Summary of Results from the 21st CCLC Center Survey

TO WHAT EXTENT ARE 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS ENGAGING IN PRACTICES SUPPORTIVE OF MORE INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY?

For 25 years, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program has provided afterschool and summer enrichment and learning opportunities to millions of youth who reside in communities that experience poverty. While *community* is a formal part of the program's name, the degree to which 21st CCLC–funded programs engage more broadly in their school and neighborhood varies substantially from one program to the next.

In 2021, the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®), with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, initiated a 3-year study to explore how 21st CCLC programs are working with other school- and community-based programs to help create more **integrated service delivery systems** for students and families that experience poverty. The primary goal of the study is to identify promising approaches that 21st CCLC programs have engaged in to help create and support such integrated service delivery systems that other 21st CCLC grantees can potentially replicate.

Most afterschool and summer programs funded by 21st CCLC grants are located in public schools[i]. By being part of schools, 21st CCLC programs have the opportunity to coordinate the afterschool and summer learning activities they provide with other school-based supports and opportunities. In addition, the majority of 21st CCLC programs also work with partner

With funding from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) is conducting the **21st CCLC Integrated Service Delivery Study,** *a 3-year project designed to:*

Identify 21st CCLC programs that are integral parts of broader systems characterized by the coordination of multiple programs, activities, and services

Document strategies and approaches that support the coordination and integration of services; and

Explore how students and families may benefit from integrated and coordinated service delivery

AIR is conducting the study in collaboration with state education agencies in the states of Illinois, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and Washington. This brief summarizes early findings from the study based on a series of interviews completed in the fall of 2022 with 21st CCLC project directors and site coordinators associated with 30 centers in the five states enrolled in the study.

agencies from the broader community to enhance program offerings and provide students and families access to important services to promote health, well-being, and economic stability. In this sense, 21st CCLC programs have the opportunity to be part of more integrated service delivery systems bringing together school- and community-level resources to serve students and families in a more holistic and coordinated fashion.

As part of the study, AIR surveyed 21st CCLC programs in the five states enrolled in the study: Illinois, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and Washington.[1] The survey questions covered the following areas:

Program objectives and activities

Coordination efforts

Alignment to other initiatives

Presence and role of advisory committees

How centers **assess and track** needs

Changes to programming in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

The survey was the first data collection activity undertaken by the AIR research team as part of the **Integrated Service Delivery Study,** and we utilized it to guide the selection of a sample of programs, which the AIR team interviewed in the fall of 2022 and later visited a portion of these programs in the spring and summer of 2023.

In this brief, we summarize results from the survey that relate to efforts by 21st CCLC programs to better understand youth and family needs, work with the schools they serve to help coordinate activities and services, and develop partnerships to expand opportunities and supports for students and families. We also highlight the extent to which survey respondents adopted strategies that may help in the coordination of services and supports for students and families.

In the sections that follow, we highlight key results from the center survey as they relate to integrated service delivery. We start by providing a summary describing program efforts to conduct **needs assessment,** followed by an examination of **programming changes** and new efforts made by centers to **coordinate across programs.** We then summarize findings of how 21st CCLC–funded programs connect to systems that support the provision of **wraparound services** to students and families as well as the role of **advisory committees** in supporting coordination efforts.
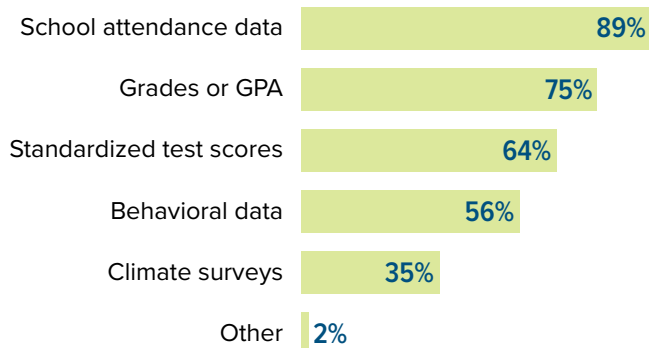
NEEDS ASSESSMENT

According to the federal statute authorizing the program, 21st CCLC–funded programs should provide academic enrichment offerings to participating students to prepare them to meet state academic standards and also provide other offerings to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students (Title IV, Part B of the ESEA, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Within this overall framework, **21st CCLC** programs are tasked with determining what types of afterschool and summer learning activities they are going to provide to support the students they serve with experiences that support their overall learning and development.

One common approach to informing the design of a given 21st CCLC program is to conduct a **needs assessment. Based on survey responses, 70% of centers completed a needs assessment to help inform the types of programming provided by the 21st CCLC program.** As shown in Exhibits 1–3, centers rely on a variety of data sources when completing a needs assessment, including school-day administrative data about students (Exhibit 1), surveys and focus groups involving a variety of school stakeholders (Exhibit 2), and other types of data sources (Exhibit 3). Several of these data sources also overlap with data required as part of the federal reporting process conducted through the 21APR data collection system.

As shown in Exhibit 1, 21st CCLC programs reported relying on a variety of administrative data associated with the school day when conducting needs assessments, particularly data on school attendance, grades, standardized test scores, and student behaviors.

21st CCLC Program Needs Assessment:
Use of School Administrative Data

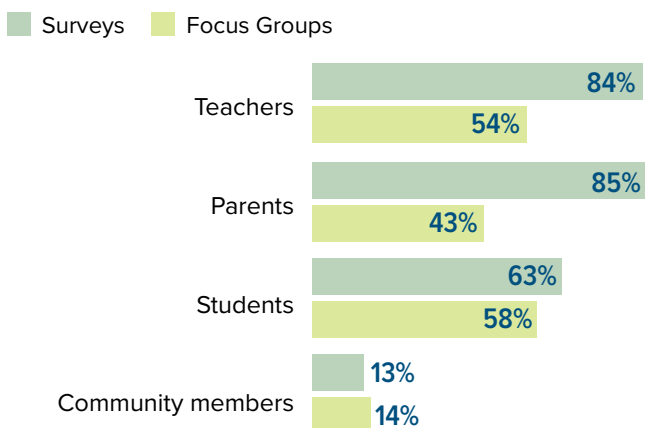|	
School attendance data	89%
Grades or GPA	75%
Standardized test scores	64%
Behavioral data	56%
Climate surveys	35%
Other	2%

Note: 21st CCLC = 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Data in this exhibit are from the 21st CCLC Integrated Service Delivery Survey, 142 responses.

As shown in Exhibit 2, 21st CCLC programs commonly collect needs assessment–related surveys from teachers, parents, and students, while they usually conduct focus groups with students and teachers. In addition, 21st CCLC programs commonly reported developing an inventory of existing programs and opportunities within the school or center, using observations of existing programming to better understand student needs, and engaging in discussions with community partners in the needs assessment process (Exhibit 3).
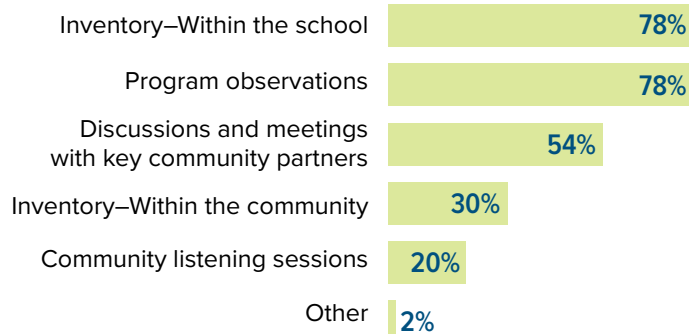
21st CCLC Program Needs Assessment:
Use of Surveys and Focus Groups

Surveys   Focus Groups

Teachers (Surveys)	84%
Teachers (Focus Groups)	54%
Parents (Surveys)	85%
Parents (Focus Groups)	43%
Students (Surveys)	63%
Students (Focus Groups)	58%
Community members (Surveys)	13%
Community members (Focus Groups)	14%

Note: 21st CCLC = 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Data in this exhibit are from the 21st CCLC Integrated Service Delivery Survey, 142 responses.

21st CCLC Program Needs Assessment:
Use of Other Approaches

Inventory–Within the school	78%
Program observations	78%
Discussions and meetings with key community partners	54%
Inventory–Within the community	30%
Community listening sessions	20%
Other	2%

Note: 21st CCLC = 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Data in this exhibit are from the 21st CCLC Integrated Service Delivery Survey, 142 responses.

Given the focus of the **Integrated Service Delivery Study,** it is notable that a relatively small number of surveyed centers reported conducting surveys or focus groups with community members (13% and 14%, respectively; see Exhibit 2) or conducting community listening sessions (20% of respondents; see Exhibit 3) as part of the needs assessment process.

In the next section of this brief, we outline findings on how centers have tried to pivot to better support the individual needs of students and families resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, leading 21st CCLC programs to adopt practices that support further coordination of services and activities.
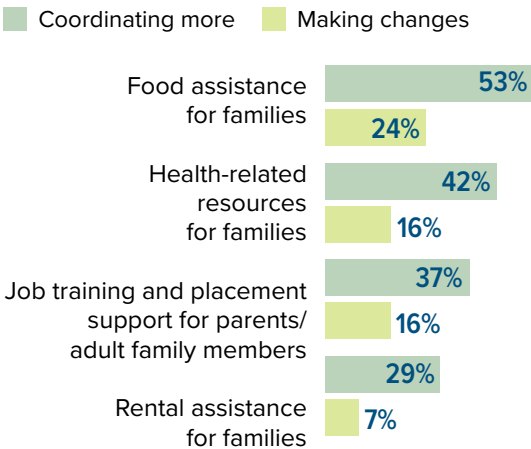
CHANGES TO PROGRAMMING AND COORDINATION EFFORTS

While the core component of 21st CCLC programming is the provision of group after-school and summer activities for students, we also wanted to explore how programs were attempting to address individual student and family needs exacerbated by the pandemic through changes to programming and coordination with other social service providers. For example, anywhere from a third to half of programs completing the survey reported coordinating more with other programs to address a broader set of student and family needs commonly addressed by the larger social service, workforce development, and health care systems, including in the areas of food and rental assistance, job training and placement support, and health-related resources (see Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4

Areas Where 21st CCLCs Reported Coordinating More with Other Programs or Making Changes to Internal Program Operations to Address Student and Family Needs
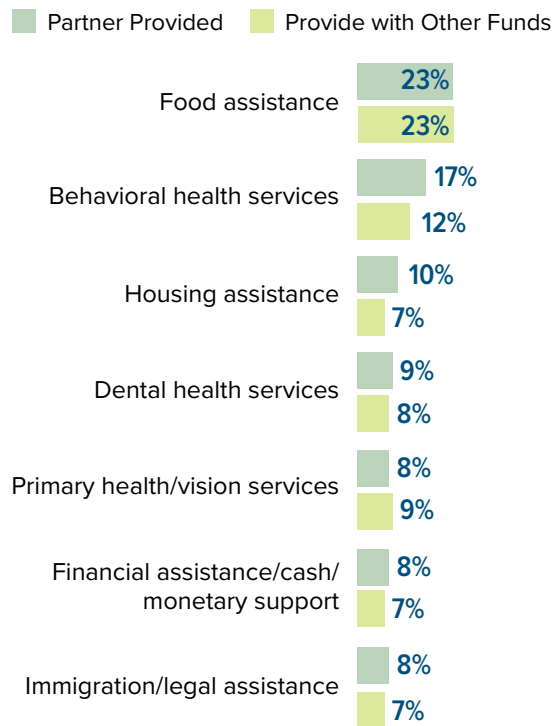
Legend: ■ Coordinating more ■ Making changes

Category	Coordinating more	Making changes
Food assistance for families	53%	24%
Health-related resources for families	42%	16%
Job training and placement support for parents/adult family members	37%	16%
Rental assistance for families	29%	7%

Note: 21st CCLC = 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Data in this exhibit are from the 21st CCLC Integrated Service Delivery Survey, 204 responses.

We also asked survey respondents to describe (a) the degree to which they were able to offer individual-level supports for students and families akin to the social service–related supports and services highlighted in Exhibit 4 and (b) whether or not there was a reliance on external funding outside of 21st CCLC to support these efforts (see Exhibit 5).

While Exhibit 4 is based on coordinating with other programs to provide access to these supports, Exhibit 5 is focused on the degree to which 21st CCLC programs were able to provide these supports directly through their program. The question also asked about the role of partners in offering these types of services and supports. As shown in Exhibit 5, nearly a quarter of 21st CCLC programs reported offering food assistance in their program, with an equal number indicating that they provided these supports through a non-21st CCLC funding source and through partner organizations, while just less than a fifth of programs reported relying on partners to provide behavioral health services to students and families attending programming.

Exhibit 5

Provision of Individual-Level Supports for Students and Families: Partner Provided or Provided with Other Funds

Legend: ■ Partner Provided ■ Provide with Other Funds

Category	Partner Provided	Provide with Other Funds
Food assistance	23%	23%
Behavioral health services	17%	12%
Housing assistance	10%	7%
Dental health services	9%	8%
Primary health/vision services	8%	9%
Financial assistance/cash/monetary support	8%	7%
Immigration/legal assistance	8%	7%

Note: 21st CCLC = 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Data in this exhibit are from the 21st CCLC Integrated Service Delivery Survey, 209 responses..

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, 21st CCLC programs reported coordinating more with social service providers in their communities to address student and family needs, with a subset of centers offering many of these supports as part of their broader 21st CCLC program by utilizing other sources of funding and targeted partnerships with key providers.

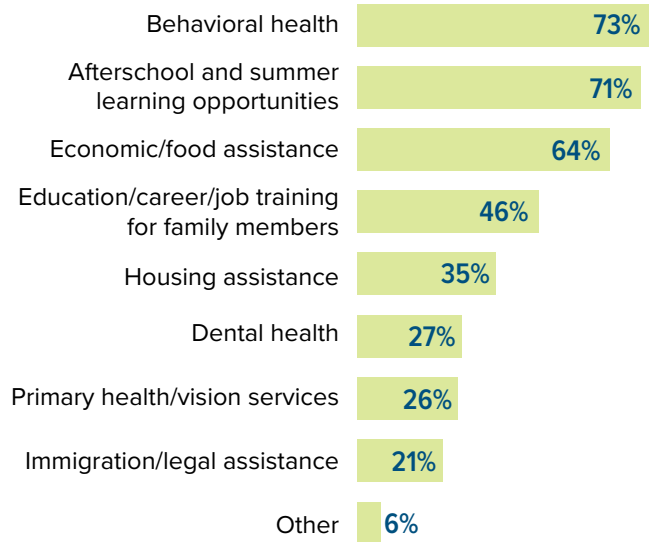## WRAPAROUND SERVICES AND THE PRESENCE OF OTHER PROGRAMS

Another opportunity for 21st CCLC programs to coordinate the activities and services they provide with other supports and services, made available within the school or center can occur when the site coordinator for the center is part of a standing committee, team, or council that works to broker access to **wraparound services** (e.g., mental health services, adult education classes, cash or food supports) for students and their families (see Exhibit 6 for the types of services provided through wraparound supports).

Based on responses to the center survey, **59% of schools/centers have a standing committee** or team that meets to coordinate the delivery of wraparound services to students and families, and **45% of respondents indicated participating** in an entity like this either occasionally (31% of respondents) or as a very active participant (14%).

As shown in Exhibit 6, when a wraparound committee or team exists in schools or centers served by 21st CCLC, the team most commonly helps coordinate services related to behavioral health, afterschool and summer learning opportunities, and economic/food assistance.

Exhibit 6

Services Provided by Entities that Offer Wraparound Supports

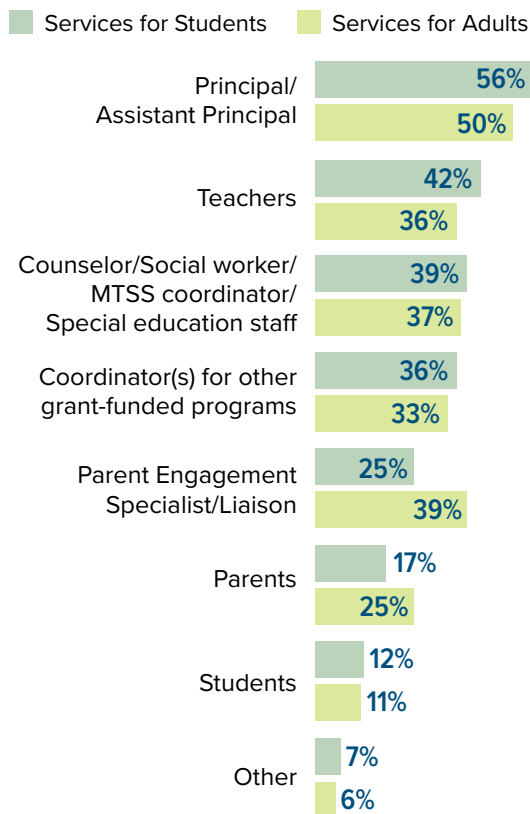| Service	Percentage
Behavioral health	73%
Afterschool and summer learning opportunities	71%
Economic/food assistance	64%
Education/career/job training for family members	46%
Housing assistance	35%
Dental health	27%
Primary health/vision services	26%
Immigration/legal assistance	21%
Other	6%

Note: 21st CCLC = 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Data in this exhibit are from the 21st CCLC Integrated Service Delivery Survey, 121 responses.

We also were interested in learning more about who in the school or center a site coordinator works with to coordinate access to non-21st CCLC–funded programming and services to better support students and adult family members (see Exhibit 7). It is clear from the findings in Exhibit 7 that **principals,** in particular, may play an important role in supporting the coordination of 21st CCLC and non-21st CCLC–funded activities and services. We found that teachers, counselors, social workers, coordinators of multi-tiered systems of support, special education staff, and coordinators from other grant-funded programs worked with 30%–40% of survey respondents to coordinate 21st CCLC activities and services with non-21st CCLC–funded programming and supports.

Exhibit 7

Individuals Site Coordinators Work with to Coordinate Access to Non-21st CCLC–Funded Programming and Services

Services for Students ▪ Services for Adults

Principal/Assistant Principal: 56% / 50%
Teachers: 42% / 36%
Counselor/Social worker/MTSS coordinator/Special education staff: 39% / 37%
Coordinator(s) for other grant-funded programs: 36% / 33%
Parent Engagement Specialist/Liaison: 25% / 39%
Parents: 17% / 25%
Students: 12% / 11%
Other: 7% / 6%

Note: 21st CCLC = 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Data in this exhibit are from the 21st CCLC Integrated Service Delivery Survey, 205 responses.
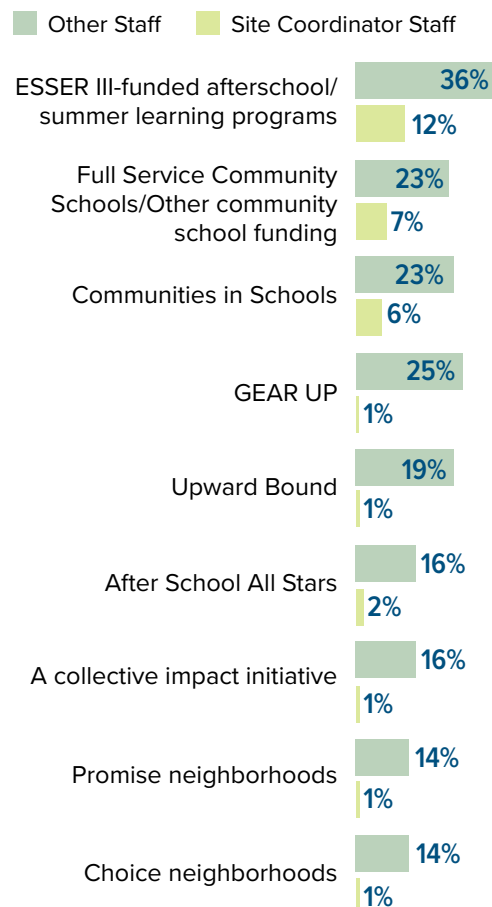
In Exhibit 8, we outline the other types of non-21st CCLC initiatives that were present in the schools and centers delivering 21st CCLC–funded activities and services. Afterschool and summer learning programs funded by the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund were most commonly identified by survey respondents as being present in the school or center, followed by **Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)** and community school initiatives and those supported by **Communities In Schools**. The latter two types of initiatives are especially notable since both community schools and **Communities In Schools** focus on the coordination of services to support student and family access to a broader domain of services, supports, and opportunities.

We also asked whether the survey respondent was responsible for staffing those initiatives in addition to the 21st CCLC program or whether there was another staff person working in the school or center responsible for the initiative. Generally, most other initiatives present in the school or center were staffed by someone other than the 21st CCLC site coordinator.

Exhibit 8

Other Non-21st CCLC Initiatives Present in 21st CCLC-Supported Schools and Centers and 21st CCLC Site Coordinator Role in Staffing These Initiatives

Other Staff ▪ Site Coordinator Staff

ESSER III-funded afterschool/summer learning programs: 36% / 12%
Full Service Community Schools/Other community school funding: 23% / 7%
Communities in Schools: 23% / 6%
GEAR UP: 25% / 1%
Upward Bound: 19% / 1%
After School All Stars: 16% / 2%
A collective impact initiative: 16% / 1%
Promise neighborhoods: 14% / 1%
Choice neighborhoods: 14% / 1%

Note: ESSER = Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund; GEAR UP = Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs; 21st CCLC = 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Data in this exhibit are from the 21st CCLC Integrated Service Delivery Survey, 209 responses.

Results from the center survey suggest that while many programs are taking steps to coordinate 21st CCLC programming with other services and supports provided within the school or center, **there are likely further opportunities to engage in this type of coordination.** A key goal of the 21st CCLC study is to help outline how 21st CCLC–funded programs can better engage in coordination activities.
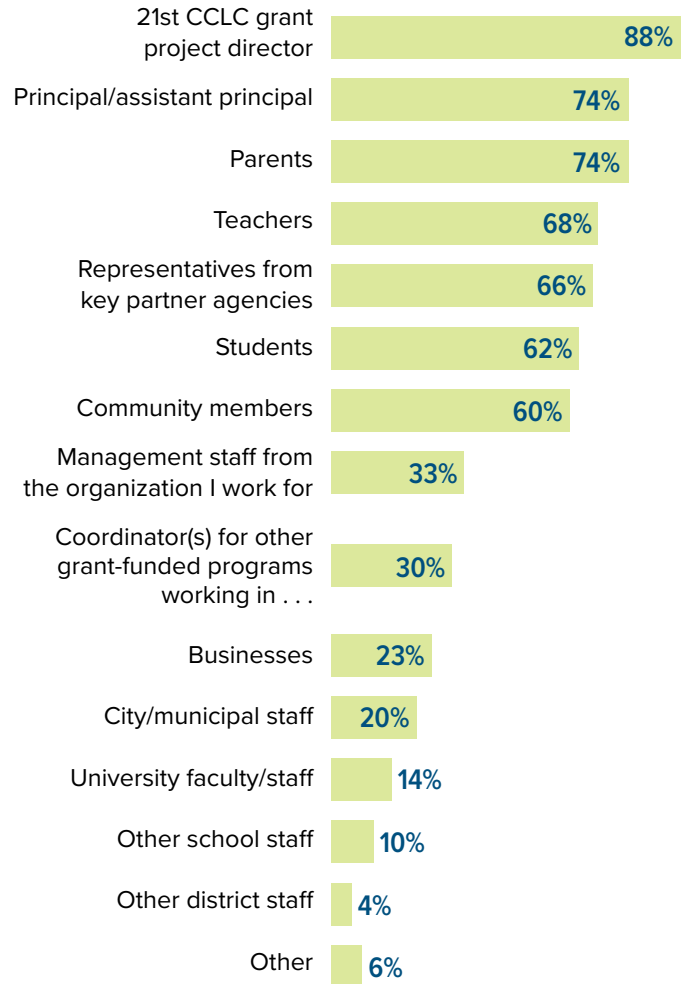
ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Another common strategy employed by **21st CCLC programs both to inform the design and delivery of 21st CCLC programming and support cross-program and cross-sector coordination is the development and convening of advisory committees.** Among survey respondents, 59% reported relying on an advisory committee to support 21st CCLC implementation. Among those programs with an advisory committee, 39% indicated that the advisory committee was specific to their individual center, while another 37% indicated that the advisory committee they worked with was specific to the 21st CCLC program but supported multiple sites. The remaining 24% indicated that the advisory committee served a larger advisory role at the school, center, district, or organization.

In terms of membership, advisory committees were most often comprised of the 21st CCLC project director, principal/assistant principal, parents, teachers, representatives from partner agencies, students, and community members (see Exhibit 9). Roughly a third of advisory committees included coordinators from other non-21st CCLC–funded grant programs in place at the school or center.

It is clear from the findings . . . that **principals, in particular, may play an important role in supporting the coordination** of 21st CCLC and non-21st CCLC–funded activities

PERCENTAGE OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES WITH CERTAIN TYPES OF MEMBERS

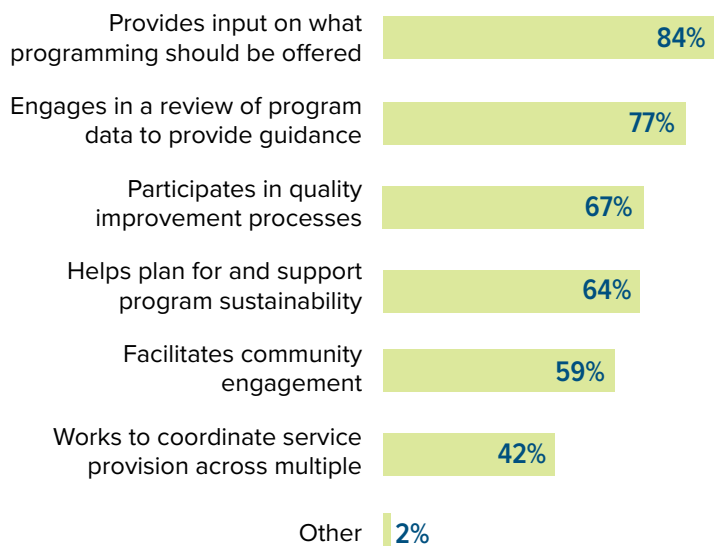| Member type	Percentage
21st CCLC grant project director	88%
Principal/assistant principal	74%
Parents	74%
Teachers	68%
Representatives from key partner agencies	66%
Students	62%
Community members	60%
Management staff from the organization I work for	33%
Coordinator(s) for other grant-funded programs working in . . .	30%
Businesses	23%
City/municipal staff	20%
University faculty/staff	14%
Other school staff	10%
Other district staff	4%
Other	6%

Note: Data in this exhibit are from the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Integrated Service Delivery Survey, 123 responses.

In terms of role, advisory committees were primarily relied upon to provide input on what programming centers should offer and to engage in a review of program data for the purpose of providing guidance and feedback on improvement strategies. In terms of topics related to the Integrated **Service Delivery Study,** just less than 60% of respondents indicated that a role of the advisory committee was to facilitate community engagement, while just more than 40% indicated that the advisory committee had a role in supporting the coordination of service provision across multiple programs (see Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10

Advisory Committee Role

Role	Percentage
Provides input on what programming should be offered	84%
Engages in a review of program data to provide guidance	77%
Participates in quality improvement processes	67%
Helps plan for and support program sustainability	64%
Facilitates community engagement	59%
Works to coordinate service provision across multiple	42%
Other	2%

Note: Data in this exhibit are from the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Integrated Service Delivery Survey, 124 responses.

CONCLUSIONS

From the center survey, the research team at AIR was able to learn a number of things related to how 21st CCLC programs are engaging in practices and activities that may be conducive to the development of more integrated service delivery systems.

- While 21st CCLC programs commonly conduct needs assessments and convene advisory committees to inform the design and delivery of programming, **attempts to engage the community more broadly in these efforts are less common.**

- In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, 21st CCLC programs most commonly reported **taking steps to increase coordination** with other programs to provide food assistance and health-related resources for families.

- **Just less than half** of 21st CCLC programs reported being involved in the coordination of **wraparound services** at their school or center, which most commonly focused on coordinating behavioral health care services for students and families.

- Nearly a quarter of 21st CCLC programs reported being present in schools that have also adopted a community school strategy to support the **coordination of supports and services for students and families.**

- Staff from 21st CCLC programs completing the survey reported **working with the principal or assistant principal most frequently** when attempting to coordinate 21st CCLC programs with other non-21st CCLC–funded activities and services provided by the school.

The AIR research team also has prepared a series of briefs that summarize key findings from these additional data collection activities, with the goal of outlining promising practices 21st CCLC programs engage in to further support more integrated service delivery systems.

SURVEY APPROACH

Between May and July 2022, AIR administered the online survey to 21st CCLC–funded programs in the five study states. We designed the survey to obtain information at the center level—that is, the actual physical location where 21st CCLC–funded activities and services are being provided. AIR worked with each state to define which active 21st CCLC programs to include in the survey sample, taking into consideration when grants were ending. The goal was to avoid including programs in the survey sample that might not be operating throughout the life of the study, which is slated to conclude in July 2024. As an incentive, we placed programs completing the survey in a drawing in each state to win a $100 Amazon gift card.

In addition, because 21st CCLC programs continued to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and were addressing several related challenges, particularly in the area of staffing, the AIR team gave grantees the option of determining which centers might be in a good position to respond to the survey. In total, we invited 172 different grantee organizations to participate in the survey, with 67% opting to do so at some level by having at least one 21st CCLC–funded center complete the center survey. Ultimately, AIR collected a total of 209 surveys from 115 21st CCLC grantee organizations in the study states.

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