
1. Introduction

In October 2014 Independence Charter School (ICS) received a three-year grant from the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program, Cohort 7. The goal of the 21st CCLC program is to provide students in high-poverty communities across the United States the opportunity to participate in academic enrichment and youth development programs designed to enhance their well-being. ICS is a tuition-free, K-8 charter school in Philadelphia that serves an ethnically diverse and economically disadvantaged student population of approximately 815 children. ICS has a nationally recognized global studies program that emphasizes academic excellence and second-language acquisition.

ICS is a school-wide Title I building, with a majority (53%) of students who are economically disadvantaged, 5% who are English language learners (ELL), and 12% who are in special education. The racial/ethnic composition of ICS students is 51% African American, 16% Hispanic, 24% white, 5% Asian, and 5% multi-racial. Objectives of the ICS 21st CCLC Cohort 7 grant include improving academic achievement on local and state assessments in reading, math, and science; improving school attendance; and reducing disciplinary referrals.

ICS has a “Path A” 21st Century program providing programming after school, during the summer, and in the evening for parents. The target student population for the ICS program is those who show the most academic, social, and economic need based on input from building administrators, teachers, and staff. This includes ELL students. The program provides remediation and acceleration in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) utilizing resources from the regular school-day curricula and community partners. Community partners provide services such as enrichment curriculum and activities, tutoring, and volunteer staffing services.

The ICS program uses small-group, interactive STEM activities and one-on-one learning as appropriate to each student. The program also provides time for students to work on homework and school day projects. After-school programming is provided Monday through Friday during the school year for 13 hours per week. Programming during the summer is provided Mondays through Fridays for 20 hours per week. For parents, the ICS 21st Century program offers an English as a second language (ESL) class onsite two nights a week (5 hours total per week) during the school year and one night a week (1 hour/week) during the summer.

ICS signed its contract for 21st Century funding in November 2014 and began its 2014-15 program in December 2014. As a result, ICS was only able to offer 10 days of programming spread over three weeks prior to January 2015. ICS offered a full complement of programming during the rest of the 2014-15 program year: 12 weeks (47 days) during January-March 2015 and 11 weeks (42 days) during April-June 2015.

1 These percentages sum to 101 rather than 100 due to rounding.
ICS was approved to serve 105 students during the 2014-15 program year: 75 elementary school students and 30 middle school students. The program also targeted serving 35 students during summer 2015: 17 elementary school students and 18 middle school students. Summer 2015 is part of the 2015-16 program year, and as such will be addressed in next year’s local evaluation report.

By The Numbers, a Pennsylvania-based consulting firm, was contracted by ICS to be the external evaluator of its 21st CCLC Cohort 7 program. This is our local evaluation report for 2014-2015.

Data for this evaluation report were collected through five avenues. First, we received data on student academic achievement and growth, and student behavior, for individual students in the 21st CCLC program from staff at ICS. Second, we received copies of Quarterly Performance Reports (QPRs) submitted by ICS to PDE during 2014-2015. Third, ICS sent copies to us of responses to parent and staff surveys about the 21st Century program. Fourth, we made two site visits to ICS in November 2014 and May 2015 to meet with program staff and teachers, and (in May 2015) observe after-school 21st CCLC programming. Questions during our site visits focused on program accomplishments, problems and barriers in meeting program goals, what is going well with the program, and lessons learned. Fifth, we communicated via email and phone with program staff during 2014-2015.

This report presents an analysis of data on participating students (section 2), ICS performance on the 21st Century federal performance (GPRA) measures (section 3), and ICS performance on its local performance measures (section 4). This report also includes analyses of student achievement and growth (section 5), student behavior (section 6), and stakeholder feedback (section 7). Conclusions are presented in section 8.

2. Participating Students

ICS was approved to serve 105 students during the 2014-15 program year: 75 elementary school students and 30 middle school students. Data provided by ICS indicate that they served a total of 126 students, defined as students who attended the 21st CCLC program for one day or more during 2014-15. This is 21 (20%) more students than were contracted for. Of the 126 students served, 106 (84%) were elementary school students and 20 (16%) were middle school students. Among the 106 elementary school students served, 13 (12%) were in Kindergarten, eight (8%) were in 1st grade, 16 (15%) were in 2nd grade, nine (8%) were in 3rd grade, 39 (37%) were in 4th grade, and 21 (20%) were in 5th grade. Among the 20 middle school students served, nine (45%) were in 6th grade, nine (45%) were in 7th grade, and two (10%) were in 8th grade.

Data provided by ICS indicate that they had 93 regular participants during the 2014-15 program year, defined as students attending the program for at least 30 days. Of the 93 regular participants, 82 (88%) were elementary school students and 11 (12%) were middle school students. In total, regular participants constituted about three-fourths (74% = 93/126) of all students served and nearly nine-tenths (89% = 93/105) of the contracted number of participants.
Broken down by statutory area, regular participants constituted 77% of all students served at the elementary level and 55% at the middle school level.

Demographic data from the 2015 PSSA exam for students served by the 21st CCLC program in grades 3-8 who took that exam indicate that about two-thirds (64%) were economically disadvantaged and more than two-thirds (70%) were members of an historically underperforming subgroup. About one-fifth (19%) of these students were identified as needing an individualized education program (IEP), excluding those with a gifted individualized education plan (GIEP). One-tenth (10%) of these students were English Language Learners (ELL). In terms of race/ethnicity, about one-half (47%) of these students were identified as black or African-American, about one-third (31%) as Hispanic, about one-eighth (13%) as white, 5% Asian, and 5% multi-racial.²

3. 21st Century Federal Performance (GPRA) Indicators

This section reports the federal Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measures and indicators for ICS’s 21st CCLC program. There are three federal performance measures: (1) Students regularly participating in the program will meet or exceed state and local academic achievement standards in reading and math; (2) Students regularly participating in the program will show improvement in the performance measures of school attendance, classroom performance and/or reduced disciplinary referrals; and (3) Participants in 21st CCLC programs will demonstrate additional positive educational, social, and behavioral changes. Federal performance indicators, targets, and results are shown in Tables 1–3. Some performance indicators are for elementary regular program participants, some are for middle school regular participants, and some are for all regular participants regardless of statutory area.

For performance measure #1, improvement on report cards is defined at the federal as a positive move of half a letter grade or five percentage points or more. Report card grades at ICS for grades K-4 are calculated on an integer 1-4 scale, so that an improvement for federal purposes constitutes a positive move of at least one level (e.g. 2 to 3). For grades 5-8, report card grades at ICS are letter grades ranging from F to A+. Improvement on state assessments, which is also part of performance measure #1, is defined for federal purposes as a positive move of one or more proficiency levels. ICS operates on a trimester system, so fall grades are for the first trimester and spring grades are for the third trimester.

Calculation of performance at the federal level excludes students already achieving at the highest level, so those students with fall report grades of 4 (grades K-4) or A+ (grades 5-8) are excluded from the report card calculations. Similarly, students initially scoring at the advanced proficiency level on the PSSA exam are excluded from those calculations.

Performance indicators for federal measures #2 and #3 were calculated using data from the PPICS Teacher Survey. This survey asks teachers of participating students about their students’ behaviors in ten areas: turning in homework on time, completing homework to the

² These percentages sum to 101 rather than 100 due to rounding.
teacher’s satisfaction, participating in class, volunteering (e.g. for extra credit), attending class regularly, being attentive in class, behaving well in class, academic performance, coming to school motivated to learn, and getting along well with other students. Response options for each area are: did not need to improve, significant improvement, moderate improvement, slight improvement, no change, slight decline, moderate decline, and significant decline.

The PPICS Teacher Survey was completed for 48 of the 93 regular participants (52%) rather than the target of 100% of the regular participants. The Teacher Survey results in this report are based on data for these 48 participants.

Regular participants showed progress on all of the federal performance indicators in Tables 1–3. For example, in Table 1, nearly two-thirds (64%) of regular middle school participants had improvements in their math report card grades from fall 2014 to spring 2015, and nearly two-thirds (64%) had improvements in their reading/English grades from fall 2014 to spring 2015. In Table 2, more than one-half (63%) of regular participants had teacher-reported improvement in homework completion, and more than one-half (56%) of regular participants had teacher-reported improvement in class participation. In Table 3, nearly one-half (46%) of elementary school regular participants had teacher-reported improvement in behaving in class, and nearly one-half (46%) had teacher-reported improvement in getting along with other students.

At the same time, regular participants did not achieve the target percentages associated with the federal performance indicators. In Table 1, the largest gap was for the percentage of elementary school regular participants improving from not proficient to proficient or advanced on the reading PSSA: the target was 45% while the achievement was 0%. In Table 2, the largest gaps were for teacher-reported improvement in class participation by middle school regular participants: the target was 93% while the achievement was 33%. In Table 3, the largest gap was for the percentage of middle school regular participants with teacher-reported improvements in student behavior: the target was 75% while the achievement was 0% (both for behaving in class and for getting along well with other students).

Two factors worked against achievement of federal targets during 2014-2015. First, ICS was not able to begin 21st CCLC programming until early December 2014. As a result, ICS was only able to offer 10 days of programming spread over three weeks prior to January 2015. Changes in performance between fall 2014 and spring 2015 on report card grades and student behavior reflect only about a half year of programming instead of a full year. Similarly, changes in performance levels between 2014 and 2015 on the PSSA exams may have been impacted by the reduced 21st CCLC programming time.
### Table 1. Federal Performance Measure 1 Results: Federal Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Target (%)</th>
<th>Achievement (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of elementary 21st CCLC regular program participants whose mathematics grades improved from fall to spring (GPRA 1.1)</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>26% (= 17/66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of middle or high school 21st CCLC regular program participants whose mathematics grades improved from fall to spring (GPRA 1.2)</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>64% (= 7/11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of all 21st CCLC regular program participants whose mathematics grades improved from fall to spring (GPRA 1.3)</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>31% (= 24/77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of elementary 21st CCLC regular program participants whose reading/English grades improved from fall to spring (GPRA 1.4)</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>23% (= 18/78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of middle or high school 21st CCLC regular program participants whose reading/English grades improved from fall to spring (GPRA 1.5)</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>64% (= 7/11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of all 21st CCLC regular program participants whose reading/English grades improved from fall to spring (GPRA 1.6)</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>28% (= 25/89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of elementary 21st CCLC regular program participants who improve from not proficient to proficient or above in reading on state assessments (PSSA) (GPRA 1.7)</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>0% (= 0/18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of middle/high school 21st CCLC regular program participants who improve from not proficient to proficient or above in mathematics on state assessments (PSSA or Keystone Exam) (GPRA 1.8)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0% (= 0/6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Federal Performance Measure 2 Results: Federal Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Target (%)</th>
<th>Achievement (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of elementary 21st CCLC regular program participants with teacher-reported improvement in homework completion and class participation (of students needing to improve) (GPRA 1.9)</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(= 19/30) Homework Completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(= 18/30) Class Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of middle and high school 21st CCLC program participants with teacher-reported improvement in homework completion and class participation (of students needing to improve) (GPRA 1.10)</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(= 5/8) Homework Completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(= 2/6) Class Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of all 21st CCLC regular program participants with teacher-reported improvement in homework completion and class participation (of students needing to improve) (GPRA 1.11)</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(= 24/38) Homework Completion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(= 20/36) Class Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Performance Indicator</td>
<td>Target (%)</td>
<td>Achievement (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of elementary 21st CCLC participants with teacher-reported improvements in</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>46% ( (= 11/24) ) ( \text{Behaving in Class} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student behavior (of students needing to improve) (GPRA 1.12)</td>
<td></td>
<td>46% ( (= 11/24) ) ( \text{Getting Along Well with Other Students} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of middle and high school 21st CCLC participants with teacher-reported</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0% ( (= 0/3) ) ( \text{Behaving in Class} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improvements in student behavior (of students needing to improve) (GPRA 1.13)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0% ( (= 0/3) ) ( \text{Getting Along Well with Other Students} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of all 21st CCLC participants with teacher-reported improvements in student</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>41% ( (= 11/27) ) ( \text{Behaving in Class} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behavior (of students needing to improve) (GPRA 1.14)</td>
<td></td>
<td>41% ( (= 11/27) ) ( \text{Getting Along Well with Other Students} )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Second, the State Board of Education made significant changes to the 2015 PSSA exams in mathematics and reading (English Language Arts, ELA). The State Board adopted more rigorous PA Core Standards in late 2013, and the 2015 math and reading PSSAs are the first ones that are fully aligned to the new standards. Along with these changes to the content of the exams came changes to the cut scores for classifying a student’s performance as below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced. Like the new exams, the new cut scores were designed to make the PSSA more rigorous. 2014 and 2015 PSSA proficiency rates are not comparable because they are based on two different tests and two different sets of standards.

The changes in the PSSA are reflected in PSSA proficiency rates. At the statewide level in 2014, 69.1% of all students in grades 3–8 taking the reading PSSA scored proficient or advanced. In 2015, that percentage declined to 60.0%. Similarly, at the statewide level in 2014, 73.3% of all students in grades 3–8 taking the math PSSA scored proficient or advanced. In 2015, that percentage dropped to 39.6%.

These results indicate that ICS made progress but generally did not meet federal performance targets for 2014-15. However, the ability to meet these targets was constrained by the fact that ICS was unable to begin 21st Century programming until early December 2014, and by a significant increase in the rigor of the PSSA exam between 2014 and 2015.

4. 21st Century Local Performance Indicators

This section reports the local performance measures and indicators for ICS’s 21st CCLC program. The local performance measures coincide with the federal measures: (1) Students regularly participating in the program will meet or exceed state and local academic achievement standards in reading and math; (2) Students regularly participating in the program will show improvement in the performance measures of school attendance, classroom performance and/or reduced disciplinary referrals; and (3) Participants in 21st CCLC programs will demonstrate additional positive educational, social, and behavioral changes. The local performance indicators, targets, and results are shown in Tables 4-6.

Regular participants showed progress on the four local performance indicators associated with federal measure #1 (Table 4). In particular, 90% of regular participants pretested and posttested with Achieve3000 showed literacy gains, which exceeds the target for this indicator of 50%. Achieve3000 is an online tool designed to accelerate Lexile reading growth and is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. ICS has decided to discontinue use of Achieve3000, and so this performance indicator will need to be modified for the remaining years of the 21st Century grant to reflect whatever new assessment instrument that is adopted by ICS.

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of regular participants showed improvements in academic performance as measured by the Teacher Survey, which is less than the 75% target but still a positive outcome. The two indicators associated with the PSSA are not as positive, although as discussed above these results are confounded by the significant increase in the rigor of the PSSA between 2014 and 2015.
Regular participants also showed progress on the performance indicators associated with federal measure #2 (Table 5). For example, a majority (56%) of regular participants improved their class participation as measured by the Teacher Survey, which is less than the 75% target but still positive. Not as positive is the result that only 18% of regular participants improved their class attendance as measured by the Teacher Survey, as against a target of 75%. Regular participants improved their school attendance by reducing unexcused absences and days tardy, although not by as much as the 60% target in each of these two areas. None (0%) of the regular participants had a disciplinary incident or a suspension during 2013-14, and hence there were no regular participants needing to improve in these areas during 2014-15.

Regular participants generally made good progress on the performance indicators associated with federal measure #3 (Table 6). For example, nearly one-half (47%) of the regular participants improved their motivation to learn as measured by the Teacher Survey, which is less than the 75% target but still positive. Data were not collected during 2014-15 for the local performance indicators associated with parent/guardian participation in ESL classes.

A survey of parents/guardians of regular participants was administered in September 2015 about their views of the 21st CCLC program during 2014-15 and their opinions about progress made by their children in the program during 2014-15. A total of 48 parents/guardians responded to the survey. A majority of these respondents reported an improvement in their child’s attitude toward school (61%) and their child’s behavior at school (57%). These figures are less than the 80% targets for these two indicators but still represent good progress.

A survey of 21st CCLC staff at ICS was administered in September 2015 about their views of the 21st CCLC program during 2014-15. A total of 13 staff members responded. Six of the 13 respondents (46%) indicated that they were very satisfied with the 21st Century program at ICS as a whole. This is less than the target of 70% but still represents reasonable progress. Five of the 13 (38%) responding staff members were somewhat satisfied, and two (15%) were somewhat dissatisfied. None (0%) of the respondents were very dissatisfied. 3 Data were not collected on the staff survey about the adult education ESL program.

These results indicate that ICS generally did well with respect to its local performance indicators that could be calculated based on available data for 2014-15. Regular 21st CCLC participants made significant progress on several measures of academic performance and behavior on the PPICS Teacher Survey. Parents/guardians of regular participants and 21st Century staff at ICS had positive opinions of the 21st CCLC program.

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3 These percentages sum to 99 rather than 100 due to rounding.
### Table 4. Federal Performance Measure 1 Results: Local Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Performance Indicator*</th>
<th>Target (%)</th>
<th>Achievement (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of regularly attending students who improve their reading PSSA performance level from the prior year to the current year</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>26% (= 10/38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of regularly attending students who improve their math PSSA performance level from the prior year to the current year</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>5% (= 2/37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of regularly attending students improving their academic performance as measured by the Teacher Survey</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>63% (= 25/40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of regularly attending students improving in literacy based on pre/post assessments using Achieve3000</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>90% (= 19/21)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Each indicator is calculated for those students needing to improve in that area.
Table 5. Federal Performance Measure 2 Results: Local Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Performance Indicator*</th>
<th>Target (%)</th>
<th>Achievement (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of regularly attending students who improve their school attendance by reducing their number of days of unexcused absences from the prior year to the current year</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>48% (= 26/54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of regularly attending students who improve their school attendance by reducing their number of days tardy from the prior year to the current year</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>28% (= 16/57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of regularly attending students who improve their school behavior by reducing their number of discipline incidents from the prior year to the current year</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>— (0/0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of regularly attending students who improve their school behavior by reducing their number of days suspended from the prior year to the current year</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>— (0/0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of regularly attending students improving their class attendance as measured by the Teacher Survey</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>18% (= 4/22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of regularly attending students improving their class participation as measured by the Teacher Survey</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>56% (= 20/36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of regularly attending students improving their class attentiveness as measured by the Teacher Survey</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>48% (= 16/33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Each indicator is calculated for those students needing to improve in that area.
### Table 6. Federal Performance Measure 3 Results: Local Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Target (%)</th>
<th>Achievement (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of regularly attending students improving their volunteering in class as measured by the Teacher Survey*</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>30% (= 11/37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of regularly attending students improving their motivation to learn as measured by the Teacher Survey*</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>47% (= 15/32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of regularly attending students improving their ability to get along well with others as measured by the Teacher Survey*</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>41% (= 11/27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of students promoted to the next grade</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>100% (= 93/93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of parents/guardians participating in ESL classes who attend at least 5 sessions</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of parents/guardians attending at least 5 ESL sessions who have a comparable pretest and posttest adult assessment (among participants attending at least 5 sessions)</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of parents/guardians attending at least 5 ESL sessions with a comparable pretest and posttest adult assessment who make a gain on the assessment (among participants attending at least 5 sessions and who have a comparable pretest and posttest)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average percentage of attendees of Advisory Board meetings who are parents/guardians of student participants</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>24% (= 4/17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of parents/guardians of regularly attending students reporting an improvement in their child’s attitude toward school*</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>61% (= 23/38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of parents/guardians of regularly attending students reporting an improvement in their child’s behavior at school*</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>57% (= 20/35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of 21st Century program staff at ICS who are “very satisfied” with the after-school, summer, and pre-K programs for 21st Century students</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>46% (= 6/13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of 21st Century program staff at ICS who are “very satisfied” with each of several aspects of the adult education ESL program for 21st Century parents/guardians</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Calculated for those students needing to improve in that area.
5. Student Achievement and Growth

This section reports on results of additional analyses of PSSA exam performance levels, report card grades, and two assessment instruments (Achieve3000, Springboard Collaborative) used by ICS during 2014-15. Most of the analyses here are for regular participants (those attending the 21st CCLC program at least 30 days).

A. PSSA/Keystone Exam Scores

We received 2015 math performance level data for 61 regular participants, which is 97% of the regular participants in grades 3 through 8. For English Language Arts (ELA), we received 2015 performance level data for 60 participants, which is 95% of regular participants in grades 3 through 8.

In math, nearly two-fifths (38%) of the 61 participants with math PSSA data scored below basic; one-third (33%) scored basic; and less than one-third scored proficient or advanced (15% proficient, 15% advanced). For ELA, 15% of the 60 participants with ELA PSSA data scored below basic; over two-fifths (43%) scored basic; and about two-fifths scored proficient or advanced (25% proficient, 17% advanced).

These data illustrate the academic challenges and needs facing 21st CCLC participants at ICS. For the state as a whole, the percentage of students in grades 3–8 scoring proficient or advanced in 2015 was about 40% for math and 60% for English Language Arts. If the grade-by-grade PSSA figures for the state are weighted by the number of 21st CCLC regular participants at ICS in each grade, rather than the total number of students in the state at each grade level, the percentage of students for the state scoring proficient or advanced becomes 42% for math and remains at 60% for English Language Arts.

We assessed the impact of number of days of attendance in the 21st CCLC program during the 2014-15 program year on students’ 2015 PSSA performance levels, controlling for their 2014 performance levels. Results indicate that, among the 51 regular participants with both 2014 and 2015 PSSA math data (grades 4 through 8), those who participated in a greater number of days in the 21st CCLC program did not perform significantly higher on the 2015 PSSA math exam. Similarly, among the 50 regular participants with both 2014 and 2015 PSSA ELA data (grades 4 through 8), those who participated in a greater number of days in the 21st CCLC program did not perform significantly higher on the 2015 PSSA ELA exam.

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4 Percentages do not sum to 100 due to round-off error.
5 The 2014 PSSA performance level is statistically controlled in analyses because higher scoring students one year tend to be the higher scoring students the following year; similarly lower scoring students tend to score low the following year. This tendency is expected to persist in spite of the changes to the 2015 PSSA exam.
6 Ordinal logistic regression was conducted (Model $\chi^2 = 35.949$; df=2; p<0.001; Effect of attendance: coefficient=-0.013; Wald statistic=0.649; df=1; p=0.421).
7 Ordinal logistic regression was conducted (Model $\chi^2 = 60.697$; df=2; p<0.001; Effect of attendance: coefficient=-0.025; Wald statistic=1.665; df=1; p=0.197).
We then examined whether regular participants (grades 4 through 8) had significantly higher 2015 PSSA performance levels than participants with fewer than 30 days of participation in 21st CCLC.8 There was no relationship between being a regular participant and 2015 math PSSA performance level or ELA performance level.9

These results illustrate the academic challenges facing 21st CCLC participants at ICS, with less than one-third (30%) of regular participants scoring proficient or advanced on the 2015 PSSA math exam and about two-fifths (42%) scoring proficient or advanced on the English Language Arts PSSA. While attendance in the 21st CCLC was not related to 2015 PSSA scores, this is the first year of the program at ICS, and the program was not implemented until midway through the school year.

B. Report Card Grades

We received reading and math and reading report card grades for the first trimester (fall) and third trimester (spring) of the 2014-15 school year for 91 of the 93 regular participants (98%).10 For grades K-4, report card grades are on a 1-4 scale. For grades 5-8, letter grades were converted to a numerical scale ranging from 0 (F) to 4.33 (A+).11

For math, grades improved from the first to third trimester for 24 regular participants (26%). For reading, grades improved from the first to third trimester for 25 regular participants (27%). Math grades stayed the same between these two trimesters for 38 participants (42%), while reading grades stayed the same for 46 participants (51%). Math grades declined between the first and third trimesters for 29 participants (32%), while reading grades declined for 20 participants (22%).

Paired sample t-tests were used to determine whether there were statistically significant improvements in grades between the first and third trimesters for regular participants. Results indicate that for regular participants, reading grades did not improve significantly over the course of the year (t=0.615; df=90; p=0.540). The average reading grade was 2.4 during the first trimester and 2.5 during the third trimester. There was a tendency for math grades to decline between the first and third trimesters for regular participants, going from an average of 2.8 to 2.6 during the year (t=-1.722; df=90; p=0.088). However, math grades also declined for participants with less than 30 days of participation, going from an average of 2.6 during the first trimester to 2.4 in the third trimester.12

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8 20 students in grades 4 through 8 participated in fewer than 30 days and had math and ELA PSSA performance levels for the current and previous periods.
9 Ordinal logistic regression analyses was conducted. For math PSSA data: n=71; Model $\chi^2=58.237$; df=2; p<0.001; Effect of attendance: coefficient=0.126; Wald statistic=0.053; df=1; p=0.818. For ELA PSSA data: n=70; Model $\chi^2=79.732$; df=2; p<0.001; Effect of attendance: coefficient=0.519; Wald statistic=0.828; df=1; p=0.363.
10 Math grades were for numbers and operations for grades K-2; problem solving for grades 3 and 4; math for grade 5; and math problem solving for grades 6-8. Reading grades were for reading comprehension for grades K-4, and ELA for grades 5-8.
11 On this scale an A is 4, B is 3, C is 2, and D is 1. A “+” on a letter grade adds 0.33, and a “-” subtracts 0.33.
12 The decline for participants with less than 30 days of participation was not statistically significant, most likely due to the relatively small number of such students (n=32; t=-1.297; df=31; p=0.204).
We assessed the impact of number of days of attendance in the 21st CCLC program during the 2014-15 program year on regular participants’ 2014-15 third trimester grades, controlling for their first trimester grades.\textsuperscript{13} Results indicate that regular students who participated in a greater number of days in the 21st CCLC had significantly higher math grades during the third trimester, controlling for first trimester grades.\textsuperscript{14} However, the relationship between days of attendance and third trimester reading grades was not statistically significant.\textsuperscript{15}

We then examined whether regular participants had significantly higher third trimester grades than participants with fewer than 30 days of participation in 21st CCLC.\textsuperscript{16} However, results were not statistically significant.\textsuperscript{17}

These results indicate that about one-quarter (26\%) of regular participants in the ICS 21st CCLC program during 2014-15 improved their math grades from the first to third trimester. Similarly, 27\% of regular participants during 2014-15 improved their reading grades from the first to third trimester. At the same time, 32\% and 22\% of the regular students saw their math and reading grades, respectively, decline over the school year. Regular participants who participated in a greater number of days in ICS’s 21st CCLC had significantly higher third trimester math grades than those participating in a few number of days, controlling for first trimester grades. The relationship between number of days of participation and third trimester reading grades was not significant for regular participants.

C. Achieve3000 and Springboard Collaborative

Achieve3000 is an online tool designed to accelerate Lexile reading growth and is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Achieve3000 differentiates non-fiction text based on each student’s academic profile and increases text complexity as a student progresses. Achieve3000 comes with benchmark assessments that ICS used during 2014-15 to gauge student progress and inform instruction. As noted above, ICS has decided to discontinue use of Achieve3000, and so this is the only year of the 21st Century grant on which Achieve3000 assessment scores are analyzed.

Springboard Collaborative is a school-year and summer program designed to accelerate progress in reading during the school year and to halt the “summer slide” in reading that often occurs. Springboard Collaborative trains teachers to coach the families of their struggling readers

\textsuperscript{13} First trimester grades are statistically controlled in analyses because students with higher grades in the first trimester tend to have higher grades in the third trimester; similarly, students with lower first trimester grades tend to have lower third trimester grades.
\textsuperscript{14} OLS regression was conducted. For math, model F=26.377; df=2, 88; p<0.001; effect of attendance: coefficient=0.009; t=2.470; p=0.015.
\textsuperscript{15} OLS regression was conducted. For reading, model F=28.623; df=2, 88; p<0.001; effect of attendance: coefficient=0.002; t=0.522; p=0.603.
\textsuperscript{16} 32 students participated in fewer than 30 days and had both first and third trimester grades.
\textsuperscript{17} OLS models controlled for first trimester grades. For math, model F=31.190; df=2, 120; p<0.001; effect of being a regular participant: coefficient=0.123; t=0.779; p=0.438. For reading, model F=40.750; df=2, 120; p<0.001; effect of being a regular participant: coefficient=0.084; t=0.645; p=0.520.
to improve progress during the academic year. In the summer, Springboard Collaborative offers an intensive, five-week summer literacy program for Pre-K through 3rd grade students and their families. Springboard Collaborative comes with an assessment instrument that can be used to gauge student progress in reading.

A total of 21 regular students had pretest and posttest scores on Achieve3000; these students were in grades 3 through 7. On average, 217 days (7.1 months) elapsed between pretest (fall 2014) and posttest (spring 2015) administrations. A total of 22 regular students had pretest and posttest scores on the Springboard Collaborative, with an average of 4.5 months elapsing between the pretest and posttest. Regular students with pretest and posttest administrations of the Springboard Collaborative were in grades K through 4.

For Achieve3000, scores increased for all but two regular participants – that is, scores increased for 90% of the regular participants. Similarly, scores on the Springboard Collaborative increased for 91% of the 22 regular participants with pretest/posttest scores.

Paired sample t-tests indicate that statistically significant gains between pretest and posttest occurred on both assessments for regular participants. On average, the pretest score on Achieve3000 was 524 and the posttest score was 610 for regular participants (t=6.422; df=20; p<0.001). For Springboard Collaborative, the average pretest score was 18 and the average posttest score was 23 (t=7.376; df=21; p<0.001). The relationship between the number of days of participation in the 21st CCLC and posttest scores on these two assessments (controlling for pretest scores) was not examined due to the small number of students with scores on these two assessments.18

Results indicate significant gains occurred on the Achieve3000 and Springboard Collaborative assessment instruments. Nearly all regular students with pretest and posttest scores experienced a gain (90% and 91%, respectively). Moreover, the gains that occurred on Achieve3000 and Springboard Collaborative were statistically significant (p<0.001).

6. Student Behavior

A. Disciplinary Incidents

Data from ICS disciplinary logs indicate that there were no disciplinary infractions among 2014-15 21st CCLC participants during the 2013-14 school year. During the 2014-15 school year, one regular participant (1% of all regular participants) had two disciplinary infractions. None (0%) of the 21st CCLC regular participants received in-school suspensions (ISS), out-of-school suspensions (OSS), or expulsions.

18 Only 7 students with less than 30 days of participation in the 21st CCLC had pretest and posttest scores on Achieve3000 and only 6 students with less than 30 days of participation had pretest/posttest scores on Springboard Collaborative. Due to these small numbers, scores of regular participants are not compared with those of students with less than 30 days of 21st CCLC participation.
These data indicate that the percentage of 21st CCLC participants subject to disciplinary actions is quite low given the at-risk nature of the ICS target population, with only one student (1%) having disciplinary infractions and no in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, or expulsions. This compares very favorably with national figures from the U.S. Department of Education on suspensions and expulsions among at-risk students.19

B. School Day Attendance

We received data by student from ICS on unexcused school day absences and days tardy among 21st CCLC participants. For the 2014-15 school year, the mean number of unexcused absences among the 93 regular participants was 1.6 (approximately 1% of the days in a 175-day school year). The standard deviation was 2.2, the minimum was zero, and the maximum was 11. There were 46 regular participants (49%) who had no unexcused absences, and most (60%) regular participants had either 0 or 1 unexcused absences. On the other hand, there were 9 regular participants (10%) who had 5 days or more of unexcused absences. The data we received on unexcused absences and tardies were for the entire school year; as a result we cannot examine changes between fall 2014 and spring 2015.

The figures on tardies paint a similar picture to the figures on unexcused absences. For the 2014-15 school year, the mean number of days tardy among the 93 regular participants was 4.6 (approximately 3% of the days in a 175-day school year). The standard deviation was 7.4, the minimum was zero, and the maximum was 38. There were 33 regular participants (35%) who had no tardies, and most (54%) regular participants had either 0 or 1 tardies. On the other hand, there were 16 regular participants (17%) who had 10 or more tardies. The Pearson correlation coefficient between the number of unexcused absences during 2014-15 and the number of days tardy during 2014-15 is 0.19 (p=0.064), indicating that there is only a weak tendency for unexcused absences and tardies to be concentrated among the same students.

Out of the 93 regular participants, 78 had data on school day absences for both 2014-15 and 2013-14, and 78 had data on days tardy for both school years. Among these 78 participants, one-third (33%) had fewer absences in 2014-15 than 2013-14, about one-fourth (27%) had more absences in 2014-15 than 2013-14, about one-third (31%) had no absences in either year, and about one-tenth (9%) had the same, non-zero number of absences in both years. A paired t-test indicated no statistically significant difference between the mean number of unexcused absences in 2013-14 (1.8) and 2014-15 (1.7).20

For days tardy, about one-fifth (21%) had fewer tardies in 2014-15 than 2013-14, about one-half (47%) had more tardies in 2014-15 than 2013-14, about one-fourth (27%) had no tardies in either year, and 5% had the same, non-zero number of tardies in both years. A paired t-test indicated a statistically significant increase in the mean number of tardies between 2013-14 (2.2) and 2014-15 (4.6).21

20 t=0.443, df=77, p=0.659 (two-tailed test).
21 t=2.843, df=77, p=0.006 (two-tailed test).
We estimated the Pearson correlation coefficient between the number of unexcused absences and the number of days of participation in the 21st CCLC program during 2014-15. One might expect the correlation coefficient to be negative, if participation in the program leads to better school day attendance, or simply because a student who is absent from school on a given day will have missed out on the opportunity to participate in the 21st CCLC after-school program that day. However, the estimated correlation coefficient is 0.01 and is not statistically different from zero (p=0.907).

C. PPICS Teacher Survey

The PPICS Teacher Survey was completed for 48 of the 93 regular participants (52%) rather than the target of 100% of the regular participants. The PPICS Teacher Survey was administered near the end of the 2014-15 school year. Some results from the PPICS Teacher Survey are discussed above in the Federal Performance Indicators and Local Performance Indicators sections.

As noted above, the PPICS Teacher Survey asks teachers of participating students about their students’ behaviors in ten areas: turning in homework on time, completing homework to the teacher’s satisfaction, participating in class, volunteering (e.g. for extra credit), attending class regularly, being attentive in class, behaving well in class, academic performance, coming to school motivated to learn, and getting along well with other students. Response options for each area are: did not need to improve, significant improvement, moderate improvement, slight improvement, no change, slight decline, moderate decline, and significant decline. Responses other than “did not need to improve” were coded into a 1-7 scale where 7 is significant improvement, 6 is moderate improvement, 5 is slight improvement, 4 is no change, 3 is slight decline, 2 is moderate decline, and 1 is significant decline.

A majority of regular participants were rated as needing to improve in nine of the ten behavioral areas, the exception being attending class regularly, where 46% were rated as needing to improve. The proportion of students rated as needing to improve in the other areas was 71% for turning in homework on time, 79% for completing homework to the teacher’s satisfaction, 77% for participating in class, 77% for volunteering, 69% for being attentive in class, 56% for behaving well in class, 83% for academic performance, 67% for coming to school motivated to learn, and 56% for getting along well with other students.

For those students rated as needing to improve in an area, the majority showed an improvement (i.e. a slight, moderate, or significant improvement) in four of the ten behavioral areas: turning in homework on time (59%), completing homework to the teacher’s satisfaction (63%), participating in class (56%), and academic performance (63%). In five of the ten areas, a majority of those needing to improve showed no change: volunteering (70%), attending class regularly (77%), being attentive in class (52%), behaving in class (56%), and getting along well with other students (52%). There was only one area, turning in homework on time, where more than one-tenth (12%) showed a decline (i.e. a slight, moderate, or significant decline). In the
other nine areas, less than 10% showed a decline. In three areas (participating in class, volunteering, and being attentive in class), there were no students (0%) who showed a decline.

Among the students rated as needing to improve in an area, average student ratings on a 1-7 scale were all between 4 (no change) and 5 (slight improvement): 4.68 for turning in homework on time, 4.79 for completing homework to the teacher’s satisfaction, 4.75 for participating in class, 4.49 for volunteering, 4.23 for attending class regularly, 4.76 for being attentive in class, 4.70 for behaving well in class, 4.80 for academic performance, 4.53 for coming to school motivated to learn, and 4.52 for getting along well with other students.

Analyses were conducted of the association between student ratings on the 1-7 scale and whether the student was a regular participant. There was a tendency for regular participants to have higher ratings than non-regular participants on completing their homework to the teacher’s satisfaction (r=0.263; p=0.092) and participating in class (r=0.286; p=0.074). The association between being a regular participant and ratings in the remaining areas did not tend towards statistical significance.22

These results indicate that a majority of regular participants in ICS’s 21st CCLC program during 2014-15 were rated by their teachers as needing to improve their behavior in nearly all areas. A majority of those rated as needing to improve showed improvements in behavior in four areas. There was only one area, turning homework in on time, where more than one-tenth of regular participants showed a decline in behavior. On average, improvements in behavior were slight rather than moderate or significant.

7. Stakeholder Feedback

A. Parent Survey

A survey of parents/guardians of regular participants was administered in September 2015 about their views of the 21st CCLC program during 2014-15 and their opinions about progress made by their children in the program during 2014-15. A total of 48 parents/guardians responded to the survey.

Parents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the overall 21st CCLC program. Response options were very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, and not satisfied. One-fourth (25%) of the respondents indicated that they were very satisfied and three-fourths (75%) indicated that they were somewhat satisfied. None (0%) of the respondents indicated that they were not satisfied. Parents were also asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the academics and with communication in the 21st CCLC program. For academics, about one-fifth (21%) of the respondents indicated that they were very satisfied and two-thirds (67%) indicated that they were

22 Pearson correlation coefficients were also used to assess the relationship between number of days of participation and student ratings (regular participants only). The absolute value of coefficients for turning homework in on time, volunteering (e.g., for extra credit or more responsibilities), attending class regularly, being attentive in class, behaving in class, academic performance, coming to school motivated to learn, and getting along well with other students ranged from 0.012 to (p=0.943) to 0.188 (p=0.238).
somewhat satisfied. However, one-eighth (13%) were not satisfied. For communication, responses overall were similar: about one-fifth (21%) of the respondents indicated that they were very satisfied, two-thirds (67%) indicated that they were somewhat satisfied, and one-eighth (13%) were not satisfied.\textsuperscript{23}

Parents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with three statements about the 21st CCLC program. Response options were strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The first statement was “The program addressed my child’s specific needs.” About four-tenths (42%) of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, about four-tenths (42%) agreed, and one-sixth (17%) disagreed. No respondents (0%) strongly disagreed. The second statement was “I had opportunities to visit the program.” One-sixth (17%) of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, one-fourth (25%) agreed, three-eighths (38%) disagreed, and about one-fifth (21%) strongly disagreed. The third statement was “The program offered my child a variety of academic and enrichment activities.” One-third (33%) of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, three-eighths (38%) agreed, one-fourth (25%) disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed.\textsuperscript{24}

Parents were asked to indicate whether they thought their child changed during 2014-15 in several academic areas (reading, math, science, social studies, use of technology, and homework completion) and behavioral areas (self-confidence, attitude toward school/learning, attendance at school, and behavior at school). Response options were “did not need to improve,” improved, no change, and declined. For the academic areas, the percentage of parents indicating that their child did not need to improve ranged from 17% to 21%. For each of the behavioral areas, more than 70% of parents indicated that their child did need to improve. Of those rated as needing to improve, a majority of parents in each of the academic and behavioral areas indicated that their child did improve. None (0%) of the respondents thought that their child declined in any academic or behavioral area.

Parents were asked an open-ended question about what they thought was the most positive result of their child’s participation in the 21st Century program during 2014-15. Seventeen parents provided responses. A thematic analysis of the responses was conducted. Sixteen of the 17 respondents mentioned a single theme and one mentioned two themes. Five respondents (29%) mentioned the variety of activities and programming. Four respondents (24%) mentioned that the program provides a safe after-school environment for their child. Three respondents (18%) mentioned something that their child learned or accomplished. For example, one respondent stated that his/her child “developed a desire to read independently.” Two respondents (12%) felt that the 21st Century teachers and staff really care about their child, and two respondents liked the fact that the 21st Century program is free to participating students and parents.

Parents were also asked an open-ended question about ways in which they thought the 21st Century program could improve. Eighteen parents provided responses. A thematic analysis of the responses was conducted; each respondent mentioned a single theme. Seven of the 18

\textsuperscript{23} The percentages for academics and communication sum to 101 rather than 100 due to rounding.

\textsuperscript{24} Percentages for some questions in this paragraph do not sum to 100 due to rounding.
respondents (39%) felt that communication between teachers/administration at ICS and parents could be improved. Five respondents (28%) thought that programming should be expanded in some area. For example, one respondent would like organized sports, and another would like more time devoted to PSSA preparation. Two respondents (11%) thought that students should be placed in smaller groups, and four respondents (22%) felt that current programming should be changed in some other way.

B. Staff Survey and Interviews

A survey of 21st CCLC staff at ICS was administered in September 2015 about their views of the 21st CCLC program during 2014-15. A total of 13 staff members responded. Staff members were asked about their degree of satisfaction with the 21st Century program at ICS as a whole and with five aspects of the program: overall quality of academic enrichment activities; collaboration with other school programs; collaboration with community partners; communication among 21st Century program staff; and communication between 21st Century program staff and school administration. Response options were very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, and very dissatisfied.

Six of the 13 respondents (46%) indicated that they were very satisfied with the 21st Century program at ICS as a whole. Five of the 13 (38%) responding staff members were somewhat satisfied, and two (15%) were somewhat dissatisfied. None (0%) of the respondents were very dissatisfied.25 With respect to particular aspects of the 21st Century program, 12 of the 13 respondents (92%) were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the overall quality of academic enrichment activities and with communication among 21st Century program staff. The remaining respondent in each case was somewhat dissatisfied.

There was greater staff dissatisfaction with other aspects of the program. Nine of the 13 respondents (69%) were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with collaboration with community partners. Seven respondents (54%) were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with communication between 21st Century program staff and school administration, and five respondents (38%) were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with collaboration with other school programs.

Staff members were asked an open-ended question about what they thought are the strengths of the 21st Century program at ICS. All 13 respondents provided an answer. A thematic analysis of the responses was conducted. Ten of the 13 respondents mentioned a single theme and three mentioned more than one theme. Eight respondents (62%) mentioned some aspect of the programming or activities. For example, one respondent mentioned STEM and the Lego Robotics program; another respondent mentioned the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra.

Staff members were also asked an open-ended question about what ways they thought the program could improve. Nine staff members provided responses. A thematic analysis of the responses was conducted; each respondent mentioned a single theme. Three respondents (33%)
mentioned improved communication between teachers and school administration, and two respondents (22%) mentioned additional small group work. Four respondents had some other type of suggestion.

We interviewed the ICS 21st CCLC program leadership staff and teachers about the Cohort 7 program during our May 2015 site visit. Interview topics included progress in improving the academic performance and behavior of participating students, problems or challenges faced in improving academic performance and behavior, what is going well with the project overall, any major challenges facing the project as a whole, and ways in which the project could be improved.

Interviewees stated that the 21st CCLC program is making good progress in improving students’ academic performance. They felt that the program is improving students’ homework by enhancing understanding of the subject matter and improving the students’ self-discipline. They also felt that the individualized attention and small group activities in the 21st Century program are improving student performance in reading. Interviewees indicated that inquiry-based projects have made a difference, such as one in which students are asked to design a paper airplane and a rubber band launcher with the goal of making the plane fly as far as possible.

Interviewees stated that one challenge to improving students’ academic performance is that parents often pick up their children in the afternoon prior to the completion of that afternoon’s 21st Century activities, disrupting the planned activities and causing students to miss out on programming time. Also, some students are inconsistent in their day-to-day attendance, making it difficult to do multi-day projects. Another challenge has been student resistance to a no-cellphone-use policy during 21st Century time. Interviewees stated that this has been a “huge challenge” but that they saw an improvement during the school year in compliance with this policy. At the middle school level, an additional challenge is that some students attending the 21st Century program are not there voluntarily and simply do not want to participate.

Interviewees indicated that student behavior has been good and has generally improved during the school year. They indicated that having students in small groups during much of 21st Century programming time has made it easier to address behavioral issues. Interviewees stated that having a schedule for 21st Century programming time, and sticking to it, has also been helpful in maintaining good student behavior.

Interviewees stated that ICS generally does not suspend students except for serious incidents such as fighting. ICS instead takes the approach of removing a student from a situation that is problematic for the student’s behavior. In case of behavior problems, ICS may also take away a student’s privileges, such as computer access, participation in recess, or the freedom to go unescorted to the restroom. The rationale for this approach is that ICS staff feel that students are better off being in school, and in the 21st Century program, than at home or elsewhere.

Interviewees felt that the overall commitment of the staff is one thing that is going well with the project, particularly the commitment of staff to finding ways to work successfully with students who have already had a full day of school. Interviewees also felt that parental support is something that is going well.
In terms of ways in which the project could be improved, interviewees stated that they are looking forward to the second year of the grant because of the summer programming and because they will be able to do a full school year of programming. Interviewees mentioned that they are partnering with Springboard Collaborative for summer 2015, with the goal of halting the “summer slide” in reading. Interviewees also stated that they would like to work with smaller groups of students during 21st Century time. They indicated that one issue here is day-to-day variability in student 21st Century attendance. On some days the groups are small (e.g. 8 students) whereas on other days there may be 14 or 15 students, which is closer to the size of a classroom than a small group.

C. Advisory Board

The ICS 21st CCLC Advisory Board consists of 17 members, of whom seven are community members, five are students, four are parents, and one is a teacher. The community members come from organizations including the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Walnut Street Theatre, TechGirlz, and Philly Art Center. Three meetings of the Advisory Board were held during 2014-15, on 2/25/2015, 5/20/2015, and 8/31/2015. Three meetings must be held in order to be in compliance with 21st CCLC program requirements, and so ICS met this requirement.

In summary, stakeholder feedback from the parent survey, staff survey, and staff interviews indicate that a majority of these stakeholders are very positive about the ICS 21st CCLC program. The ICS 21st CCLC Advisory Board met three times during 2014-15, thereby being in compliance with program requirements.

8. Conclusions

The findings in this evaluation report indicate several improvements occurred in academic performance by students participating in the ICS 21st CCLC Cohort 7 program. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of middle school regular program participants improved their math grades from fall 2014 to spring 2015, and nearly two-thirds (64%) improved their English grades from fall 2014 to spring 2015. Statistical results indicate that among regular participants, those who participated in the 21st Century program a greater number of days had greater improvements in their spring math grades, controlling for their fall math grades.

The generally low PSSA scores of ICS’s 21st CCLC participants provide evidence of the academic challenges facing 21st CCLC participants at ICS, with less than one-third (30%) of regular participants scoring proficient or advanced on the 2015 PSSA math exam and only about two-fifths (42%) scoring proficient or advanced on the reading/English Language Arts PSSA.

With respect to student behavior, a majority of regular participants in ICS’s 21st CCLC program during 2014-15 were rated by their teachers as needing to improve their behavior in all but one of the areas on the PPICS Teacher Survey. A majority of those rated as needing to
improve showed improvements in behavior in four areas. There was only one area, turning in homework on time, where more than one-tenth showed a decline. In three areas (participating in class, volunteering, and being attentive in class), there were no students who showed a decline. On average, improvements in behavior were slight rather than moderate or significant. Only one regular participant had any disciplinary infractions during 2014-15, and no regular participants had an in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion.

ICS generally did not meet federal performance targets for 2014-15, but the ability to meet these targets was constrained by the fact that ICS was not able to begin its 21st Century project until early December 2014, and by a significant increase in the rigor of the PSSA exam between 2014 and 2015. ICS did well on many of its local performance targets, such as the percentage of regularly attending students improving in literacy based on pre/post assessments using Achieve3000, the percentage of regularly attending students improving their academic performance and behavior as measured by the PPICS Teacher Survey, and the percentage of parents/guardians of regularly attending students reporting an improvement in their child’s attitude toward school.

Stakeholder feedback from the parent survey, staff survey, and staff interviews indicate that a majority of these stakeholders are very positive about the ICS 21st CCLC program. The ICS 21st CCLC Advisory Board met three times during 2014-15, thereby being in compliance with program requirements.

Recommendations for improvement coming out of the parent survey, the staff survey, and staff interviews mostly revolve around communication:

- Improved communication between ICS and parents of participating students. This could include communicating with parents the importance of consistent attendance by their children in the 21st Century program and the importance of attending for the entire after-school period each day, rather than just part of a period. This could also include communicating with parents about opportunities for them to visit and participate (as adult learners or volunteers) in the 21st Century program.

- Improved communication between 21st Century program staff and school administration. The 21st Century program is new to ICS, and ICS was only able to offer the program for about half of the 2014-15 school year. With staff and administration now having more experience with the operation of a 21st Century program, ICS should be better positioned in 2015-16 to foster communication.

- Improved collaboration between ICS and community partners. Here too, with experience from the 2014-15 school year now in hand, ICS should be better positioned to put the resources of community partners to best use in the 21st Century program.