PROGRESS BRIEF
from PROGRAM DIRECTORS
Key Findings selected from the 2021 Mid-Year Report (MYR)

Guidance for Reading this Brief

What is the *Progress Brief from Program Directors*?

This Brief presents a selection of results from the Program Directors' Mid-Year Reports (MYR). The MYR is an online, annual reporting requirement of all 21CCLC sub-grantees, completed by Program Directors at or near the mid-way point of each program year. The MYR is designed to gather information for two main purposes:

(1) to **monitor implementation progress and assess needs of programs** at the statewide collective, or whole-group, level, with the objective of sharing meaningful findings to use for benchmarking and for distributing guidance and technical support;

(2) to gather data related to quality indicators from each individual program as part of the State's accountability management system (along with the risk assessment, Site Monitoring Visit, and other review mechanisms that help NYS maintain compliance with federal and state regulations). *See page 16 for more information about the Mid-Year Report.*

This Brief contains information related to purpose (1). It is intended to **share key findings and recommendations** with all NYS 21CCLC stakeholders, based on the combined data provided from every Program Director across the State. The purposes of reporting these findings are to promote reflection by providing greater awareness of statewide trends, and to help drive collective improvement efforts.

How to use this Brief

(1) **Self-Reflection Tool.** This Brief provides an opportunity for programs to reflect upon their progress and practices in relation to the statewide trends, while also reviewing their level of implementation in accordance with the quality standards and expectations. It celebrates winning ways, while also satisfying curiosity about what others may be doing.

(2) **Help Inform Program Management & Improvement.** Taking it a step further, programs can identify areas for improvement within their organizations. They may consider incorporating new insights or exploring efficiencies and opportunities to update or refine program management policies, structures, and practices.

Guidance related to implementing practices aligned with the quality standards and expectations have been sprinkled throughout; these will appear as "program tips" alongside the findings, and in a few sections, they have been gathered inside highlighted boxes. These tips invite readers to consider *what is important about these findings?* and *how can this information be useful for me and my program?*

Mid-Year Report 2021 Respondents

- **140**[1] respondents representing **100%** of the statewide sub-grantee programs (56% NYC, 44% RoS) completed the Mid-Year Report.
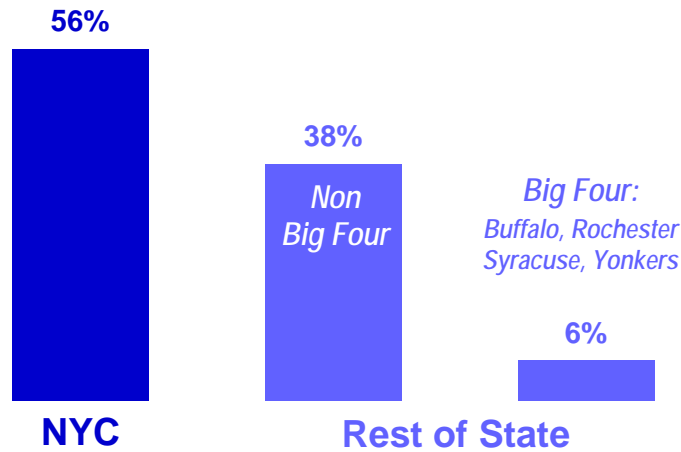
- **Most programs (58%) operate multiple sites**, compared to 42% of programs that operate a single site.


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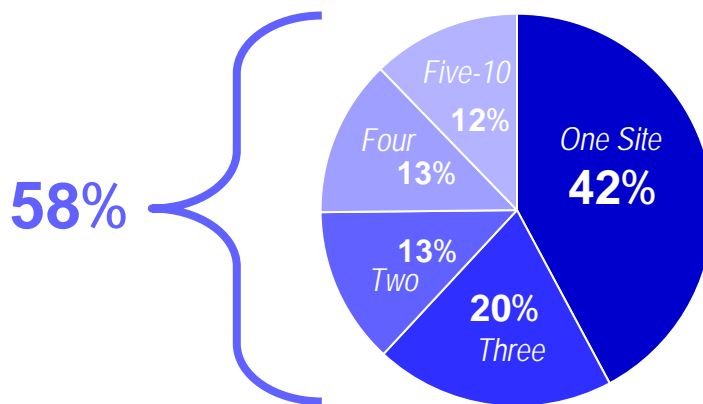
[1] There are 138 subgrantee programs; there were two submissions from individuals representing the same program.

<div style="border: 2px solid blue;">

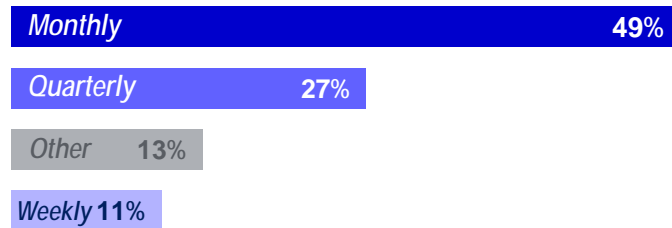## Staff Turnover & Professional Development

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Turnover

- **Over half of Program Directors (52%) reported turnover in key staff positions over the past year.*** This is down from 68% reporting turnover in the previous year.[2]

- *Among all programs reporting turnover (N=73),* **Site Coordinators** were the most frequently reported of the positions requiring replacement (61%). This is up slightly from the 57% reported in the 2020 MYRs. School Administrator and Fiscal Manager turnover reports were also up slightly from last year. Fortunately, **Program Manager turnover was down 25 percentage points** from the 51% reported the previous year.
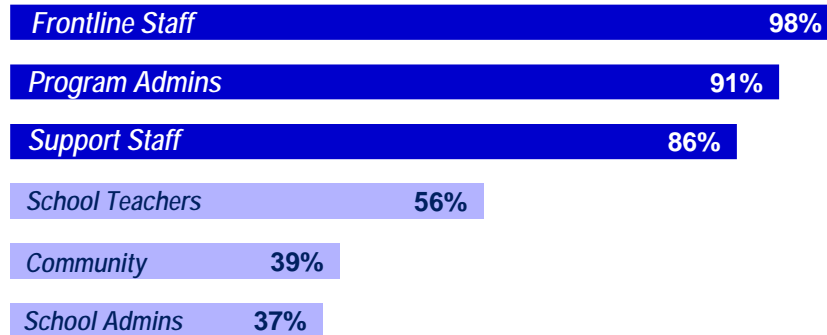
Position	Percentage
Site Coordinator	61%
Other	29%
Program Manager	26%
School Admin.	24%
Fiscal Mgr.	20%
CBO Executive	9%
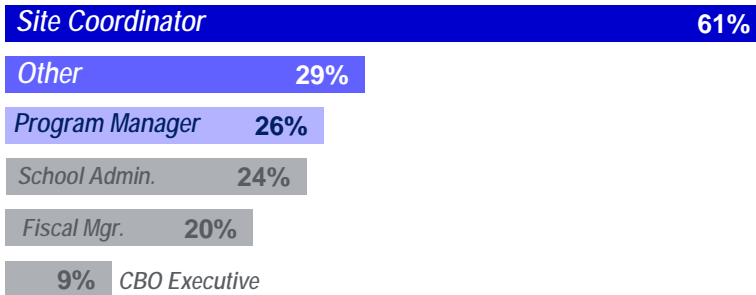
*Note: For this question, some programs had turnover in more than one position.

Professional Development (PD) frequency & availability

- About half of programs provided **monthly** PD training to their staff.

Frequency	Percentage
Monthly	49%
Quarterly	27%
Other	13%
Weekly	11%

- **Professional Development was made available to a variety of stakeholders, prioritizing frontline staff.** Some programs designed PD for school and community partners – a strategy shown to help strengthen relationships and build support capacity.

Stakeholder	Percentage
Frontline Staff	98%
Program Admins	91%
Support Staff	86%
School Teachers	56%
Community	39%
School Admins	37%

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[2] Throughout this report, mentions of the "previous year" or "last year," refer to data gathered from the 2020 Mid-Year Report.

Professional Development (PD) topics offered

- Most Program Directors reported offering PD focused on the topics of Social Emotional Learning, Youth Development and Student Engagement. 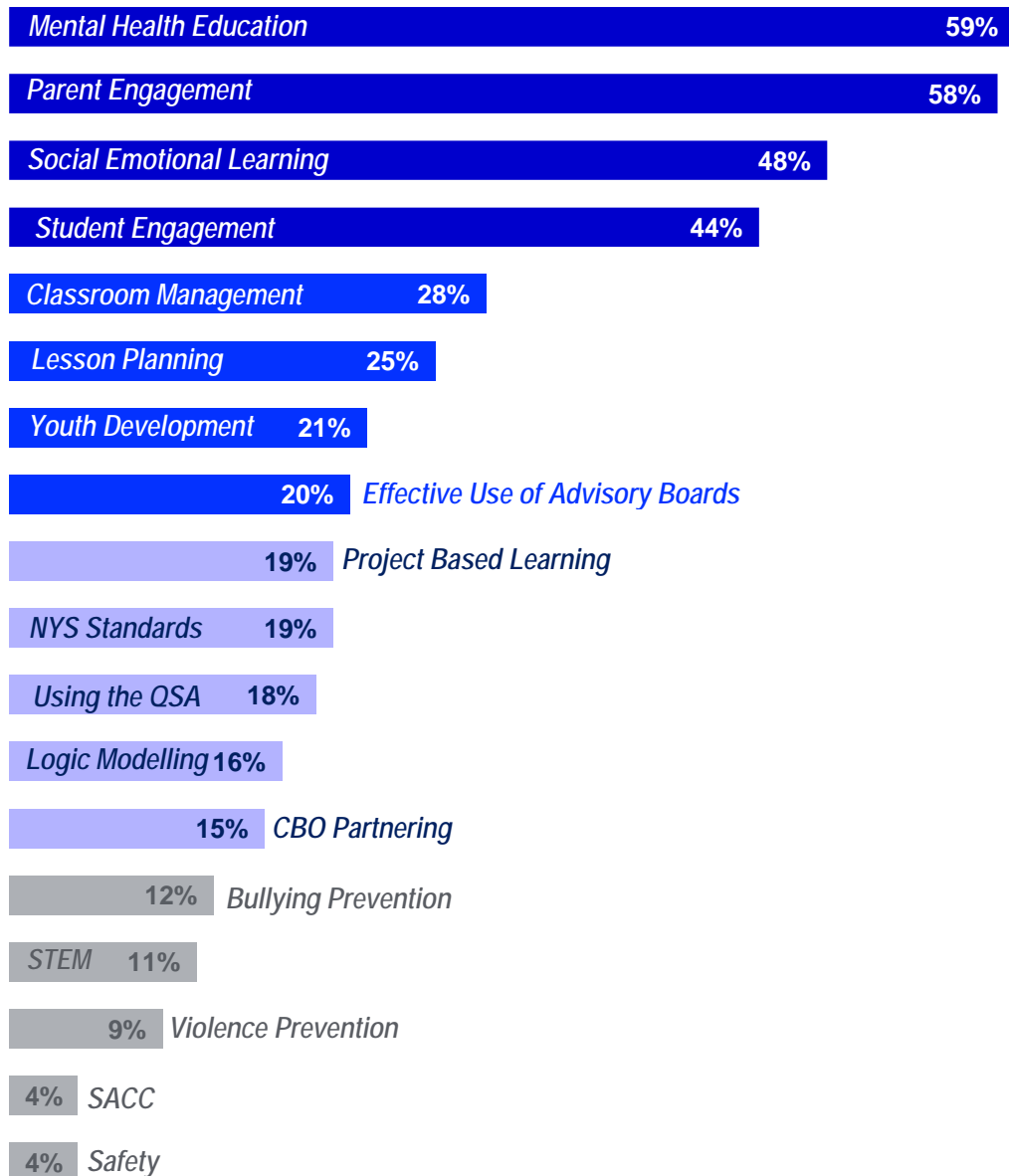Compared to last year, SEL was up +8 percentage points, whereas Youth Development fell by -4 percentage points. The highest gain of these top three topics was with Student Engagement, up +10 percentage points.

- Training focused on operational/technical topics (e.g., SACC requirements, effectively using Advisory Boards), which are designed to target a more limited audience of administrative staff/site leaders, remained consistent with the 2020 report as the least frequently offered.

Topic	Percent
Social Emotional Learning (SEL)	94%
Youth Development	86%
Student Engagement	81%
Classroom Management	76%
Lesson Planning	71%
Safety (CPR, First Aid, AED)	69%
Parent Engagement	69%
Mental Health Education	68%
STEM	64%
Project Based Learning	56%
Using the QSA	51%
Bullying Prevention	50%
SACC Mandated Training	45%
Violence Prevention	45%
NYS Learning Standards	42%
Partnering w/ CBOs	31%
Using Advisory Boards	23%
Logic Model Development	20%

Professional Development (PD) needs identified

- **Program Directors identified Mental Health Education as the top training need.** This has risen +18 percentage points from last year. While Parent Engagement and SEL remained top needs, Student Engagement rose sharply by +17 percentage points. Classroom Management, which was the second most needed training reported in 2021, dropped –19 percentage points.

| Training Need	Percentage
Mental Health Education	59%
Parent Engagement	58%
Social Emotional Learning	48%
Student Engagement	44%
Classroom Management	28%
Lesson Planning	25%
Youth Development	21%
Effective Use of Advisory Boards	20%
Project Based Learning	19%
NYS Standards	19%
Using the QSA	18%
Logic Modelling	16%
CBO Partnering	15%
Bullying Prevention	12%
STEM	11%
Violence Prevention	9%
SACC	4%
Safety	4%

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Program Tips

Tap 21CCLC Network resources for turn-key training in critical topics to build, reinforce, and supplement staff skills

➤ While the primary services 21CCLC programs provide are designed for students and their families, programs are also responsible for selecting, preparing, training and actively supporting staff members. Because it is an additional function which is critical – even if not within the primary scope/purpose of the program's mission – it may be useful to **outsource or team up with a provider** who designs adult learning materials.

➤ Training that targets the critical point-of-service skills needed by frontline staff makes sense to prioritize in terms of time and budget. But what about other training needs that may need attention? Training on things such as management/operational strategies, data collection, compliance, etc. can be designed for select groups of stakeholders and developed from previously prepared content. Access the Resources Centers' archives for subject-specific presentations delivered at conferences and virtual learning symposia.

➤ The Resource Centers offer orientation trainings for new program leaders via conferences and webinars. Contact your regional RC and/or check the NYS 21CCLC Website and the NYSED SSS Website *[Also includes a lot of resources, not all of which are on the 21C website]* for available recordings & resources from these trainings. The RCs also offer Technical Assistance support on an as needed basis. If you need personalized, specific guidance on staff recruitment and training, reach out to schedule a technical assistance call.

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Partnership with Local Evaluator

Communication with Evaluator

- **Most Program Directors (84%) communicated with their Evaluator on a Weekly or Monthly basis.** This is up 6 percentage points from 78% reporting this frequency last year.

Monthly	**43%**
Weekly	**41%**
Other **11%**	Every 2 Weeks, Two times/Week
4% *Quarterly*	
1% *Daily*	
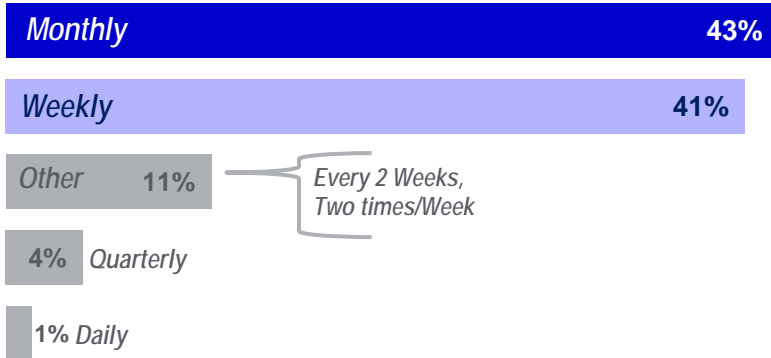
Using Evaluation to Support Program Improvement

- **Program Directors reported that they use evaluation findings and recommendations, as required, to drive improvement.** They captured the evidence of this data-based improvement planning in the following forms:

   **79%** in *Notes/Minutes* from Advisory Board or other meetings

    57% in *Correspondence Records* between program staff, school staff, local evaluator and/or community partners discussing improvement

    56% in *Action Plans*

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Budget Investment in Evaluation

- Programs Directors reported[3] an annual investment in evaluation services averaging **$44,060**. The highest reported investment was $399,900 the lowest was $350. The most commonly occurring single amount was $93,000 (13 occurrences), while the median (the middle value) was $32,000.

- About one third of all programs (36%) reported investing $50,000 or more on evaluation, averaging over $86,000; this is compared to nearly two-thirds (64%) who invested less than $50,000, averaging a little over $23,000 per year.

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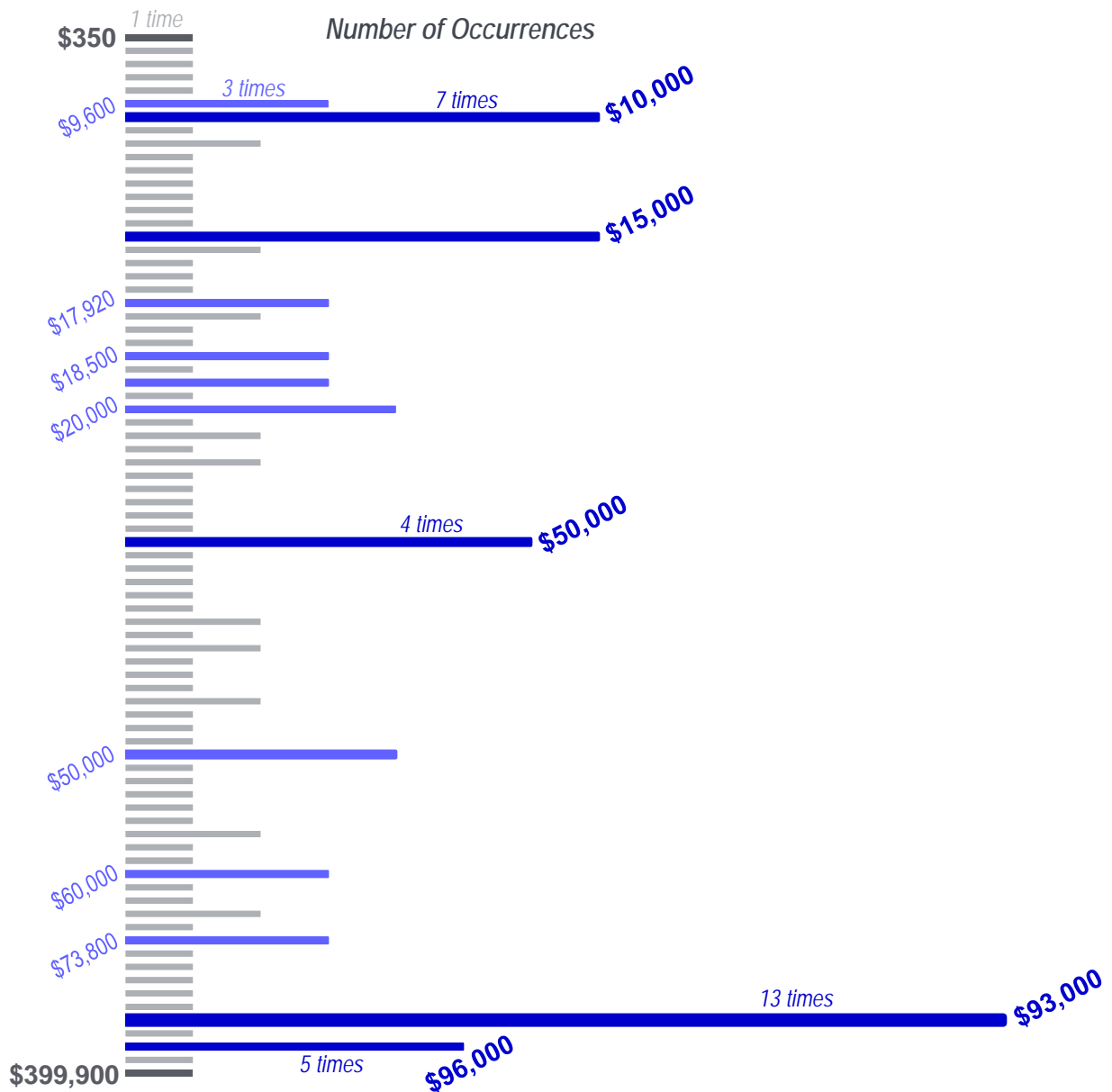
[3] The evaluation budgets reported above have not been compared against each program's total operating budget to verify their accuracy (all should be within the 8% cap of their total program budget). It would be interesting to compare programs based on the proportion of the total budget allocated to evaluation rather than the total dollar amount. This proportional comparison would effectively put all programs of different sizes on a level playing field to compare how much they committed to the evaluation.

Program Tips

Use evaluator findings and recommendations to drive program improvement.

➤ Maintaining communication with your evaluator is important to facilitate collaboration on data collection, to schedule visits, meet deliverables and engage in discussions.

➤ Programs are required to communicate with stakeholders about evaluation findings and to provide evidence of these publications/communications for compliance *with SMV Report Indicator H-7.* It is part of the expectation of programs to inform stakeholders about program progress, accomplishments, and improvement efforts using up-to-date data. Beyond compliance, the use of data to communicate program performance can be leveraged strategically in efforts to:

> ✓ **help recruit and retain participants,**
>
> ✓ **solidify school and community partnerships,**
>
> ✓ **help support fund-raising efforts, and**
>
> ✓ **broadly promote the quality and sustainability of the program brand**.

➤ Local evaluators should provide the most recently gathered, relevant information in **consumer-friendly formats** for Program Directors to distribute or embed in program publications/brochures, meeting agendas, etc.

Value your Evaluator

➤ It is critical to understand how integral evaluation is to your program; not simply as a required component, but how it contributes to its success. Your evaluator should keep track of how closely you are implementing what you proposed in your grant, the progress you are making toward your goals, and suggest strategies for continuous improvement. All these roles help your program to stay on track, grow stronger and more effective, all while helping to meet reporting requirements. Your evaluator should be helping you do the good, hard work you do better.

➤ Evaluators receiving lower amounts have the same responsibilities for data collection, analysis, and reporting as those receiving higher amounts. Even if your budget decreases due to enrollments below your target, your evaluator is still required to do the same amount of work to document your program's implementation and outcomes.

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Engaging Program Stakeholders

- Program Directors reported large and small group meetings and check-ins for convening staff, partners, and other stakeholders to discuss programming.

Large Group Collaborative Meetings for data review and strategic planning

- Annual Trainings/Retreats (during summer, or holidays/vacations)
- Bi-annual Program Review & Planning
- Quarterly Advisory Meetings
- Monthly Stakeholder Meetings

Small Group Collaborative Meetings for short-cycle feedback and activity planning

- Weekly Activity Planning Sessions
- Daily Pre-Program Staff & Partner "Micro" Meetings
- Team Leaders'/Coordinators' Meetings, weekly/bi-monthly, as needed
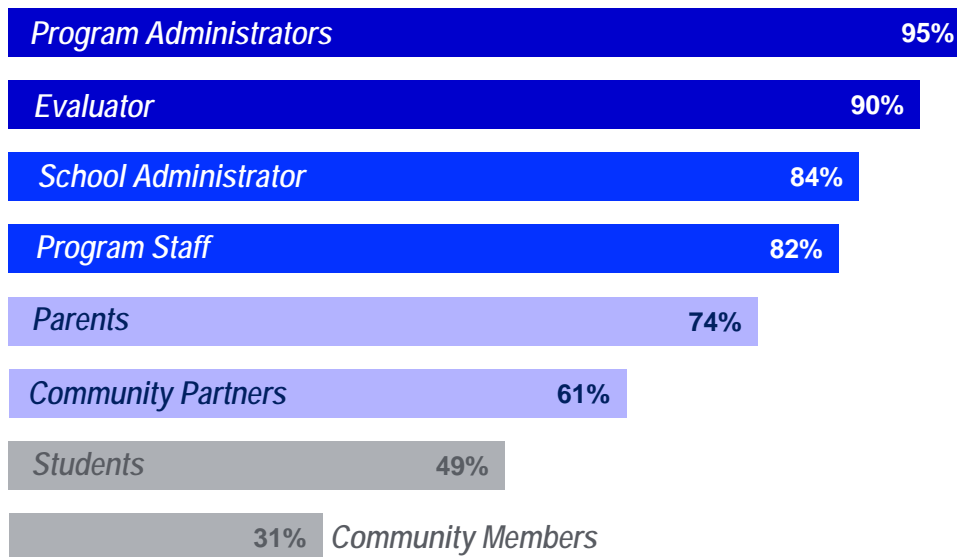
Communication Check-In Systems for schedule, resource, and curriculum updates

- In-person, phone, or email conversations between program leaders, school leaders, and/or community partners
- Program Director attending community meetings to share highlights, gather input, solicit services & supports
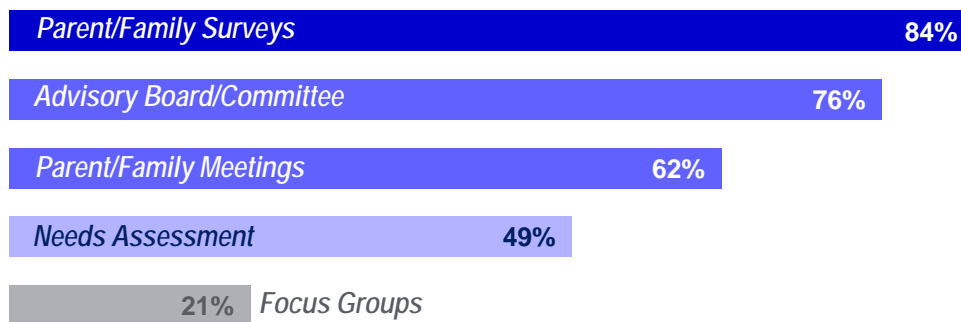- Parent check-ins at pick-up/drop-off

Advisory Board

- Most key stakeholders were reported to have participated in Advisory Board meetings; however, **Students** and **Community Members** **continue to be the least represented groups**. Compared with the previous year, student participation demonstrated the sharpest decline, down -14 percentage points. Community members declined -11 percentage points.

- **Program Administrators, Evaluators, School Administrators and Program Staff continued to be the most regularly participating stakeholders,** with most groups demonstrating a slight increase from 2020. There was a slight decline in the participation from Parents (-2) and Community Partners (-6).

Stakeholder	Percentage
Program Administrators	**95%**
Evaluator	**90%**
School Administrator	**84%**
Program Staff	**82%**
Parents	**74%**
Community Partners	**61%**
Students	**49%**
Community Members	**31%**

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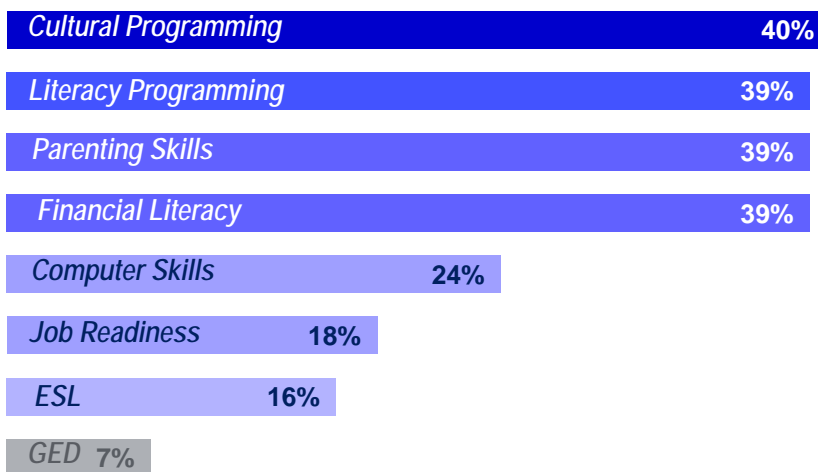
Family Involvement in Program Design

- **The large majority of Program Directors reported using** surveys **and** meetings **to keep families meaningfully involved with the program design and policies.**[4] These results are consistent with the results from the previous year. A slightly larger percentage reported using needs assessments (+10 percentage points) and focus groups (+3%). The use of Family/Parent Meetings declined -11 percentage points.

> *Tip:* While meetings invite exploration through dialogue and opportunities to gather more detailed feedback through live interaction, surveys invite a potentially larger number of stakeholder voices to weigh in on pre-selected and open-response questions. Both methods can be used together to collect insightful information about families' satisfaction and needs.

Parent/Family Surveys	84%
Advisory Board/Committee	76%
Parent/Family Meetings	62%
Needs Assessment	49%
21%	*Focus Groups*

Programming for Families

- While the two types of family programming most offered by programs – Cultural Programming and Literacy – remained in the top position as the previous year, both had declined by -14 and -13 percentage points. Slight declines occurred across all other types compared to 2020, except for Financial Literacy which was up +3 percentage points.
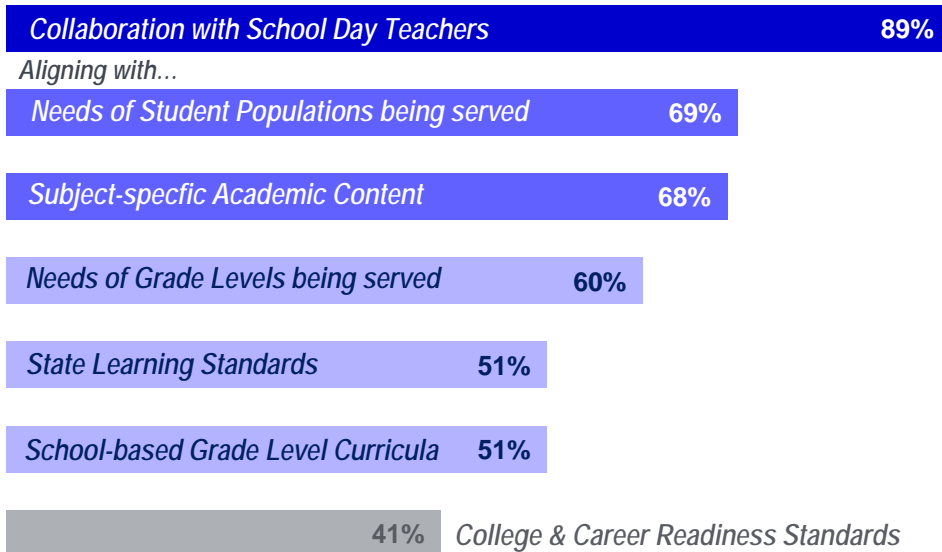
Cultural Programming	40%
Literacy Programming	39%
Parenting Skills	39%
Financial Literacy	39%
Computer Skills	24%
Job Readiness	18%
ESL	16%
GED	7%

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[4] While a lower percentage of Program Directors reported that they conducted a standalone Needs Assessment, a number of programs indicate that they use the strategies of satisfaction surveys and stakeholder meetings to include an assessment of family needs.

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Collaboration with School Day Leaders & Staff

Strategies for Linking Programming with the School Day

- **Active collaboration with teachers** was **the most reliable strategy used by Program Directors to link their programming with the school day.** The strategy of aligning with the needs of specific student populations being served increased from the previous year +12 percentage points. College & Career Readiness continued to be the least frequently used alignment strategy reported, down -2 percentage points.
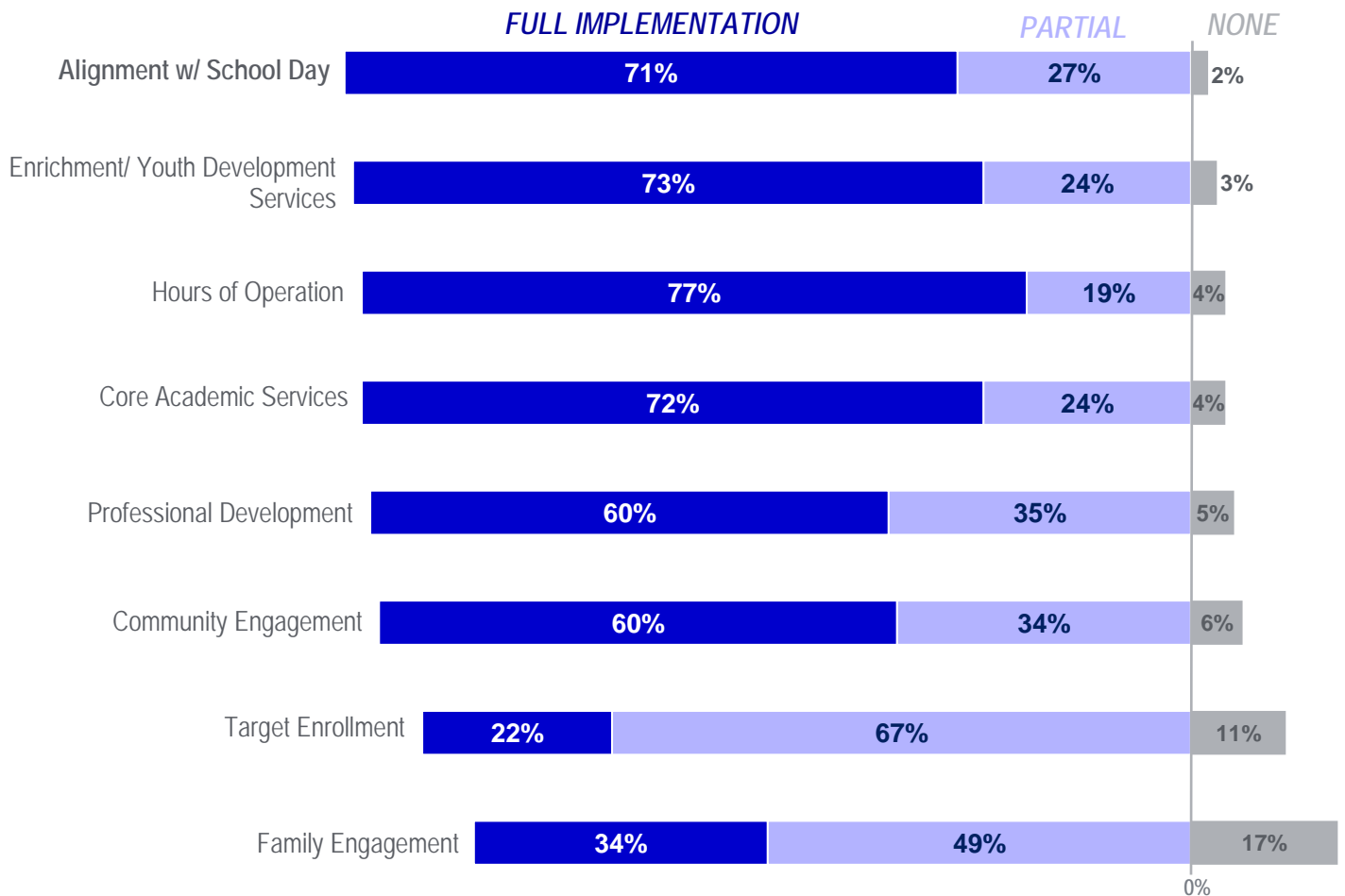
Collaboration with School Day Teachers	**89%**

Aligning with...

Needs of Student Populations being served	**69%**
Subject-specfic Academic Content	**68%**
Needs of Grade Levels being served	**60%**
State Learning Standards	**51%**
School-based Grade Level Curricula	**51%**
41%	*College & Career Readiness Standards*

Best practices for facilitating program linkages to the school day include:

- ➤ Employing day school-teachers and aides in program

- ➤ The appointment of a staff member who serves, at least in part, as a liaison between the program and the school day staff/leaders. The title and role of these specialized staff members varies across programs. Some activity leaders or mentor teachers, who also belong to the instructional staff at partner schools, assume this liaison responsibility.

- ➤ Common Planning and dedicating a set time on a daily, weekly, or bi-weekly basis for the specific task of communicating with school day staff/leaders to strengthen the partnership and align supports.

- ➤ Other strategies mentioned: coordinating referral systems, data sharing agreements, and meetings with school counselors.

  Tip: Remember to document these meetings as evidence of compliance with *SMV Report Indicator F-1.*

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Fidelity of Implementation

- **The large majority of Program Directors reported they were either fully or partially implementing the required components of 21CCLC** (these components are specified in their grants and tracked on the *Template for Goals and Objectives*).

- **Compared to the previous year, an increased number (+3 percentage points) revealed they had not yet implemented one or more of these key components at the time of reporting**. This increase of programs reporting they were not implementing was consistent across ALL components. The sharpest increases were in the areas of Family Engagement (+12) and Target Enrollment (+6).

- Overall, the proportions of programs with Full Implementation of each program component declined from the previous year, while the proportions with Partial and No Implementation have risen. Professional Development implementation declined -4 percentage points. Full implementation of Enrichment/Youth Development Services declined -19 percentage points.

	FULL IMPLEMENTATION	PARTIAL	NONE
Alignment w/ School Day	71%	27%	2%
Enrichment/ Youth Development Services	73%	24%	3%
Hours of Operation	77%	19%	4%
Core Academic Services	72%	24%	4%
Professional Development	60%	35%	5%
Community Engagement	60%	34%	6%
Target Enrollment	22%	67%	11%
Family Engagement	34%	49%	17%

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Challenges, Successes & Promising Practices

- Program Directors described the challenges, successes and promising practices that emerged this past year. Engaging students in both virtual and in-person, socially distanced activities was by far the most pervasive challenge. Programs responded by meeting student needs – as well as those of families/communities – *creatively* and *individually*.

Family Engagement

- *Virtual family engagement/responsiveness to family needs*
- *Multiple communication strategies enhance both parent and student engagement*
- *Providing Wellness checks, food, and technology support to families*

Student Engagement

- *Providing differentiated academic instructional support for each student or small groups*
- *Developing creative, unique programs and services, including those to enhance physical activity and connection*

School Day Relationships

- *Strong communication between program and school personnel*
- *Improved relationships with school administrators and staff working to better serve students*

Community Building

- *Providing food, technology, clothing and other supplies to communities*
- *Engaging community partners to develop needed support and activities to students and families*

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Highlights: Voices from The Field

Challenges Programs Faced

"The impact of COVID on programming this year cannot be overstated: mostly remote attendance, screen fatigue, frequent closures of schools."

"Student engagement has been a consistent challenge during remote/blended learning, particularly as measured by after-school participation, as many students have extreme screen fatigue by the end of the school day."

"A lot of students are fully remote, have technology barriers, or are disconnected from the regular school day due to constantly shifting school day schedules. Communities are struggling to recover from COVID."

Successes And Promising Practices

"One site has weekend programming, allowing students to not have to continue to stay logged in after school. Another site has set up a weekly "Link Up" with the Site Coordinator and another school staff member, who have set up the weekly virtual space to build consistent connection and dialogue with students. It has also become a space for regular feedback from students and where they can discuss what's going on in their lives and in the world. This site is also launching a peer mentoring program to encourage student connections. For the art programming, program facilitators have gotten creative in figuring out what tools students have at home and utilizing them to create art (e.g. rotting berries and Kool-Aid to serve as natural coloring for a tie-dye activity). At another high school site, the facilitator for a music beat making class figured out how to set up a virtual soundboard. Students are now able to engage and produce music virtually together."

"We have begun working with Educators for America to implement a remote peer to peer program called Building Cultural Bridges in which students in our program are connected to students in Namibia. They write "pen pal" letters and also have the opportunity a few times a year to meet "face to face" via videoconferencing. It is engaging for students while also reinforcing writing and communication skills and exposing them to a new and different culture."

"The program has found a creative way to offer PE and Art to students in the virtual program. We have created a "Virtual Amazing Race." When students sign up, they receive a pedometer to track their daily steps. There are various step checkpoints set up for them and once they reach a checkpoint, they get a challenge to complete. This race is taking students "across the country" virtually."

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Purposes of the Mid-Year Report (MYR) for Program Directors

(1) Progress Update & Needs Assessment

> *Internal & External | Collective | Formative*
> *Who is the collected information accessible to/used by: <u>Internal</u> state-level teams & <u>external</u> program-level stakeholders | How is it reported: In aggregated, or combined, form representing the whole-group as a <u>collective</u> | When is it studied: At a mid-point as part of a <u>formative</u> review*

The State and sub-contracting partners are interested in examining the aggregated results from a number of items on the MYR to learn more about the trending perceptions and experiences of Program Directors; this is used in state-level Program planning in the following ways:

➤ The State Program Coordinator's Office uses this information, as needed, to issue guidance to the field (e.g., policy updates, clarifications) and to celebrate Program-wide successes. This includes sharing key findings and recommendations with the collective stakeholders for deeper reflection: this is the focus and intent of the *Progress Brief from Program Directors*.

➤ The Regional Technical Assistance Resource Centers (TARCs) use this information as one of multiple sources from which to identify high-priority professional learning needs and opportunities for sub-grantees. This helps them design and deliver responsive support.

➤ The Statewide Evaluator uses this data in combination with other sources to examine high-level trends impacting programs across the state, and to use findings to provide research-informed recommendations.

(2) Accountability Snap-shot

> *Internal | Individual | Intervals, As Needed*
> *Who the collected information is accessible to/used by: <u>Internal</u> state-level teams | How it is reported: In disaggregated form at the <u>individual</u> program-level | When it is studied: At <u>intervals</u> or <u>as needed</u> as part of a case-by-case review*

The questions in the MYR are aligned with the NYSED & Federal Quality Standards & Requirements* specified in the RFP, Site Monitoring Visit (SMV) Report, and other policy documents. They ask for Program Directors to respond, using the most accurate information currently available to them, about their progress achieving and maintaining compliance with these expectations.

The State Program Office and Resource Centers can use this information discerningly to assess the relative levels of progress and need at the regional and individual sub-grantee levels for monitoring purposes. MYR data is incorporated into Site Monitoring Visit preparation and review processes and used to design targeted training and technical assistance and support to address the specific needs of individual programs. Although the report references compliance documents, disaggregated information obtained via the MYR is **not used to determine compliance** nor is it attached to any punitive measures; it is one source among many used to monitor a sub-grantee's progress and current efforts towards achieving the quality standards & Requirements of the grant. *

* The quality standards & Requirements are derived from US-DOE and NYS accountability directives and linked with evidence-based practices of successful afterschool/OST programming.

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