



Pennsylvania Nita M. Lowey  
21<sup>st</sup> Century Community  
Learning Centers Program

Children Analyzing, Navigating,  
Observing and Experimenting  
with Science (CANOES)  
McKeesport Area School District

Cohort 9  
21st Century Community  
Learning Centers Program

2021-2022 Year 5  
Evaluation Report

Shali Liu, Evaluator  
Dr. Keith Trahan, Interim Director

Collaborative for Evaluation and Assessment  
Capacity

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Legislative Authority: The 21st Century Community Learning Centers is a subgrant program funded by the U.S. Department of Education, authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, Title IV, Part B; 20 U.S.C. 7171–7176, and administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

## Introduction

### About Pennsylvania 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program provides federal funding for the establishment of community learning centers that offer academic and enrichment opportunities to children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools, to meet state and local standards in core academic subjects through a broad array of activities that can complement their regular academic programs. Literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children must also be provided.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st Century) program is authorized under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (P.L. 107-110), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Pennsylvania's primary goal for its 21st Century program is to assist youth to meet state standards for core academic subjects by providing them with academic and enrichment opportunities. In addition to academics, centers are encouraged to offer participants a broad array of other services and programs during non-school hours, such as art, music, recreation activities, character education, career and technical training, drug and violence prevention programming, and technology education. Educational services for families of participating students, such as literacy instruction, computer training, or cultural enrichment, must also be included. Federal law requires that all 21st Century program sites provide academic enrichment activities and parental involvement activities. Programs are encouraged to use innovative instructional strategies, coordinate academics with local curricula and assessments, and use assessment data to inform instruction and evaluate results. Academics are to involve more than just helping participants with homework and should not just repeat school day activities.

Pennsylvania's 21st Century program encourages active youth and family participation to ensure that both have decision-making roles in the creation, operation, and evaluation of every 21st Century program in Pennsylvania. School and community collaboration is another key in meeting the academic, social, physical, and emotional needs of children and families. Programs are to offer quarterly open house meetings and maintain an open-door policy where adult family members feel welcome and are encouraged to drop in.

All activities are to be based on rigorous scientific research and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) provides "principles of effectiveness" to guide programs in identifying and implementing programs that enhance student learning. Activities must address the needs of

local schools and communities and be continuously evaluated at the local level.

## Program Description and Context

The McKeesport Area School District (MASD) has established the Children Analyzing, Navigating, Observing and Experimenting with Science (CANOES) after school program at Twin Rivers Elementary School through 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grant funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). MASD received 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant funding to offer a comprehensive and sustainable afterschool program for the 2021-2022 school year to help increase student performance on academic achievement measures, such as the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and class grades. The McKeesport Area School District is a suburban, public school district serving the Pittsburgh suburbs of Dravosburg, McKeesport, South Versailles Township, Versailles, and White Oak. It covers approximately 7 square miles and serves approximately 3,400 students in PreK-12<sup>th</sup> grades through four schools and one technology center. The vision of MASD is, “to create a learning environment, which provides students an opportunity to maximize their potential and achieve success.” Twin Rivers Elementary School serves approximately 850 students and is located near downtown McKeesport.

Funding from 21st CCLC grant has allowed MASD to provide afterschool programming to students who would otherwise be less likely to have the opportunity. The program aims to strengthen and supplement academic and social supports provided to students. Using school and district teachers as afterschool staff maximizes coordination with in-school learning, allows for a deeper focus on academics, and provides opportunities for staff and students to build supportive relationships.

The project has the following primary goals:

1. To provide opportunities for academic enrichment, including providing tutorial services to help students (particularly students in high-poverty areas and those who attend low-performing schools) meet state and local student performance standards in core academic subjects such as reading and mathematics.
2. To provide students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, such as youth development activities, drug and violence prevention programs, counseling programs, art, music, and recreation programs, technology education programs, and character education programs, that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students.

3. To provide families of students served by community learning centers opportunities for educational development.

## Evaluation Design

A key element in McKeesport's 21st CCLC grant request is a yearly evaluation of the program by an external evaluator to help gauge program outcomes and utilize the information for program improvement. The Collaborative for Evaluation and Assessment Capacity (CEAC) in the University of Pittsburgh School of Education works with CANOES and MASD leadership for this purpose. To this end, CEAC examined academic data, student demographics, school and program attendance data, as well as survey data from teachers. CEAC also conducted interviews with the program director and site coordinator of the afterschool program, along with focus groups with student participants.

## Findings

### Program Design, Implementation, and Operations

This year, MASD and CANOES leadership was able to develop and implement a return its in-person after school program. The MASD CANOES Program ran Monday – Thursday, during traditional after school hours (3:30-6:30 pm), from October through May. The program offered many of the same activities as in prior year, including homework help, academic support, STEAM projects, virtual field trips, college and career exploration, and readers theater. CANOES also returned to its in-person summer camp, offered for six weeks in the summer before the school year, Monday through Friday from 8:00 to noon. Many of the same teachers also staffed the program as in previous in-person years, allowing students to maintain previously built relationships. The district and CANOES program also offered prizes and district spirit wear as incentives for student participation and as part of its schoolwide PBSIS system.

Twin Rivers' students in kindergarten through fourth grade were given the opportunity to participate in a 2021 CANOES Summer Camp program. This year marked a return to an in-person summer program after the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

All students are eligible to access CANOES programming, but students who are below benchmark on state or local standardized assessment, eligible for free-reduced lunch, or recommended by teachers or counselors due to poor academic performance are encouraged to participate in the program. Additionally, program staff utilizes data from various assessments to construct individualized plans for student to maintain or improve their success in school.

## Key Findings

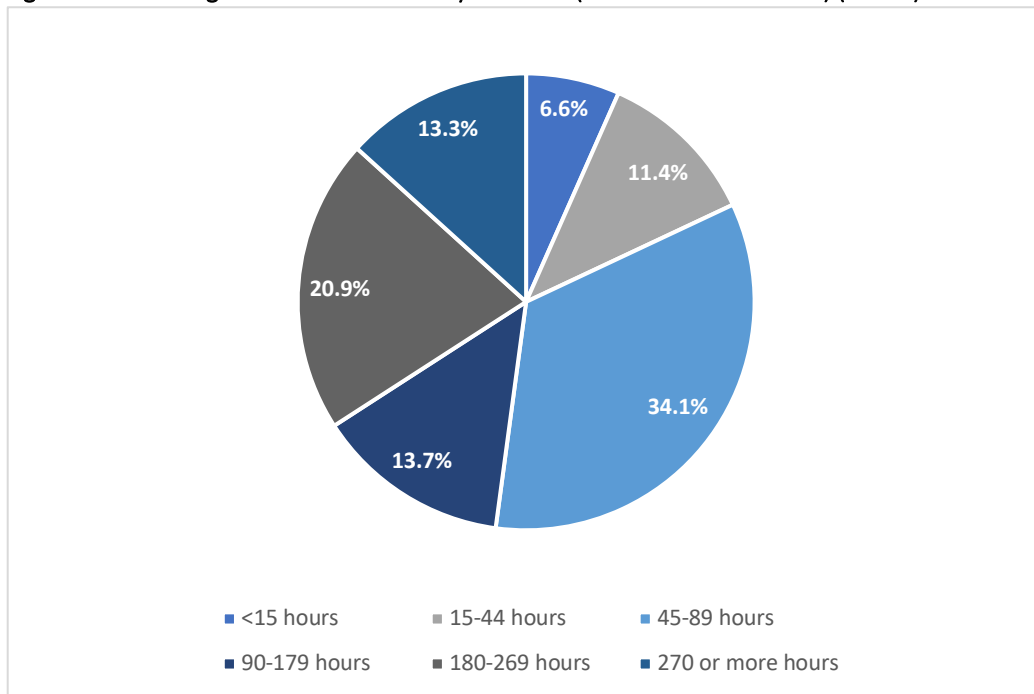
- 53.7% (n=29) of students had 90% or above school attendance, which was an improvement from the prior year, which had 40.8% (n=20) of attendees with school year attendance rates of 90% or above
- About one-third of attendees participated in 180 hours or more of the program, which is about half of the total program time
- A little over two-thirds (66.4%, n=89) of summer camp attendees participated in 60+ hours of the program, which a little over two-thirds of the program
- The program returned seamlessly to in-person format after a year on-line due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Busing issues made transportation for students very difficult and likely negatively impacted participation
- Nearly a quarter of participants improved on the DIBELS assessment from beginning to end of the school year (Reading: 19.1%, n=22; Math: 22.4%, n=24)
- On all three academic behavior items, “homework completion to the teacher’s satisfaction,” “participation in classroom,” and “academic performance,” findings were very positive, with more than 75% of students rated by teachers as either improved or did not need to improve in these areas

## Program Participation and Attendance

Regarding CANOES attendance, a total of 211 students participated in either the school year or summer program. Participation levels varied greatly. Among those students, 89 (42.2%) students attended only in Summer 2021, 77 (36.5%) students attended only in school year 2021-2022, and 45 (21.3%) students attended during both summer and school year.

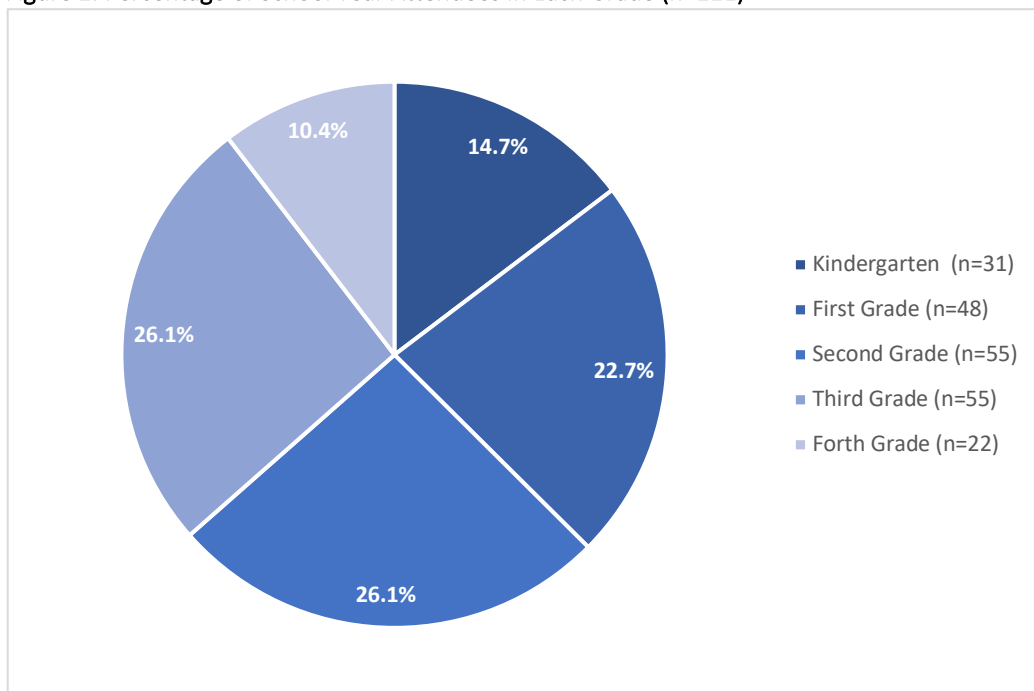
About one-third of attendees participated in 180 hours or more, which is about half of the total program time. More specifically, 13.3% (n=28) attended 270 hours or more, which was the highest attendance category, and 20.9% (n=44) attended 180-269 hours. Participation in the 45-89 hours range had the highest percentage of students attending (34.1%, n=72), and 13.7% (n=29) of attendees joined from 90 hours to 179 hours. Just under twenty percent of attendees (18.0%, n=38) participated in 44 hours or less of the program (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Percentage of Hours Attended by Students (School Year + Summer) (n=211)



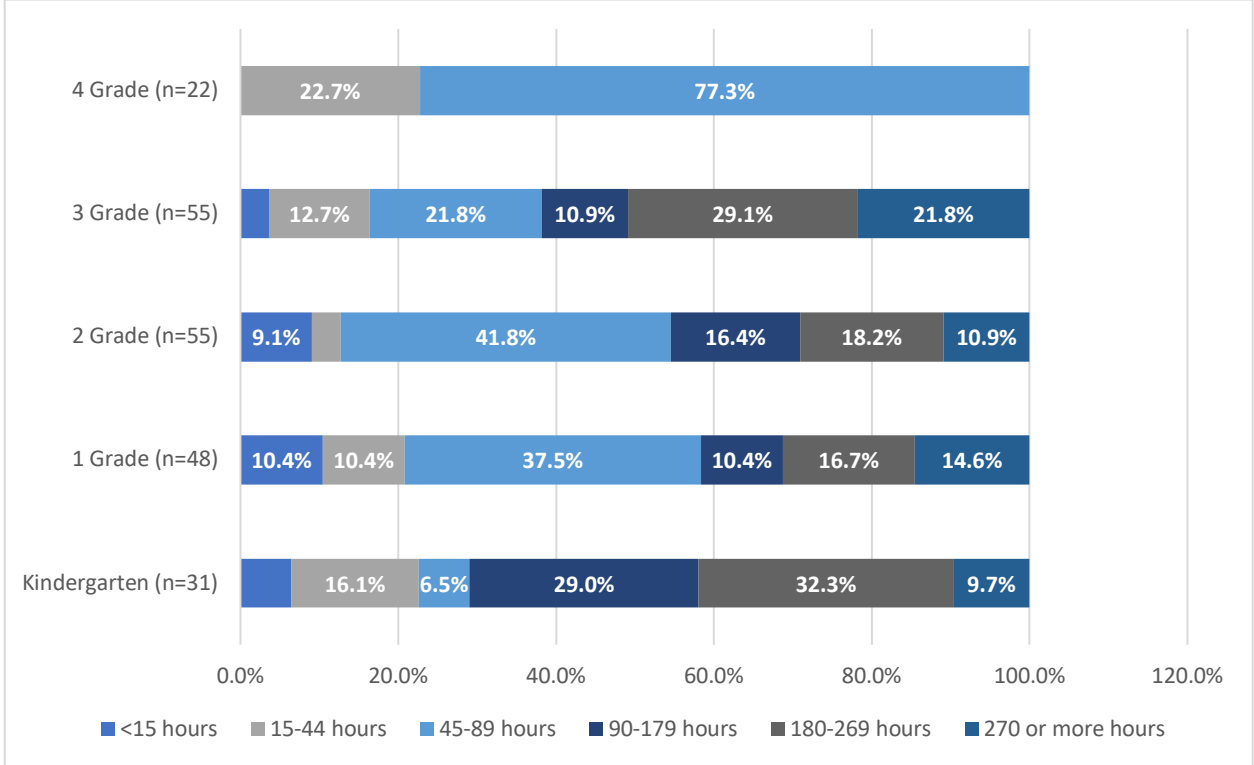
Participation levels varied across grades. Second and third grade students had the largest number of students (26.1%, n=55), respectively. First graders made up the second largest group (22.7%, n=48), and fourth graders accounted for the smallest group making up 10.4% (n=22) of students enrolled in CANOES (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percentage of School Year Attendees in Each Grade (n=211)



Among different grades, the number of hours students attended the program varied quite a bit. Most kindergarten students attended 90 hours or more, including 9 students (29.0%) attending 90-179 hours, 10 students (32.3%) 180-269 hours and 3 students (9.7%) 270 or more hours. The largest proportion of hours attended by for first graders and second graders was 45-89 hours range. 18 out of 55 third graders (50.9%) attended 180 hour or more, while 17 fourth graders (77.3%) attended hours of 45-89 hours range (Figure 2).

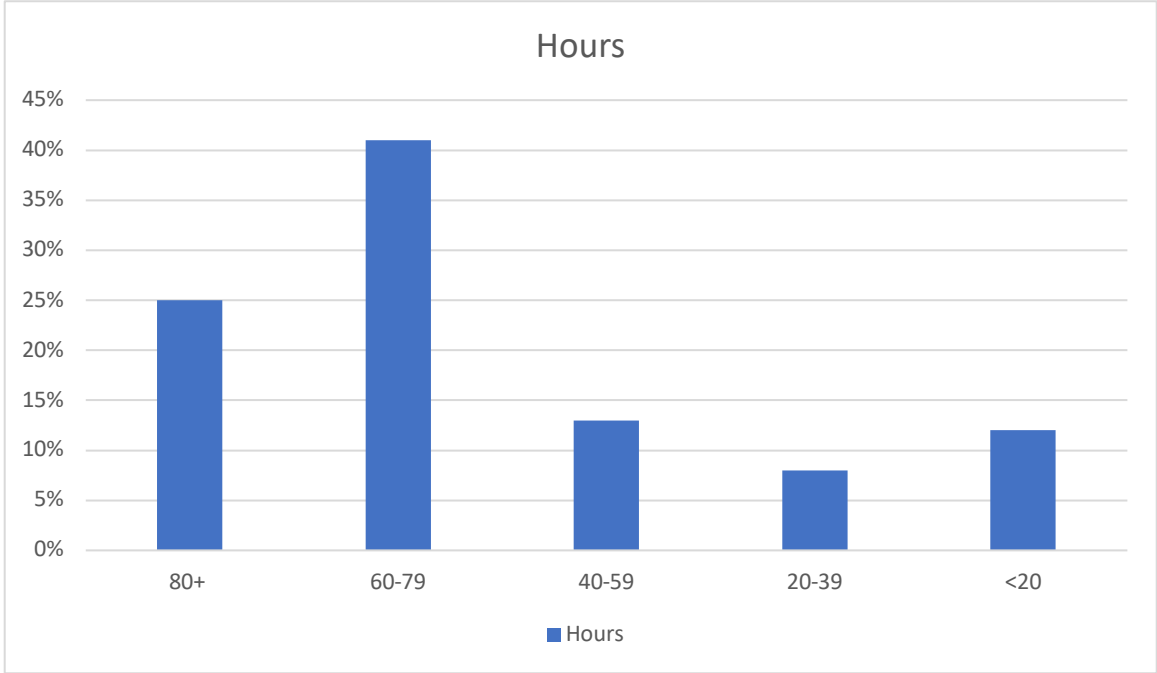
Figure 3. Percentage of Hours Attended by Students in Different Grades (n=211)



For the summer program, the 60-79 hours range of participation had the highest percentage (41.0%, n=55) of students. 80 hours or more had the second highest with 25.4% (n=34). Furthermore, 18 attendees (13.4%) joined 40-59 hours, 11 students (8.2%) joined for 20-39 hours, and 16 students (11.9%) joined for less than 20 hours (Figure 3).

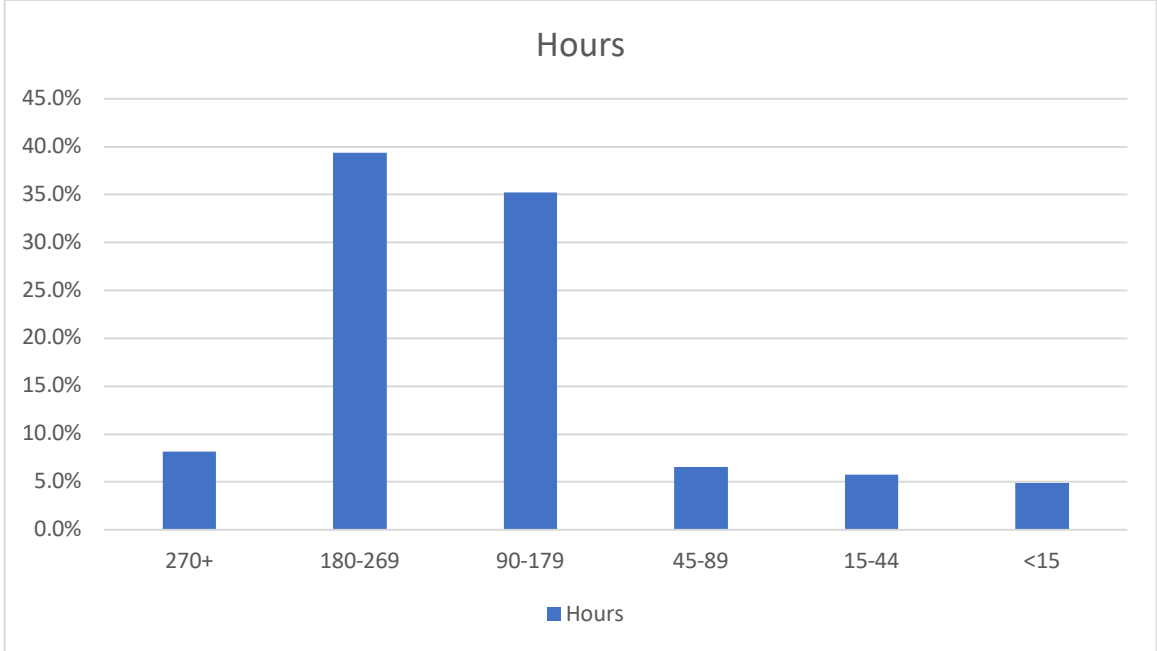


Figure 3. Percentage of Hours Attended by Students (Summer) (n=134)



For school year attendance, most students attended in the 90 to 180 range. More specifically, 39.3% (n=48) of students attended 180-269 hours and 35.2% (n=43) attended 90-179 hours. Ten students (8.2%) attended nearly all programming during the school year. Remaining students (17.2%, n=21) were fairly evenly split across the three lowest participation levels in the 0-90 hours range.

Figure 4. Percentage of Hours Attended by Students (School Year) (n=122)



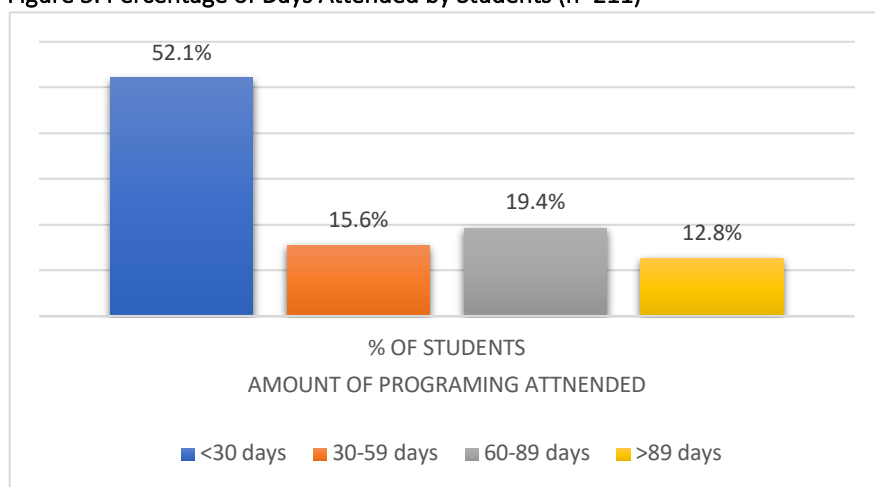
## Student Demographics

In this reporting year, more girls (56.4%, n=119) enrolled in the CANOES program than boys (43.6%, n=92). Race/ethnicity was reported in four categories: Black, White, multi-race and Hispanic/Latino. Black students made up the majority of students enrolled (60.7%, n=128), followed by White students (24.2%, n=51), and multi-racial students (13.7%, n=29). The remaining student (1.4%) identified as Hispanic/Latino. In terms of economic disadvantage, 100% (n=211) qualified for free or reduced lunch. As for students identified for special education (non-gifted) services, 19.9% (n=42) of the students who participated in this year's program were identified to receive services.

## Attendance in Days

To further measure consistency of attendance, the number of days students attended after school was also explored. 211 students attended at least one day of programming. 122 students (57.8%) attended at least one day of programming during the school year and 134 students (63.5%) attended at least one day in the summer program. The highest percentage of students (52.1%, n=110) attended less than 30 days. 41 students (19.4%) attended between 60 and 89 days of programming, follow by 15.6% (n=33) who attended between 30 and 59 days (Figure 5). 89 students attended only the summer program.

Figure 5. Percentage of Days Attended by Students (n=211)

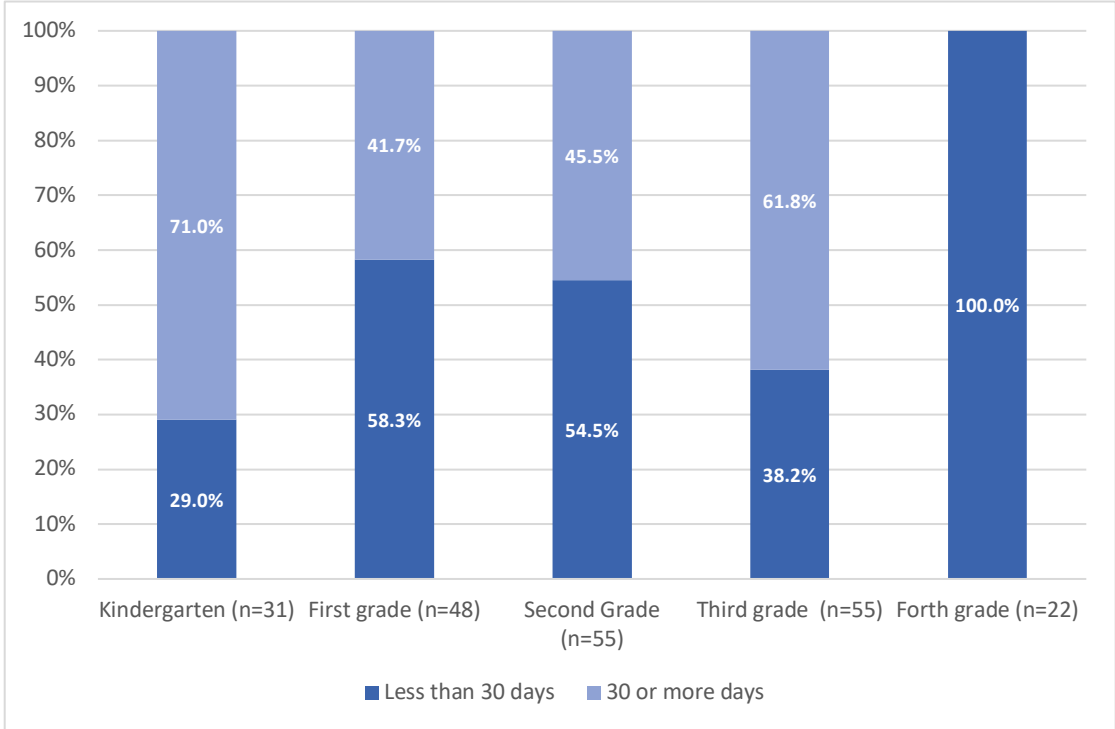


Among students who attended 30 or more days (n=101), which was the benchmark for regular attendance in prior years and an indicator of consistent participation, students from the third grade accounted for the largest portion (33.7%, n=34). Students from second grade (24.8%,

n=25) was the second largest group, kindergarteners the third largest group (21.8%, n=22), and first graders (19.8%, n=20).

The percentage of students in each grade who attended consistently for 30 or more days (n=211) varied. 71.0% (n=22) of kindergarteners and 61.8% (n=34) of third grader attended 30 or more days, while students from first and second grade who attended 30 days or more accounted for 41.7% (n=20) and 45.5% (n=25) of the participating students in their grade. However, all fourth grader attended less than 30 days.

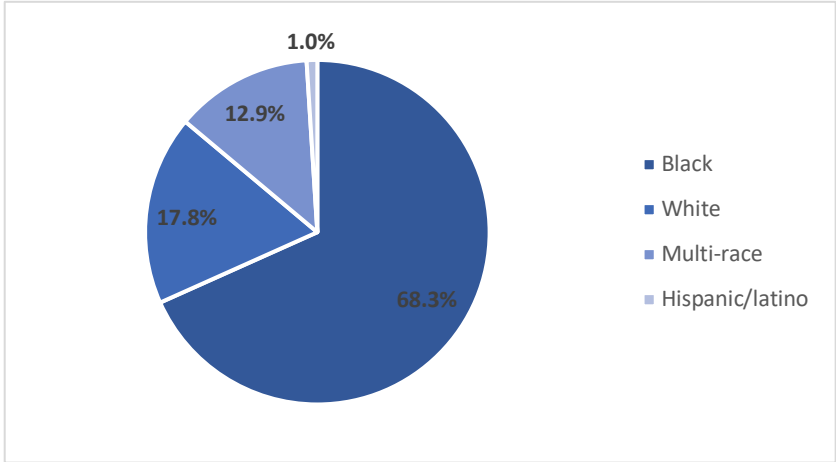
Figure 7. Percentage of Students in Each Grade Attending Less than 30 days vs. Students Attending 30 or more days (n=211)



When looking at the demographics of attendees with at least 30 days, the percentage stays nearly the same. 52.9% (n=63) of female attendees and 41.3% (n=38 ) of male attendees joined 30 days or more. As for students identified for special education 40.5% (n=17) students attended 30 or more days.

When looking at the race of students who attended 30 or more days , 68.3% (n=69) of students were identified as Black, 17.8% (n=18) as White, 12.9% (n=13) as multi-race and 1% (n=1) were Hispanic/latino (Figure 8).

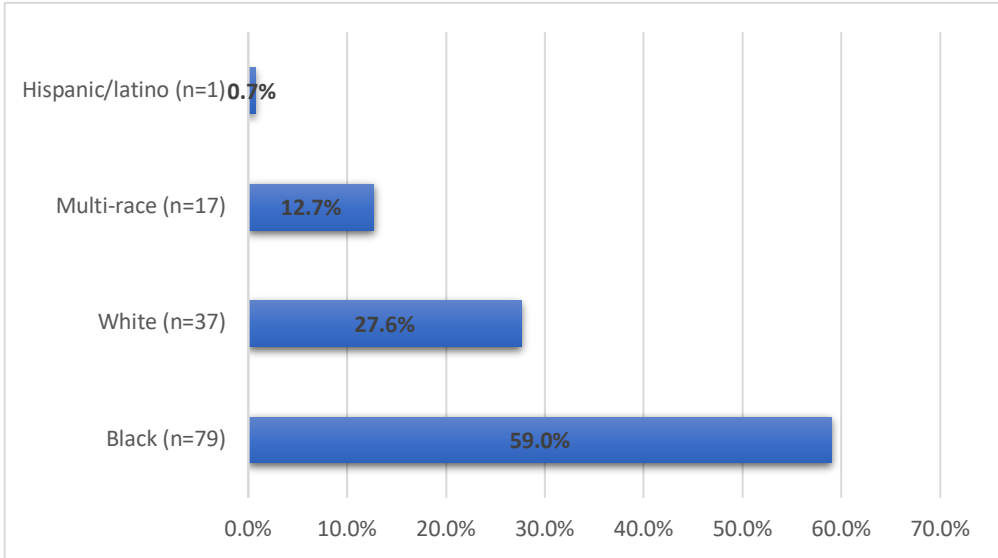
Figure 8. Percentage of All Regular School Year Attendees Disaggregated by Race and Ethnicity (n=101)



Summer Program 2020 Attendance

CANOES summer camp had an enrollment of 134 students who attended at least one day of the summer program. Of these, 89 students (66.4%) only attended the summer program. In total there were 24 days of programming, 79.9% of the students (n=107) attended 10 or more days in the summer program. There were similar numbers of female (50.7%, n=68) and male (49.3%, n=66) students attending the summer program. First grade and second grade were the largest age groups, separately composing 26.9% (n=36) of the program. The ethnic composition of the program was 59.0% (n=79) Black students, 27.6% (n=37) White students, 12.7% (n=17) multi-racial students and 0.7% (n=1) Hispanic/Latino students.

Figure 9. Percentage Attendees of the Summer Program Disaggregated by Ethnicity (n=134)



## Student Outcomes

The following sections will report data analysis pertaining to academic and behavioral performance of CANOES students. Standardized scores on the DIBELS assessment are reported, followed by report card grades in reading, math and science, and MASD teacher survey results related to academic performance.

### DIBELS – Local Standardized Assessment

The DIBELS assessment is administered to students in kindergarten to sixth grade and measures early literacy and numeracy skills. These tests are designed to identify students struggling with content and skills early in school in an effort to improve future academic success. Scores of the exam are benchmarked on a four-point scale from well below benchmark to above benchmark.

Scores were obtained for 116 students on the DIBELS reading test at the beginning of the year, and 115 students for the end of the year administration. Of 116 students at the beginning of the year, 15.5% (n=18) were above benchmark, decreasing to 12.2% (n=14) at the end of the year. On the other hand, the percentage of students at benchmark increased from 14.7% (n=17) to 20.9% (n=24). Although a majority of students scored below or well below benchmark at both the beginning (69.8%, n=81) and end of the year test (67.0%, n=77), the percentage decreased (Figure 11).

For the DIBELS math test, results were similar. Scores were obtained for 108 students for the beginning of the year and 107 attendees for the end of the year administration. Of the students at the beginning of the year, 18 students (16.7%) scored above benchmark. This number decreased by one to 17 (15.9%) at the end of the year. The percentage of students performing at benchmark was nearly identical at the beginning (14.8%, n=16) and end of the year (14.0%, n=15). A majority of students scored below or well below benchmark at both the beginning (69.0%, n=74) and end of the year test (70.0%, n=75), with the percentage staying nearly the same across the year (Figure 12).

Figure 11. DIBELS Reading Scores at Beginning of the Year (BOY) and End of the Year (EOY)

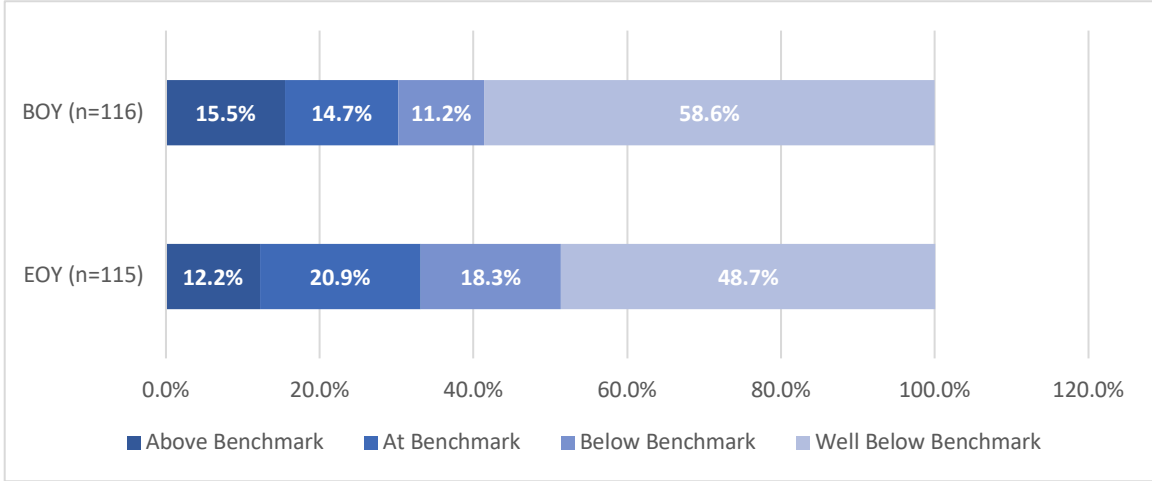
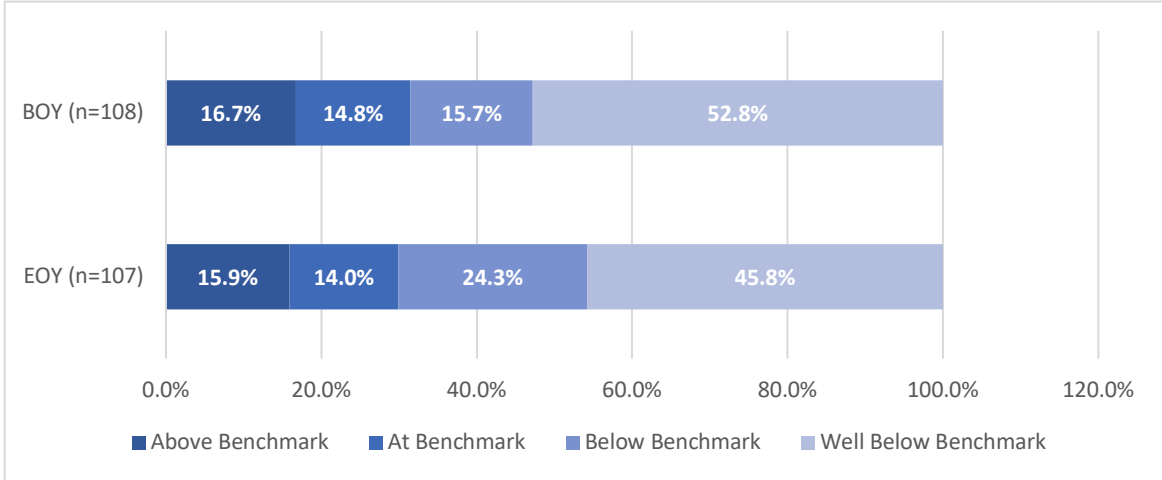


Figure 12. DIBELS Math Scores at Beginning of the Year (BOY) and end of the Year (EOY)

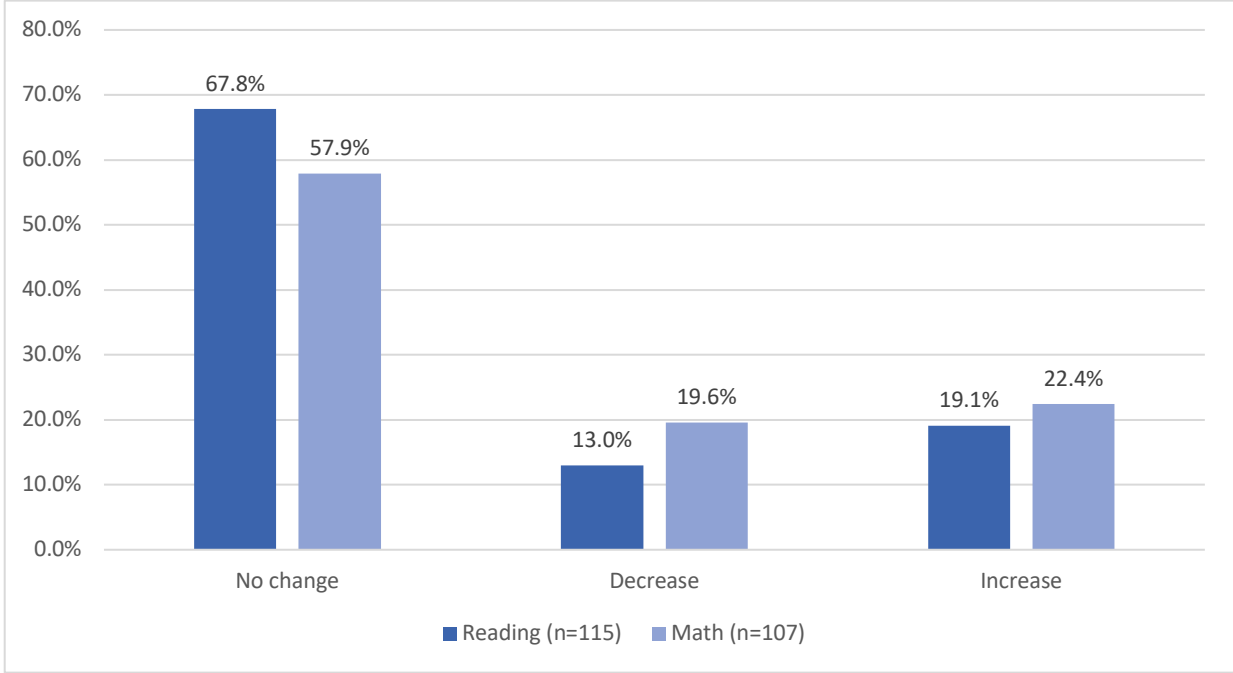


To better account for the changes in scores, a match pair comparison of 115 attendees for the reading assessment and 107 attendees for the math assessment from the beginning to the end of the year was performed. On this measure, nearly a quarter of participants improved (Reading: 19.1%, n=22; Math: 22.4%, n=24) from beginning to end of the school year. Among the students who improved, academic performance of 10 attendees (45.5%) increased in reading and 11 students (45.8%) improved in math from well below or below, to at or above benchmark (Figure 10).

For the reading assessment, a majority of attendees (67.8%, n=78) remained at the same performance level on both the beginning and end of year assessments, while 13% (n=15) decreased. Among the students who decreased in reading, 46.7% (n=7) decreased from above or at benchmark to below or well below benchmark.

For the math assessment, 57.9% (n=62) of the students remained at the same performance level on both the beginning and end of year, while 19.6% (n=21) decreased. Among the students who decreased in math, 52.4% (n=11) decreased one level, such as from at benchmark to below (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Match Comparison in DIBELS Reading and Math Scores from BOY to EOY



Drilling down into the data by student characteristics, of the 18 students with an IEP who took the reading DIBELS both at the beginning and end of the year, 3 students improved one level while 12 (66.7%) stayed consistent at the level of below benchmark or well below benchmark. For the math DIBELS, 17 students with an IEP took the DIBELS both at the beginning and in the end of the year, of which 3 students scored at benchmark or above benchmark at the beginning of the year and stayed consistent at the end of the year. On the other hand, 10 students remained well below benchmark from beginning to end of the year, and 3 students decreased one or two levels.

When disaggregating the DIBELS reading data by gender, the percentage of male students scoring well below benchmark decreased from 29 students (64.4%) on the pre to 21 students (46.7%) on the post, while female students reduced from 38 students (54.3%) to 35 students (50.0%). Five male students (11.1%) scored at benchmark on the pre, and eight male students (17.8%) did so on the post, while 12 female students (17.1%) on the pre and 16 female students (22.9%) on the post did so (Figure 11). For the math DIBELS, the total percentage of students at benchmark and above benchmark decreased for male students and increased for female students. Percentages of well below benchmark for both female and male attendees decreased (Figure 12).

Figure 11. Local Reading Assessment Student Benchmark at the Beginning (BOY) and End of Year (EOY) Disaggregated by Male and Female

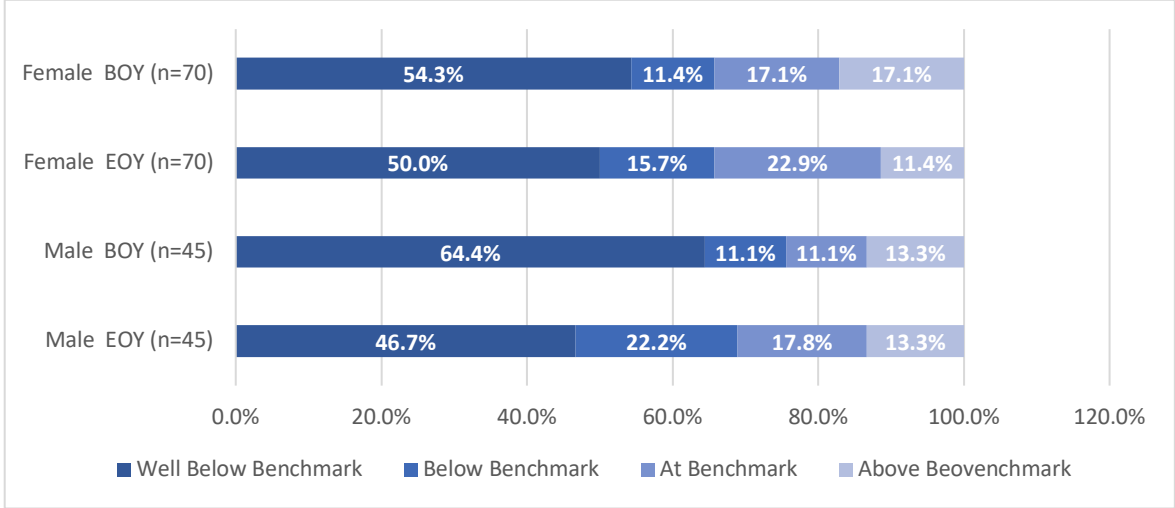
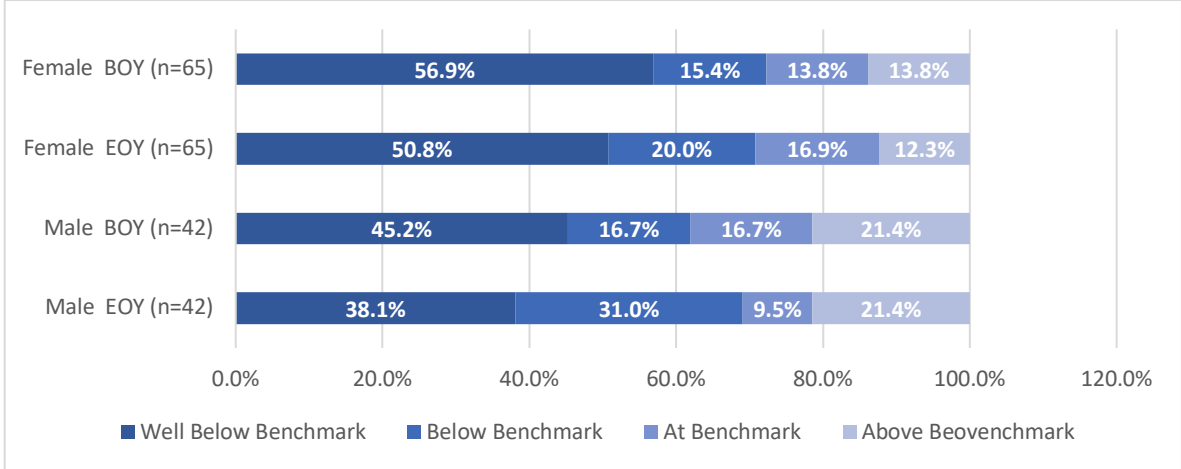


Figure 12. Local Math Assessment Student Benchmark at the Beginning (BOY) and End of Year (EOY) Disaggregated by Male and Female

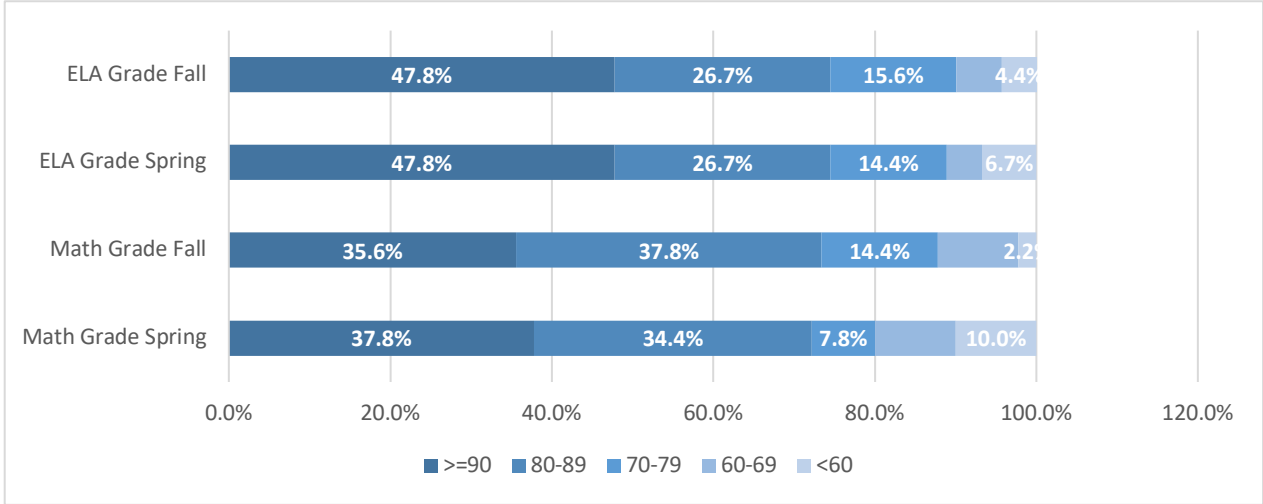


Grades

With regard to participating students’ grades, findings were generally more positive. Looking at students’ reading grades, 47.8% of students (n=43) scored within the 90-100 range and 26.7% students (n=24) earned grades within the 80-89 range on the pre and on the post. Thus, nearly three quarters of students (73.3%, n=67) stayed in the 80-100 range. On the other hand, only 6 students (4.4%) ended with a failing grade (under 60). For math, the percentage of students scoring in the 90-100 range increased from 35.6% (n=32) to 37.8% (n=34) from the beginning to end of year, while the percentages of students scoring in the 80-89 and 70-79 ranges decreased. Only 9 students (10%) ended with a failing grade (Figure 13).



Figure 13. Change in Reading and Math Report Card Grades from Beginning to End of the Year (n=90)



When disaggregating the grade data by race/ethnicity, results varied. For the 57 Black attendees, 66.7% students (n=38) scored within the 80-100 range at the beginning and end of the year in reading grades and were categorized as “did not need to improve” on the teacher survey (Figure 14). On the other hand, for math, the percentage of attendees with scores in the 90-100 range increased from 24.6% (n=14) at the beginning to 28.1% (n=16) at the end of the year. The percentage with a failing grade increased from 1 student to 8 (14%). Moreover, for the 12 students identified as multi-racial, the percentage of grades within the 90-100 range climbed greatly from 58.3% (n=7) at the beginning of the year to 75% (n=9) at the end, and all students’ grades were over 70 at both points. For math, percentages of math grades within the 80-100 range were 75% or above (Figure 15). In addition, as for White attendees, 95% (n=19) of students were categorized as “did not need to improve” at the beginning of the year in both reading and math, compared to 90% (n=18) at the end of the year, indicating a slight decrease. None of the student had a failing grade at the beginning or end of the year (Figure 16).

Figure 14. Change in Math Report Card Grades from Beginning to End of the Year for Black (n=57)

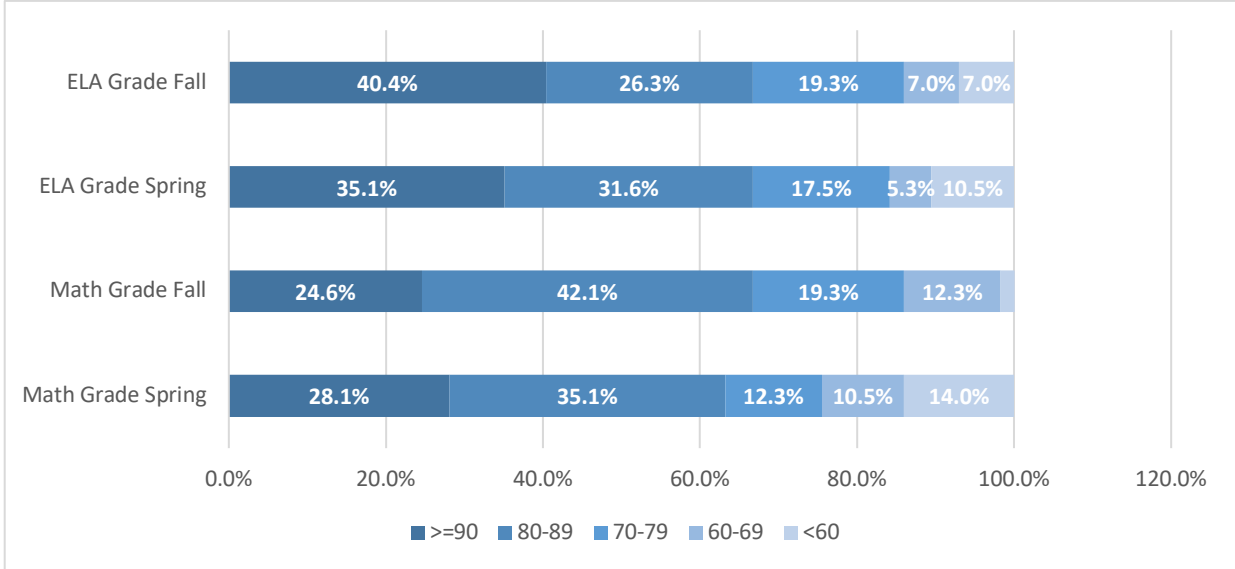


Figure 15. Change in Math Report Card Grades from Beginning to End of the Year for Multi-race (n=12)

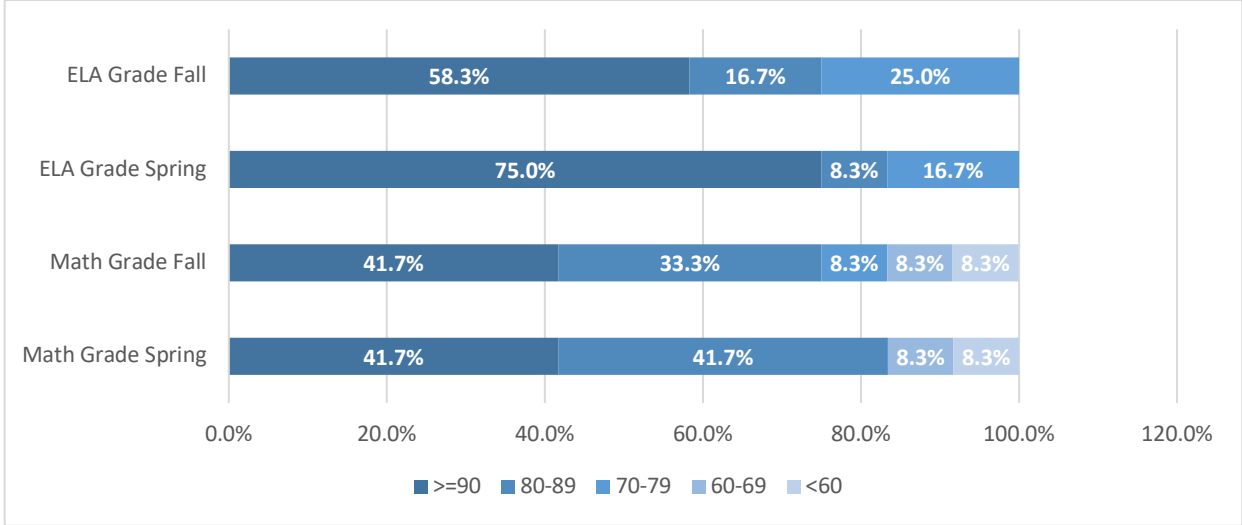
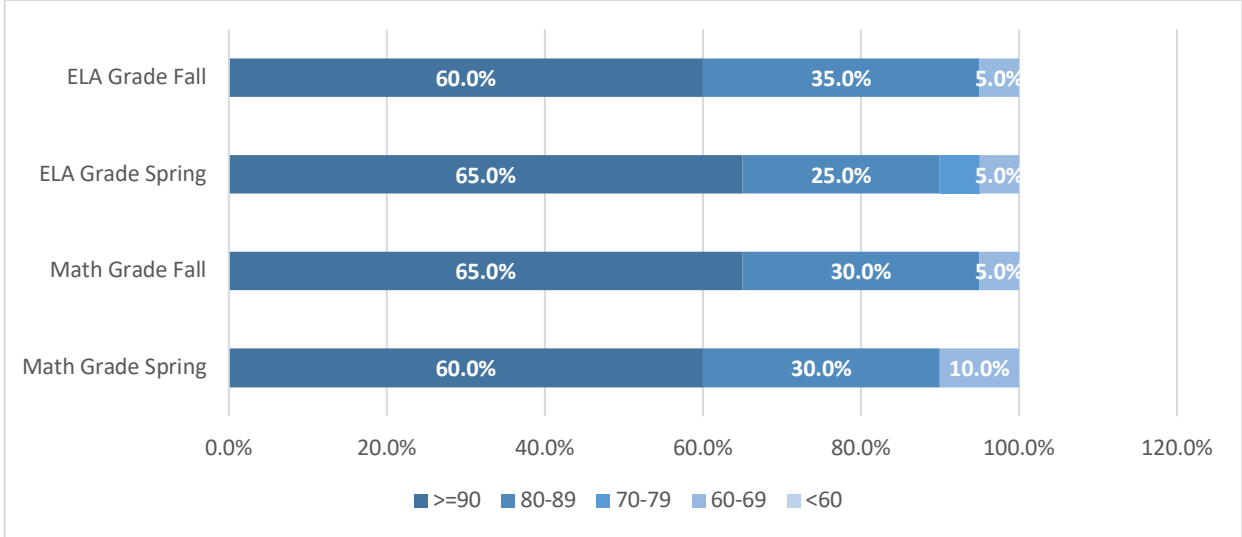


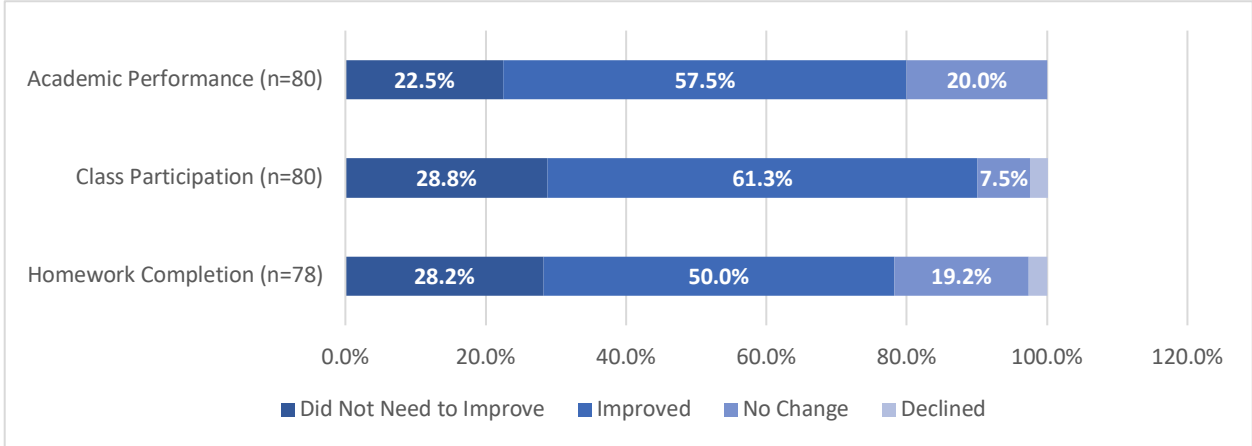
Figure 16. Change in Math Report Card Grades from Beginning to End of the Year for White (n=20)



Teacher-Reported Results (Teacher Survey)

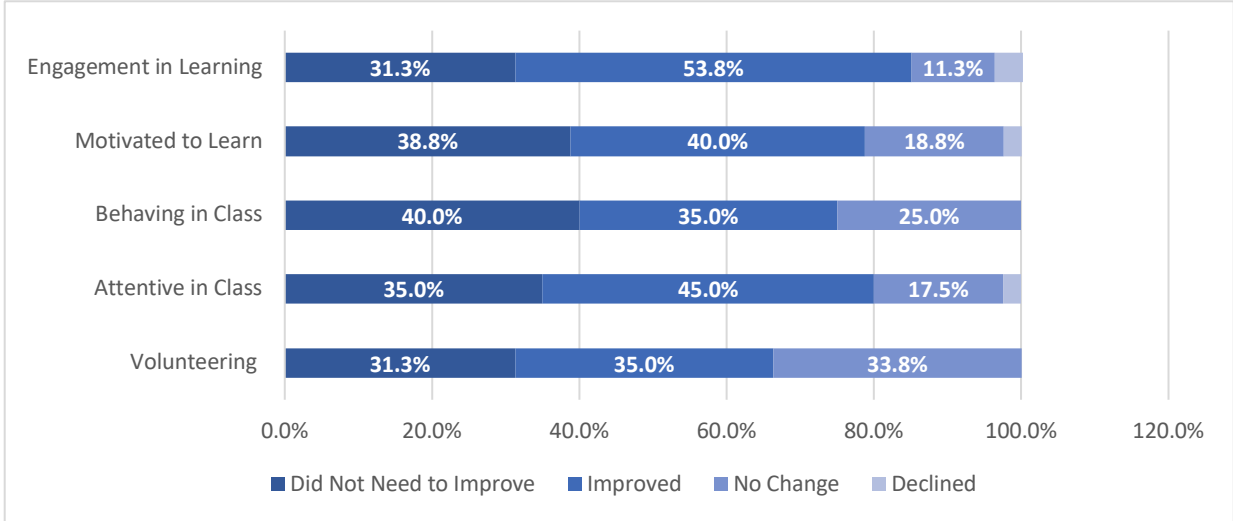
As a part of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program, teachers complete an annual survey assessing a student's academic and classroom behavior. The three measures of a student's academic behavior were "homework completion to the teacher's satisfaction," "participation in classroom," and "academic performance." The scale ranges from "declined" to "no change" to "improved," and "did not need to improve." On all three academic behavior items, findings were very positive, with more than 75% of students rated by teachers as either improved or did not need to improve in these areas (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Teacher Survey on Student Academic Behavior



With regard to classroom behavior, the five measures used are “engagement in learning,” “coming to school motivated to learn,” “behaving in class,” “being attentive in class,” and “volunteering” (e.g. for extra credit or more responsibilities). On these measures, findings were also generally positive. On four of five items (attentiveness, behavior, motivation, and engagement), 75% or more of students were rated either improved or did not need to improve. With regards to volunteering, teachers rated a slightly lower number of students as improved or did not need to improve (66.3%). On the item of volunteering, 27 students (33.8%) rated as no change (needs improvement) (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Teacher Survey on Classroom Behavior (n=80)



School Attendance & Years in After School Program

For 21CCLC programs, the benchmark for school attendance is a 90% attendance rate. School attendance data for this school year (2021-2022) was available for 93 (44%) of the attendees

and available for last school year (2020-2021) for 88 (42%) of the attendees. This year, 49.5% (n=46) of students had 90% or above attendance. This was an improvement from the prior year (2020-2021), which had 35% (n=31) of attendees with school year attendance rates of 90% or above.

When disaggregating the school attendance data for the current year by grade, 56.5% (n=13) of first graders had rates of 90% or above, followed closely by 51.6% (n=16) of second graders, and then 43.6% (n=17) of third graders.

On an individual level, school attendance data from this year and last year were available for all 88 students. 63.6% (n=56) of students improved their attendance rate from last year to this year. 19.3% (n=17) of students improved their school attendance rate from below 90% last year to 90% or above this year. Only 6 students (6.8%) declined from an attendance rate of 90% or above last year to below the benchmark this year. 29.5% (n=26) of students maintained 90% or higher attendance rate both last year and this year, and 45.5% (n=40) of students did not have an attendance rate of 90% or higher in either year, of which 65.0% (n=26) showed improvement and 35.0% (n=14) declined. Lastly, of the 47 students whose attendance rate was below 90% in this year, more than half (55.3%, n=26) improved in school attendance compared with last year.

Data on how many years attendees have participated in after school was available for 119 of the 211 student attendees. Of these, most (73.1%, n=87) participated in 21st CCLC after school programming for one year, followed by 20.2% (n=24) having attended for two years. Eight students participated in after school for three years.

## Stakeholder Feedback

At the end of the year, interviews were conducted with the CANOES leadership team to gain insight into successes and challenges during the program year. During the same time period, a student focus group was also conducted to learn about students' experience in the program, particularly regarding programming, building relationships, help with schoolwork, and additions/improvements for next year.

## Program Director and Site Coordinator Interviews

As for CANOES, programming operations returned to a level similar to prior years before COVID. One specific success mentioned was the return of an in-person summer program after the prior summer's online summer camp. The 21CCLC summer program was held in the mornings, followed by an afternoon program hosted by another program of the district. Thus, students were able to enjoy a full day of activities.

For the school year program, there were several additions and changes for this year. All programs were implemented in-person and early dismissals were not allowed, which had been a policy before pre-COVID. Also, CANOES staffing was not a problem coming out of the pandemic. Staffing was easy to recruit and were all from MASD. There were no struggles about finding staff.

As for activities, a new tinker cart element was added this year to allow students to have another creative, STEAM outlet. On the academic front, mid-year MAP and DIBELS were adopted to improve formative assessment and diagnostics to support student learning. Additionally, family engagement activities returned this year. Leadership thought it was beneficial to do networking with families and peers. Three family engagement activities from October to December were held. These were seen as a major success because of pandemic's influence and less chances to do parent engagement the prior year.

The major challenge of the year was transportation. Due to the bus company's inability to find drivers, bussing was a problem not only for the after school program but also the entire district. Regularly, entire routes were often unable to be run for the school day. The lack of bussing led to no transportation for after school, which was likely a major factor in the lower participation numbers compared to pre-COVID. Unfortunately, low SES students' participation is often more effected by the lack of busing. Improvement for next year is anticipated with a new bus company and return to transportation for after school.

In general, leadership thought CANOES ran smoothly based on their comments. Most of the programming was internal and several field trips were organized. There were a few opportunities to work with local organizations for activities, including the Carnegie Science Center, Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium, and the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. What's more, in the academic part of after school programming, 20-minutes of homework/schoolwork support was arranged and implemented. Leadership thought these activities were advantageous for students' learning and experience. For example, academics were experienced in games, such as "readers theaters" and hands-on science activities, which students seemed to really enjoy. Students could also check out math games to use at home.

Student behavior was not viewed as a problem. PBISS was incorporated into the after school program with a "pick a ticket" component. There were few behavior problems and attendance of those who regularly came was generally good given the struggles with transportation. The bussing problems were the major challenge, leading to parents being less likely to send kids to after school. This was echoed in each leadership interview.

#### Student participants focus group

In terms of the favorite part of CANOES, students gave examples such as going outside, the food, using computers, and physical games. The positive role of the after-school program in schoolwork lied in support in math from particular teachers mentioned. Although, they would

have specific time for homework, some students mentioned that there was not much homework, but students would just ask teachers to help them in specific subjects like math and reading. Moreover, students commented positively that after school is beneficial for building relationships. Students talked about enjoying being with their friends and meeting new friends, as well as meeting and getting to know other teachers. If they were not in the after-school program, students mentioned they would likely have been at home, doing homework, going outside, playing friends, playing video games, or staying with relatives. Student said they would recommend for their friends to attend the after school program. One student had told here friend that she had a lot of fun and shared the positive role of help in schoolwork from teachers. If they could add anything in after-school program, it would be good to have more homework time for those who need it, less dinner time, and more art classes. Based on the focus group, students gave affirmative feedback for the after school program, since they would tell friends to join the program. As one student said, “It is a cool place to have fun and learn stuff.”

## Grantee Results on Performance Measures

### GPR Measure 1 – Academic Achievement, State Assessments

Percentage of students in grades 4-8 participating in 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer who demonstrate growth in reading/language arts on state assessments.  
 Percentage of students in grades 4-8 participating in 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer who demonstrate growth in math on state assessments.

Grantee Performance Indicator	Grantee’s Performance Target (# or %)	Actual Performance
N/A	N/A	N/A

### GPR Measure 2 – Grade Point Average

Percentage of students in grades 7-8 and 10-12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer with a prior-year unweighted GPA less than 3.0 who demonstrated an improved GPA.

Grantee Performance Indicator	Grantee’s Performance Target (# or %)	Actual Performance
N/A	N/A	N/A

**GPR Measure 3 – School Day Attendance**

Percentage of youth in grades 1–12 participating in 21st CCLC during the school year and summer who: Had a school-day attendance rate at or below 90% in the prior school year AND Demonstrated an improved attendance rate in the current school year.

57 current year attendees had a prior year attendance rate below 90%, of which 75.4% (n=43) improved their attendance rate in the current year.

Grantee Performance Indicator	Grantee’s Performance Target (# or %)	Actual Performance
The percentage of elementary 21st CCLC participants, as applicable to the grades the applicant intends to serve, having a prior year attendance rate below 90% whose school-day attendance rate improved from the prior year to the current year.	25%	75% (n=43)

**GPR Measure 4 – Behavior**

Percentage of students grades 1 - 12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer who experienced a decrease in in-school suspensions compared to the previous school year.

0 students from current year experienced a suspension during the prior program year, making a decrease in that measure not possible.

Grantee Performance Indicator	Grantee’s Performance Target (# or %)	Actual Performance
The percentage of elementary 21st CCLC participants, as applicable to the grades the applicant intends to serve, who experienced a decrease in in-school suspensions compared to the previous school year.	30	N/A

**GPR Measure 5 – Student Engagement in Learning**

Percentage of students in grades 1–5 participating in 21st CCLC programming in the school year and summer who demonstrated an improvement in teacher-reported engagement in learning.

82 of 211 attendees this year received completed teacher surveys. Of those 52% of attendees with surveys and 20% (n=43) of all attendees were rated as improved on the engagement item.

Grantee Performance Indicator	Grantee's Performance Target (# or %)	Actual Performance
The percentage of elementary 21st CCLC participants, as applicable to the grades the applicant intends to serve, who demonstrated an improvement in teacher-reported engagement in learning.		20% (n=43)

### State Measure 6- Family Literacy and Involvement

Number or percentage of families of participating students who participate in family literacy and involvement activities.

CANOES held three family engagement events during the year, which had 92 parent and 115 student attendees.

Grantee Performance Indicator	Grantee's Performance Target (# or %)	Actual Performance
The [number OR percentage] of families of participating students who participate in family literacy activities.	25	0
The [number OR percentage] of parents of participating students who participate in family literacy activities	25	0
The [number OR percentage] of family members of participating students who participate in family engagement activities.	25	115
The [number OR percentage] of parents of participating students who participate in family engagement activities.	25	92

### Considerations and Recommendations for Improvement

Overall, the CANOES program seems to have engaged students and returned to a level of comparability to pre-COVID years. The major difference and challenge to this year was participation levels, which were lower than pre-COVID levels. This difficulty is likely due to two major factors: remnants of the COVID-19 pandemic's negative effect on group activities and the major busing difficulties faced by MASD throughout the school year. With the new bus company set to take over transportation next school year, opportunities to improve access



should be forthcoming. Thus, the program could benefit from improved transportation service in order to open up more opportunities to increase students' participation, to have more field trips and learning outside of the school sites.

A major strength of the CANOES program and in-person afterschool programs in general is that students build and strengthen their relationships with their peers and teachers. Many students mentioned that although they did not know each other at the beginning, through their time in CANOES they were able to form friendships and a positive environment. Also, according to teachers' survey feedback, student behavior received positive ratings on all items. A related recommendation is to compare the culture and behavior of students in after school to that of the regular school day. Focusing recruitment on students who need extra behavior support and opportunities to build relationships could help the broader school culture and those students who might be struggling socially.

The main recommendation CEAC would make is to continue to work to structure programming in a way that ensures that students identifying as ethnicities other than White receive the necessary support to continue to improve their academic and social growth. Given the high percentage of Black and multi-racial students participating in the program, it is recommended that specific research-based strategies designed for those students be implemented. The highly rated relationships are the building blocks of most educational strategies. CANOES has helped Twin Rivers develop a solid foundation on which to build more focused educational interventions to help build students' academic success, but such strategies must be purposefully developed and implemented.

The main challenge of the program seems to be academics. As was reflected from PSSA scores, there is still room for students to improve on their school academics. The high ratings on social and behavioral measure suggests that more social learning opportunities might be helpful. In addition, adopting improvement focused strategies with more formative and embedded assessments, like the mid-year DIBELS addition, would make adaptations during the year more feasible. Looking back at the history of CANOES, academic measures have been lower than desired; thus, initiating strategic and quicker approaches for improvement are suggested.

As DIBELS scores showed that students received not quite ideal scores in math and reading, we recommend to have more support with students schoolwork in those subjects during the afterschool program. Perhaps considering hands-on, gamified, and other innovative activities related to math and reading would strengthen students' knowledge learned from school. In particular, math games were well received this year; building on that next year could provide an easy avenue to increasing math learning opportunities. Another opportunity is building on students' interest in hands-on and physical activities to integrate math and reading opportunities. However, it is important to maintain a balance between academic and social aspects of the program, along with listening to student voice. With participation levels lower than desired, the program should not push academics to the detriment of student enjoyment in the program.

## Contact Information

### **For questions regarding the PAWS Program, contact:**

Dr. Amy Dellapenna  
Project Director, CANOES  
Elementary Literacy Coordinator  
McKeesport Area School District  
3590 O'Neil Boulevard  
McKeesport, PA 15132  
Phone Number: 412-948-1329  
adellapenna@mckasd.net

Dr. Jane L. Coughenour  
Director of State & Federal Programs  
McKeesport Area School District  
3590 O'Neil Boulevard  
McKeesport, PA 15132  
Phone Number: 412-664-3627  
JCoughenour@mckasd.net

### **For questions regarding the evaluation or report, contact:**

Keith Trahan, PhD  
Interim Director, Collaborative for Evaluation and Assessment Capacity  
Faculty, Department of Educational Foundations, Organizations, and Policy  
School of Education, University of Pittsburgh  
4321 Wesley W. Posvar Hall  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260  
[keithtrahan@pitt.edu](mailto:keithtrahan@pitt.edu)  
<http://www.ceac.pitt.edu>