

Gary Comer Youth Center

21st Century Community Learning Centers Evaluation Report: FY11

FY10: Gary Comer College Prep Charter High School

Overview and Program History

This report represents the findings from a year-long evaluation process for the second year of funded 21CCLC programming at Gary Comer College Prep (GCCP). Gary Comer Youth Center (GCYC) was granted 21CCLC funds in FY10 to provide programs for students at GCCP. The 21CCLC program at GCCP is one of three GCYC 21CCLC programs, the other programs are located at GCYC, and at the Paul Revere Elementary School. This is the only high school 21CCLC program that GCYC currently operates although they offer a variety of Youth Development, health, arts, and recreation opportunities at their facility. The GCCP 21CCLC program offered a variety of asset-based Youth Development activities five days per week after school and Saturdays. Examples of 21CCLC activities included: Book Club, Music Classes, College and Career Readiness activities, journalism, and peer tutoring programs among others. These activities explicitly reflected what the students were learning during the school day with fun, enrichment activities. The activities align with the Illinois State Learning Standards in Reading, Math, and Social and Emotional Learning. The GCYC 21CCLC program at GCCP has a strong emphasis on preparing students for college and beyond. There were no changes to programming in the past fiscal year.

Research suggests that high quality Youth Development programs in Out-of-School Time (OST) settings promote opportunities for student reflection, leadership, and in many cases promotes positive developmental outcomes (Benson, 2003). Youth Development programs that take place across multiple contexts (i.e., home, school, and community) are more likely to support positive youth development (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2002). GCYC programs are designed to work across these contexts to support the child and their family and to impact the community. This evaluation describes the quality of program efforts (i.e., inputs and outputs) along with program effects (i.e., participants outcomes).

Recruitment of Students

The 21CCLC program was available to all students at GCCP. Participating students in the GCCP 21CCLC program were recruited by program staff in multiple ways. Primarily, teachers, school personnel, and student advisors were asked to refer students to the program with the greatest need for academic assistance. Students were also able to sign up for activities through open enrollment at the beginning of the school year. Students and their families who could not attend the enrollment opportunity did receive multiple recruitment mailings and a flyer.

Student Enrollment by Site

The GCYC 21CCLC program at GCCP had consistent enrollment (≥ 113) and high retention ($> 75\%$ attendance at more than 30 days) for the two years of this grant. Details on student enrollment and retention are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Summer unduplicated enrollment	0	0			
School yr unduplicated enrollment	138	34			
School year and Summer unduplicated	19	79			
a) Number of students attending < 30 days	48	28			
b) Number of students attending > 30 days	109	85			
Total enrollment	157	113			

Demographic Characteristics Participating Students

Table 2. details the demographic characteristics of 21CCLC student participants at GCCP by participation rate (i.e., students attending less than 30 days versus students attending 30 days or more). This data set represents that the student population was unbalanced for gender, with the majority of the population in FY11 was female. The majority of participants were African American (94% in Yr 2) and receiving free or reduced lunch (87% in Yr 2). These data depict a subsample of the representative population in the surrounding community of Englewood. In Years 1 and 2, there were no students with a disability status in school. This is less than the representative population in the recruitment pool at GCCP. These data are depicted in more detail in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of 21CCLC students by participation rate

	Total student attendees					Participated > 30 days				
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr 4	Yr5	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr 4	Yr5
Enrollment	157	113				109	85			
Male	53	47				36	34			
Female	104	66				73	51			
9	78	29				42	20			
10	68	53				56	41			
11		31					24			
12										
American Indian/Alaska Native										
Asian/Pacific Islander										
Black or African American	145	106				99	80			
Hispanic or Latino	12	7				10	5			
White										
Multiracial										
Do not know										
Limited English Proficiency										
Disability Status (Not LEP)										
Free or Reduced Lunch		98					74			

Student Retention Strategies

Program staff utilized a variety of strategies to promote student retention. The current research suggests that students are more likely to be retained in programs that are youth-centered and promote opportunities for leadership (Deschenes, McDonald, & McLaughlin, 2004). GCYC 21CCLC program staff at GCCP suggest that student participants attended GCCP 21CCLC activities because of the engaging, interest-based programming along with the positive relationships young people enjoyed with high quality staff. The research supports that youth participation rates are related to quality programs and dedicated staff (Durlak, Mahoney, Bohnert, & Parente, 2010). The primary external motivator for retention was increased opportunities for students to apply for summer employment with improved attendance.

Family Engagement

The research suggests that Family Engagement programs in OST settings are successful when staff and parents co-construct meaningful roles for parents to engage on behalf of themselves, other parents, and to advocate for their children (Weiss, Dearing, Mayer, Kreider & McCartney, in press). The 21CCLC staff at GCCP worked to engage parents in a variety of ways. In Year 2, the number of actively involved families increased from 15 to 40. Detailed data on family participation can be found in Table 3. Some examples of family activities included: monthly meetings, special events for and by parents (e.g., Arts Bazaar), parent workshops (e.g., College Financial Aid), and parent hosted community events. GCYC supported GCCP 21CCLC staff attendance at Professional Development opportunities specifically related to Family Engagement.

Table 3.

Family Participants (Units)	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr 4	Yr5
GCCP	15	40			

Program Operations

Staffing

Research suggests that young people reap positive developmental outcomes when they have multiple and ongoing positive relationships with high quality staff (Smith, Peck, Denault, Blazevski, & Akiva, 2010). GCYC supported positive staff-child interactions through low ratios, and opportunities for staff to persist and develop over time.

Staffing Ratio

GCYC 21CCLC program at GCCP has a minimum requirement of 1 staff person to every 15 students.

Staff Training

The management team at GCYC reported that the staff in the 21CCLC program at the GCCP site were well qualified and had attended multiple professional development opportunities. Professional Development opportunities included ISBE trainings, GCYC training, and external convenings (See Objective 6 for further detail).

Staff Retention

There has been moderate attrition of GCYC 21CCLC staff in the past two years at GCCP and staff were available to student participants at multiple times during the week including Saturdays. More details on program hours and data related to program staff are depicted in Tables 4., 5., and 6.

Table 4. Hours of Operation

Hours of Operation – School Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 4
Total Number of Weeks Site is Open	50	42			
Typical Number of Days per Week	6	6			
Typical Number of Hours per Week (school yr)	22	40			
Typical Number of Hours per Week (summer)	25	40			
Days in the Week in Session	6	6			

Table 5. Staffing

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
	Pd	Vol	Pd	Vol	Pd	Vol	Pd	Vol	Pd	Vol
Certified teachers from school of students	10		16							
Center Administrators	3		3							
Youth Development Workers	4		6							
Other non teaching school staff	1		1							
Parents	1									
High School students										
College students	3		1	3						
Other staff (some or no college degree)	2									
Other community members			1	1						
TOTAL	24		32							

Table 6. Staff Retention

Number (n) of staff who departed in the FY	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
21 st Leadership (director, coordinators, managers)	-	1			
21 st CCLC teachers/tutors	1				
Other staff	1	1			
Total	2	2			

Summary

In sum, the GCYC 21CCLC program measures of efforts at GCCP represent high quality inputs and outputs. Student participants were enrolled and retained using best practice activities that promoted equity in the representative population and suggest that the students most in need of academic support were targeted for recruitment. However, the 21CCLC program at GCCP did not include (or monitor) students with disabilities. Retentions strategies reaped high levels of student retention. Similarly, the number of engaged families increased from Year 1 to Year 2 and the described activities engaged

parents as leaders and learners on behalf of themselves and their children. The hours of program operation exceeded 21CCLC program objectives. GCYC hired high quality staff who were mostly retained and able to attend multiple Professional Development opportunities. The following sections describe: the evaluator's methods, findings, and recommendations related to the measures of effect.

Methods

Program Observations: The purpose of the *YPQA* tool is to assess the quality of program offerings in youth development programs (High Scope, 2005). There are many possible uses for the measure. The primary use is to aid youth organizations to meet best practice standards and to indicate potential areas for professional development and to facilitate conversations between constituents about how to improve program offerings. The *YPQA* Form A: Program Offering Items is a sixty-item observation tool organized into four components: I. Safe Environment, II. Supportive Environment, III. Interaction, and IV. Engagement. Each section in the *YPQA* yields three sources of data: (1) Observation notes for each indicator, (2) Individual scores for each indicator in the section, ranked either 1 (low), 3 (middle), or 5, and (3) an item score achieved through adding the scores for each item in the section and then dividing them by the total number of indicators in the section. The average of section scores yields a component score.

Gary Comer Youth Center used the *Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA)* to assess the quality of program offerings. In the third quarter of FY11, an external evaluation team observed program offerings at the GCCP site using the *YPQA* for reporting and ongoing program development purposes. See Appendix A.

Key Opinion Leader Interviews: The evaluator met with key personnel (e.g., school principals) to describe additional perspectives on program quality and youth outcomes. The key opinion leader was asked a series of twelve open-ended questions related specifically to the Illinois State Objectives for the 21CCLC program. See Appendix B.

Satisfaction Surveys: Students and parents were asked to complete a fourteen item survey which solicited information on their satisfaction with the program, their perception of student growth and achievement along with two open-ended questions related to program improvement. See Appendix B.

Collection of Permanent Products: The evaluator worked together with GCYC program leadership to identify and collect reports, flyers, and other documents that describe or maintain the status of the 21CCLC program.

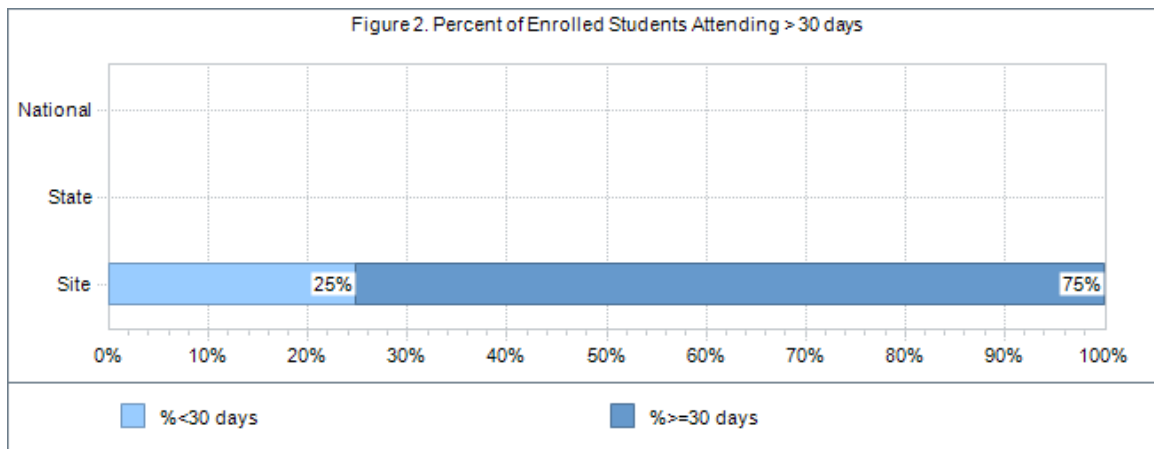
Comparative Data Sets: The evaluator explored relevant data sets (e.g., Census Data) in addition to the valuable information encompassed in the Annual Progress Report (*teacher surveys, grades, test scores and participation rates*).

State Objectives

Objective 1: Participants will demonstrate an increased involvement in school activities and in participating in other subject areas such as technology, arts, music, theater, sports, and other recreational activities.

Through an assessment of *comparative data sets* the evaluator found that student participants in the GCYC 21CCLC program at GCCP attended the program regularly. Chart 1. below depicts 75% of student participants attended the program more than 30 days. The *key opinion leader interview* confirmed that students who attend the 21CCLC program were uniquely committed to their school and their school day experience as a result of their experience in the 21CCLC program. The *survey* of student participants (94%) revealed that students at GCCP enjoyed the program and attended because of the high expectations and support they received from program staff. The *parent survey* confirms that the majority of parents (95%) were satisfied with the program and that almost all respondents (99%) agreed that their child enjoyed attending the 21CCLC program. The *program observations* reveal that the program is well attended and that there were a variety (more than 5) of activities offered at a given time.

Chart 1.



Objective 2: Participants in the 21CCLC will demonstrate increased academic achievement.

A *review of permanent products* revealed that GCYC 21CCLC program activities at GCCP were in alignment with the Illinois Reading and Math Learning Standards. The *key opinion leader interview* confirmed that 21CCLC program staff (many of whom are teachers) were intentional in embedding learning standard goals into the OST activities to compliment what students are learning in the school day. The *program observations* revealed that the after school book club was promoting many of the same skill building activities (i.e., comprehension) the students were working on during the school day but with a reading for pleasure book. Student *survey* results depicted that participants (86%) felt that they received valuable help in completing their school work. The *teacher survey* confirmed that the majority of participating students were showing improvements in homework completion. The *key opinion leader interview* revealed that the enrichment opportunities offered through the 21CCLC program increased students’ academic performance in school and their interest in school in general. The *teacher survey* revealed that participating

students showed moderate improvements in Reading (Range = 21- 32%) and Math (Range = 33% - 43%), however teachers reported significant improvements in behaviors related to academic success (i.e., motivation, and performance). These data are depicted in Chart 2. The *parent survey* confirmed that all respondents (100%) felt their child was more motivated to learn, and that the vast majority (98%) report that their child’s academic performance had improved.

Chart 2.

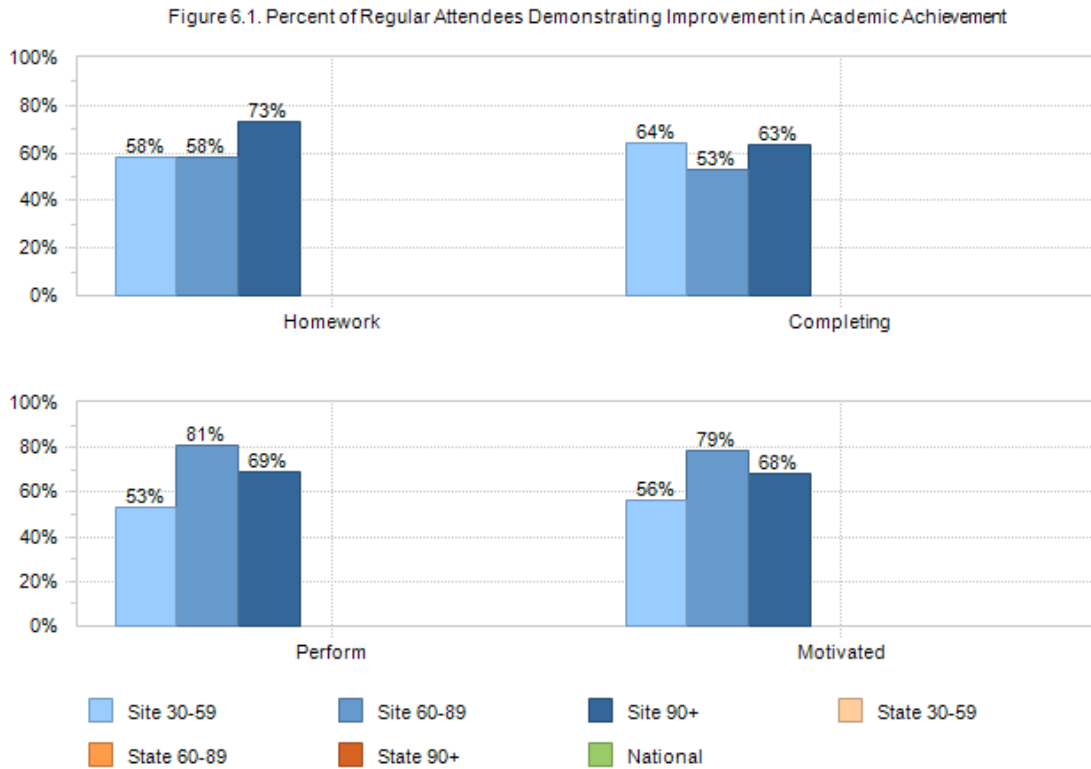


Chart 3.

Regular Attendees	Math	Reading
Increased grade by half or more	31	21
Decreased grade by half or more	42	54
Neither increased nor decreased	12	10

Note: State assessment scores are not included in analysis/PPICS as recommended by AIR. Categories in PPICS system do not allow for input of ACT, PLAN or PSAT scores, the assessments the high school uses for students (charter high school).

Objective 3: Participants in the 21CCLC program will demonstrate social benefits and exhibit behavioral changes.

A review of permanent products revealed that GCYC 21CCLC program activities at GCCP were in alignment with the Illinois Social and Emotional Learning Standards. The *student survey*

confirmed that participating students felt that the 21CCLC program has taught them to: make positive decisions (92%), solve problems (86%), and to make and have positive friendships (92%). The *teacher survey* confirmed that regular attendees (>70%) have demonstrated improved positive behaviors related to school (i.e., volunteering) and with others. The *parent survey* revealed that the majority of respondents (98%) felt their child's behavior has improved as a result of their participation in the program. Further, parents (96%) reported that their child has gained skills in setting and achieving goals as a part of their participation in the 21CCLC program. The *program observations* revealed that program staff were active in promoting activities that engaged student participants in group work and reflection.

Objective 4: The 21CCLC will work toward services that benefit the entire community by including families of participants and collaborating with other agencies and non-profit organizations. Through a *review of permanent products*, the evaluator found that the program staff at the 21CCLC program engaged in a variety of activities with student participants and their families that benefitted the entire community. Some examples of these activities are: Arts Bazaar, Halloween Festival, Harvest Table, Back to School Event, Black Youth Story, Lights on Afterschool, Breakfast of Champions/MLK, Earth Day, Art Showcase, and the Comer Awards. Further, the *review of permanent products* revealed that 90% of students participated in the Service Learning component of the 21CCLC program. Service Learning projects engaged students in identifying the needs and assets of the community and in leading in service projects for the surrounding community. Some examples of Service Learning projects were: assisting at a food bank, local park beautification, creation of a community garden sponsored by CEDA, beach cleanup, organizing holiday and sporting events for the community, building and maintaining a community garden, beautification of neighborhood landscaping, shelter projects and repairing community garages. The *key opinion leader* interview confirmed that the 21CCLC program allowed the school to offer more robust opportunities for the students and the community. He further suggested that the 21CCLC program at GCCP was a valuable way to showcase the many student and staff talents in the school and to share in those talents with the community.

Objective 5: These programs will serve children and community members with the greatest needs for expanded learning opportunities.

Although data on school performance is not publicly available at this time (GCCP is a Noble Street Charter School), GCCP is located in an impoverished area with low performing schools. The surrounding community of Englewood has an unemployment rate that is more than double the national average (24%) and over 18% of individuals are reported as living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Over 90% of participating students in the 21CCLC program are eligible for free and reduced lunch. Further, the surrounding community of Englewood has ongoing problems with violence and gang activity (Chicago Tribune, September, 3rd & 4th, 2011). The *student survey* revealed that participants (93%) do feel safe and supported in the program. The *parent survey* confirms that parent respondents (98%) feel that the 21CCLC program provides a safe place for their child to be after school.

Table 7.

NCLB Status	Family Income Level	Parent Involvement	Attendance/Truancy/ & HS Graduation	Mobility
Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available

Objective 6: The 21CCLC program personnel will participate in professional development training that will enable them to implement an effective program.

A review of permanent products revealed that 21CCLC program staff attended a variety of professional development opportunities in FY11. The staff attended all mandated 21CCLC trainings with ISBE and the national 21CCLC Institute, along with internal opportunities for professional development (e.g., youth voice and choice), and external conferences and trainings including but not limited to: YPQA training, Impact Assessment with Northwestern University, Beyond School Hours, and Boost.

Objective 7: The 21CCLC program projects will use the funding most efficiently by coordinating and collaborating with state and other funding sources, agencies and other community projects to supplement the program, and not supplant the funds, and to eventually become self-sustaining.

The program observations revealed that the program activities were integrated within the other after school offerings without replicating or taking the place of school administered activities. Further, the program observations along with the key opinion leader interview revealed that the school leadership was supportive of the 21CCLC program staff working in tandem with the school to provide quality programs in OST. The review of permanent products revealed that members of the community, GCYC staff, and school personnel were actively involved in the advisory board to ensure coordinated supports for students and their families. The key opinion leader interview revealed that school leadership was not aware of the Advisory Board, although they shared that they felt included in the overall planning of the 21CCLC program and were well informed. The key opinion leader interview further revealed that they felt that the 21CCLC programs alongside other after school activities appeared “seamless” to the student participants and that they felt this was an asset to the program and the school community. A review of permanent products revealed that the 21CCLC program included partnerships with Free Spirit Media, Lark Resources, and the University of Chicago Neighborhood Schools Program.

Limitations of the Data

The data presented here represents the results from multiple sources using multiple methods to ensure high confidence in the reliability of the findings. Attainment of each objective was described by triangulating findings from these sources and methods. However, as is common in the social sciences and education, the data is intrinsically flawed. Primarily, there exists sampling bias. The sample of respondents may also be the group that is most highly satisfied, involved, and impacted by the 21CCLC program. Further, the data was collected in the field by practitioners (with the exception of the Key Opinion Leader Interview and the Program Observations). There then may exist human error in the collection or in the entry of the data. This evaluator did not conduct inter-rater reliability on the program observations using the YPQA, as the purpose was program monitoring and improvement, not scientific research. This method for using the YPQA is, in fact, promoted by the instruments creators as a valid and reliable way to improve and maintain quality programs (High Scope, 2005).

Dissemination of the Data and Findings

The data contained in this report was aggregated and reported on by an external evaluator. Per the request of individuals (i.e., key opinion leaders) involved in this evaluation, the raw data will not be disseminated to the public without prior consent. However, the aggregate data (i.e., survey results) are stored on a web-based system for use in the ongoing tracking and monitoring of program quality at this 21CCLC site. The dissemination of this evaluation is detailed in the following section.

Final Findings and Recommendations

Implementation and Tracking

The evaluator recommends that GCYC create an ongoing Quality Monitoring System to define, implement, and track quality indicators of effort and effect for all of their OST programs that would include an evidence basis along with the best practice objectives set forth by the State of Illinois in accordance with the 21CCLC funding. This practice would include the definition of quality indicators, benchmarks, goals, and ultimately a system to track these data in a web based system.

Overall Recommendations, Action Plans, and Tracking of Improvements

The evaluator found evidence that the GCYC 21CCLC program at GCCP enrolled a generally representative sample of the population of students at GCCP who were in the greatest need of academic support. The retention for the 21CCLC program exceeded expectations for a program in a high school which suggests that it is a high quality program with highly engaged staff (Vandell, Reisner, Pierce, 2007). Staff were retained and engaged in a variety of internal and external professional development opportunities. The GCYC 21CCLC program at GCCP offered a variety of academic enrichment and Youth Development activities after school and on the weekend that align with the Illinois Learning Standards in Reading, Math and Social and Emotional Learning. Families were engaged in a variety of way on behalf of themselves and their children. The data here suggests that student participants contributed to the community and experienced social and academic growth potentially as a result of their participation in the 21CCLC program; and that the climate of the school may have improved. There were mixed findings related to participation and impact of the Advisory Board. These are promising findings for Year 2 of a program in a high school setting.

The evaluator recommends ensuring equal access for all individuals to enroll in the 21CCLC program, including those students with disabilities and/or to be more diligent in supporting and tracking those students with disabilities in the 21CCLC program. The evaluator further recommends formalizing the advisory board and inviting members of school leadership to serve as a part of the committee. Further, the evaluator suggests keeping records and disseminating advisory board minutes to interested parties. Finally, the evaluator recommends sharing this report with program staff and engaging staff in an action planning process for the coming program year.

Dissemination of Evaluation

The evaluator recommends that the findings from this report will be disseminated in multiple steps. Primarily, the 21CCLC program leadership and staff may consider the findings and develop an action plan for program quality improvements in the coming year. That action plan along with this report may then be distributed to constituents with a three to five question response form soliciting feedback on the action plan. The constituents may include but are not limited to: The State of Illinois Board of Education, GCYC board members, program participants and their families, contract staff, and partners. Finally, once the action plan is amended with recommendations from the core constituency, GCYC may choose to post the evaluation and subsequent action plan publicly on their web page.

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Appendix A
External Observation Report

GARY COMER YOUTH CENTER

21st Century Community Learning Center

Evaluation Report

Gary Comer Youth Center Observation Report

Background

A representative from the Gary Comer Youth Center contracted with an external consultant to evaluate the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21CCLC) programs at: Gary Comer Youth Center, Gary Comer College Prep, and at the Paul Revere Elementary School. This 21CCLC evaluation consists of multiple steps yielding results that allow for both triangulation of data sources and methodologies. The methods include: (1) surveys of constituents (i.e. youth, parents, and teachers); (2) interviews with school principals and site leadership; (3) the collection of permanent products and anecdotes; (4) data analysis; and (5) program observations.

Method

The evaluator observed at least one program offering at each of the three program sites: Gary Comer Youth Center, Gary Comer College Prep, and at Paul Revere Elementary School using the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) instrument. The YPQA has both designated use as a self-study instrument and as a rigorous external evaluation tool (High Scope, 2005). The YPQA is described in detail in the following section. For each site, the evaluator completed YPQA Form A. The scores and supporting observation notes are summarized in this report by site and in aggregate. The final sections of this document include recommendations for practice and an action plan conceptualized by the site coordinator for each site. The purpose of this activity and report are to provide a point in time assessment of quality along with the opportunity to give program sites information to reflect upon and to improve practice. A follow up self-evaluation may be conducted for continuous quality improvement mid year of FY12.

Measure

The purpose of the *Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA)* tool is to assess the quality of program offerings in youth development Out-of-School Time programs (High Scope, 2005). The *YPQA* defines quality in terms of fostering a physically safe and emotionally supportive environment, positive interactions with adults and peers, and through youth engagement in their own context (High Scope, 2005). Organizations have many options in using this measure to gauge how their work promotes quality. The *YPQA* is typically used as either an internal assessment tool with and for staff or by an external evaluator. The *YPQA* was appropriate for this evaluation because it is a sound instrument for Positive Youth Development (PYD) programs. Positive Youth Development programs have been traditionally difficult to evaluate because they differ in various constructs and with the youth who are involved. The creators of the *YPQA* have favorably designed the instrument to align with the principles of PYD without holding organizations to accountability standards that vary from program to program. The creators of the *YPQA*

were able to do this in the form of observations and anecdotal notes that go along with a simple scoring mechanism. This response format is ideal for this evaluation because it encourages the observer to describe the observed phenomenon in detail. Although the score is an important indicator of quality; the creators of the *YPQA* stress that the observation notes are critical in gaining an authentic understanding of PYD quality practice (High Scope, 2005).

The *YPQA* is a valid and reliable tool that is specifically geared towards assessing quality of PYD programs (High Scope, 2005). The *YPQA* was ideal for this evaluation because the assessor was able to observe the constructs of safety, support, interaction, and engagement that are foundational to any PYD practice (Pittman et al., 2001). The *YPQA* is a valid tool because the creators, High Scope, validated it using both expert and amateur raters. The tool is discussed in more detail in the next section.

The *YPQA* consists of two separate instruments, Form A: Program Offering Items and Form B: Organizational Items. Form A: Program Offering Items is the observation tool used for this evaluation and is discussed in more detail in the next section.

YPQA, Form A: Program Offering Items

The *YPQA* Form A: Program Offering Items is a sixty-item observation tool organized into four components: I. Safe Environment, II. Supportive Environment, III. Interaction, and IV. Engagement. Each component has three to six sections in each, labeled A-R (High Scope, 2005). Each section in the *YPQA* yields three sources of data: (1) Observation notes for each indicator, (2) Individual scores for each indicator in the section, ranked either 1 (low), 3 (middle), or 5 (high), and (3) an item score achieved through adding the scores for each item in the section and then dividing them by the total number of indicators in the section. The average of section scores yield the component score. There is no overall or total score for the entire Form A.

The observation portion of the measure takes approximately two hours to complete with written anecdotes on indicator prompts organized in the four components listed above. Each score is an indicator about the phenomenon being observed. For example, in Component II, Supportive Environment, the Section II-F prompt is "Staff provide a welcoming atmosphere." The scoring is as follows for one of the three indicators in this section: Score = 1 (low) is, "During activities, staff mainly use a negative tone of voice and disrespectful language". Score = 3 (middle) is, "During activities, staff sometimes use a negative tone of voice and disrespectful language and sometimes use a warm tone of voice and respectful language." Score = 5 (high) is, "During activities, staff mainly use a warm tone of voice and respectful language." (High Scope, 2005).

The creators of the *YPQA* recommend that the observer completes the note section of the form first and then sits down and completes the scoring afterwards with the notes as reference (High Scope, 2005). The observers score (1, 3 or 5) each prompt. The scores for the indicators are then averaged for each Section and Component to provide both a Section

score (A-R), a Component Score (I-IV) (High Scope, 2005).The evaluator suggests that the notes from the YPQA Form A support a description of quality of the three 21CCLC sites along with other data sources.

Gary Comer Youth Center 21CCLC Aggregate Scores

Component	GCYC	GCCP	PRES	Avg Org Score
Safe Environment	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.6
Supportive Environment	3.5	4.4	4.3	4.1
Interactions	2.5	3.4	4.2	3.4
Engagement	2.2	3.1	1.8	2.4

Summary Findings

The findings in these site observation reports suggest that; where programs provide a safe and supportive environment, there are some opportunities for positive interactions and engagement. Where safe and supportive environments are not present there are understandably lower scores on interactions and engagement. Since these constructs are hierarchical, this only stands to reason. With few exceptions, the emotional climate of programs were reported to be safe and physically appropriate for programs. Interactions scores varied greatly between settings but mostly demonstrated positive respectful interactions amongst staff and youth and between youth. Engagement scores were the lowest and indeed this area is the most challenging to implement especially without a strong foundation of safety and respect among individuals in a setting. Where engagement scores were moderate to high, observers reported that some youth had opportunities for choice and reflection.

Recommendations

These recommendations represent a shared responsibility of GCYC, site coordinators, and potentially the school administration to promote ongoing quality practice in alignment with best practice and core safety requirements.

Ensure all programs have:

- Safety equipment and procedures in program space.
- Agreements with the school and plans for ensuring the cleanliness of program space.
- Standards regarding greeting of children and youth, ice breakers, and group work opportunities.
- Develop youth-centered conflict resolution practices that engage children in the reflection, description and potential solution when conflicts arise before rendering consequences.

- Opportunities for children and youth to engage in meaningful activities where there exists choice, partnership with adults and scaffolded leadership opportunities and reflection.

Action Plan

- Distribute present observation report to site coordinators to facilitate a process by which action plans are developed for each site.
- Determine where GCYC may be of support in sustaining and improving quality based upon the action plans described by site coordinators.
- Conduct a follow up self-evaluation.

Results by Site

Site: Gary Comer Youth Center

YPQA Scores

Item	Scores
Safe Environment	
Psychological and emotional safety is promoted	5
The physical environment is safe and free of health hazards	5
Appropriate emergency procedures and supplies are present	3.8
Program space and furniture accommodate activities offered	5
Healthy food and drinks are provided	4.3
Safe Environment subscore	4.6
Supportive Environment	
Staff provide a welcoming atmosphere	4.3
Session flow is planned, presented, and paced for youth	4.2
Activities support active engagement	2.5
Staff support youth in building new skills	2
Staff support youth with encouragement	3.6
Staff use youth-centered approaches to reframe conflict	4.5
Supportive Environment subscore	3.5
Interaction	
Youth have opportunities to develop a sense of belonging	3
Youth have opportunities to participate in small groups	1
Youth have opportunities to act as group facilitators and mentors	3
Youth have opportunities to partner with adults	3
Interaction subscore	2.5
Engagement	
Youth have opportunities to make goals and set plans	2
Youth have opportunities to make goals based upon their interests	3
Youth have opportunities to reflect	1.5
Engagement subscore	2.2

Summary Findings

Safe Environment

The evaluator observed that the emotional climate of the program is unbiased and emotionally safe. The evaluator observed that the program space is physically safe and free of hazards. She further reports that although safety equipment and procedures may exist in the building, they are not in the program space nor can any staff locate them. The evaluator reports that program space and furniture are appropriate for activities and that a healthy meal is provided to all young people.

Supportive Environment

The evaluator observed that while youth are spoken to in a consistently warm tone, not all youth are greeted at the door. The evaluator observed that the planned activities are clearly communicated and start on time, however there was not enough time to complete the activity and there was no transition time between activities. The observer notes that not all youth understand directions the first time, and that the activities appear routine. Some youth appear actively engaged while others do not. Observers report that activities do support active engagement for some youth through skill building activities but that they do not lead to tangible results. Few activities offer opportunities for youth to deal with abstract concepts and/or foster reflective communication. There are no opportunities for youth to engage in opportunities to try new things. The evaluator reports that staff are actively engaged with youth during the entire program offering. Staff support youth contributions with subjective comments such as, "Good job" and staff sometimes use open-ended questions. The evaluator notes that staff report that they reframe conflict in a positive manner and consistently follow up with youth after a conflict. The evaluator did not observe any conflict.

Interactions

The evaluator reports that youth have informal ways of getting to know each other and to reflect but not through formal icebreakers. This is evidenced by young people's familiarity with each other and the program in most cases. There are few opportunities for small group work and little or no opportunities for youth to facilitate or be mentors.

Engagement

Although expectations are made clear by the adult leader; youth have few opportunities to partner with adults. According to staff, some youth are given the opportunity to support the planning of activities and are given choices in their activity participation. The evaluator did not observe opportunities for youth to reflect and provide feedback on their contribution and the program activity.

Recommendations

In sum, the evaluator proposes the following activities to continue quality program delivery at the point of service. The evaluator proposes that the action plan created by the program leadership, staff, and with the input of young people to be used to improve program delivery.

- Arrange for safety equipment and posted procedures to be available in the program room(s) and provide training for all staff, volunteers and participants on safety procedures.
- Organize the program day so youth are greeted at the door and allow for transition times.
- Leadership opportunities are integral at this age. Be cognizant to provide young people with meaningful scaffolded partnering, leadership, and mentoring opportunities. Doing this in small groups helps make this task manageable for young people.
- Engage youth in individual goal setting within the context of programs and across their program experience.
- Offer ongoing and meaningful opportunities for structured and creative reflection.

Action Plan

To be completed by the GCYC program team.

Results by Site

Site: Gary Comer College Prep

YPQA Scores

Item	Scores
Safe Environment	
Psychological and emotional safety is promoted	5
The physical environment is safe and free of health hazards	5
Appropriate emergency procedures and supplies are present	3.6
Program space and furniture accommodate activities offered	5
Healthy food and drinks are provided	4.3
Safe Environment subscore	4.6
Supportive Environment	
Staff provide a welcoming atmosphere	4.3
Session flow is planned, presented, and paced for youth	5
Activities support active engagement	3
Staff support youth in building new skills	5
Staff support youth with encouragement	4.3
Staff use youth-centered approaches to reframe conflict	5
Supportive Environment subscore	4.4
Interaction	
Youth have opportunities to develop a sense of belonging	2.8
Youth have opportunities to participate in small groups	3.6
Youth have opportunities to act as group facilitators and mentors	3
Youth have opportunities to partner with adults	4
Interaction subscore	3.4
Engagement	
Youth have opportunities to make goals and set plans	3
Youth have opportunities to make goals based upon their interests	4
Youth have opportunities to reflect	2.3
Engagement subscore	3.1

Summary Findings

Safe Environment

The evaluator reports that the emotional climate of the program is unbiased and safe. The evaluator further reports that the physical space is safe and free of hazards and has appropriate safety equipment. The evaluator observed that although safety procedures may exist in the building, they are not in the program space nor could any staff identify the location. The evaluator observed that the program space and furniture are sufficient for activities and the program staff report that snack is provided although the evaluator did not observe this.

Supportive Environment

The evaluator observed that youth are spoken to in a warm tone and that staff make consistent eye contact. All youth are greeted at the door. The evaluator reports that the planned activities are clearly communicated by staff and start on time. The evaluator observed that activities appear routine. All youth appear actively engaged. The evaluator observed that activities support active engagement through skill building activities that lead to tangible results. Some activities offer opportunities for youth to deal with abstract concepts and/or foster reflective communication. Youth engage in opportunities to try new things. The evaluator reports that staff support youth with specific and guided encouragement but there is limited use of asking open-ended questions.

Interactions

Youth have informal ways of knowing each other. This is evidenced by young people's familiarity with each other and the program in most cases. There is no observed sense of belonging to a 21CCLC program. There are some opportunities for small group work and each group has a defined purpose. There is some opportunity for youth to lead a group, but there are little or no opportunities for youth to facilitate or be mentors. However youth do have informal opportunities to present. Staff consistently set clear guidelines, but do not share control of the group with youth.

Engagement

Although expectations are made clear by the adult leader; youth have few opportunities to partner with adults. Some youth are given some opportunity to support that planning of activities and are given choices in their activity participation. While some youth are given opportunities to reflect and provide feedback on their contribution and the program activity, some are not.

Recommendations

In sum, the evaluator proposes the following activities to continue quality program delivery at the point of service. The evaluator proposes that the action plan created by the program leadership, staff and with the input of youth to be used to improve program delivery.

- Post procedures in the program room(s) and provide training for all staff, volunteers and participants on safety procedures.
- Organize the program day so youth are greeted at the door.
- Leadership opportunities are integral at this age. Be cognizant to provide young people with meaningful scaffolded partnering, leadership, and mentoring opportunities. Doing this in small groups helps make this task manageable for young people.
- Engage youth in individual goal setting within the context of programs and across their program experience.
- Offer ongoing and meaningful opportunities for structured and creative reflection.

Action Plan

To be completed by the GCCP program team.

Results by Site

Site: Paul Revere Elementary School

YPQA Scores

Item	Scores
Safe Environment	
Psychological and emotional safety is promoted	5
The physical environment is safe and free of health hazards	4.5
Appropriate emergency procedures and supplies are present	4
Program space and furniture accommodate activities offered	5
Healthy food and drinks are provided	5
Safe Environment subscore	4.7
Supportive Environment	
Staff provide a welcoming atmosphere	4.3
Session flow is planned, presented, and paced for youth	5
Activities support active engagement	4.5
Staff support youth in building new skills	5
Staff support youth with encouragement	4.3
Staff use youth-centered approaches to reframe conflict	2.5
Supportive Environment subscore	4.3
Interaction	
Youth have opportunities to develop a sense of belonging	5
Youth have opportunities to participate in small groups	4.3
Youth have opportunities to act as group facilitators and mentors	3.6
Youth have opportunities to partner with adults	4
Interaction subscore	4.2
Engagement	
Youth have opportunities to make goals and set plans	1
Youth have opportunities to make goals based upon their interests	2
Youth have opportunities to reflect	2.3
Engagement subscore	1.8

Summary Findings

Safe Environment

The program evaluator observed that the emotional climate of the program is unbiased and safe. She further reports that the physical space is safe and free of hazards although some of the space it is not clean. The evaluator further reports that although safety equipment and procedures exist in the building, they are not in all of the program spaces.

The evaluator observed that program space and furniture are sufficient for activities and that a healthy meal is provided

Supportive Environment

The evaluator observed that some staff speak to youth in a warm tone and make consistent eye contact while others do not. The evaluator observed two staff greeting youth at the door while others did not. The evaluator observed that the planned activities are clearly communicated and start on time. The evaluator notes that all youth understand directions the first time, and that activities appear routine. Youth appear actively engaged primarily during activity time but also during academic enrichment time. The evaluator observed that activities support active engagement through skill building activities that lead to tangible results. However, few activities offer opportunities for youth to deal with abstract concepts and/or foster reflective communication. Youth engage in opportunities to try new things. The evaluator reports that most observed staff support youth with specific and guided encouragement and by asking open-ended questions. The evaluator reports that although staff reframe conflict in a positive manner and consistently follow up there is little youth input in resolving conflict.

Interactions

The evaluator observed that youth have multiple ways to develop a sense of belonging in the program through icebreakers, and in showcases. This is evidenced by young people's familiarity with each other and the program in most cases. There are some opportunities for small group work and little or no opportunities for youth to facilitate or be mentors.

Engagement

Although expectations are made clear by the adult leader; youth have few opportunities to partner with adults. Few youth are given opportunities to support the planning of activities nor are they given choices in their activity participation. There were no observed instances of youth being given opportunities to reflect and/or to provide feedback on their contribution and the program activity.

Recommendations

In sum, the evaluator proposes the following activities to continue quality program delivery at the point of service. The evaluator proposes that the action plan created by the program leadership, staff and with youth and parent input to be used to improve program delivery.

- Address the school regarding the cleanliness of the rooms and/or make alternate arrangement to get the room cleaned.
- Arrange for safety equipment to be available in each of the program rooms.
- Organize the program day so all youth are greeted at the door.

- Engage children in the reflection, description and potential solution when conflicts arise before rendering consequences.
- Although adult assisted leadership is appropriate for this age group, be cognizant to provide children with meaningful scaffolded partnering, leadership, and mentoring opportunities.
- Engage children in planning of program activities within the required constructs of the program day and allow for choices within those activities.
- Offer ongoing and meaningful opportunities for structured and creative reflection.

Action Plan

To be completed by the PRES program team.

Appendix B
Survey and Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol

Purpose

Gary Comer Youth Center believes in the value of their partnerships with schools to implement high quality 21CCLC programs. As a part of this ongoing evaluation, the evaluator interviewed two school principals from Gary Comer College Prep and from Paul Revere Elementary School along with the Program Director from Gary Comer Youth Centers to provide a meaningful insight into how well GCYC 21CCLC programs were meeting the statewide objectives.

Method

The external evaluator interviewed each of the three leaders individually on three separate occasions. The interviews ranged from twenty-eight to fifty-five minutes long and consisted of eight open ended questions. The evaluator took extensive notes during the interviews and asked follow up or probing questions where appropriate. The summaries of the interviews are reported in aggregate to protect the confidentiality of interview participants.

Questions

1. Can you tell me how the 21CCLC program has impacted student participation in other positive experiences?
2. Can you tell me how the 21CCLC program has impacted student academic performance?
3. Do you have any examples?
4. Can you share with me any observations you have of student improvement in behavior(s)?
5. Do you have any examples?
6. How has the 21CCLC program affected the school community (alt climate)?
7. How has the 21CCLC program worked to involve families?
8. How is the Advisory Board going?
9. What should be on the Agenda for the Advisory Board next year?
10. Tell me about the coordination between the 21CCLC program and other OST programs.
11. As you may already know this program is funded through (year). Do you have any suggested strategies for sustainability?



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HOME OF THE
SOUTH SHORE
DRILL TEAM

Participant Survey
21st Century Community Learning Center
Gary Comer College Prep/Gary Comer Youth Center
Funded by the Illinois State Board of Education

Please respond to the following questions about your experience in the after- school program.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I like coming to the program.	4	3	2	1
2. I feel safe during the program.	4	3	2	1
3. The staff expect me to do my best.	4	3	2	1
4. Staff care about what happens to me.	4	3	2	1
5. I am able to get the help that I need with school work.	4	3	2	1
6. It is important for me to get good grades.	4	3	2	1
7. I have learned how to solve problems.	4	3	2	1
8. I have learned how to make positive decisions.	4	3	2	1
9. I feel good about my relationships and friendships.	4	3	2	1
10. I get chances to be a leader in the program.	4	3	2	1
11. I have learned about different ways to exercise and stay healthy.	4	3	2	1
12. I have learned about technology.	4	3	2	1
13. I have learned about the arts.	4	3	2	1

What do you like best about the afterschool program?

What is one thing you would improve upon?

What activities would you like to do in the program?



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DRILL TEAM

Parent/Guardian Survey
 21st Century Community Learning Center
 Gary Comer College Prep/Gary Comer Youth Center
 Funded by the Illinois State Board of Education

Please respond to the following questions in relation to your child’s experience in their after- school program.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The after-school program offers a safe place for my child to go.	4	3	2	1
2. My child enjoys the after-school program.	4	3	2	1
3. My child completes his/her homework at the program.	4	3	2	1
4. My child is learning to set goals for him/herself.	4	3	2	1
5. My child looks forward to going to school.	4	3	2	1
6. My child is motivated to learn.	4	3	2	1
7. My child’s academic performance has maintained or improved.	4	3	2	1
8. My child’s behavior has maintained or improved since joining the program.	4	3	2	1
9. The staff at the after-school program communicate information to me.	4	3	2	1
10. The program hours fit my needs.	4	3	2	1
11. I am satisfied with the after-school program.	4	3	2	1
12. I would recommend this program to other parents.	4	3	2	1

What do you like best about the afterschool program?

What is one thing you would improve upon?

If you would like further information on the program or would like to participate in family events, please contact Dot Benford at 773.358.4100 or visit www.gcyhome.org.

Thank you.