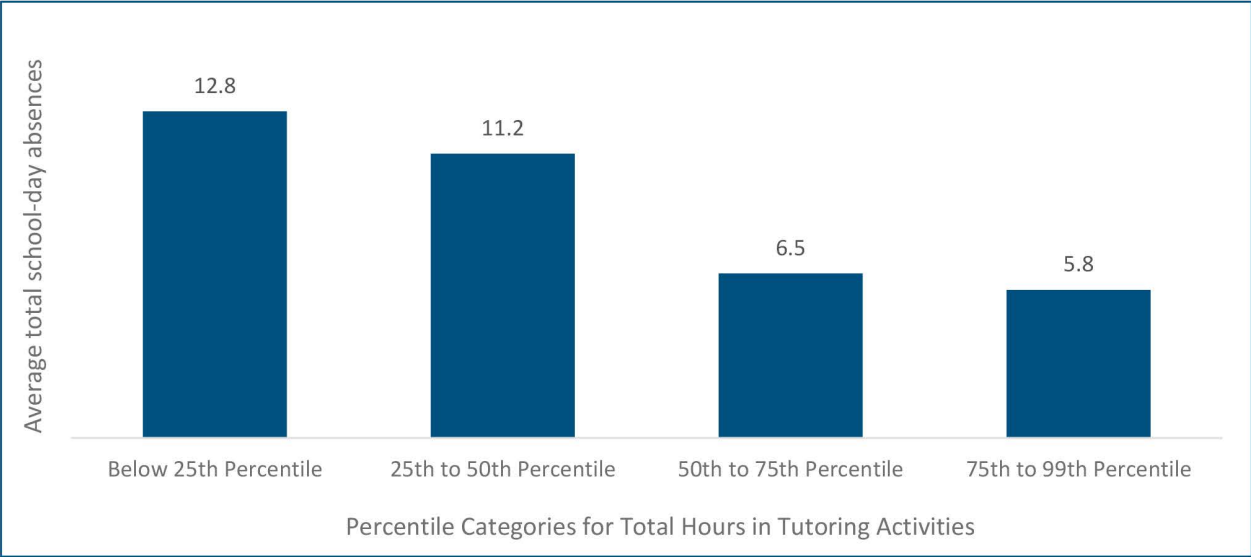

Note. SPED = special education; FRPL = free or reduced-price lunch. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure 28. Students with special education or free or reduced-price lunch eligibility attended more tutoring hours on average.
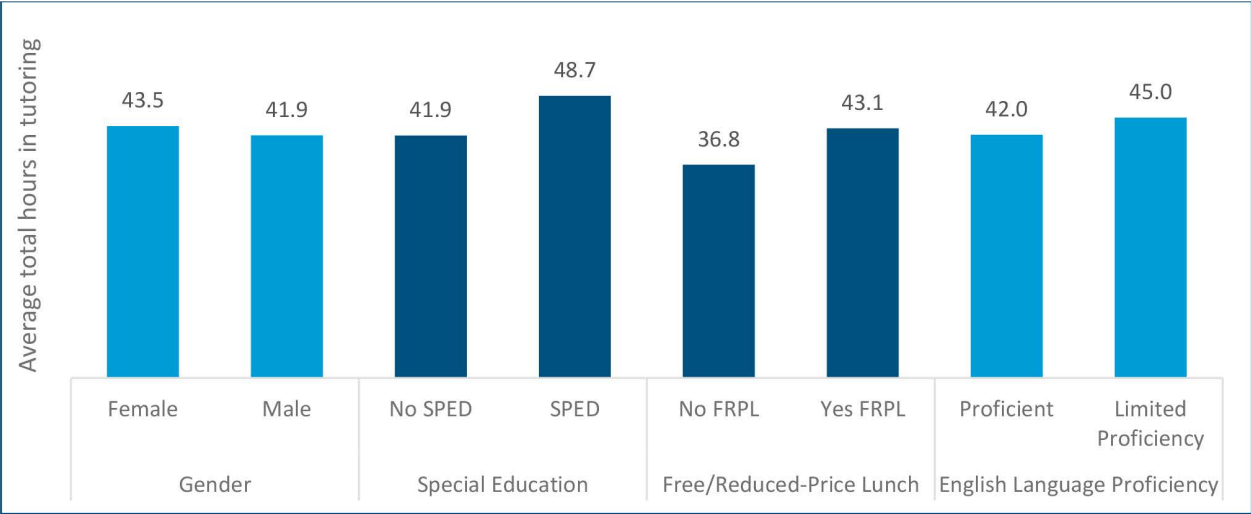
Note. SPED = special education; FRPL = free or reduced-price lunch. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure 29. Students who spent the largest number of hours in tutoring activities (more than 50% of participants) had the fewest number of school-day absences.

Note. We fit a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare differences in school-day absences across groups. All groups were significantly different from each other at $p<.05$ except for the 50th to 75th percentile compared with the 75th to 99th percentile. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

We next examined participation in arts and music activities (see Figures 31 through 33).

Figure 30. A smaller percentage of students with free or reduced-price lunch eligibility or limited English language proficiency participated in arts and music activities than students without these classifications.

Note. SPED = special education; FRPL = free or reduced-price lunch. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure 31. Students with free or reduced-price lunch eligibility or limited English language proficiency also attended fewer arts and music activity hours on average than students without these classifications.

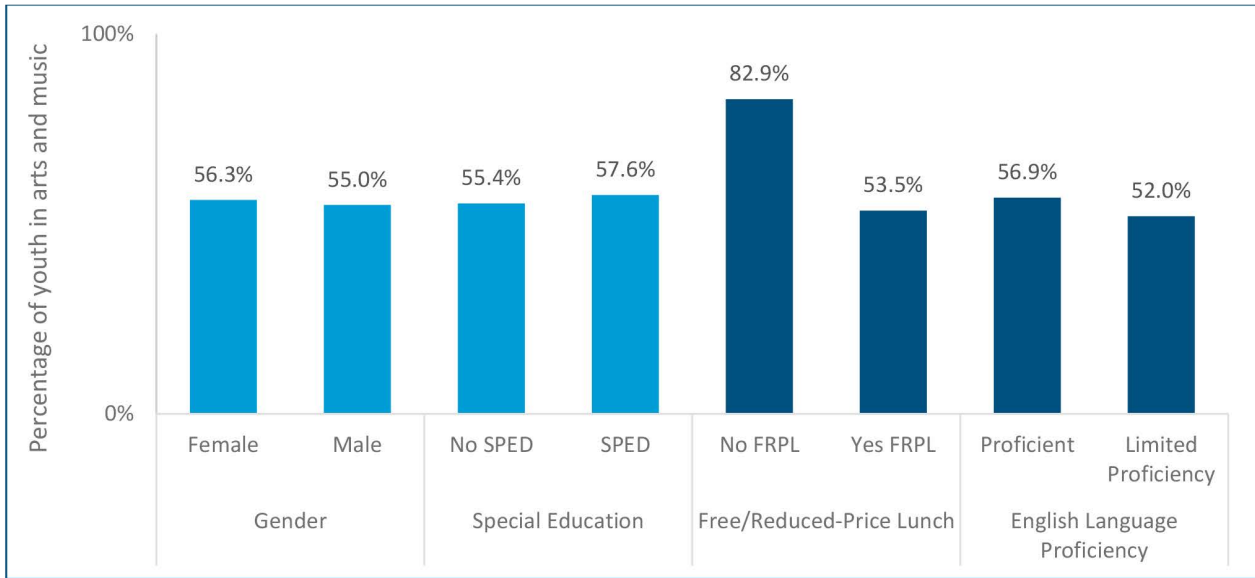*Note.* SPED = special education; FRPL = free or reduced-price lunch. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure 32. Students who spent the largest number of hours in arts and music activities (more than 50% of participants) had the fewest number of school-day absences.

Note. We fit a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare differences in school-day absences across groups. All groups were significantly different from each other at $p<.01$ except for the 50th to 75th percentile compared with the 75th to 99th percentile. Data came from Cayen and NDE.
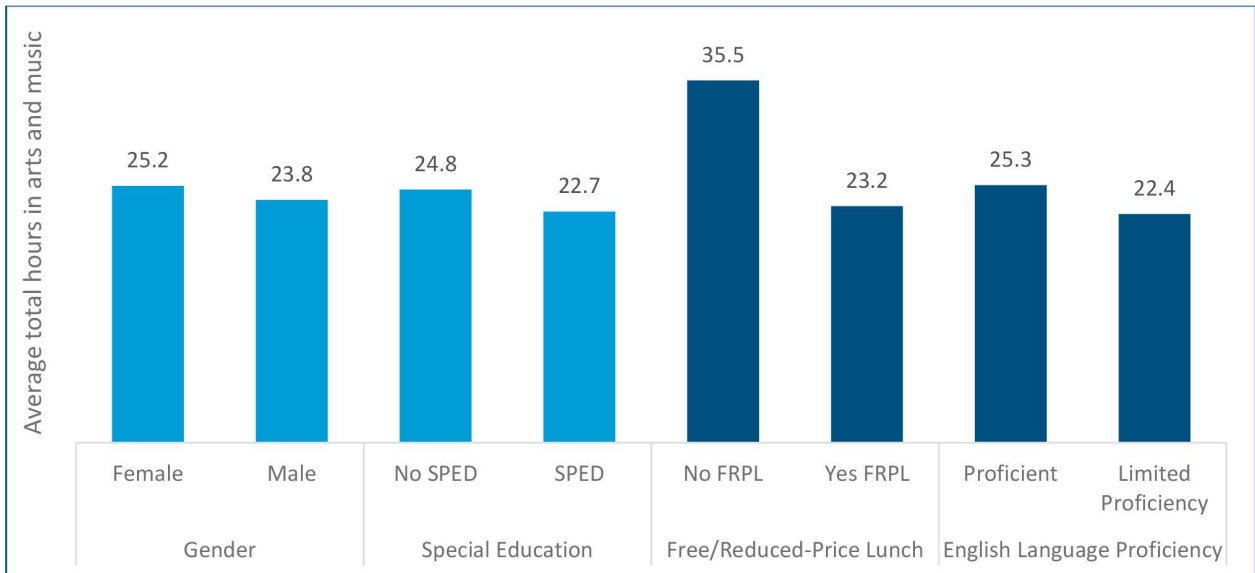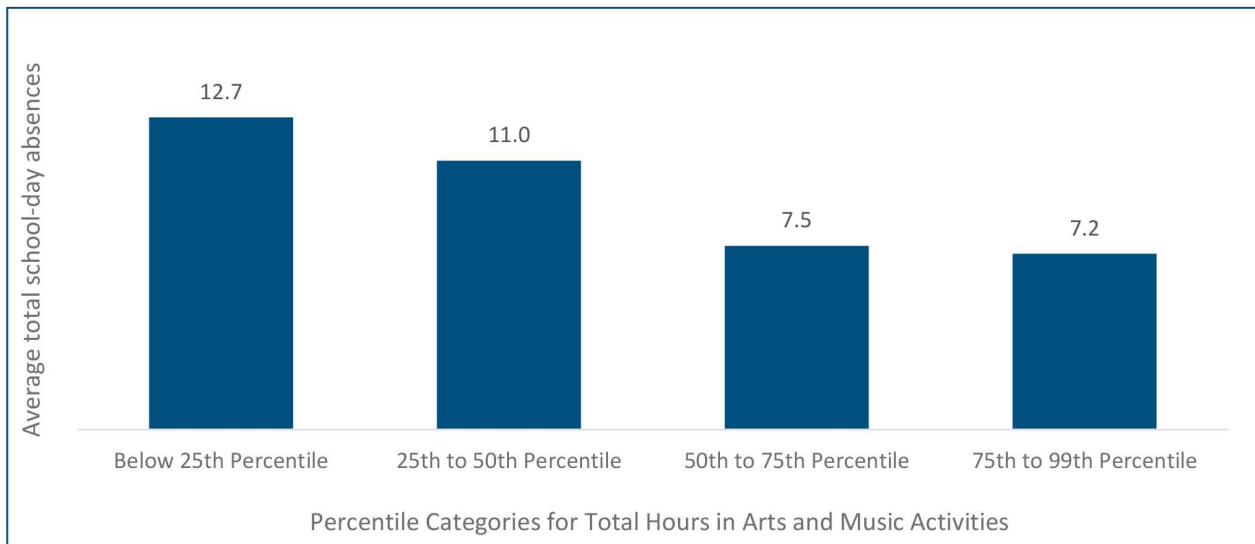
Last, we examined differences in literacy activity participation (see Figures 33 through 35).

Figure 33. Slight differences occurred in the percentage of students participating in literacy activities when comparing students based on special education, free or reduced-price lunch eligibility, or English language proficiency.

Note. SPED = special education; FRPL = free or reduced-price lunch. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure 34. The largest difference in average total literacy activity hours occurred when comparing students who do and do not receive free or reduced-price lunch.

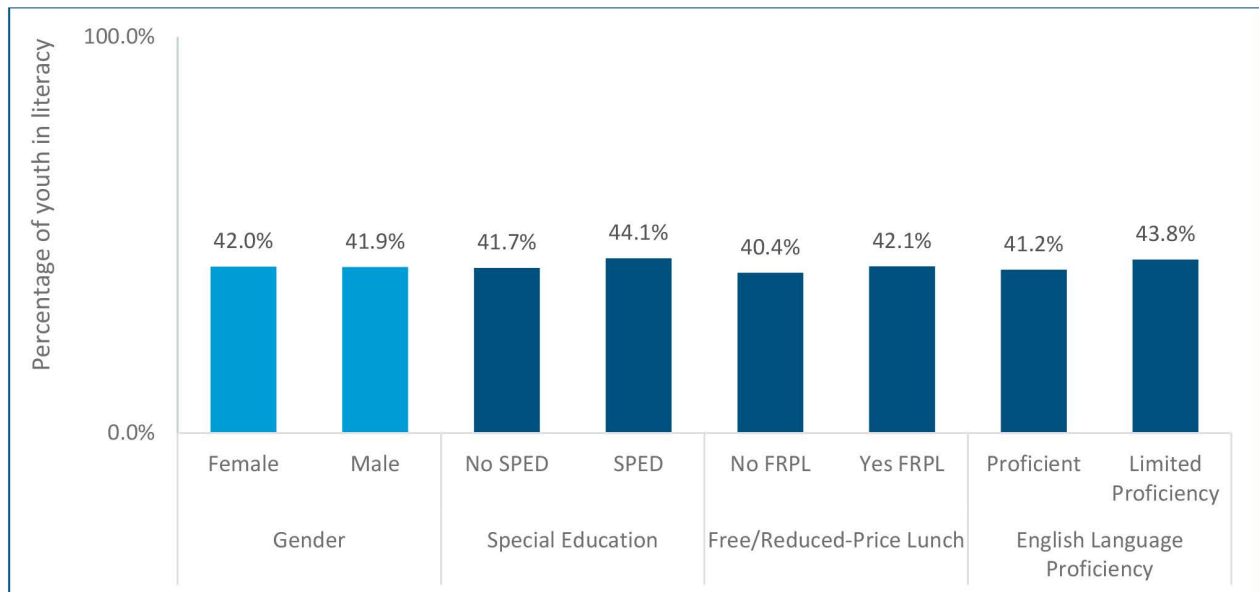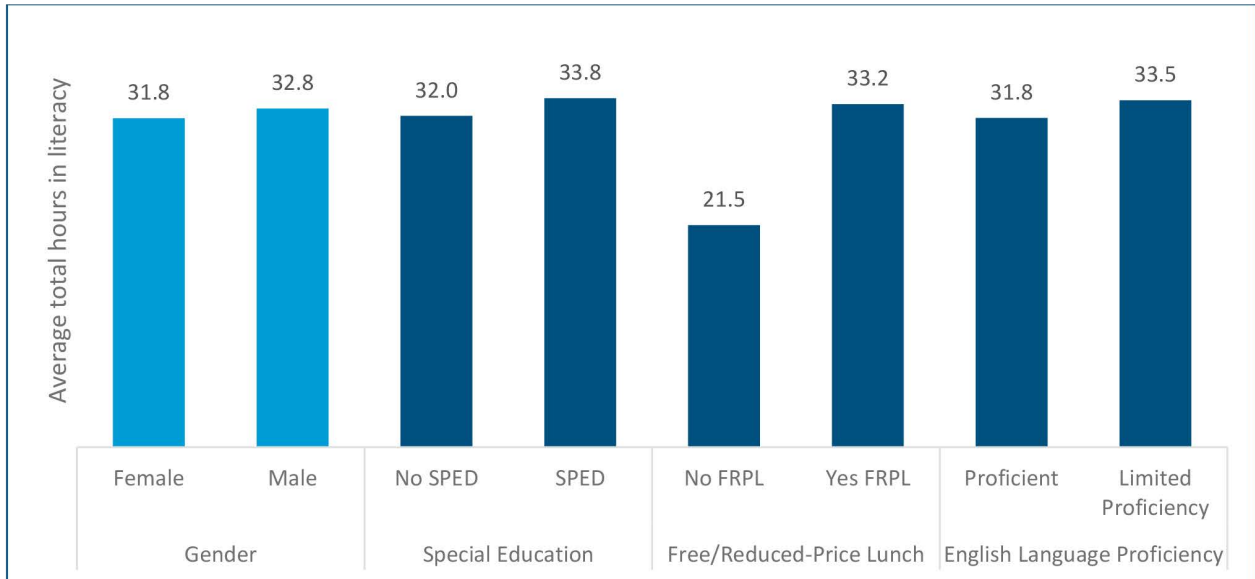*Note.* SPED = special education; FRPL = free or reduced-price lunch. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure 35. Students who spent the largest number of hours in literacy activities (more than 75% of participants) had the fewest number of school-day absences.
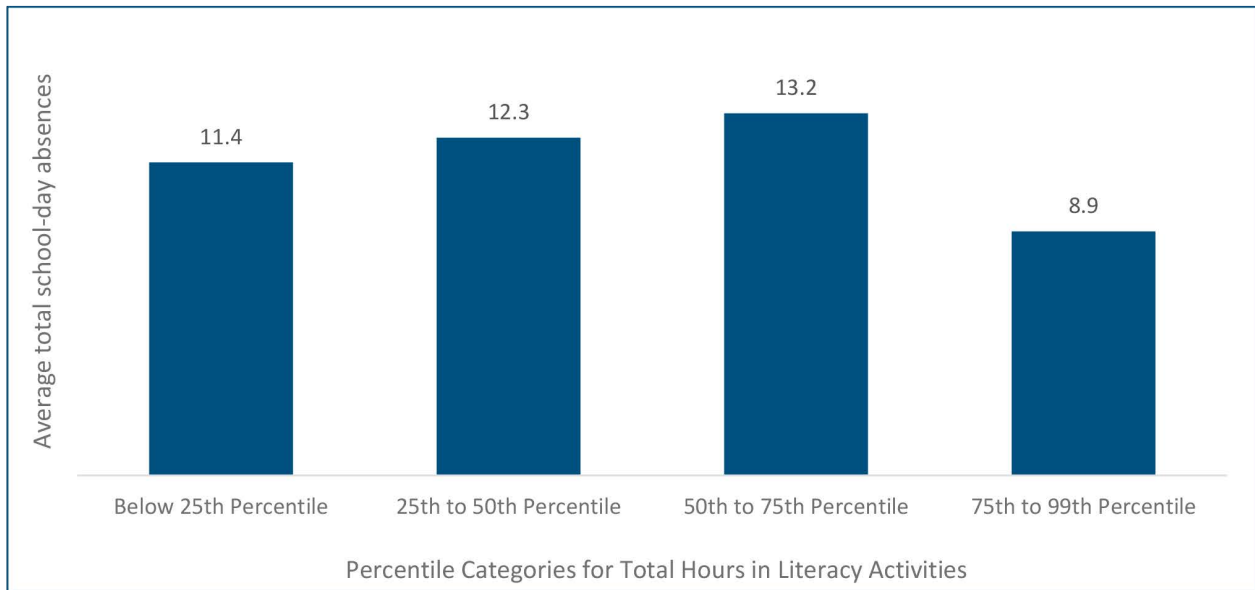
Note. We fit a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare differences in school-day absences across groups. All groups were significantly different from each other at *p*<.05 except for the 25th to 50th percentile compared with the 50th to 75th percentile and below the 25th percentile. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Summary

By looking at program attendance by 21st CCLC activity category, we discovered that a select number of activity categories had both a higher percentage of students participating and a higher average of total hours spent by students. Looking more closely at student participation when taking certain demographic variables into consideration, some interesting differences can be seen. We found that although a certain group may have a greater *breadth* of participation (i.e., a higher percentage of students who participated in a particular activity type at least once), that same group may not have a greater *depth* of participation (i.e., a higher average of total hours spent in that activity type). In addition, we found that students who spent more time in a select few activity types tended to have fewer school-day absences in the school year. This may suggest that students who attend school more often also attend programming more often. We saw very little difference, however, in ELA and math achievement levels and AGPs depending on time spent in certain activities. It is important to note, however, that these findings are descriptive and do not indicate a causal relationship between time spent in a certain activity and student outcomes.

Some notable differences in participation levels may warrant additional exploration in the future. For example, in most of our analyses, there were differential participation levels between students who were free or reduced-priced lunch eligible and those who were not. There also are differences in participation levels for academically oriented activities, such as tutoring and homework help, versus those that are more enrichment based, such as STEM or arts and music. It may be beneficial to explore if programs that afford students more choices in what activities to attend are more likely to be characterized by a higher percentage of students spending the majority of their time in, for example, STEM and the arts. How do these youth in these types of programs describe their experiences relative to students attending more diverse types of programming? These questions may be useful to explore when undertaking future evaluation activities.

Chapter 3. Program Target and Goal Completion

The next evaluation question that AIR explored was related to aggregate statewide performance on a series of key performance indicators (KPIs). In the past several years, AIR and NDE worked together to revise the state performance targets in a series of domains. These KPIs were developed by considering current federal Government Performance and Results Act indicators, the 2015 federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Nevada's updated accountability framework in response to ESSA, and feedback from the Evaluation Advisory Group, which consisted of Nevada 21st CCLC project directors. Table 4 outlines the three domains of the KPIs (Program Implementation, Program Attendance, and Student Outcomes), associated indicators within each domain, and the 2020–21 results for each indicator. It is important to note that some data were not yet available to analyze the KPIs. This is due, in part, by specific types of data not being available at the state level (e.g., discipline data were only available at the local level), but a large majority of the data points were not available in 2020–21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings	Aligned recommendations
• Statewide indicators point to moderate performance across centers related to program implementation; however, it important to consider the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on programs' ability to meet performance indicators as originally operationalized. • Student program attendance decreased across indicators from the prior year, which may be due, in part, to continued challenges adapting to the pandemic.	• Key performance indicators should be developed to align with available data to allow for analysis of progress across all indicators.

Table 4. 2019–20 Nevada 21st CCLC Key Performance Indicator Results

Indicator name	Indicator	Results
Program Implementation (N = 110 centers)		
Implementation 1	Percentage of centers providing opportunities for academic support	100%
Implementation 2	Percentage of centers offering students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities (enrichment)	98%
Implementation 3	Percentage of centers offering families of students served by CCLCs opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development	83%

Indicator name	Indicator	Results
Implementation 4	Percentage of centers offering services at least 12 hours a week on average during the school year	57%
Student Program Attendance (N = 10,864 students)		
Attendance 1	Percentage of youth enrolled in 21st CCLC programming more than 30 days during the school year	51%
Attendance 2	Percentage of youth enrolled in 21st CCLC programming more than 60 days during the school year	28%
Attendance 3	Percentage of youth enrolled in 21st CCLC programming more than 90 days during the school year	16%
Attendance 4	Percentage of youth enrolled in 21st CCLC programming who participated for 60 days or more for 2 consecutive years	9%
Student Outcomes (sample size varies by outcome)		
Outcome 1	Percentage of students regularly participating in the program who were in need of improvement who are on track for meeting their adequate growth percentile (AGP) for reading on the Smarter Balance Assessment (SBAC). (Grades 4–8)	Not available
Outcome 2	Percentage of students regularly participating in the program who were in need of improvement who are on track for meeting their AGP for math on the SBAC. (Grades 4–8)	Not available
Outcome 3	Percentage of students regularly participating in the program who were in need of improvement who moved into the Proficient category for reading. (Grades 4–8)	Not available
Outcome 4	Percentage of students regularly participating in the program who were in need of improvement who moved into the Proficient category for math. (Grades 4–8)	Not available
Outcome 5	Percentage of students regularly participating in the program who were identified as English learners who showed progress toward English language proficiency. (Grades K–8)	Not available
Outcome 6	Percentage of students regularly participating in the program who had absences in the prior school year and demonstrated fewer absences in the current year. (Grades K–8)	Not available [a]
Outcome 7	Percentage of students regularly participating in the program who are earning less than 100% of credits attempted in the prior school year and who demonstrated a higher percentage of credits earned.	Not available
Outcome 8	Percentage of students regularly participating in the program who had school-day disciplinary incidents in the prior school year and demonstrated fewer incidents compared with the previous school year. (Grades 1–12)	Not available
Outcome 9	Percentage of students regularly participating in the program who were in need of improvement and increased their MAP Reading testing score. (Grades K–3)	Not available

Indicator name	Indicator	Results
Outcome 10	Percentage of students regularly participating in the program who were in need of improvement and increased their MAP Math testing score. (Grades K–3)	Not available

[a] Because of the closing of schools on March 16, 2020, due to the pandemic, which created a truncated 2019–20 school year, we were unable to analyze this indicator. Chronic absenteeism rates can be calculated and compared (with caution), but these data do not align with the indicator as currently defined.

Summary

The KPIs represent our best thinking on what would be useful for the state, but we must either wait for these data to become available from the state or develop ways to collect this information, while also considering the data collection burden on the subgrantees. It also is worth considering how these indicators may need to change based on new information about available data sources and forthcoming changes in state and federal data reporting requirements.

Chapter 4. NDE Support to Subgrantees

The last evaluation question that AIR explored was what contributions and direction NDE provided to support subgrantees in the successful administration of their programs during the 2020–21 program year. The purpose of this evaluation question was to highlight areas of strength and identify gaps where NDE could focus future efforts. To examine this question, AIR reviewed documentation of NDE's efforts during the 2020–21 program year, which included a copy of the 2020–21 program calendar, the URL to the NDE 21st CCLC webpage, documentation related to monitoring of subgrantees conducted by NDE, and copies of PowerPoint presentations from NDE-supported trainings and professional development.

Findings	Aligned recommendations
• NDE provides subgrantees with a comprehensive program calendar at the beginning of the year, but this appears to be a static document and it is unclear how often it is updated and re-sent to subgrantees. • Content provided on the NDE 21st CCLC website primarily contains resources related to grant funding and compliance. Links to additional resources provide little to no context about how that resource can be helpful. • NDE's monitoring tool appears comprehensive, and associated data collection methods appear to be aligned to the tool. The monitoring tool and associated documents appear to have been last revised during the 2015–16 program year. • When reviewing the 2019–20 trainings, we found that the content of trainings covered multiple topics and that the resources we reviewed were in alignment with the 2020–21 program calendar. • The NDE Support Site, developed by AIR, might have a misleading URL given that it still references the pilot. Analytics of this website reflect that it gets the most visits shortly after	• Consider a more interactive calendar design that is easily updated by NDE staff and easily accessible by subgrantees. Consider further categorization of important events based on the type of support provided to help identify any gaps in professional development content. • Consider a more streamlined approach to providing important resources to subgrantees (e.g., content derived from the NDE 21st CCLC website versus the Support Site). This may require updates to communication on where the resources are located. • It would likely be beneficial to review NDE's monitoring tool against current federal and state requirements, literature regarding best practices in out-of-school time settings, and NDE's specific goals for the 21st CCLC program, with specific focus on transparency to subgrantees. • It may be worth investigating if and where those resources live and make them available to subgrantees. • It would be beneficial to review the Support Site for organization, consider how subgrantees could use it more consistently, and determine how to better integrate this content with the NDE 21st CCLC website. • If NDE is interested in exploring how these types of supports more directly contribute to programs success, consider working with content experts to determine a sound theory of action and logic model that makes these connections. Based on

| | providing specific reminders that it is available for use. | this theory of action and logic model, design a detailed data collection and analysis plan. |

The evaluation team organized the available information into distinct categories related to the types of support that NDE provided to subgrantees:

- Resources related to understanding the 21st CCLC grant requirements, including access to the federal statute under ESSA, nonregulatory guidance, and state resources such as ePAGE; trainings and notices related to funding opportunities; and notices in grant requirement changes (e.g., Tydings waiver).

- Resources related to grant monitoring, including documentation related to the process and content of desktop and on-site monitoring.

- Resources related to reporting, including data submission requirements, federal reporting, and external evaluation.

- Resources related to quality of programming, including access to organizations such as the Nevada Afterschool Network, the Afterschool Alliance, and the National Afterschool Association, and identification of professional development opportunities and resources.

To better illustrate the distribution of these supports and resources across the categories, we have organized them into Table 5 below.

Table 5. Distribution of NDE Supports by Type

	Grant requirements	Grant monitoring	Grant reporting	Quality programming
NDE 21st CCLC 2020–21 program calendar	✓	✓	✓	✓
NDE 21st CCLC webpage	✓			✓
NDE monitoring guidelines		✓		
NDE training PowerPoint files	✓			
NDE-commissioned Support Site	✓		✓	✓

In the section below, we provide brief descriptions of available documentation, highlight strengths, and suggest areas for improvement.

NDE 21st CCLC 2019–20 Program Calendar

The 2019–20 program calendar is organized by month and includes important dates, such as state and federal holidays, important reminders for data submission, federal term end dates,

data reviews and compliance checks, deadlines to submit requests for funds, and state-required trainings (regional start-up trainings, regional project directors and data trainings, and Nevada Showcase Conference); upcoming relevant conferences (the U.S. Department of Education Summer Symposium, Nevada Showcase Conference, Beyond School Hours, National Afterschool Association, and BOOST); open office hours; and professional development opportunities (continuous quality improvement pilot webinars, Youth For Youth webinars, and site-level topics).

The calendar received from NDE was in a spreadsheet, and the calendar received by subgrantees is in PDF format. It is unclear how often this calendar is updated with changes that take place over the course of the year.

NDE 21st CCLC Website

In our review of the NDE 21st CCLC website, we found that the main content of the page provided a brief overview of the grant program and a link to the grant application. All other resources were included in a sidebar and organized into the following categories:

- **Contact.** The state education agency's lead name is presented here but does not provide contact information. Also listed here is a link to subscribe to 21st CCLC program updates.

- **Federal Resources.** The one link redirects users to the Education Department General Administrative Regulations and other applicable grant regulations. There is no obvious guidance provided by NDE on which sections of this website would be most relevant to subgrantees or how to interpret these guidelines

- **State Resources.** There are three links provided under this section: login to the Electronic Plans, Applications, Grants, and Expenditures (ePAGE); a downloadable spreadsheet of Title I schools from FY15; and a redirect to a webpage for Nevada Underperforming Schools, which apparently was last updated in 2015.

- **Resources.** NDE provides the following links: (a) public notice of Tydings Waiver from 2019; (b) notice of public comment opportunity regarding NDE's intent to apply for a waiver regarding the use of 21st CCLC funds during nonschool hours because of the COVID-19 pandemic; and (c) three links to external entities related to afterschool programming (the Afterschool Alliance, the Nevada Afterschool Network, and the National Afterschool Association).

- **Professional Development.** NDE provides two links to external entities providing professional development opportunities related to afterschool and positive youth development: the SEDL toolkits and You for Youth.

The majority of content included on the NDE 21st CCLC website is related to grant funding and guidance. Many of the federal and state resources are provided in links to other webpages with little context or guidance on how those resources could be useful, and one of the professional development resources provided is outdated.

NDE Monitoring Guidelines

NDE provided the evaluation team with documentation related to the on-site monitoring process of subgrantees, conducted by NDE.

NDE's monitoring tool appears to be comprehensive, and associated data collection methods (observation form, interview questions) align with the tool. Although the guidance document that NDE shares with subgrantees outlines how the monitoring tool is organized, it is unclear if NDE also shares the monitoring tool. It would likely be beneficial for subgrantees to see the full version of the tool to have a better understanding of the criteria against which they are being assessed. In addition, the monitoring tool and associated documents appear to have been last revised during the 2015–16 program year. Due to recent changes in current federal and state requirements (e.g., federal 21st CCLC Government Performance and Results Act measures, Nevada Statewide Plan for Improvement of Pupils), it would be beneficial to review the tool against these new requirements, as well as literature regarding best practices in out-of-school time settings, and NDE's specific goals for the 21st CCLC program, with specific focus on transparency to subgrantees.

NDE Training PowerPoint Files

We reviewed copies of PowerPoint files used for trainings that NDE delivered to subgrantees. When reviewing the trainings that took place during the 2020–21 program year, we found that the content of all trainings was related to grant requirements. Training content covered the upcoming request for application process for that year, the purpose of 21st CCLC funding, the new federal Government Performance and Results Act measures, Cayen data systems trainings, open office hour content, and information on other useful funding sources. These trainings seem to be in alignment with professional development opportunities listed on the 2020–21 program calendar.

Monitoring Resources

- Suggested schedule for 21st CCLC monitoring visits
- Afterschool program observation form
- Monitoring Tool Guidance document
- Monitoring Tool
- Sample agendas for monitoring
- Sample write-up based on a monitoring visit

NDE-Commissioned Support Site

In 2018, NDE enlisted the evaluation team's support in creating a support website where grantees could go to find important updates and resources related to their program. The original intent of this website was to support programs participating in the CQIP, but quickly broadened to the full spectrum of grant related tasks. This support site includes the following key sections:

- A welcome page that highlights important events in the near future

- A section on NDE guidance, inclusive of resources related to COVID-19 and other important forms and documents (e.g., contact form, program calendar, parent release form)

- A section on evaluation reporting that provides resources related to the Cayen data system, surveys, external evaluation, and statewide evaluation

- A section on the CQIP, including tools and resources as well as past webinars and trainings

- A section on professional development that organizes resources into key areas, such as foundational youth development training, social and emotional learning, facilitating distance learning, and lesson plan and activity ideas from a variety of organizations

- Key points of contact, including NDE and AIR staff

Given that this site was originally constructed for programs participating in the CQIP, the URL might be misleading given that it still references the pilot. The analytics of this website reflect that it gets the most visits shortly after providing specific reminders that it is available for use, which have generally been during formal trainings and office hours. It would be beneficial to review how the site is organized, consider how subgrantees could use it more consistently, and determine how to better integrate this content with the NDE 21st CCLC website.

Summary

During the 2020–21 program year, NDE provided a variety of resources to subgrantees to support the successful administration of their 21st CCLC grants. These resources addressed grant requirements, grant monitoring, grant reporting, and quality of programming to varying degrees. In our review of these documents, we found both areas of strength and areas for improvement. Subgrantees in Nevada would continue to benefit from NDE's areas of strength, which include a commitment to communicating expectations regarding data submission and reporting, identifying opportunities for professional development, and fostering transparency in grant monitoring activities, with communication happening frequently and in advance of key dates. In the findings and recommendations table at the beginning of this chapter, we have offered several recommendations to enhance NDE's efforts and streamline these processes.

Report Conclusion

The findings presented in this report are meant to offer important insights and recommendations that can support learning and improvement of the 21st CCLC program in Nevada. Specifically, this report aimed to answer the following evaluation questions:

1. What characteristics were associated with the subgrantees and centers funded by 21st CCLC and the student population served by the program?

2. What did program attendance look like? How are student characteristics related to students' level of program attendance? How is participation in different activity types related to program participation rates and student outcomes?

3. To what extent are 21st CCLC programs in Nevada meeting their local, state, and federal targets and goals?

4. What contributions and direction did NDE provide to support subgrantees in the successful administration of their programs?

It is important to note that the information captured in this report is descriptive in nature. When reviewing findings based on descriptive analyses, caution is necessary when interpreting and using these results given that they do not support causal inferences to be made about the impact of the program on youth outcomes; however, they do provide a useful starting point for understanding the key characteristics of the Nevada 21st CCLC program. It also is important to reiterate that the COVID-19 pandemic continued to interrupt normal program operations during the 2020–21 program year. Differences in results for this program year may be due to interruptions in data collection or transitions in normal program operations.

Concerning Question 1, demographic and baseline outcome data show that the 21st CCLC program is serving youth in lower performing schools who need to improve academically and who experience poverty. A large majority of youth participants in Nevada were eligible for FRPL in each year under investigation, and nearly 30% of students were English learners. Based on our analysis of baseline outcome data, many English learner youth (27%) attending 21st CCLC programming in Nevada score below 50th percentile on AGPs for English language proficiency assessments, particularly in the lower grades, and many (39%) meet the threshold for missing 5% of the school year. We also saw a shift in the types of activities offered during this year. Most programs continued to offer STEM, physical activity, and arts and music activities, but to a lesser degree than in years past. There also were increases in the percentage of centers offering tutoring and counseling program activities, with a notable increase in counseling activities. This

could be a direct response of 21st CCLC programs in Nevada identifying the most immediate needs of students and families during the pandemic.

In relation to Question 2 concerning youth attendance and program characteristics, we found that across all four program years, roughly two thirds (61–66%) of youth were regular attendees (attending 30 days or more), and centers are diverse in terms of size based on the number of youth served, with the number of youth served ranging from 18 to 856 during this period and a mean of 178 to 227 youth served per year.

We also found that youth who attend more frequently also tend to spend more time in activities such as literacy, homework help, STEM, and physical activity. In addition, students who spent more time in activities such as literacy, arts and music, homework help, STEM, and physical activity tended to have fewer school-day absences in the school year and higher English language proficiency levels compared with students who spent less time in these activities. It is important to note, however, that these findings are descriptive and do not indicate a causal relationship between time spent in a certain activity and student outcomes.

In examining Question 3 regarding program target and goal completion, we found statewide indicators point to moderate performance across centers related to program implementation; however, it important to consider the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on programs' ability to meet performance indicators as originally operationalized.

Finally, when examining Question 4—how NDE provided support to subgrantees to aid in the successful administration of their programs—we found that NDE offered a variety of resources that addressed topics such as grant requirements, grant monitoring, grant reporting, and quality of programming to varying degrees.

Given these findings, the evaluation team has three high-level recommendations to consider during future evaluation planning:

1. Continue to explore center-level differences in program activities offered and their delivery model in an effort to understand how this relates to youth experiences, with special consideration of how students may experience programming during a global pandemic. Understanding what these programs are doing may result in useful information that can be shared across centers and subgrantees in Nevada. Possible data collection methods to explore these differences are youth surveys, interviews with site staff, and focus groups.

2. Consider implementing an updated youth survey to include questions that measure multiple constructs, such as perceptions of adults and other youth; engagement in learning; and self-esteem, agency, and skill-building experiences. This will allow NDE to have a more consistent and representative source of information for understanding youth experiences in

programming, which would be a more direct program outcome for how afterschool programs can impact attending youth.

3. If NDE is interested in exploring how the supports they offer more directly contribute to program success, they should consider working with content experts to determine a sound theory of action and logic model that makes these connections and fits into a larger conceptual framework for how afterschool programs can have an impact on youth. Based on this theory of action and logic model, they should design a detailed data collection and analysis plan.

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Appendix A. Technical Appendix

To answer the evaluation questions, the evaluation team used a variety of data collection strategies and data analysis methods. We received youth-level data from the afterschool data collection system (Cayen) to examine program characteristics and attendance, and the state data warehouse to examine school-related outcomes.

Methods for Data Collection and Analysis

Data Sources

Data collected and analyzed in this report came from two primary sources, both administrative data systems. We describe each data source and associated methods of data analysis in this section.

Cayen Data System. AIR received data from Cayen to conduct analyses related to the four evaluation questions articulated earlier in this report. Data files included student-level participation and demographic information as well as activity information by center and by each student. The student-level participation data served as the basis for our data request to NDE for outcome data.

Youth Outcome and Related Data From NDE. AIR received 21st CCLC student participation data from Cayen and supplied that data file to NDE. NDE used this information to perform a series of merges against the state data warehouses to obtain outcome data related to school-day attendance, English language proficiency, and additional demographic information about the students in question. We used these data to conduct the descriptive and effectiveness analyses exploring outcomes for youth regularly attending programming compared with youth not attending regularly.

Analytic Approach and Methods

The findings outlined in this report are primarily quantitative. We based our approach on the evaluation questions being answered and the resources available to carry out the project. The analyses highlighted in this report are as follows:

Descriptive Analyses. We analyzed information related to grantee, center, and student characteristics obtained from Cayen and NDE descriptively to explore the range of variation on a given characteristic. In Chapter 2, we examined differences in student outcomes across percentile categories of hours spent in specific activity types. For each analysis, we looked at how many hours students spent in the top activities (i.e., STEM, physical activity, tutoring, arts and music, and literacy) based on quartiles—that is the bottom 25% based on the numbers of

hours spent, between 25% and 50%, between 50% and 75%, and the top 25% (students who spent more hours than 75% of students). We then conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to see if student outcomes differed across these four groups. Specifically, we looked at the total number of school-day absences in the year and English language arts and math achievement levels.

Document Review. Upon receiving documentation from NDE related to supports provided to subgrantees, the evaluation team reviewed each document listing its content. Once we compiled a list of content from all documents, we then reviewed the list for emergent themes to which we could categorize each data source. We also reviewed each data source for areas of strength and improvement.

Table A1 summarizes the methods employed to answer each evaluation question.

Table A1. Summary of Methods by Evaluation Question

| Evaluation question	Descriptive analysis	Document review
What characteristics were associated with the grants and centers funded by 21st CCLC and the student population served by the program?	✓	
What did program attendance look like? How are program characteristics related to students' level of program attendance? How is participation in different activity types related to program participation rates and student outcomes?	✓	
What is the effectiveness of the program on youth attending more regularly during the course of the school year relative to similar youth attending less regularly?	✓	
What is the effectiveness of the program on youth attending more regularly across the span of two school years relative to similar youth attending less regularly?	✓	
To what extent are 21st CCLC programs in Nevada meeting their local, state, and federal targets and goals?	✓	
What contributions and direction did NDE provide to support subgrantees in the successful administration of their programs?		✓

Figures A1–A10 present the descriptive results of quartile distribution for hours spent in activity types and average adequate growth percentiles scores in English language arts and mathematics.

Figure A1. Students had similar English language arts achievement adequate growth percentiles (AGPs), regardless of the number of hours spent in STEM activities.
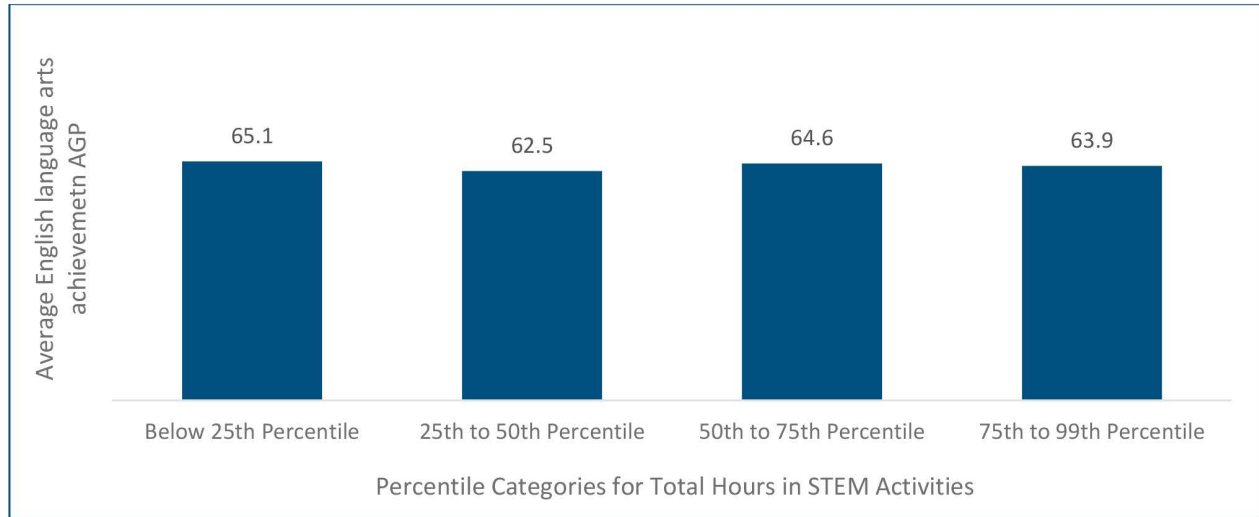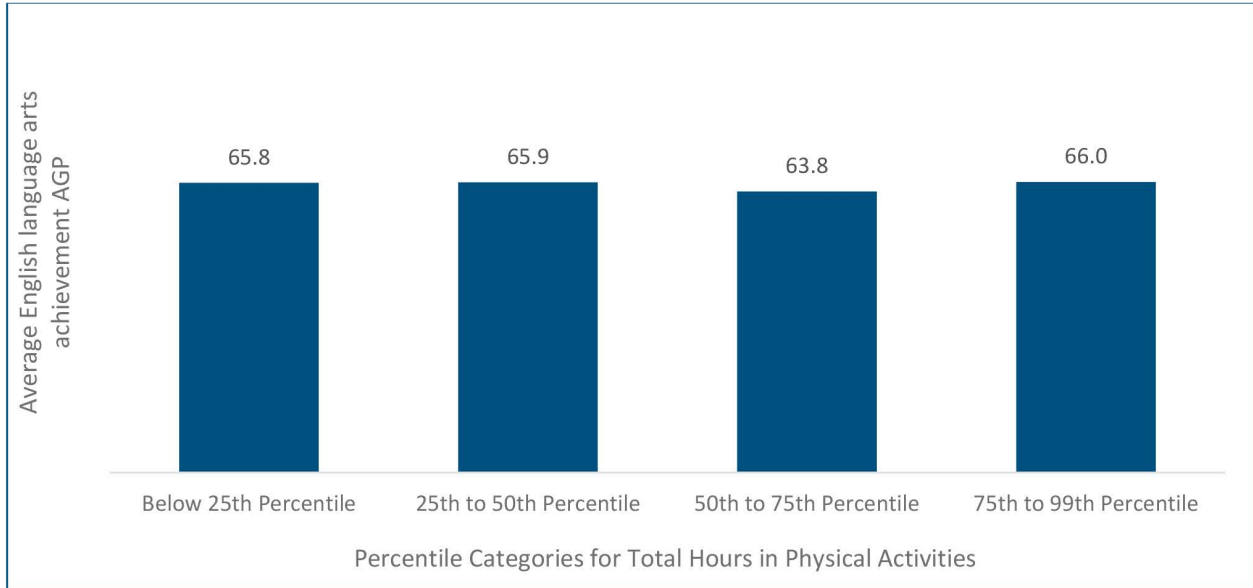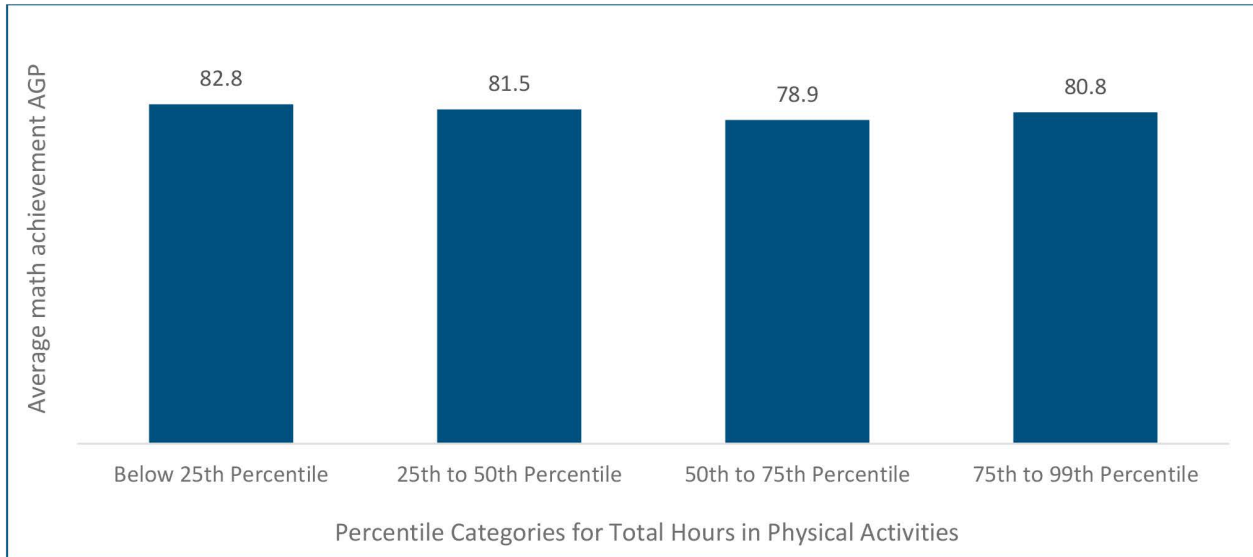

Note. We fit a one-way analysis of variance to compare differences in English language arts achievement AGPs across groups. No groups were significantly different from each other. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure A2. Students had similar math achievement adequate growth percentiles (AGPs), regardless of the number of hours spent in STEM activities.
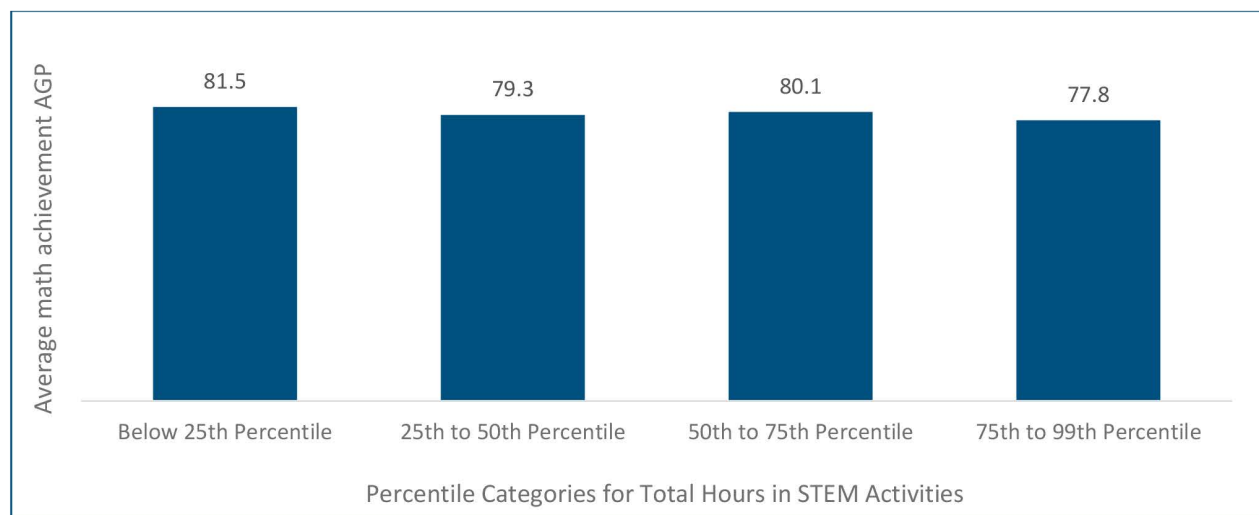
Note. We fit a one-way analysis of variance to compare differences in math achievement AGPs across groups. No groups were significantly different from each other. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure A3. Students had similar English language arts achievement adequate growth percentiles (AGPs), regardless of the number of hours spent in physical activities.
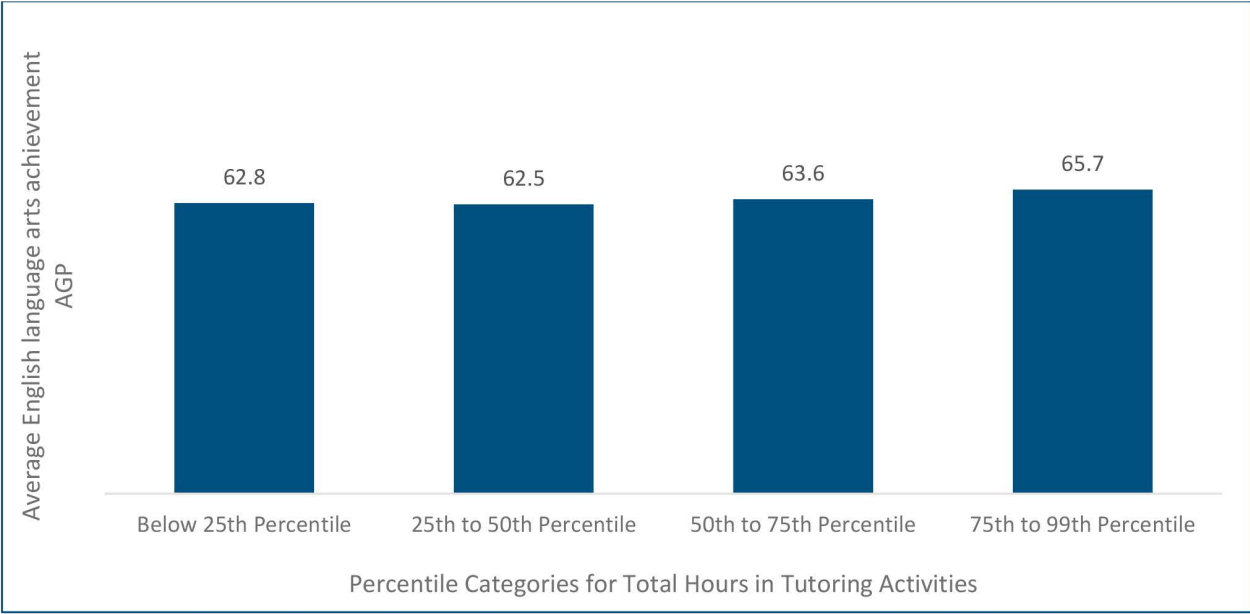

Note. We fit a one-way analysis of variance to compare differences in English language arts achievement AGPs across groups. No groups were significantly different from each other. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure A4. Students who spent the least number of hours in physical activities (less than 75% of participants) had higher math achievement adequate growth percentiles (AGPs) than students who spent a moderate number of hours (50th to 75th percentile).

Note. We fit a one-way analysis of variance to compare differences in math achievement AGPs across groups. The 50th to 75th percentile had lower math AGPs compared with below the 25th percentile at *p*<.05. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure A5. Students had similar English language arts achievement adequate growth percentiles (AGPs), regardless of the number of hours spent in tutoring activities.
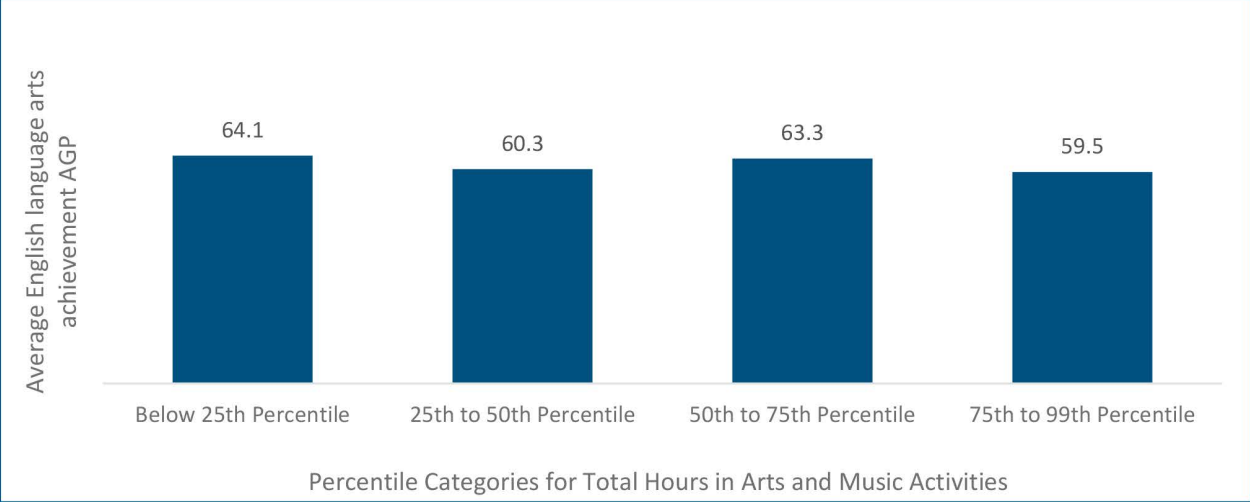

Note. We fit a one-way analysis of variance to compare differences in English language arts achievement AGPs across groups. No groups were significantly different from each other. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure A6. Students had similar math achievement adequate growth percentiles (AGPs), regardless of the number of hours spent in tutoring activities.
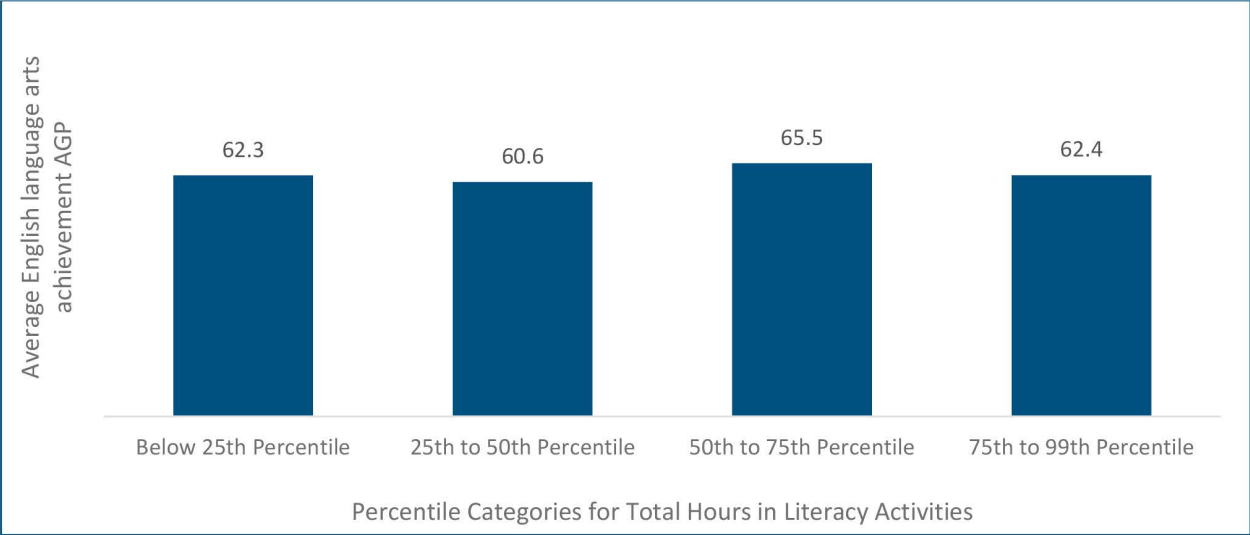

Note. We fit a one-way analysis of variance to compare differences in math achievement AGPs across groups. No groups were significantly different from each other. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Nevada 21st CCLC Statewide Evaluation 2019-20
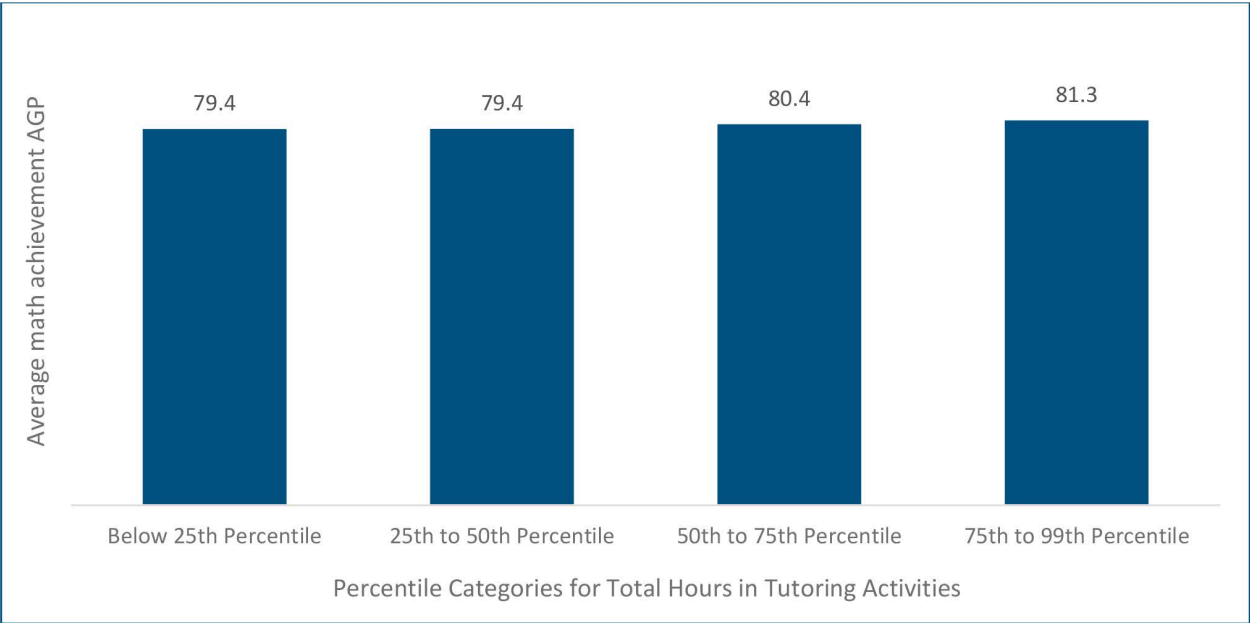
Figure A7. Students who spent the least number of hours in arts and music activities (less than 75% of participants) had higher English language arts achievement adequate growth percentiles (AGPs) than students who spent a moderate number of hours (50th to 75th percentile).
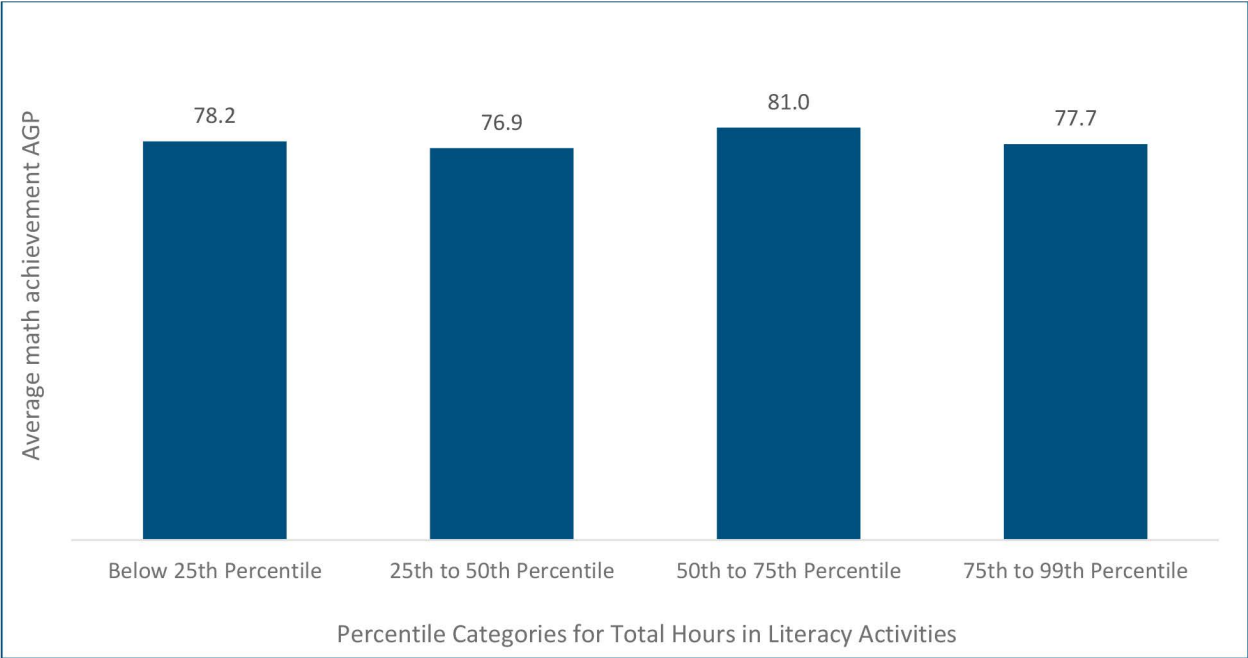

Note. We fit a one-way analysis of variance to compare differences in English language arts achievement AGPs across groups. The below 25th percentile had higher English language arts AGPs compared with the 50th to 75th percentile at *p*<.05. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure A8. Students had similar English language arts achievement adequate growth percentiles (AGPs), regardless of the number of hours spent in literacy activities.
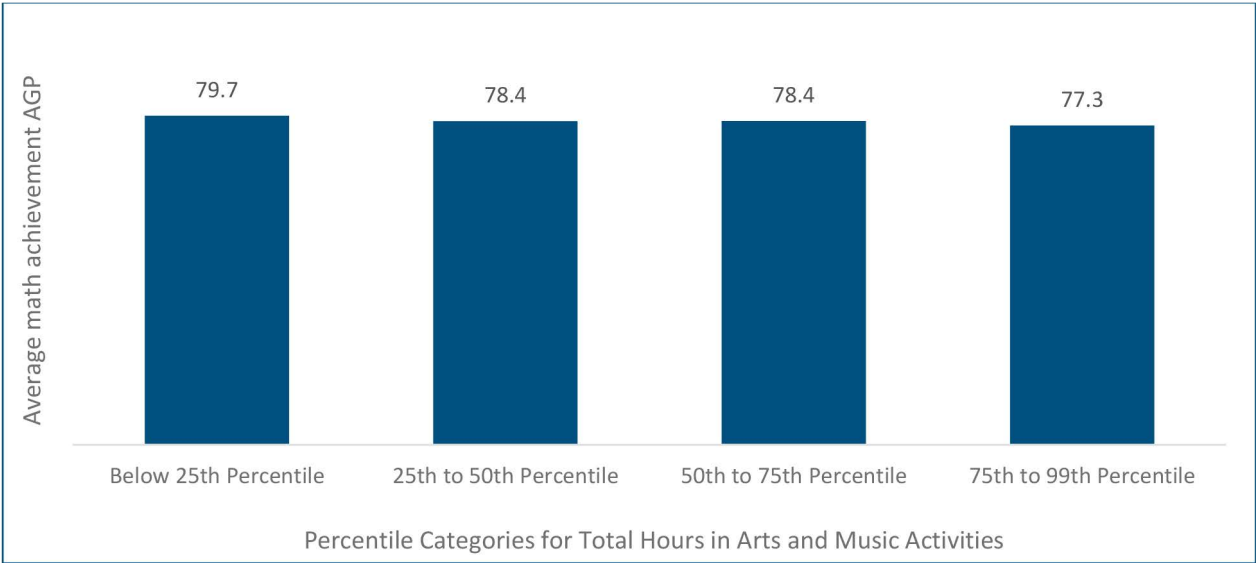

Note. We fit a one-way analysis of variance to compare differences in English language arts achievement AGPs across groups. No groups were significantly different from each other. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure A9. Students had similar math achievement adequate growth percentiles (AGPs), regardless of the number of hours spent in literacy activities.

Note. We fit a one-way analysis of variance to compare differences in math achievement AGPs across groups. No groups were significantly different from each other. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

Figure A10. Students had similar math achievement adequate growth percentiles (AGPs), regardless of the number of hours spent in arts and music activities.

Note. We fit a one-way analysis of variance to compare differences in math achievement AGPs across groups. No groups were significantly different from each other. Data came from Cayen and NDE.

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