Academic and Social Transformation at the Village Learning Place

21st Century Community Learning Centers Annual Evaluation Report
SY2023-24: Let's Invest in Neighborhood Kids (LINK) After School and LINK Leaders School Year



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"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."

Benjamin Franklin

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Acknowledgments

Dr. Amy Desai Graham would like to thank the staff and funders of LINK After School and LINK Leaders School Year at Village Learning Place for the opportunity to serve and support your program and the young people and families you engage.

Acronyms

ELA: English Language Arts
LINK: Let's Invest in Neighborhood Kids
MSDE: Maryland State Department of Education
VLP: Village Learning Place
21st CCLC: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Executive Summary

Let's Invest in Neighborhood Kids (LINK) After School and LINK Leaders School Year are supported by the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grant and provide an afterschool enrichment program at the Village Learning Place (VLP). VLP aims to promote literacy, cultural awareness, and lifelong learning through access for all ages to information, resources, and educational programs.

During the three-year cycle, the program seeks to document academic achievement via demonstrated improvements in math and reading/ELA (English language arts); teacher-reported student engagement in learning; improved school year attendance; improved school year grade-point averages (GPAs); improvements in in-school suspension rates; parental engagement, and successful program implementation via site observations of academic and enrichment programming. During SY 2023-24, of the 62 students who enrolled in the LINK After School program, 58 attended the program for more than 30 days. Of the 37 students enrolled in the LINK Leaders School Year Program, 19 attended the program for more than 30 days. Participants in the LINK After School and LINK Leaders School Year program were not consistently tracked for progress toward milestones, so the number of students tracked varies by indicator. In the first year of the three-year funding cycle, the program met seven of its eight school-year indicators. For the one unmet indicator, data was not available to determine progress toward the milestone. During the summer, of the 57 students enrolled in the LINK Summer program, 52 were tracked for detailed outcomes and attended the program for more than 20 days. Of the 30 students enrolled in the LINK Leaders Summer program, 26 were tracked for detailed outcomes and attended more than 20 days. In the first summer of the current funding cycle, VLP was able to successfully meet four of its eight indicators; the remaining four indicators were not applicable to summer programming. Overall, VLP successfully met all eight indicators throughout the year either during the school year, summer, or both.

Of the goals and indicators outlined for the site, the evaluation team considered the following in Table 1:

Table 1. Program Indicators and Results SY2024

Performance Indicator		Year 1 Result
1	By August 2024, 50% of students in grades 1–5 participating in 21st CCLC programming in the school year and summer will demonstrate an improvement in teacher-reported engagement in learning.	✓ Milestone met during the SY. ✓ Milestone met during the summer.
2	By August 2024, 50% of students in grades 6-12 participating in 21st CCLC programming in the school year and summer will demonstrate an improvement in teacher-reported engagement in learning.	Progress towards the milestone is undetermined for the SY. ✓ Milestone met during the summer.
3	By August 2024, 50% of youth in grades 1–12 participating in 21st CCLC during the school year and summer who: (1) Have a school-day attendance rate at or below 90% in the prior school year; and (2) Demonstrated an improved attendance rate in the current school year.	✓ Milestone met during the SY. Not applicable for summer programming.
4	By August 2024, 50% of students in grades 7-8 and 10-12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer with a prior-year unweighted GPA less than 3.0 will demonstrate an improved GPA.	✓ Milestone met during the SY. Not applicable for summer programming.
5	By August 2024, 50% of students in grades 4-8 participating in 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer will (a) demonstrate growth in reading/language arts on state assessments, and (b) demonstrate growth in math on state assessments.	✓ Milestone met during the SY Not applicable for summer programming.
6	By August 2024, 50% of students in grades K-3rd and/or 9-12th participating in 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer will demonstrate growth in reading/language arts and math.	✓ Milestone met during the SY and summer.
7	By August 2024, 50% of students grades 1 through 12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the	✓ Milestone met during the SY.

	school year and summer will experience a decrease in in-school suspensions compared to the previous school year.	Not applicable for summer programming.
8	By August 2024, 60% of caregivers with children in grades preK-12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year will participate in 2 or more parental engagement activities.	✓ Milestone met during the SY and summer.

✓ milestone met X milestone not met N/A cannot determine if milestone was met

Opportunities

- The program has maintained a high level of program participation, with 94% of enrollees in the LINK After School program being regular attendees in SY 2023-24. The program also maintained a high participation rate among the LINK Summer and LINK Leaders Summer programs (91% and 87%, respectively).
- During year one of the program cycle, VLP met its milestones for all eight (100%) of the assessed indicators either during the SY, summer, or both.

Challenges

- The program struggled to collect data for all participants across indicators, which made it difficult to produce an analysis wholly representative of the students in the program.
- Due to competition with other afterschool programs and personal circumstances experienced by students, the program experienced a significant attrition rate in the first year of the program cycle.

Recommendations

+ Track and evaluate students in the LINK and LINK Leaders programs more closely, especially regarding program assessments, to ensure that progress toward indicators is assessed more accurately and reflects the experiences of all students served.
+ Consider creating an exit survey for families to complete when withdrawing from the program. This may help the program gather constructive feedback to reduce its attrition rate in the coming years.

Introduction

Village Learning Place (VLP) is an independent non-profit library that houses educational programs, enrichment opportunities, and informational resources located in Charles Village. Since 2007, they have worked with young people from pre-K to 8th grade and expanded to serve students in pre-K to 12th grade. They were selected into the 2023-2026 cohort of a 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program, a federally funded initiative managed at the state level through the Maryland State Department of Education. The funding supports VLP's ongoing after-school enrichment programs, Let's Invest in Neighborhood Kids (LINK) After School, LINK Leaders School Year, LINK Summer, and LINK Leaders Summer. This report summarizes the results from the first year of activities of all four programs.



Program Description

LINK After School and LINK Leaders School Year are small community-based after-school programs offered at the Village Learning Place in the Charles Village neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland. Both programs are offered free of charge and provide in-person programming in SY 2023-2024. LINK After School serves Pre-Kindergarten to 6th Grade students every day, Monday-Friday from 2:25-5:30 pm. During SY 2023-2024, the program was offered from October 2, 2023, to May 24, 2024. The program provides students with free, dynamic programming and nutritious snacks and supper every weekday throughout the school year. The academic focus of the LINK programs is on reading, mathematics, science, and character education with quality instruction and research-based curricula. Enrichment opportunities include STEM, art, team building, and physical activities.

LINK Leaders serves 7th to 12th-grade students every day during the school year, Monday-Friday, from 2:30-5:30 pm. During SY 2023-2024, the program was offered from October 2, 2023, to May 24, 2024. LINK Leaders supports learning while guiding middle and high school students to graduation and into college, technical training, and/or the workforce. Through their "Leaders Open Doors" curriculum, students are encouraged to seek out opportunities, new experiences, and opportunities. In addition, LINK Leaders aims to provide students access to dynamic learning and networking opportunities. The LINK Leaders program focuses on character-building and leadership training through hands-on education, workshops, and partnerships with community leaders. Community service is emphasized within the college and career-readiness curriculum.

The LINK Leaders program schedule differs from the PreK-6th programming (LINK After School) in that it is less structured and daily attendance is not required. Instead, students can drop in as their schedule allows or sign up for the numerous workshops and enrichments that are available throughout the year. It is expected that all enrolled students will attend programming at least once a week throughout the school year. Each day starts with a self-guided period for study and transition time from 2:30-3:30 pm. Structured programming takes place from 3:30-5:00 pm each day featuring a variety of activities including enrichment workshops, college & career exploration, leadership development, and service learning. Dinner is served beginning at 5:00 pm.

LINK Summer completed its fifteenth year of programming as a small community-based summer academic enrichment program serving pre-K to 6th-grade students from the Charles Village neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland. The overall program is designed to prevent summer learning loss and to inspire creativity. In summer 2024, VLP continued in-person learning for both LINK Summer and LINK Leaders Summer.

LINK (Let's Invest in Neighborhood Kids) Summer was held for a little over 5 weeks from July 1st through August 9th from 9 am to 4 pm for grades pre-K to 6th. LINK Summer is a dynamic and educational program offering lessons in literacy, math, and science, and also includes important elements of character education such as circle time, identifying feelings, and friendship building. The program also provided enrichment workshops including clay sculpting, mindfulness, fun fitness, visual art, theater, poetry, gardening, technology, etc. Learning was extended outside of the classroom into their garden, on community walks, and during Friday field trips. Students and program staff attended field trips to various sites including state parks and museums. Students received breakfast and lunch through VLP's partnership with Baltimore Housing Authority's Summer Meals Program, and VLP provided morning and afternoon snacks for students. The program hosted a Family Breakfast mid-summer and an End of Summer Celebration.

LINK Leaders Summer was held for about 5 weeks from July 1st through August 9th on Mondays through Thursdays at Village Learning Place, where Leaders participated in the program's updated curriculum including a focus on career and college planning, financial education, entrepreneurship, service-learning, enrichments, and movement time outdoors. Enrichments

include a variety of activities such as art, STEM activities, cooking, athletics/dance/yoga, graphic arts, photography, etc. Fridays were reserved for field trips including the beach, college visits, business tours (to learn about career options), and sites throughout Baltimore to learn about its history.

Evaluation Overview

Dr. Amy Desai Graham and her team were engaged to assess descriptive goals and outcomes to satisfy external evaluation requirements during the second year of the current three-year funding cycle. Program planners are interested in the required monitoring and evaluation measures, as well as ensuring that the goals of the project adhere to the core values of the program's framework.



Performance Goals and Indicators

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) identified six performance goals to evaluate the effectiveness of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grant programs. In the 2024 school year, the LINK After School and LINK Leaders School Year programs aimed to measure success according to the following indicators:

Indicator 1. By August 2024, 50% of students in grades 1–5 participating in 21st CCLC programming in the school year and summer will demonstrate an improvement in teacher-reported engagement in learning.

Indicator 2. By August 2024, 50% of students in grades 6-12 participating in 21st CCLC programming in the school year and summer will demonstrate an improvement in teacher-reported

engagement in learning.

Indicator 3. By August 2024, 50% of youth in grades 1–12 participating in 21st CCLC during the school year and summer who: (1) Have a school-day attendance rate at or below 90% in the prior school year; and (2) Demonstrated an improved attendance rate in the current school year.

Indicator 4. By August 2024, 50% of students in grades 7-8 and 10-12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer with a prior-year unweighted GPA less than 3.0 will demonstrate an improved GPA.

Indicator 5. By August 2024, 50% of students in grades 4-8 participating in 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer will (a) demonstrate growth in reading/language arts on state assessments, and (b) demonstrate growth in math on state assessments.

Indicator 6. By August 2024, 50% of students in grades K-3rd and/or 9-12th participating in 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer will demonstrate growth in reading/language arts and math.

Indicator 7. By August 2024, 50% of students grades 1 through 12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer will experience a decrease in in-school suspensions compared to the previous school year.

Indicator 8. By August 2024, 60% of caregivers with children in grades preK-12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year will participate in 2 or more parental engagement activities.

Evaluation Questions

For the first year of the cycle, the evaluation team focused on documenting the evaluation questions, which align with the goals identified by MSDE to measure the effectiveness of 21st CCLC programs.

1) To what extent did students demonstrate improvement in school engagement?
    - See results under Evaluation Question 1 (indicators 1-3) on pages 19-20 and Tables 5 and 6, which summarize teacher-reported engagement in learning and school day attendance achievements.

2) To what extent was academic success achieved for all students?
    - See results under Evaluation Question 2 (indicators 3-6) on pages 21-22 and Table 7, which summarize academic achievements for SY 2023-24 and Summer 2024.

3) To what extent do students demonstrate social-emotional benefits, as well as positive behavior change over the course of their participation in the program?
    - See results under Evaluation Question 3 (indicator 7) on page 22 and Table 8, which summarize in-school suspension achievements for SY 2023-24.

4) To what extent was the program able to engage and support caregivers in family literacy and related educational development?
    - See results under Evaluation Question 4 (indicator 8) on page 23 and Table 9, which summarizes caregiver and family engagement achievements and describes the engagement activities offered in SY 2023-24 and Summer 2024

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5) To what extent was the program implemented as designed?
    - See results in the Program Quality section on pages 24-31, which summarizes the findings from the three site visits conducted during SY 2023-24 and Summer 2024.



Evaluation Design & Methods

This descriptive evaluation, designed to document both program implementation and participant outcome data, utilizes a mixed-method approach. Student outcomes and program implementation data were gathered through custom spreadsheets shared by program staff and assessed using comparative analysis of individual matched data. Quantitative analyses were conducted in Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and some summary and visualization using Google Sheets or MS Excel. Data accuracy was ensured by a central program staff member responsible for data entry and review. After data transfers, the evaluation staff ran the appropriate cross-checks to ensure data quality and notified the program staff of any discrepancies/errors. Data security was ensured by removing participant indicators from the data as soon as possible and maintaining standard data protocols for data management by securing data in password-protected files.



Site observation, the qualitative component, occurred on three occasions: once during the Winter of 2023, the Spring of 2024, and the Summer of 2024. Observable factors for focus via in-classroom observations and a walkthrough of the grounds and facilities typically include the facility, types of activities, classroom management, safety and security, student engagement with activities, teacher-student interaction, and utilization of resources.

Analyses and evaluations reflect a focus on program goals and associated indicators.

Evaluation Results – Findings

Participants

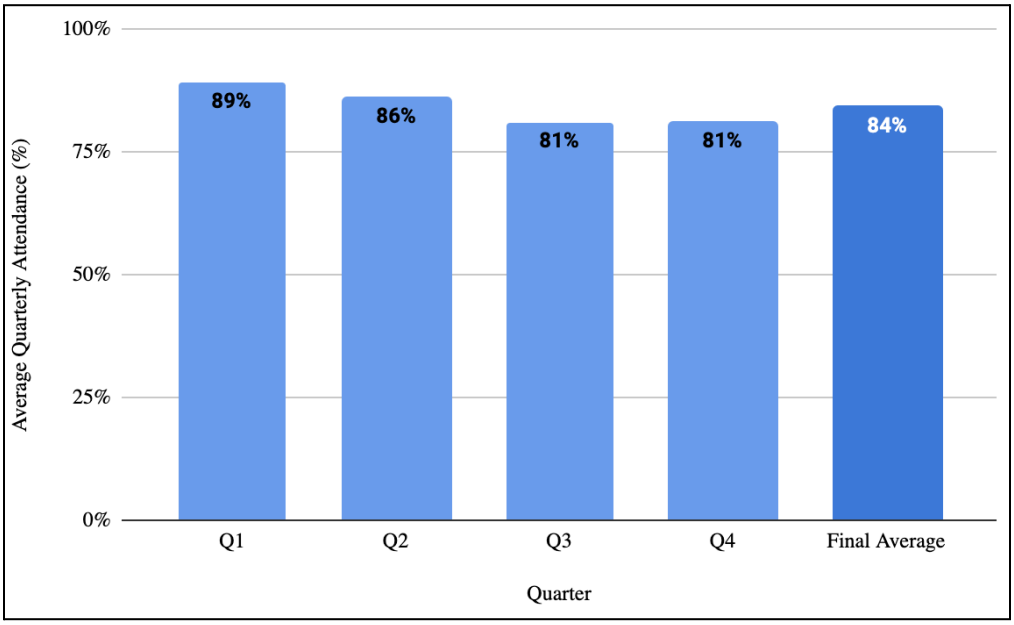
Attendance

Year one of programming for cycle 2023-2026 was conducted in person for the entirety of the school year. Average daily attendance was only calculated for the LINK After School program. Table 2 summarizes monthly and annual average daily student attendance based on the data supplied by the program. The program achieved an average annual attendance of 83% for SY 2024. Figure 1 illustrates the average monthly attendance by quarter for SY 2024.

Table 2. Average Program Attendance by Month SY 2024

Month	Monthly and Annual Average Daily Attendance 2023-2024 (average N=43)
Oct-23	**89%**
Nov-23	**86%**
Dec-23	**84%**
Jan-24	**87%**
Feb-24	**77%**
Mar-24	**83%**
Apr-24	**80%**
May-24	**81%**
Annual SY 2024	**83%**

Figure 1. Average Program Attendance by Quarter SY 2024



Program Participation

Program participants are those who enroll in the program; however, the amount of program exposure should lead to better outcomes, thus participants include both enrollees (students who are enrolled in the program and attended at least one day) and regular attendees (those who were in the program for 30 days or more). Table 3a presents the data for LINK After School program participation based on the number of days in the program. During SY 2023-24, 62 students enrolled in LINK After School, of which 58 (94%) attended the program for 30 days or more and were counted as regular attendees. Unfortunately, due to competition with other after-school programs, 16 students withdrew from the program, with many withdrawals occurring midyear or at the end of the year. As such 13 of the 16 withdrawals were regular attendees.

Table 3a. LINK After School 2023-2024 Program Participation

Program Participation			
Days in Program		# Students	% Students
	Less than 30 days	4	6%
	30 Days or more	58	94%
Program Attrition Rate			
	Withdrawals	16	26%

Table 3b presents LINK Leaders School Year program participation data. While 37 students enrolled in the LINK Leaders School Year, 19 students (51%) attended 30 or more days and qualified as regularly attending participants. Notably, the LINK Leaders School Year and Summer programs are less structured than LINK After School and LINK Summer, and daily attendance is not required. Instead, students in the LINK Leaders programs are allowed to attend as their schedules permit.

Table 3b. LINK Leaders School Year 2023-24 Program Participation

Program Participation			
Days in Program		# Students	% Students
	Less than 30 days	18	49%
	30 Days or more	19	51%
Program Attrition Rate			
	Withdrawals	0	0%

Table 3c presents the data for LINK Summer School program participation based on the number of days in the program. During summer 2024, 57 students enrolled in and attended at least one day of LINK Summer programming. A total of 91% of program participants were regular attendees in summer 2024.

Table 3c. LINK Summer 2024 Program Participation

Program Participation			
Days in Program		# Students	% Students
	Less than 20 days	5	9%
	20 Days or more	52	91%
Program Attrition Rate			
	Withdrawals	3	5%

Table 3d presents LINK Leaders Summer program participation data. Thirty (30) students enrolled in the LINK Leaders Summer and 26 of these students (87%) attended 20 or more days and qualified as regularly attending participants.

Table 3d. LINK Leaders Summer 2024 Program Participation

Program Participation			
Days in Program		# Students	% Students
	Less than 20 days	4	13%
	20 Days or more	26	87%
Program Attrition Rate			
	Withdrawals	0	0%

Table 4a presents detailed data concerning the LINK After School participant demographics. Among regular attendees, 10% were classified as English language learners and 19% had special educational requirements. Approximately 55% of regular attendees were female and 45% male. The majority of participants identified as Black or African American, or White.

Table 4a. LINK After School 2023-2024 Demographic Information

Demographics	Enrolled Program Participants	Attended 30 days or more
	N=61	N=58
	(%)	(%)
Descriptive Information		
English Language Learners	10%	10%
Special Educational Requirements	20%	19%
Grade Level		
preK	18%	19%
K	10%	10%
1st	15%	16%
2nd	11%	10%
3rd	13%	14%
4th	15%	14%
5th	7%	7%
6th	11%	10%
Gender		
Female	54%	55%
Male	46%	45%
Race/Ethnicity - Identify as:		
Black or African American	43%	40%
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	13%	14%
White	31%	33%
Other	13%	14%

Table 4b presents the LINK Leaders School Year program student demographics. Among regular attendees, 16% were classified as English language learners and 21% had special educational requirements. Approximately 39% of regular attendees were female and 61% male. The majority of participants identified as Black or African American.

Table 4b. LINK Leaders School Year 2023-2024 Demographic Information

Demographics	Enrolled Program Participants	Attended 30 days or more
	N=37	N=19
	(%)	(%)
Descriptive Information		
English Language Learners	14%[1]	16%
Special Educational Requirements	26%[1]	21%
Grade Level		
7th	41%	32%
8th	54%	58%
9th	3%	5%
10th	0%	0%
11th	3%	5%
12th	0%	0%
Gender		
Female	51%[1]	39%[2]
Male	49%[1]	61%[2]
Race/Ethnicity - Identify as:		
Black or African American	68%	79%
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	24%	21%
White	8%	0%

[1] Data is available for 35 out of 37 students.
[2] Data is available for 18 out of 19 students.

Table 4c presents detailed data concerning the LINK Summer participant demographics. Among enrolled participants, 8% have special educational requirements. About 55% of program participants were female and 45% were male. The majority of participants identified as Black or African American.

Table 4c. LINK Summer 2024 Demographic Information

Demographics	Enrolled Program Participants	Attended 20 Days or More
	N=60	N=52
	(%)	(%)
Descriptive Information		
English Language Learners	0%	0%
Special Educational Requirements	8%	8%
Grade Level		
Pre-K	10%	12%
K	8%	8%
1st	7%	8%
2nd	9%	10%
3rd	7%	6%
4th	9%	9%
5th	9%	8%
6th	9%	6%
Gender		
Female	55%	54%
Male	45%	46%
Race/Ethnicity - Identify as:		
Black or African American	58%	56%
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	5%	6%
Other	12%	12%
White	25%	27%

Table 4d presents detailed data concerning the LINK Leaders Summer participant demographics. Among enrolled participants, 13% have special educational requirements. About 57% of program participants were female and 43% were male. The majority of participants identified as Black or African American.

Table 4d. LINK Leaders Summer 2024 Demographic Information

Demographics	Enrolled Program Participants	Attended 20 Days or More
	N=30	N=26
	(%)	(%)
Descriptive Information		
English Language Learners	0%	0%
Special Educational Requirements	13%	12%
Grade Level		
7th	23%	27%
8th	37%	35%
9th	30%	31%
10th	7%	8%
11th	3%	0%
12th	0%	0%
Gender		
Female	57%	58%
Male	43%	42%
Race/Ethnicity - Identify as:		
Black or African American	93%	92%
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	3%	4%
Other	3%	4%

Results by Evaluation Question

Evaluation Question 1: To what extent did students demonstrate improvement in school engagement?

Table 5. Summary of Student Engagement Outcomes for SY 2023-2024

Indicator	Indicator Description	Year 1 Result
1	By August 2024, 50% of students in grades 1–5 participating in 21st CCLC programming in the school year and summer will demonstrate an improvement in teacher-reported engagement in learning.	✓ **61%** of Grade 1-5 students demonstrated growth in teacher-reported engagement in summer 2024. ✓ **80%** of Grade 1-5 students demonstrated growth in teacher-reported engagement in summer 2024.
2	By August 2024, 50% of students in grades 6-12 participating in 21st CCLC programming in the school year and summer will demonstrate an improvement in teacher-reported engagement in learning.	**Progress toward milestone is undetermined for SY 2023-24.** ✓ **97%** of Grade 7-11 students demonstrated growth in teacher-reported engagement in summer 2024.

✓ milestone met *X* milestone not met N/A cannot determine if milestone was met

During SY 2023-24, a total of 23 students in the LINK After School program were assessed for teacher-reported student engagement in learning. Of these students, 61% demonstrated improvements, thus exceeding the year one milestone for indicator one. During the summer, a total of 35 LINK Summer students were assessed for teacher-reported engagement in learning, and 28 of these students demonstrated improvements. As a result, the program met its milestone for indicator one in summer 2024, with 80% of Grade 1-5 students demonstrating improvements in teacher-reported engagement in learning. Data is unavailable for teacher-reported engagement in learning among Grade 6-12 students for the 2023-24 school year. Thus, progress toward the indicator two milestone for SY 2023-24 is undetermined for year one. However, 29 LINK Leaders Summer students were assessed for teacher-reported improvements in engagement in learning during summer 2024. Notably, data was unavailable for 6th-grade students in the LINK Summer program and the LINK Leaders Summer program did not have 12th-grade students enrolled throughout the year. Of these 29 students for whom data was available, 28 demonstrated improvements. The program met its milestone for indicator two during summer 2024, with 97% of Grade 7-11 students demonstrating teacher-reported improvements in engagement in learning.

Table 6. Summary of Attendance Achievements for SY 2023-2024

Indicator	**Indicator Description**	**Year 1 Result**
3	By August 2024, 50% of youth in grades 1–12 participating in 21st CCLC during the school year and summer who: (1) Have a school-day attendance rate at or below 90% in the prior school year, and (2) Demonstrated an improved attendance rate in the current school year.	✓ **64%** of Grade 1-11 students with an attendance rate below 90% during SY 2022-23 demonstrated improved attendance in SY 2023-24. **Not applicable** for summer programming.

✓ milestone met *X* milestone not met N/A cannot determine if milestone was met

During SY 2023-24, the program was able to retrieve attendance data for a total of 35 Grade 1-11 students served by LINK Afterschool and LINK Leaders School Year. Of these 35 students, 11 had an attendance rate below 90% during the previous school year (SY 2022-23). Seven (7) of these 11 students demonstrated an improved attendance rate during the current school year (SY 2023-24). As a result, the program met its milestone, with 64% of students with an attendance rate below 90% in the previous year demonstrating an improved attendance rate during the current school year.



Evaluation Question 2: To what extent was academic success achieved for all students?

Table 7. Summary of Academic Achievements for SY 2023-2024

Indicator	Indicator Description	Year 1 Result
4	By August 2024, 50% of students in grades 7-8 and 10-12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer with a prior-year unweighted GPA less than 3.0 will demonstrate an improved GPA.	✓ **57%** of Grade 7-8 students with a GPA below 3.0 during SY 2022-23 demonstrated an improved GPA in SY 2023-24. **Not applicable for summer programming.**
5	By August 2024, 50% of students in grades 4-8 participating in 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer will (a) demonstrate growth in reading/language arts on state assessments, and (b) demonstrate growth in math on state assessments.	✓ **50%** of Grade 4-8 students demonstrated growth on MCAP ELA state assessments. ✓ **50%** of Grade 4-8 students demonstrated growth on MCAP Math state assessments. **Not applicable** for summer programming.
6	By August 2024, 50% of students in grades K-3rd and/or 9-12th participating in 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer will demonstrate growth in reading/language arts and math.	✓ **95%** of K-3 students demonstrated growth or maintained a score at/above benchmark on ELA program assessments during SY 2023-24. ✓ **82%** of Grade K-3 students demonstrated growth or maintained a score at/above benchmark on math program assessments during SY 2023-24. ✓ **83%** of Grade 9th-11 students demonstrated growth in ELA during summer 2024. ✓ **100%** of Grade 9-11 students demonstrated growth in math during summer 2024.

✓ milestone met *X* milestone not met N/A cannot determine if milestone was met

For SY 2022-23 and 2023-24, GPA data was available for 16 Grade 7-8 students in the LINK Leaders Afterschool program. Of these 16 students, 14 had a GPA below 3.0 in the previous school year (SY 2022-23). Eight (8) of these 14 students demonstrated an improved GPA during the 2023-24 school year. The program met its milestone with 57% of Grade 7-8 students with a GPA below 3.0 in the previous year demonstrating an improved GPA in the current school year. Notably, the program did not enroll any 10th or 12th-grade students during SY 2023-24, and data is unavailable for the single 11th-grade student served. Thus, progress toward the GPA milestone for Grade 10-12 students does not apply to the program for SY 2023-24. GPA improvements also do not apply during summer programming.

Regarding state assessment data, the program was able to retrieve data for 26 Grade 4-8 students. Of these 26 students, 13 demonstrated growth on MCAP ELA assessments and 13 demonstrated growth on MCAP math assessments. The program met its milestone for indicator five with 50% of students demonstrating improvements on both ELA and math state assessments.

During the school year, 20 Grade K-3 students were assessed for improvements in ELA using STAR Early Literacy program assessments. Of these 20 students, 19 (95%) demonstrated improvements or maintained a score at or above the grade-level benchmark. Seventeen (17) Grade K-3 students were assessed for math outcomes using STAR Math program assessments. Of these 17 students, 14 (82%) demonstrated improvements or maintained a score at or above the grade-level benchmark. During summer 2024, 12 Grade 9-11 students were assessed for outcomes in ELA and math. Among these 12 students, 10 (83%) demonstrated improvements on ELA program assessments and all 12 (100%) demonstrated improvements on math program assessments. As a result, the program exceeded its academic achievement milestone, with the vast majority of Grade K-3 and Grade 9-11 students demonstrating growth in both ELA and math.

Evaluation Question 3: To what extent do students demonstrate social-emotional benefits, as well as positive behavior change over the course of their participation in the program?

Table 8. Behavior Achievements for SY 2023-2024

Indicator	Indicator Description	Year 3 Result
7	By August 2024, 50% of students grades 1 through 12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer will experience a decrease in in-school suspensions compared to the previous school year.	✓ **100%** experienced zero in-school suspensions in SY 2023-24. **Not applicable** for summer programming.

✓ milestone met X milestone not met N/A cannot determine if milestone was met

The program met its behavior milestone during SY 2023-24, with 100% of students experiencing zero in-school suspensions. Likewise, no students experienced in-school suspensions during the previous school year (SY 2022-23). In-school suspension data does not apply to summer programming.

Evaluation Question 4: To what extent was the program able to engage and support caregivers in family literacy and related educational development?

Table 9. Parental Engagement Achievements for SY 2023-2024

Indicator	Indicator Description	Year 3 Result
8	By August 2024, 60% of caregivers with children in grades preK-12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year will participate in 2 or more parental engagement activities.	✓ **69%** of caregivers with children in grades preK-12 participated in 2 or more parental engagement activities during SY 2023-24. ✓ **86%** of caregivers with children in grades preK-12 participated in 2 or more parental engagement activities during summer 2024.

During SY 2023-24, 45 families had children in the LINK After School and LINK Leaders School Year programs, and 69% attended 2 or more parental engagement activities; 91% of caregivers attended at least one event. There were a total of six engagement activities available to caregivers and families this school year. Village Learning Place hosted three family fun nights during SY 2023-24, which were celebrations with games and activities for children and families along with the provision of a meal. The family fun nights in SY 2023-24 included the Spooky Harvest Night, Spring Family Fun Night, and the End of Year Celebration. The Parent Meeting allowed caregivers to attend a restorative circle meeting with their children and children's teacher. In 2023, VLP hosted LINKsgiving, which was a family dinner prior to the Thanksgiving holiday. The 529 Session in the spring allowed parents to learn how to create a Maryland 529 account to save for their children's college education.



During summer 2024, 42 families had children in the LINK Summer and LINK Leaders Summer programs, and 86% attended 2 or more parental engagement activities; 95% of caregivers attended at least one event. There were a total of four engagement activities available to caregivers and families this summer. Village Learning Place hosted two family fun nights during summer 2024, which included games and activities for children and families along with the provision of a meal. The family fun nights in summer 2024 included the Summer Family Fun Night and the End of Summer Celebration. The family breakfast event invited families to eat breakfast with their students, mingle with other families, and spend time with summer staff. When caregivers chaperone, they join the class for the field trip. This typically involves riding on the bus, escorting a small group of students around at the site of the field trip, and keeping kids safe and on schedule.

Evaluation Question 5: To what extent was the program implemented as designed?

Program Quality: Site Observations

Program quality was assessed using in-person observations. The evaluation team was able to observe the LINK After School and LINK Leaders School Year programs on two different occasions during the winter and spring of SY 2024: once on February 22nd and once on May 20th. The classes observed were Grade preK-K, Grade 1-2, Grade 3-4, Grade 5-6, and Leaders. The evaluation team also observed the LINK Summer and LINK Leaders Summer programs on one occasion on July 15, 2024. The classes observed were Grade Pre-K/K, Grade 1-2, Grade 3-4, Grade 5-6, and Leaders.

Program quality was assessed using an in-person observation conducted by the evaluation team. Data was collected regarding the following indicators: facility, types of activities, classroom management, safety and security, student engagement with activities, teacher-student interaction, and utilization of resources.

Facility

School Year Observations

During the February 22nd visit, the ramp to the back exit of the program building was under construction so the program was held in the VLP Library for all classes. The preK-K and Grade 1-2 classes were in the basement classrooms and the Grade 3-4 and Grade 5-6 classes were on the main floor of the Library. During the May 20th visit, the back exit ramp was completed, and all classes were observed in the program building. All classes were in their own classroom for programming.

Summer Observations

Programming was provided to students in two buildings during summer programming. Students in LINK Summer (grades PreK-6th) meet in the VLP office building, directly across the street from the VLP Library. All classes had their own classroom for programming. The LINK Leaders program (grades 7th-12th) is housed in the VLP Library. Students have access to the main floor of the library and the basement.



Activities

School Year Observations

The Grade preK-K class was observed during recess and while working on their End of Year projects. During recess, students were escorted by two staff members onto the playground and played on the equipment. The End of Year project involved students learning the 50 states

through the "Fifty Nifty United States" song. The Grade 1-2 class were also observed during recess and while working on their End of Year project. During recess, students also had supervised time on the playground to play with each other and the playground equipment. For their End of Year project, the Grade 1-2 class practiced singing "Count on Me" by Bruno Mars. The Grade 3-4 class was observed during an art activity and while working on their End of Year projects. Students participated in painting rocks to add to the VLP garden. Students chose from several paint colors based on their preference and experimented with different paint mixtures. The grade 3-4 students also completed their End of Year surveys and choreographed their own dance for the End of Year Celebration. The Grade 5-6 class was observed while working on an engineering project and preparing for the End of Year Celebration. Students designed and built model buildings to withstand a 7.0 earthquake. The class referenced building codes to inform the design of their buildings. The Grade 5-6 class also prepared a presentation of all the projects they worked on throughout the year (e.g., engineering, garden book, etc.) to present at the End of Year Celebration. The Grade 3-6 classes also participated in a Spanish language enrichment provided by The Language Project (Adventurers: Level 2 Spanish). The Leaders class was observed independently completing their homework. After completing their homework, the Leaders played card games. During the final observation, the Leaders did not have any formal work to complete, so they instead engaged in unstructured social time. During this time, the Leaders played video games and others had snacks. Despite not having a formal activity at that time, the Leaders engaged in a wide range of projects throughout the year including a training and fitness program (MIssion Fit), 3D printing, cooking lessons, gardening, Run Club, etc.

Summer Observations

The preK-K class was observed during the end of their Circle Time activity and the beginning of their indoor recess. At the end of Circle Time, the students sat quietly on the rug surrounding their teacher as she completed a lesson on national parks. Afterward, the students were released to recess, where they eagerly grabbed bins filled with toys, mostly building blocks, from the shelves to play with. The students immediately gathered around the toy bins together on the rug and began playing and building together without conflict. The students were also very eager to play with their instructors, who joined them on the rugs and built with them. The Grade 1-2 class was observed during their Circle Time activity, in which they discussed what elements they would change or add to the summer program if they could. The students sat together on the rug in the classroom around their teacher and waited eagerly to be called on and share their ideas one by one. The Grade 3-4 class was observed during their In My Skin enrichment activity. The students completed a worksheet titled "Just Checkin' In", which asked how the

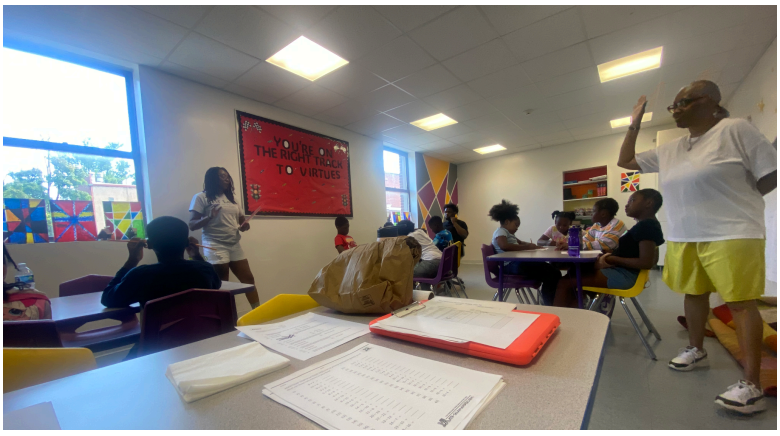


student felt that morning. Students had the option of five emotions to choose from at the top of the page (represented through emoticons), followed by a section to write about the most frustrating aspect of their week, the most enjoyable aspect, and anything else they would like to share. The students then engaged in a discussion about their feelings and how to express them constructively. After the Just Checkin' In activity, students moved into making gratitude lists. The Grade 5-6 class was observed during their Circle Time activity. The students eagerly participated in an activity called Random Numbers. The students received a worksheet with the numbers 1-100 listed in 'random' order and had one minute to circle all the numbers in consecutive order. The students were instructed to attempt to identify the pattern being repeated. After one minute ended, each student shared the highest number they reached, and a student who successfully identified the pattern went around to his peers, explaining his observations. The LINK Leaders (grades 7-12) were given the option to participate in martial arts instructed by Charm City MMA or yoga instructed by Bold Yoga. The martial arts group participated in warm-up exercises including jumping jacks, 'champion push-ups' (students go down, say "I'm a champion!", and push themselves back up), and partnered sit-ups. The students also did a series of group activities such as various crawling exercises (e.g., crab crawls, army crawls, and bear crawls) and cartwheels before learning various self-defense techniques. The yoga group laid on yoga mats placed between the library bookshelves. Their instructor sat in the middle, guiding them through meditation and self-affirmations. After this meditation, the students regrouped and engaged in a discussion about the different chakras, how they affect their lives, and tools for dealing with difficult feelings (e.g., using nature to ground yourself when anxious, using self-affirmations to build self-esteem).

Classroom Management

School Year Observations

The class sizes were relatively small, allowing teachers to employ strong classroom management skills. For example, in the Grade Pre-K-K class, teachers provided reminders to the students regarding classroom boundaries; e.g., "let's listen", "sit on your bottom", "we are too loud and we can't hear our friends". In the Grade 1-2 class, teachers provided students clear instructions to ensure their song and dance routine to "Count on Me" by Bruno Mars remained coordinated. When students had a conflict, teachers effectively maintained order in the classroom. Additionally, teachers directed students to clean up their snack before playing ("Do you want your snack?", child responds "no", "Where should you put it?", child cleans up). In the Grade 5-6 class, two students had a disagreement and another had an outburst. The teacher pulled the students out of the



classroom and spoke to them in the hallway to diffuse the situation. Afterward, the students were allowed to return to the activity and properly participate and engage in the class. In the LINK Leaders class, one student was excused from the day's activities after making an inappropriate remark.

Summer Observations

Teachers used positive techniques to manage the classroom. Throughout the classes, it was clear that teachers upheld certain expectations that their students respectfully adhered to. For example, in the preK-K class students sat quietly and attentively during their Circle Time lesson and raised their hands patiently to share ideas. Similar behavior was observed in the Grade 3-4 classroom. In these classes, students did not engage in disruptive or distracting behaviors, so the teachers did not have to employ classroom management techniques to keep the class on task. In the Grade 1-2 class, students were asked to raise their hands and take turns speaking. In moments where the students became excitable and lost focus, the teacher employed multiple strategies to reign in the classroom, including ringing a bell, asking students to show her their 'quiet coyotes', and blowing a whistle as a last resort. After employing these strategies, students were able to complete their Circle Time discussion and transition into their indoor recess, where they worked together and independently. In the Grade 5-6 classroom, students raised their hands and waited to be called on to respond to questions posed by their teacher. When the class began to get off track, the teacher employed strategies such as clapping and having the students respond with the number of times he clapped.

Safety and Security



School Year Observations

Program staff closely monitored students inside and outside the facility. For example, in the preK-K and Grade 1-2 classes, teachers closely monitored students and the two entrances/exits to the playground as the children played outside on the playground equipment. When students needed to use the restroom, one teacher would accompany them inside the library. The program building is locked, and all visitors must be buzzed in at the back entrance and are met by program staff. The VLP Library is usually a public space, but during the February 22nd visit, the program staff monitored all visitors entering the building and was closed to the public.

Summer Observations

Students appeared to be well-monitored and

teachers kept all students in sight during transitions. The grade preK-K, 1-2, and 3-4 classrooms had a teacher and a student assistant in the classroom to supervise students at all times. The grade 5-6 classroom had at least one instructor in the classroom at any given time. The proximity of the classrooms also allows for teachers from other classes to monitor students in the hallway and quickly check in with students who may be distracted. The LINK Leaders group (grades 7-12) was also well supervised. The students were divided into two groups, and at least two instructors were with each group at any given time. The facilities housing the LINK Summer and LINK Leaders programs remained locked throughout the day, making them inaccessible to unapproved guests.

Student Engagement



School Year Observations

During their recess time, the preK-K class and the Grade 1-2 class played well with their peers without conflict. The preK-K class remained highly engaged while learning the "Fifty Nifty United States" song, and were excited to practice. The Grade 1-2 class had a lot of fun and was also engaged while practicing "Count on Me" by Bruno Mars. The Grade 3-4 class remained focused and embraced their creativity while completing their rock paintings. Students aptly followed their teacher's instructions, such as being quick to comply when asked to sit down or to put their sketchbooks away. The students enjoyed each other's company and cooperated well with each other. The students also remained engaged and focused while practicing their choreography for the End of Year Celebration. In the Grade 5-6 class, the teacher and assistant teacher provided lessons for the engineering activity, and students remained excited and engaged throughout the activity. The Grade 5-6 class remained attentive while working on their engineering project and compiling their presentation. The Leaders enjoyed each other's company and were engaged with each other during their downtime, playing games and conversing with one another. During their Spanish language enrichment, the Grade 3-6 classes were engaged, asking questions, and attentive during instruction and assignments.

Summer Observations

Throughout all the classes observed, it was very clear that the students were highly engaged and excited about the activities they participated in. In the Grade preK-K class, students sat quietly on the carpet around their teacher as she completed the discussion on national parks. Afterward, these students were excited to share their ideas with their peers and their teachers. During their indoor recess, students played and worked together to build towers and other artifacts with the available materials. In the Grade 1-2 class, the teacher asked students during Circle Time to share their ideas about the question she posed. The students raised their hands to be called on and enthusiastically responded to the remarks of their peers. Throughout the conversation, it was

clear that these students were often overcome by an uncontrollable desire to share their thoughts and ideas about the activity with their peers and teachers, sometimes forgetting to take turns speaking. In the Grade 3-4 class, students responded to their teacher's prompts by sharing their feelings and their experiences of frustration or excitement throughout the week with their peers. In the Grade 5-6 class, students raised their hands to respond to their teacher's questions and in some instances posed follow-up questions to their teacher. The students diligently completed their Random Numbers activity and were happy to receive insight from their peers to reveal the pattern in the worksheet. In the LINK Leaders groups, students followed instructions and offered words of encouragement to their peers. Students in the martial arts group eagerly completed exercises with their partners and held each other accountable for following the assigned activities through to completion. The students in the yoga group engaged in a fruitful and positive conversation with their instructor about the chakras and coping techniques.

Teacher-Student Interaction

School Year Observations

Program teachers built positive, trustful relationships with their students throughout the year. For example, the Grade 1-2 and 3-4 classes looked up to their teachers for guidance as they choreographed their respective routines for the End of Year Celebration. In the Grade 1-2 class, the students worked independently and teachers circulated the classroom to assist students that needed help. During the rock painting activity, the grade 3-4 teacher continued to offer students guidance and encouragement about their creativity while they completed their rock painting projects. After completing their homework, the LINK Leaders group engaged in a card game with each other and their Intern Coordinator and enjoyed other unstructured social activities.



Summer Observations

Teachers in both the academic and enrichment programming have clearly developed a positive rapport with students: calling students by name, giving positive reinforcement, and engaging with students in an excited and motivated manner. Students demonstrated a desire to interact with their teachers and clearly felt supported by their teachers and other staff. For example, in the Grade preK-K class, teachers talked to students about the artifacts they built and gave positive reinforcement. Students in this group were also excited to display their

knowledge from previous lessons. For example, one student began singing the song "Fifty Nifty United States" they had learned during the previous weeks, and the instructor joined in, encouraging the student to continue reciting the states in alphabetical order. During the indoor recess, the teacher and classroom assistant sat with the students, helping them with their activities, and offered words of encouragement to students excited to show them their work. In the Grade 1-2 class, students had a clear admiration and desire to assist their teachers. For example, at the beginning of Circle Time, the teacher remarked on how the classroom library was disorderly. Two students immediately got up and began cleaning/picking up the books without being asked, and the teacher thanked them for this. Later in their discussion about things they would change or add to the program, one student commented "I would kick out all the adults so we can do whatever we want!" to which another student responded "Don't get rid of Ms. Bekki!" and hugged their teacher. Another student remarked that he would "add a one to five-minute break for the teachers," further displaying the care the students have for their instructors. In the Grade 3-4 class, the teacher prompted students to share their feelings and encouraged quieter students to share their thoughts. The students openly shared their emotions with their teacher and shared experiences of negative emotions with their class. The teacher validated her students, making the room a safe place for emotional vulnerability. In the Grade 5-6 class, the teacher started the day by checking in with his students. As the class discussed current events, the teacher asked thought-provoking questions to make students think more deeply about the opinions and viewpoints they hold. The teacher also asked students for their feedback on things such as program field trips. The students were unafraid to be completely candid about their opinions, further displaying a deep comfort between students and instructors. During their Circle Time activity, the teacher handed out worksheets and gave students step-by-step instructions as to how the activity should be completed. The students followed the instructions, and afterward one of their peers aided the class in identifying the pattern in the worksheet (as instructed by the teacher). The teacher offered words of encouragement to students who felt embarrassed about not getting as far in the activity as others. In the LINK Leaders groups, students were given instructions for how to do a certain activity, and instructors modeled these exercises to the students before they did them. Instructors also offered robust words of encouragement to students who raised their hands to share their ideas or felt uncertain about their ability to perform different activities. The LINK Leaders students were also often seen joking with their teachers and classmates, further suggesting a strong sense of comfort within their environment.



Utilization of Resources

School Year Observations

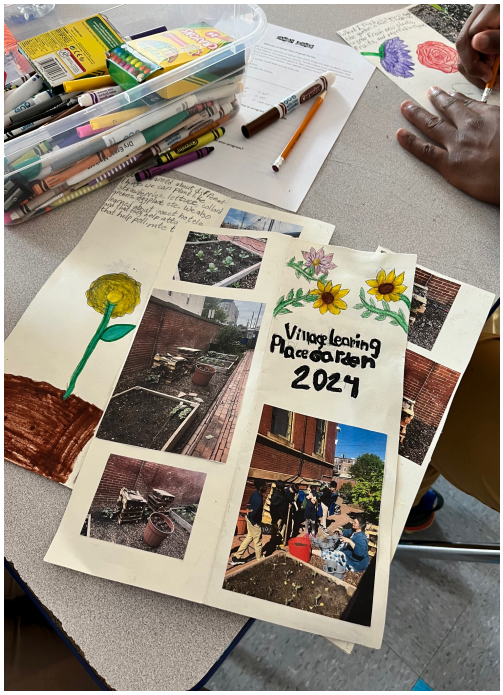
The resources available to the program are well utilized. Classrooms and outdoor spaces served as meeting spaces for academics and enrichments. The program provided a vast array of resources for student use including whiteboards, craft supplies (e.g., rocks, paint, and paint brushes), educational toys, group games (e.g., decks of cards), individual desks, building supplies, handouts, computers, and books.

Summer Observations

The resources available to the program are well utilized. Classrooms served as meeting spaces for academics and enrichments and students also had access to the playground and garden. The program provided an array of resources for student use including worksheets, blocks and other toys, clay and crafting materials, books, education tools, exercise and yoga mats, individual desks, computers, and internet.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Recommendations

Opportunities



- The program has maintained a high level of program participation, with 94% of enrollees in the LINK After School program being regular attendees in SY 2023-24. The program also maintained a high participation rate among the LINK Summer and LINK Leaders Summer programs (91% and 87%, respectively).
- During year one of the program cycle, VLP met its milestones for all eight (100%) of the assessed indicators either during the SY, summer, or both. .

Challenges

- The program struggled to collect data for all participants across indicators, which made it difficult to produce an analysis wholly representative of the students in the program.
- Due to competition with other afterschool programs and personal circumstances experienced by students, the program experienced a significant attrition rate in the first year of the program cycle.

Recommendations

- Track and evaluate students in the LINK and LINK Leaders programs more closely, especially regarding program assessments, to ensure that progress toward indicators is assessed more accurately and reflects the experiences of all students served.
- Consider creating an exit survey for families to complete when withdrawing from the program. This may help the program gather constructive feedback to reduce its attrition rate in the coming years.