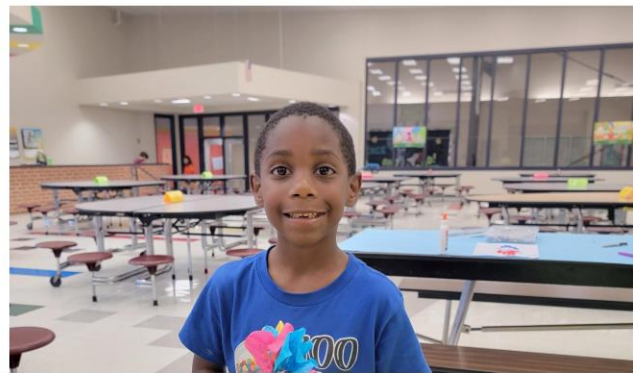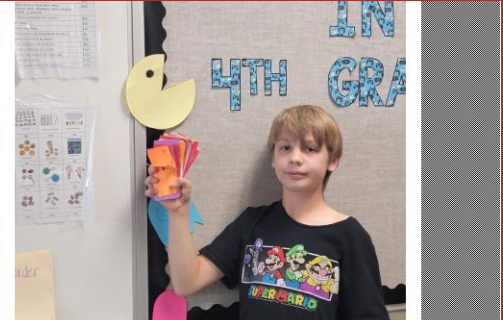# 21st CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS SOUTHEAST HARRIS and BRAZORIA COUNTY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ACE SOUTHEAST HARRIS COUNTY – CYCLE 11, YEAR 2

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7/24/2023

Contents

Preface and Acknowledgements

This evaluation report is generated per Texas ACE and 21st Century Community Learning Centers evaluating and reporting requirements. This report examines ACE program outcomes for ten centers located in Southeast Harris County for the 2022-2023 school year. The evaluation process aligns with and incorporates program component requirements and process evaluation guidelines provided by the Texas ACE Guidebook, the Texas ACE Blueprint, the Texas ACE Quality Assurance Program, and evidence-based practices/research associated with out-of-school time educational and enrichment activities. The scope of work outlined in the evaluation contractual agreement with Communities in Schools (CIS) Southeast Harris and Brazoria County provided additional context for this annual report.

Findings and all recommendations stated in this report may not reflect the policies and perceptions of CIS Southeast Harris and Brazoria County, the districts in Southeast Harris County, or TEA. Any observations or recommendations stated reflect the Evaluator's position based on the data collected through on-site observations and provided by ACE staff. Qualtrics survey delivery platform and the TX21st/TEAL data system were used to capture additional data for this annual report.

Thank you to the Chief Executive Officer, Project Director (PD), the Site Coordinators (SC/SCs), Family Engagement Specialist (FES), students and their families, school day administrators, teachers, and staff who provide a significant portion of the data required to develop this report.

I.   Executive Summary

This report provides grantee- and center-level evaluative content on Communities In Schools Southeast Harris and Brazoria County Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) programs administered through the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The Texas Education Agency serves as a pass-through for federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grants authorized under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (Title IV, Part B, 2015)[1] The 21st CCLC/ACE "…creates community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities…"[2] for at-risk students enrolled in academically underperforming Title I schools or Focus Campuses as designated by TEA.

Four components of ACE programs emphasize academic assistance, enrichment, family and parental support, and college and workforce readiness. ACE service delivery and evaluation strategies combined requirements and process evaluation guidelines provided by the Texas ACE Guidebook, the Texas ACE Blueprint, and the Texas ACE Quality Assurance Program. Evidence-based practices/research associated with out-of-school time educational, and enrichment activities provide additional context for this annual program report.

The research questions in this report relate to attendance, behavior, and learning engagement outcomes to measure student achievement and family engagement. These research questions include:

- Adherence and Exposure: Is program implementation congruent with the design and recommended components required to address student/family/campus needs and interests to promote positive outcomes?
- Quality and Engagement: Is program delivery engaging to students and congruent with high-impact practices that meet student/family/campus needs and interests to promote student learning engagement?

This section's Program Summary and Outcomes data provide program highlights and outcomes. The Executive Summary concludes with overall program strengths, recommendations, and next steps. All content serves to address the research questions in alignment with Process Evaluation and outcome guidelines.

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[1] Afterschool Alliance. 21st Century Community Learning Centers: Funding History, 21st CCLC. Retrieved http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/policy21stcclc.cfm

[2] U.S Department of Education. Programs: 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Retrieved https://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html

Cycle 11, Year 2, 2022-2023, Program Summary and Outcomes

Enrollment/Participation

Total ACE Student Enrollment	Contracted Regular Students (Req'd#)	Regular (attending 45+ days)	% Total Contracted Enrollment	Contracted Parent (Req'd #)	Total # Parents	% Contracted # of Parents	*Total enrollment varies based on system.*
1,163	920	965	105%	700	1,345	190%	

Note. Participant attendance differs for regular ACE student numbers reported on the CR14: Participant Attendance report (n=1,005) vs Continuation Report (n=966) and the End of Year Demographic Report (n=965) for South Houston (n=67), North Shore (n=67), Galena Park (n=104), MacArthur (n=111), West Columbia (n=119), EC Mason (n=112), Bel Sanchez (n=104), and HC Carleston (n=107; Total regular student N=1,005). Data was pulled for Tables 2-6 from the End of Year Demographic Report (n=965) since regular student demographic and grade level data were unavailable in the Grantee level, Student Report data in TX21st as in previous years.

Race/Ethnicity based on regular student attendance (45+ days)

Race/Ethnicity	American Indian/Alaskan (*N*=4)	Asian (*N*=13)	African American (*N*=184)	Hispanic (*N*=626)	Hawaiian /Pacific (*N*=1)	Two or More Races (*N*=0)	White (*N*=137)
	0.4%	1%	19%	65%	0.1%	0%	14%

Population Specifics based on total campus student profiles and *Sex* based on regular student attendance (45+ days)

Population Specifics	At-Risk	LEP	Economically Disadvantaged		Sex	Males (*N*=469)	Females (*N*=496)
	54%	32%	77%			49%	51%

Outcomes based on combined center totals

Academic	87% based on students with grade point average of ≥**70** for the school year
Attendance	97% based on students with ≤**15** days of school absences
Behavior referrals	89% based on students with ≤**10** school day referrals

Note. Quality Assurance Indicators End of Year Data by Combined Center Totals provided by Project Director. Outcomes data not provided in "Student" report in TX21st as in previous years.

Stakeholder Survey Results

Teacher	62% of teachers indicated student attendance in ACE positively affected school performance."
Principal	91% of principals responded that ACE integrated into the overall school environment, including visibility and interactions with school staff and students. 100% of principals responded that ACE is effectively meeting the needs of the students who attend ACE. 74% of principals had "Overall" positive perceptions of ACE staff and programs on their campuses
Program Enjoyment	99% of parents and 92% of students responded that their students "enjoyed coming to ACE."
Benefit from Attending ACE	99% of parents responded that students "benefit" from attending ACE."
Grades Improved	90% of parents and 85% of students responded that students' "grades improved as a result of attending ACE."
Complete Homework	63% of teachers, 97% of parents, and 92% of students responded that "ACE helps students' complete homework assignments."
Behaviors	59% teachers and 86% of parents responded that students' "behavior at school has improved since attending ACE."
Attendance	55% teachers responded that students' school day attendance with their involvement in ACE.
Positive relationships	98% of parents and 93% of students responded that "ACE provides access and opportunities for participants to form positive relationships."
ACE staff and parent communication	97% of parents responded that "ACE Site Coordinator communicates with me about my child."
Parent involvement	90% of parents responded that "ACE helped me become more involved in my child's education
Family Engagement	98% of parents responded that "The ACE Parent Events provides fun activities and beneficial resources for my family
Participate in ACE next school year	95% of parents and 94% of students responded "Yes," or "Maybe" to students participating in ACE if the program is offered at their school next semester.

II. Program Strengths, Findings, and Recommendations

A. Strengths

1. ACE staff efforts resulted in a total enrollment of 1,163. Of the 1,163 enrolled, 965 were regular students (45+ days) exceeding the contracted number (n=920) by 105%.
2. In PY23, 1,345 parents attended at least one family engagement event, exceeding the contracted number (n=700) by 190%.
3. Six out of ten centers *Met* or exceeded all Academic, Attendance, Behavior, and Family Engagement goals set in the logic models and reported in the End of Year Outcomes (see Appendix B Center Level Executive Summaries Center Outcome tables, Table 12 End of Year Outcomes, Table 3 Parent Numbers by Center, and Appendix C Tables and Figures for Teacher Survey Responses).
4. The ACE centers that participated in Texas ACE Quality Assurance Process Monitoring earned top scores of 3 and 4 (see Appendix E TEA Monitoring Reports).
5. Survey responses showed highly favorable teacher, principal, parent, and student perceptions of the ten centers (see Appendix C Tables and Figures; Figures 1-6).
6. 62% of teachers reported that student attendance in ACE positively affected school performance."
7. Principal survey responses indicated that 74% of respondents had "Overall" positive perceptions of ACE staff and programs on their campuses.
8. Principal survey responses indicated that 100% of respondents believed that ACE is effectively meeting the needs of the students who attend ACE.
9. The ten ACE centers served the most in-need students in grade level 1st-8th, who account for 16% of total campus enrollment. The students served are ethnically diverse (Black/African American - 19% and Hispanic - 65%; see Appendix C Table 5 Race/Ethnicity), and an average of 54% are At-Risk, 32% are LEP or Limited English Proficiency, and 77% are Economically Disadvantaged (see Appendix C Table 7 Demographics).
10. The ten ACE centers implemented activities/programs that fulfilled each of the four TEA activity components in academic assistance, enrichment, college and workforce readiness, and family and parental support (see Appendix C Table 9 Activities).
11. The ten ACE centers' Campus Delivery Plans identified, and logic models guided efforts and strategies toward goals to meet local campus and community needs (see Appendix B Center-Level Executive Summaries).
12. ACE staff continues with an intentional SEL focus in programs. ACE takes a holistic approach to student learning and engagement.
13. High campus buy-in on sites visited.

Academic   Enrichment   Family Engagement

14. ACE Family Engagement trending higher in fall PY23 vs fall PY22. Uptick in parent engagement can be attributed to ACE staff interaction with parents and FES team working relationship and efforts to build community partnerships.
15. ACE programs benefit from a strong, motivated veteran staff that wants to provide peer support.
16. New staff seems more coachable and engaged than in years past – which speaks to more intentional recruitment, training, onboarding, and agency promotion practices.
17. ACE programs make concerted efforts to meet participants' interests, such as the uptick in sport and eSport activities.
18. Students interacted well with each other and ACE staff at multiple campuses.
19. SCs referred to PDs as supportive in matters unrelated to program implementation or operations. The references indirectly suggest PDs invested in the holistic development and wellness of ACE staff.
20. Evaluator observed engaged staff. Speaks to sound recruitment, training, onboarding, and on-campus coaching by SCs and Leads.
21. Multiple SCs mentioned strong Leads – potential for promotions to SCs and other leadership roles.
22. Strong peer-to-peer coaching and training. Veteran SCs mentoring new SCs and staff.
23. Shared lesson planning and curriculum development amongst ACE staff customized to suit various campus needs and student interests. Corporate lesson plan development increases productivity and efficiency.
24. The creation of virtual training libraries at some centers enabled new and emerging staff to learn from veteran, successful staff, and to revisit training as a refresher. Additionally, the commitment of full-time staff to improving their leadership skills has resulted in numerous internal promotions from SC roles into administrative or other leadership positions.
25. Communities In Schools Southeast Harris and Brazoria County continue to promote from within the agency.

B.   Findings

The findings outlined below have the potential to negatively impact programming and student outcomes. The findings warrant the attention of the ACE Project Director. Subsequent sections offer recommendations to address each finding. Findings include:

1. **Social, Emotional, Learning**. ACE staff mentioned high SEL needs among students.
2. **Staff Development/Retention**.
   - Observed coaching to empowerment where SC created a climate where part-time staff had the freedom to process through lesson plan and classroom management implementation and delivery errors to determine the best course(s) of action.
   - Programs benefit from new staff and several new leaders.
   - Find creative ways to celebrate ACE staff, namely part-time staff.
3. **Space.** Some programs lack space and as enrollment increases, additional space will be needed to accommodate added students.
4. **Program.**
   - Upticks in physical activity and sports in ACE increase the potential for injury and assumed risk to program.

- Classroom management. Classroom management challenges, especially with friend and family groups observed on some campuses.
- Transition challenges between blocks/activities observed on some campuses.
- Early ACE student pick-up compromises program benefits to students and time-in-program requirements.

5. **Technology**. maintenance issues across campuses that pertain to system updates, password management/access, and replacements.

C. Recommendations

The following recommendations address findings observed during the on-site visits:

1. **SEL**. ACE staff committed to incorporating SEL elements into programming. Recommendations for SEL sessions include:
   - Extend SEL beyond exploring emotions/feelings into conversations with students about addressing issues using resources taught or provided by ACE staff.
   - Provide a list of resources/strategies from SharePoint to accompany journals or SEL pages to identify ways to approach or address – for instance – reactive behaviors with breathing or counting exercises to create separation or to de-escalate a situation.

2. **Staff Recruitment/Development/Retention.**
   - ➢ Recruitment. In addition to using job sites such as Indeed, Monster, LinkedIn, etc., consider the following recruitment recommendations:
     - ACE staff should recruit qualified family members to work for the program. The Evaluator observed several family groups that worked on various campuses. ACE staff should also consider direct recruitment of older siblings, parents, and other family members of parents as these individuals have had direct/indirect program contact and some understanding of ACE's impact on students. There are potentially more family members of ACE staff that would be valued team members.
     - Other employee search efforts might include soliciting volunteers and college students, particularly those attending colleges and universities affiliated with education, psychology, sociology, social work, and organizational psychology departments.
     - Local food banks see considerable traffic and job announcements should be placed at the food bank as well as the Texas Workforce Commission.
   - ➢ Development. Programs benefit from new staff and several new to leadership that require additional support and coaching. Recommendations for staff development include:
     - Recommendations include pairing/assigning veteran and new SCs for mentorship.
     - PD or veteran SC role play crucial conversations with staff to encourage staff to lean into conflict resolution and not retreat from hard talk/coaching opportunities with part-time staff.
     - Encourage new SCs to identify any conflict aversion and talk through those fears/apprehensions with veteran SCs or PD.

- Take a strengths-focused approach to training/coaching to promote buy-in and retention. For example, lead with employ self-reported assessments of strengths, e.g., organization, communication, technology, energy, etc., and ask staff about areas of program that align with their skills/strengths.

  ➢ Retention. Staffing matters should center on retention, as considerable time, energy, and resources are currently allocated to address staffing needs across programs. Constant changes undermine program fluidity and ACE staff-student-family-school day relationships. Recommendations for staff retention include:
    - Find creative ways to celebrate ACE staff, namely part-time staff.
    - As mentioned in the Development section, take a strengths-focused approach to training/coaching to promote buy-in and retention.

3. **Space.** Space issues persist as common in supplemental or out-of-school-time programs.
    - Partner with school-day teachers/staff to use space located near ACE activities to make management/oversight of ACE programs easier.
    - Ask school day about the potential for a portal or designated area that poses a benefit to both ACE and school day such as during testing.
    - Better organize existing space to maximize storage capacity and reduce clutter.

4. **Program.** Program recommendations include:
    - Classroom management. Classroom management challenges, especially with friend and family groups observed on some campuses.
    - Transition challenges between blocks/activities observed on some campuses.
    - Upticks in physical activity and sport in ACE increase the potential for injury and assumed risk to program. Review and evaluate existing liability waivers (LW) and require ACE staff to secure signed liability waivers for all participants. The LW should be included in the program enrollment application to help the agency mitigate liability.
    - Ensure families know/have access to medical screenings
    - Partner with coaches to engage in weight training for ACE participants as a 1) SEL outlet, 2) strength and conditioning in preparation for sport participation, 3) bolster enrollment, and 4) further integrate ACE into the school day since such a huge emphasis is placed on sport in schools.
    - Early ACE student pick-up compromises program benefits to students and time-in-program requirements.

5. **Technology**. Technology recommendations include:
    - Devise a plan for system maintenance across campuses that pertain to system updates, password management/access, and replacements.
    - Evaluator provided grant information to PD and Regional for potential funding opportunities to replace or upgrade technology across campuses/where needed.

These strengths and recommendations were delivered both in written form and in person during fall and spring site visits to the CEO and Project Director. The ACE sites operated in compliance with the

grant requirements, TEA, and the agency's mission. The Evaluator observed highly passionate staff with great relationships with ACE students and their families, school-day faculty, and staff. Remaining sections of this report are outlined as follows: II) Program Overview, III) Impacts to Program, IV) Process Evaluation Plan, V) Outcome Results, VI) Evaluator Information, VII) References, and Appendices with Center-Level Fact Sheets and Executive Summaries, Tables and Figures, Stakeholder Survey Templates, and TEA Quality Assurance Monitoring Reports.

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