

# Descriptive Study of Site Coordinator Perspectives on Program Goals, Recruitment, Activity Provision, School-Day Linkages, and District Support (2022–23)

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*American Institutes for Research*

Submitted to the Texas Education Agency

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- Site coordinators responding to the site coordinator survey were asked to choose their top three program goals from a predefined list. The most selected goal was “raise the academic performance levels of all participating studentspar o|

important” for activity design (82%, compared with 69% for city, 58% for town, and 65% for rural site coordinators).

- A vast majority of site coordinators responding to the survey indicated that the school district supports their program through provision of building space (81%). The next highest supports reported were staffing (62%), data analysis/analytic support (62%), and transportation (60%). The least-reported type of district-provided support was funding, with only 33% of site coordinators saying that they receive this type of support.
- Compared with site coordinators associated with school-district grants, site

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*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* *N* = 610. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

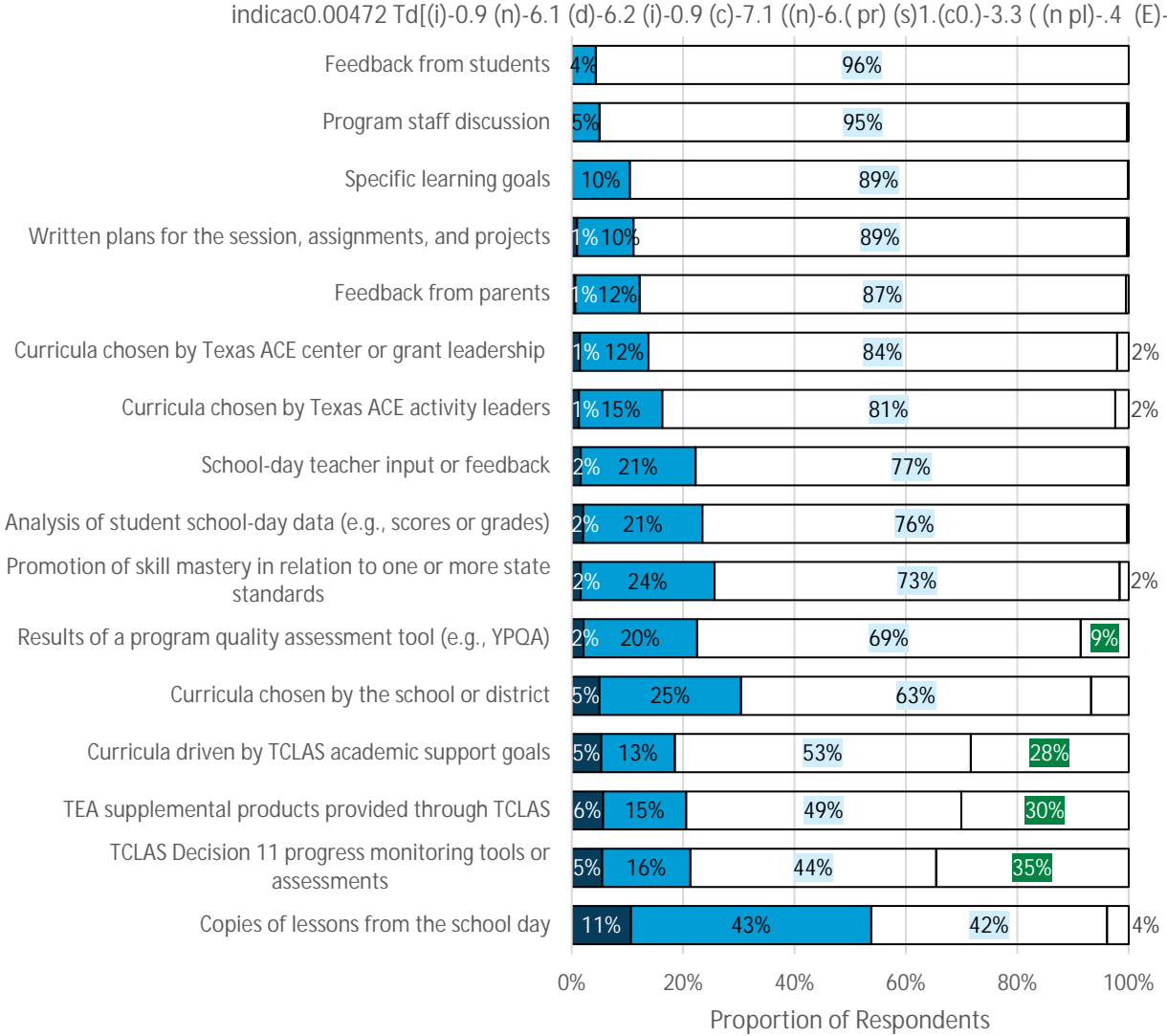
answers concerning the types of challenges they've faced in trying to meet their program goals, and of these, 78 (or about a third) said that staffing was a challenge.



In terms of \_\_\_\_\_, site coordinators who were interviewed said that they work to foster a



Q14. Thinking generally about all the activities offered in your program, what information or approaches are used to develop the content of specific activity sessions? Please



Source: Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note: N ranged from 618 to 624 for this set of items. TCLAS – Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports, TEA – Texas Education Agency, Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education, YPQA – Youth Program Quality Assessment.

*Source.*



effective (82%) and that tools or assessments included with HQIM designed to monitor student progress were at least moderately effective as well (72%). Respondents also indicated that professional development and training related to using HQIM was at least moderately effective (73%).

Several themes emerge from these findings. First, **program alignment with stakeholder interests** is very important. Within the broader goals of 21st CCLC statewide and nationally, program goals need to be aligned with school and district goals, while program services need to be aligned with individual student and community interests and needs. Aligning the program in these ways is essential to building stakeholder buy-in, which in turn is important for ensuring material and staffing support from schools and districts while keeping attendance numbers high. This is, of course, easirse







This report relies on two sources of data: a site coordinator survey and site coordinator interviews. This subsection presents a short description of each of these data types, along with notes concerning response rates and data limitations.

During

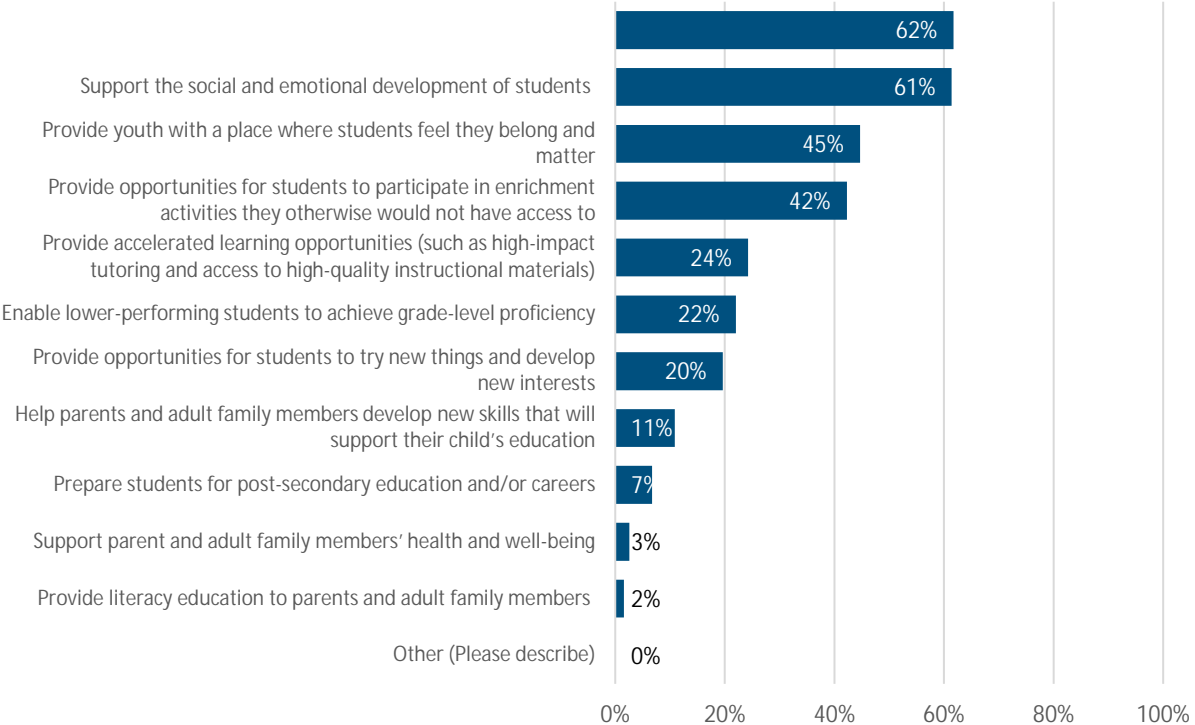
primarily to find out how new grants have approached the topics covered by the survey, with an interest in uncovering areas of particular challenge or need.

The data used to guide sample selection were therefore primarily obtained from the responses to the site coordinator survey. Criteria were based on an examination of key forced-choice responses to items

How are Texas ACE centers approaching the adoption of practices and approaches that  
? How does adoption of key practices and approaches related to the

high-level purpose, and within aligned priorities as set by TEA, each individual Texas ACE program sets site-specific goals. To gain a sense of these local goals, the site coordinator survey presented site coordinators with several questions around program priorities and goal formation. Additionally, the interviews included a series of questions that sought to explore how programs set their goals, how they assess progress toward those goals, and how those goals are adjusted over time. This section presents results of these questions.

The first question of the site coordinator survey presented respondents with a list of predefined goal types and asked them to select three that represent the highest priorities for their center. The most selected goal was “raise the academic performance levels of all participating students” (62%), followed by “support the social and emotional development of students” (61%). The third and fourth most selected goals were “provide youth with a place where students feel they belong and matter” (45%) and “provide opportunities for students to participate in enrichment activities they otherwise would not have access to” (42%). See Exhibit 1.



Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023. N = 622.

Note. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education, 21st CCLC – 21st Century Community Learning Centers.



Site coordinators associated with rural programs were more likely than site coordinators associated with other locales to select “raise the academic performance level of all participating students” as a top-three goal (72% for rural, compared with 65% for town, 61% for suburban, and 56% for city-based respondents). Site coordinators at centers primarily serving elementary students were also more likely to select this goal than were site coordinators at centers serving primarily middle or high school students (65% compared with 56%). However, site coordinators at centers primarily serving middle or high school students were more likely to select “prepare students for post-secondary education and/or careers” as a top goal (14% compared with 2%). Additional subgroup comparison data are presented in Appendix E, Exhibits E1 ^E3



*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* *N* ranged from 593 to 630, with 401 for “Other.” Percentages shown are calculated using 630 as the denominator, however, because Question 3 consisted of multiple checkbox options making it somewhat unclear what the precise denominator should be. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

In terms of the stakeholders involved in the goal-setting process, during the interviews, site coordinators mentioned including a variety of individuals. Fifteen site coordinators said that they included school administrators in the process, 10 said that they included the Texas ACE program director, and 10 said that they included other school-day staff (e.g., counselors). These were the most frequently mentioned groups included in setting program goals. Site coordinators involving school administrators said that they consulted

Additionally, eight site coordinators reported that school-day teachers (not working in the program) are involved in the goal-planning process, and eight reported that they include center

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“So we all kind of work collectively to establish these goals, especially with the input from the teachers















There was a difference in enrollment priorities in terms of locale, with site coordinators from city and suburban programs more likely to say that at least some of their activities had limited enrollment (70% for city and 73% for suburban site coordinators, compared with 54% for town-based site coordinators and 50% for rural site coordinators). Similarly, 24% of town-based site coordinators and 28% of rural site coordinators said that at least some of their activities were restricted to certain groups of students, compared with 39% for city-based site coordinators and 36% for suburban site coordinators. Additional statistically significant subgroup differences are shown in Appendix E, Exhibits E40 ^E46.

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might benefit from extra academic help or enrichment opportunities; flyers posted in the school; job announcements on websites and social media; and leveraging campus and community events such as back to school night, open house, meet the teacher, and Texas ACE summer programming. In general, word of mouth was reported as the most successful of these strategies, because students relay their positive experiences to their friends, and staff share improvements they have observed from students in the program with other students and families.

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“Definitely you want to hit the ground running. So the more that you can get that face time at the beginning of the school year, the better. So definitely whatever campus events that are held, that site coordinator wants to make sure that there, they got applications, they got maybe a table set up, something going to highlight what kids have made in the program, so some type of artifact. Just different things of that nature to help with that recruitment. So things like we have a back to-school expo during the summertime.”

– Elementary site coordinator

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“First, it's being seen. You've got to go out in the school. You cannot be just stuck in your classroom thinking that people are going to come to you. If you want people to come to your program, you have to









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“So I do this thing called student voice and choice. I actually use the form off of MyTexasACE.com to go through and find out where their interests lie. I bring that in different programs for sports and science.”

– Middle school site coordinator

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“If I’m talking to somebody new, and I have had these conversations with the new coordinators that we hired Year 1

whether they could identify any potential attendance issues. Nine site coordinators also mentioned that they proactively reach out to parents or students if they see a student's attendance start to decrease. Whether data driven or observational, many site coordinators investigate further when they see that a student's attendance declines. Two site coordinators stated that they use their child safety training (e.g., child abuse prevention and mental health training) to help them identify potential issues that could cause students to drop out of the program. Lastly, three site coordinators said that keeping lines of communication with parents open is important to keeping students enrolled in the program.

Despite these efforts, challenges

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* N ranged from 617 to 628. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

Site coordinators associated with programs serving primarily middle or high-school students were more likely to say that all or nearly all of their activities were led by a school-day teacher than were site coordinators associated with centers serving elementary-age students (39% vs. 25%, respectively). Site coordinators associated with school district grants were also more likely to say that all or nearly all of their activities were led by a school-day teacher than were site coordinators associated with non-school-district grants (34% compared with 23%, respectively), although this is expected given the access that school districts have to school-day teachers (compared with, for example, community-based organizations). These subgroup differences are also shown in Appendix E, Exhibits E47 ^E48.

Respondents who said that school-day teachers led less than half of their activities were given a follow-up question concerning







Half of the site coordinators (10) also described daily informal check-ins with school staff. They often touch base on how students did during the day—if there is anything to celebrate, watch out for, or consider concerning changes in programming (e.g., extra tutoring or homework help). These informal check-in meetings are also useful for finding out what students focused on during the school day and what students are struggling with. A few site coordinators (three) described creating opportunities for these types of informal check-ins by volunteering to be part of school-day activities and routines. For example, site coordinators mentioned volunteering for lunch, bus, or dismissal duties in addition to catching staff in the hallway for a quick discussion. Site coordinators often described informal check-ins as a convenient strategy for reducing burden on staff schedules and as an easy way to foster relationships. Some site coordinators (five) mentioned emailing staff during the day with any updates or questions, to prepare for Texas ACE programming.

Finally, one site coordinator mentioned checking in with school counselors. This type of check-in enabled the site coordinator to “get a pulse” on what they are hearing from students and to find out what trends they are observing that could inform how the Texas ACE program could further support students. Additionally, another site coordinator described how including programming events and updates in the weekly campus newsletter has been helpful in

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“Because if you don’t have access, it’s troublesome to always go to the data clerk because the data clerk...they’re also busy doing attendance, doing tracking, this and that. For you to even interfere in the morning just to ask this and that, it’s troublesome.”

– Elementary site coordinator

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“I think it encourages us to communicate with our instructional coaches more instead of us just going in there and trying to interpret the data, because some of us don’t have education backgrounds. I think by not giving us access [to data], they think they’re helping build the relationship with the instructional coach and enforcing conversations that need to happen.”

– Elementary site coordinator

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“We [Texas ACE staff] aren’t the way completely trained on some of that stuff because we haven’t been doing it. And so when we came in to run the reports, it made it a little difficult, because it’s okay, I know we can run this, but we don’t know how to do this. But it’s just that training is not all the way there yet. So when it comes to running reports, it’s just because if you’re not one of these Td [ Tw -32TJ 0 Tc- n nt ben i’



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“We do our best to work in a hand and to communicate that vision that we’re trying to support the district—they get it. They see that it’s not just giving the keys to the keys to somebody who doesn’t have a driver’s license. We actually here to help and to help grow and to work as a functioning team.”

– Elementary site coordinator

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“It’s great to share data, but the site coordinator has to know how to use it. I could look at it, so how do we implement it?”

– High school site coordinator

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The survey and the interview protocol both included questions concerning activities provided by the Texas ACE program. Specifically, site coordinators were asked about sources of information they use for activity planning, general approaches to activity planning, activity provision oversight, and coordination of Texas ACE activities with other school supports.

### Sources of Information for Determining Activity Content

Survey respondents were asked to indicate what information they consider when developing the content for activity sessions. The most selected option was “feedback from students,” with 96% of site coordinators saying that this was “very important.”<sup>10</sup> About 95% of respondents also said that program staff discussion was very important, and about 89% said that specific learning goals were very important. Interestingly, and related to the previous section concerning school-day linkages, only 42% of respondents said that copies of lessons from the school day were very important. See Exhibit 11.

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<sup>10</sup> This finding suggests that the use of student voice in determining activity content is a more widespread practice than the site coordinator interview data on retention presented earlier might suggest.

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* *N* ranged from 618 to 624 for this set of items. TCLAS – Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports, TEA –

Program Quality Assessment) was very important for activity design than were site coordinators associated with other locales (82%, compared with 69% for city, 58% for town, and 65% for rural site coordinators). Suburban site coordinators were also more likely to say that use of curricula driven by TCLAS Decision 11 academic support goals was very important (62%, compared with 50% for city, 54% for town, and 47% for rural site coordinators) and were also more likely to say that TEA supplemental products provided through TCLAS Decision 11 were very important (64%, compared with 46% for city, 51% for town, and 37% for rural site coordinators). Note, however, that for both of these latter two response options the proportion of respondents selecting “not sure” was high, with 22% to 36% of respondents within each locale choosing this option for each item. Additional subgroup differences are presented in Appendix E, Exhibits E57 ^E67.

When site coordinators who were interviewed were asked to elaborate on the sources of information they use to plan activities, nearly all of them (19) described collaborating with teachers to learn what they cover during the school day and to solicit opinions about lesson or activity ideas. Additionally, 14 site coordinators mentioned that they collect feedback from students, whereas four site coordinators said that they collect feedback from caregivers. Nine site coordinators said that they also use academic progress reports to help create activity lesson plans, and seven site coordinators shared that they ensure that their activities address student needs by aligning activity topics with school-day foci for that week or by covering topics that school-day teachers say need extra attention. Three site coordinators reported using behavioral data.

Site coordinators also discussed how helpful different kinds of data have been in developing lesson plans. In terms of academic data, the data types that site coordinators said were most helpful included state and local benchmarks, grades, and STAAR results. In addition to this—and in keeping with the findings provided in the Linkages to the School Day section and th 00.009 (mark ( o)t)Tj-0.00

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“So given any child or any issue that we see, let’s see that the population of fourth and fifth graders that are performing that well in math. That means when it comes down to me and my planning for the [Texas ACE] program, we do incorporate academics as well as enrichment. So we want to have a part of the two-afterschool segment to be helping in the issues that we see that are the most prominent academically in the school. We [try] to go to where the kids don’t necessarily see it as, oh, we’re doing work. We incorporate it into an activity to where we will take them outside and it’s like, okay, you’re playing soccer, but like if you kick it from here to here, what angle and at what speed, and so makes five goals and so makes three goals, how many is that? How many more did Person A make than Person B? So we incorporate the subject areas that have low performances into the ACE activities.”

– Elementary site coordinator

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“We had quite a few students who did not pass ARS STA. We had a math accelerated learning class created for these students. So we have students that are required by the state to do a 15-hour or a 30-hour—they have to do a remedial, a remedial class for that. So what we did with students to save them from having to get pulled out of all these other activities, we offered them a class for them to come to and complete these hours.”

– Middle school site coordinator

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### Approaches to Lesson Plan Creation and Review

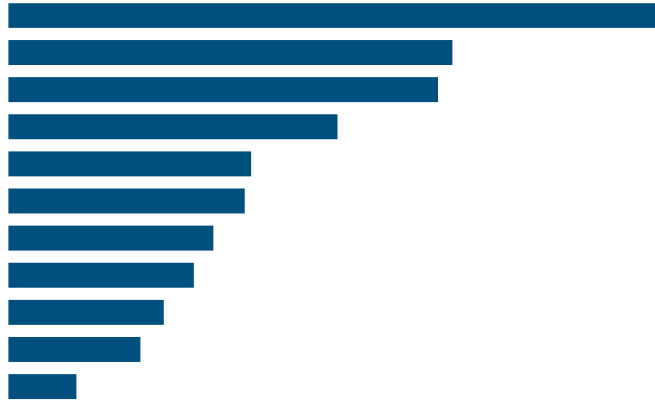
During the interviews, site coordinators were asked to elaborate on their activity planning procedures. At a high level, site coordinators tended to describe three approaches to activity planning: (a) The site coordinator primarily produces the lesson plans for staff, (b) the site

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Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.  
 Note. N = 623. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

There were several lesson plan review differences in terms of grade levels served. Site coordinators associated with programs serving primarily elementary students were more likely to say that their grant’s independent evaluator reviewed lesson plans (33%) than were those associated with programs serving primarily middle or high school students (24%), whereas the site coordinators at programs primarily serving middle or high school students were more likely to say that school-day teachers reviewed lesson plans (49%) than were site coordinators at programs primarily serving elementary students (36%). Site coordinators associated with school districts were also more likely to say that school-day teachers reviewed lesson plans (45%) than were site coordinators not associated with school districts (33%). Additional subgroup comparisons are presented in Appendix E, Exhibits E68 ^E70.

### Activity Oversight

For evaluation and general program improvement purposes, Texas ACE programs conduct activity observations. With this in mind, the survey and the interviews asked about activity oversight, both in terms of observations and post-activity debriefs. Unsurprisingly, 94% of survey respondents said that site coordinators conduct activity observations, whereas 68% said that project directors do them. Sixty percent of respondents said that peer activity leaders observe activities. Activity debriefs tended to be less common than observations (regardless of

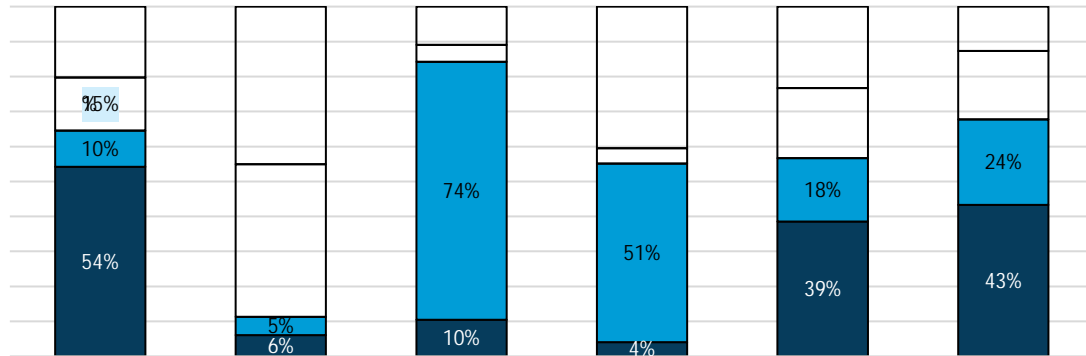


who does them), but site coordinators said that they themselves were most likely to conduct such debriefs (76%). See Exhibit 13.

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* *N* = 623. Texas ACE –





Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. N ranged from 459 to 587 for this set of items. MTSS – multi-tiered system of supports, Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

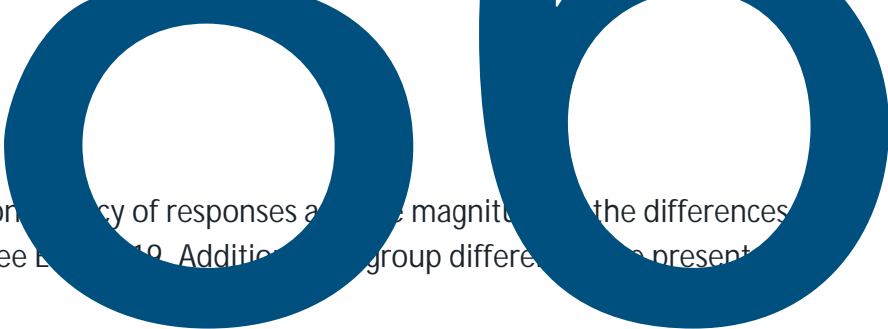
To gauge how involved site coordinators are with different types of school-day planning during which services could be coordinated, the survey included a series of questions about participation in committees, teams, and councils. Overall, only about a third (36%) said that they were involved with a school improvement planning committee, whereas 33% said that they were involved with grade-level teams. Just over a third of respondents reported that they do not participate in any school-day committees, teams, or councils at all (36%). See Exhibit 15.



Site coordinators were further asked whether their center has a standing committee, team, or council that works to broker access to wraparound services such as mental health services or adult education. Roughly half (52%) of site coordinators said

Suburban site coordinators were more likely than site coordinators from other locales to say that there was a group at their center designed to broker wraparound activities (65%, compared with 54% for city, 42% for town, and 45% for rural site coordinators). Site coordinators associated with school district grants were also much more likely to say that they have such a group (60% vs. 39%) and, when there is such a group, that they participate in it more (with 34% of site coordinators associated with school district grants participating, compared with 22% of site coordinators not associated with school district grants).

answers. The least



unsurprising, of course, but the consistency of responses and the magnitude of the differences make this a noteworthy finding. See Exhibit 19. Additionally, group differences are present in Appendix E, Exhibits E86 ^B9.



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“Anytime I need anything, it ~~doesn't~~. [The district] will go to storage, dig around, try to find it for me. If not, they figure out somewhere where they ~~can get~~ ~~doesn't~~ matter.”

– K-12 site coordinator

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In talking about district support, site coordinators said that district buy-in is critically important, noting that it is difficult to obtain district support without mutual trust and relationship building. Site coordinators mentioned open communication as important for establishing buy-in. Further, by way of negative example, nine site coordinators mentioned reluctance on the part of the district to provide program support and cited a lack of buy-in or understanding of Texas ACE as the core of the problem. That said, these site coordinators also mentioned tedious approval processes for purchasing, lack of access to facilities, and miscommunication as important factors as well.

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“I think the district forgets how important before and afterschool programming is. For some families make or break.”

– K-8 site coordinator

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To overcome challenges obtaining district support, site coordinators suggested that establishing a presence outside of program time by attending district meetings and/or setting up Facetime meetings with the superintendent can help. They also said that clearly communicating program goals and showing the alignment between Texas ACE and district goals helps establish buy-in, as does periodic sharing of program data and outcomes to demonstrate the benefits of the program.

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“I think that anyone who might be having difficulty, they just got to persevere and may have to get a little annoying with it, I guess you could say. And just making sure that, not to be a pest, but to clearly communicate that these ~~are~~ 21st Century kids. These are our kids, and ~~not~~ solving to

## Texas ACE Program Alignment with School and District Goals

To gauge the extent to which Texas ACE programming is folded into school improvement plans, the survey included a question asking whether school improvement plans specifically referenced Texas ACE programming. A majority (57%) of site coordinators said that it was (“yes”), with only 7% saying that it was not referenced. More than a third of respondents (36%) said that they did not know whether their program was referenced or not. See Exhibit 20.

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* N = 618. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

Note that site coordinators from suburban programs were most likely to say that their programming was referenced, with 68% saying “yes” compared with 56% for city, 46% for town, and 58% for rural site coordinators. Also, site coordinators associated with school district grants were more likely than those not associated with school district grants to say “yes” (63% compared with 47%, respectively). Additional subgroup differences are shown in Appendix E, Exhibits E90 – E92.

Site coordinators were further asked to select what they thought were their principal’s top three goals for the Texas ACE program. Nearly three quarters of respondents selected “raise the academic performance levels of all participating students” as one of the principal’s top three goals, whereas slightly less than half (46%) selected “support the social and emotional development of students” as a top-three principal goal. Interestingly, comparison with the site coordinators’ top goals as reported in Question 1 revealed a sizeable discrepancy for this particular goal, with 61% of site coordinators choosing support of social emotional development of students as a top-

principals (with 42%) was “enable lower-



*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* *N* = 628. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

Town-based site coordinators were more likely to say that their program was funded by TCLAS

Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Evaluation

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. N = 128. HQIM – high-quality instructional materials, TCLAS – Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports  
Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

Second, respondents who said that they were funded by TCLAS Decision 11 we

What especially innovative or robust practices and approaches are being employed that may warrant consideration as best practices for the Texas ACE community more broadly?

This section presents best practices identified through the site coordinator interviews. These focus on ways that site coordinators may be able to better define or adjust program goals, improve recruitment and retention strategies, strengthen linkages to the school day, tailor activity provision, or garner district support.

Note that the best practices presented here may not be suited for all centers. Each practice will have to be considered in light of program-specific contextual factors. These practices are therefore presented to TEA and Texas ACE programs merely as promising strategies or approaches that may warrant program-specific consideration and adaptation.

There were several important practices around goal setting and goal attainment discussed during the interviews. To begin with, site coordinators stressed that it is important to . Establishing open, regular communication with stakeholders may of course take on a variety of forms, depending on contextual factors (with common practices involving formal and informal meetings, email, newsletters, caregiver events, etc.), but several points bear consideration:

- x *Involve multiple types of stakeholders in the goal-planning process.* Consider involving school-district staff, school-day staff, students, caregivers, and community partners.
- x *Create multiple ways to communicate.* Site coordinators mentioned attending district and school-day staff meetings, holding regular check-in meetings with school administrative staff, and catching up2 (nv)ewn4 ( )]T2 (nv)en4 (r)142 (s)ng4 (s)]TJ-0.3 (ul)4mmsn t ( uf4 (m)r1 (sm0 (re)3TJ0 T( fa)4







to keep track of individual student needs. Regarding this last item concerning data use, more than half of the site coordinators said that they have intentional strategies for gaining access to school-day data.

Please note these efforts in particular:

- x Site coordinators emphasized the importance of clearly communicating program vision to school and district staff and explaining how program goals align with district goals. This provides a justification for why access to school-day data is necessary while simultaneously helping build buy-in.
- x Also described under “Best Practices: Goals,” site coordinators reported that leveraging data clerk positions at schools not only helps in terms of gaining access to data but also helps improve site coordinator data literacy.
- x Site coordinators reported that improving data literacy through grant- or TEA-provided training has been helpful for keeping track of student needs.
- x Creating program-specific data tools can be helpful for keeping track of student needs as well (e.g., Excel reports, other data reports).

One site coordinator mentioned that they se4.1 (a)4 (c)8 10 (t.4 Tf0.001 Jf.(S)4 (u10 ( (e)13,0 Td[( Td[( Td[( Td[

Simply knowing needs, of course, is not sufficient for providing high-quality activities. Site coordinators also noted that they use data to inform activities (e.g., student needs data based on school-day records and student feedback) and work with the school-day staff to ensure alignment between the program and general student need areas. Site coordinators who were interviewed also encouraged \_\_\_\_\_ in developing and conducting activities. Ten site coordinators mentioned event support as a primary way their district supports them and also support by providing guest speakers, funding, advertising/promotion, cohosting, staffing, and setup. This emphasizes the need to establish a good relationship with the school district.

In terms of activity delivery itself, activities such as \_\_\_\_\_, as already described. Regarding enrichment activities, as discussed in the preceding Findings section, it may be \_\_\_\_\_; this may not only provide new ideas for activities to offer, but can also help ensure that staff lead activities that they themselves are passionate about. Incorporating youth “voice and choice” (previously described) can be valuable for enhancing student engagement. Finally, as presented in the main Findings section, site coordinators stressed the importance of \_\_\_\_\_ creatively in enrichment activities to reinforce school-day learning while keeping participants engaged.

The importance of establishing a good working relationship with the school district has been outlined in the previous subsections on best practices. To summarize these briefly, site coordinators’ recommendations for building or strengthening the Texas ACE program’s relationship with district staff are as follows:

- x Establish a presence outside of program time by attending district meetings and/or setting up virtual meetings with the superintendent.
- x As part of that communication with the superintendent, and when communicating with district staff generally, communicate program goals to show the alignment between Texas ACE and district goals.
- x Periodically share program and outcome data aligned to district goals to show how the Texas ACE program appears to be benefiting students.

Overall, the preceding best practices present a clear picture of how site coordinators help their programs succeed. Effective communication and goal alignment are foundational components for successful programs. Further, effective site coordinators are able to identify where their



leaders to see how the Texas ACE program can help them accomplish goals that are important to them. To convey this information, however, program staff have to arrange for discussion time with school and district leaders and do so on a regular basis for the purpose of keeping the program visibly relevant.

Implied in this, of course, is communication with community stakeholders, including both partners and parent/family members. Such communication is essential for assessing community strengths and needs, for setting student development goals, and for telling stories of program success. Enabling caregivers to provide feedback in an ongoing way is also important, noting that such opportunities need to be designed to enable adults to provide sincere, fully articulated feedback (e.g., using anonymous suggestion boxes in addition to formal and informal information-gathering approaches). Communication with students, and notably allowing for student voice and choice, is also a highlight, understanding that students who have a say in the activities (what they are or how they go about them) will be more likely to stay engaged.



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U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers program description*. <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/21st-century-community-learning-centers/>

Vinson, M., Belmont, A., Fales, R., & Bishop, A. (2023). *Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant evaluation: Texas Afterschool Centers on Education, descriptive study of project director and site coordinator perspectives on staffing (2021–22)*. American Institutes for Research. <https://tea.texas.gov/reports-and-data/program-evaluations/program-evaluations-out-of-school-learning-opportunities/texas-ace-implementation-report-21-22.pdf>

The survey you are being asked to complete is part of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers evaluation being conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR). TEA has contracted with AIR to evaluate the 21st CCLC programs (also known as Texas Afterschool Centers on Education (Texas ACE) program) to assess programs, studentersionucat(m)6.8 (s[(s)-1r.1 (r) (o)1.9 p6 (e)9 (r)4.7 u.6 (s)-3.6 R)it ish (A nplet 2(h ( 0 1 (i)3.1 (on (s)-1..1 (a)2 (r)4.60.003 0 1 ( niraeitar[(C)5.9 .A39.434 -3 (D)1d.8 (e)9 (y yo)1.9 puniaAla7



1. Which of the following represent the top three goals for your 21st CCLC program at this center? Please place a 1 next to the goal that represents the highest priority for your 21st CCLC, a 2 next to your next highest goal, and a 3 next to the third highest.

a. Enable lower-performing students to achieve grade-level proficiency	
b. Raise the academic performance levels of all participating students	
c. Provide accelerated learning opportunities (such as high-impact tutoring and access to high-quality instructional materials)	

d. Support the social and emotional development of students

a. Need to address student social and emotional needs				
b. Need for programming that addresses academic learning loss				

c. Need to address college and

c. ...needed additional support developing English language skills	{	{	{	{
d. ...needed additional support developing social and emotional skills	{	{	{	{
e. ...needed additional support in health and physical wellness	{	{	{	{
f. ...needed additional support in terms of college and career readiness	{	{	{	{
g. ...were interested in learning a new skill not taught during the school day	{	{	{	{
h. ...were in need of a safe place to be after school	{	{	{	{
i. ...were in need of a mentor	{	{	{	{
j. ...were in need of friends	{	{	{	{
k. ...were struggling with school-day attendance	{	{	{	{
j. ... met other key criteria defined by program. Please describe: _____	{	{	{	{

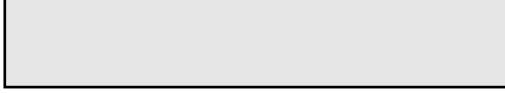




- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

12.

	Not at all effective	Slightly effective	Moderately effective	Very effective	Not sure
a. The actual high-quality instructional materials	{	{	{	{	{
b. Professional development and training related to using HQIM	{	{	{	{	{
c. Tools or assessments included with HQIM designed to monitor student progress	{	{	{	{	{



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	Lesson plan review	Activity observation	Post-activity debrief
Peer activity leaders			
Site coordinator			
Project director			
Grant independent evaluator			
Parents			
Partner staff			

School day







- o Yes
- o No
- o Prefer not to say

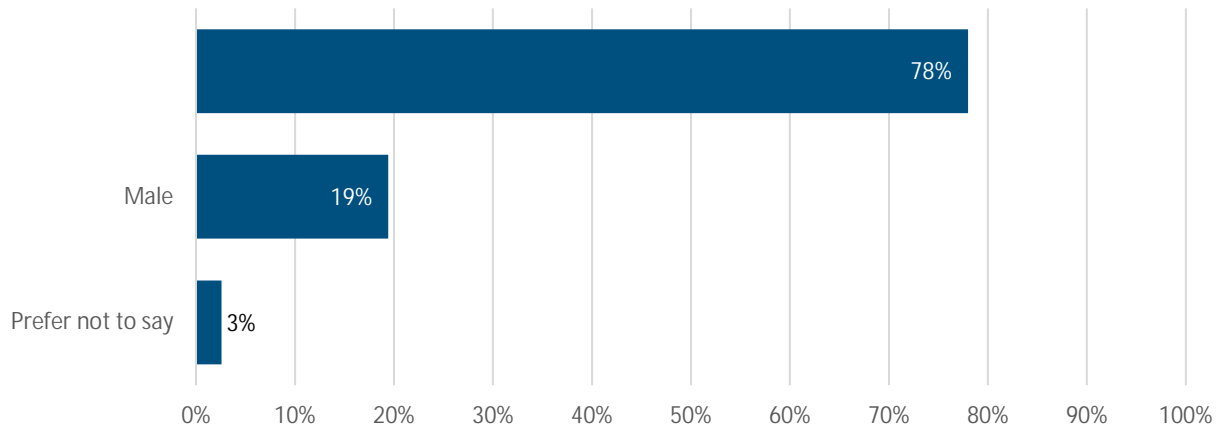
- o Female
- o Male
- o Prefer not to say

- o Hispanic/Latino
- o Not Hispanic/Latino
- o Prefer not to say

- ‘ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ‘ Asian
- ‘ Black or African American
- ‘ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- ‘ White
- ‘ Prefer not to say
- ‘ Other







*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* N = 618. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* N = 618. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.



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The purpose of this document is to outline the criteria AIR used to select a sample of Texas ACE grantees represented in Cycles 11 and 12 for inclusion in interviews in fall 2023 related to the topics of

The primary goal of the fall 2023 interviews was to identify and explore innovative, promising, or effective practices in relation to these topics, with a secondary goal of identifying areas of general challenge related to these topics (notably among Cycle 12 grantees). Ultimately, the sample selection process was intended to result in the identification of 20 Texas ACE programs to target in the fall 2023 interviews, with approximately 15 of those being from Cycle 11 programs and five from Cycle 12.

The data used to guide sample selection stemmed from two sources:

1. Administrative data sent to AIR by TEA, including:
  - a. Grant and center names
  - b. Grant type
  - c. Locale (rural, town, suburban, urban)
  - d. Grade levels served (serving elementary or not)
2. Site Coordinator survey response data collected in late spring 2023 (Cycle 11 only)

Cycle 12 programs were chosen based on administrative data (with TEA input), given that Cycle 12 was not included in the site coordinator survey (having just received grant funding). For Cycle 11 programs, an initial pool of potential interview candidates was selected based on survey response data and administrative data, and then finalized via TEA feedback. Generally, AIR sought to ensure representation within the sample in terms school type and locale, but oversampled programs serving elementary-age youth given TEA interest (and the overall proportion of programs serving this age group).

Exhibit C1 presents AIR's selection criteria related to the site coordinator survey. When creating these criteria, preference was given to those items that yielded varying responses.





	of five separate questions where the answer is “We have processes in place for this to occur and these processes are functioning well”.	points from this question.
	NOTE: Respondents indicating >=50% of activities are led by teachers do not see Q8, so this does give preference to a subset of programs (about half).	

TCLAS/HQIM

Select for programs implementing TCLAS/using HQIM (generously, since only about 20% of respondents indicated “yes” on Q9). If respondents answered Q9 with “yes” and answered Q9-Q13 (i.e., they answered

Where center scores were identical, centers were considered in blocks with school-day links, TCLAS response data, program locale, grade levels served, and grant type as deciding factors.

3. Programs were added to the sample by starting at the top of the sample list and working down. Selection proceeded as follows:
  - a. Only one center per grant was chosen, regardless of score. Other high-scoring centers for a grant were considered alternates for the included center.
  - b. Once 15 centers from different grants were identified, the resultant sample was assessed in terms of grade levels served, program locale, and grant type. The desired sample was to include a majority of elementary centers, a mix of programs by locale, and at least some variation by grant type (grant type variation may be difficult to achieve since most grants are school-based).
  - c. The sample was balanced to include sufficient centers of a given grade level, locale, and grant type, with lower-scoring centers in the sample replaced with the highest-scoring *non-sample* centers with that characteristic. For example, if there were not enough rural centers but an overrepresentation of city-based centers (as was the case), the lowest-scoring city-based center within the sample was replaced with the next-highest non-sample center that is rural based. Note that the goal was not to achieve perfect representation of the larger Cycle 11 center pool, but to ensure at least some level of variation within the sample in terms of these characteristics.
  - d. The above procedure was repeated until a well-varied sample of generally-high-scoring centers was identified.

This process was used to identify 15 centers for inclusion in the sample. The resultant list, along with alternates and lower-scoring centers, was reviewed by

Thank you for taking the time to join us for today's interview. TEA has contracted with AIR to study Texas ACE programs to explore program implementation, identify approaches and practices that appear to support effective programs, and document program outcomes and impact.

The purpose of this interview is to understand your thoughts and perceptions of how the Texas ACE program is being implemented at your center, with a particular focus on school community engagement, vision, missions, and goals in your Texas ACE program. You were nominated as someone who might be able to share some insights related to this topic. During this 90-minute interview, we will ask about center goals, student recruitment and retention, linkages to the school day, the extent of district-level support, and facilitators of and barriers to implementation. You likely filled out a survey in Spring 2023 addressing similar topics. These interviews are following up on some of those survey findings.

Your responses in this discussion will only be used to help inform our understanding of centers like yours and will not be used to evaluate your program specifically. We want to learn from you and share insights related to challenges and possible promising practices you've implemented.



- c. Are there specific outreach efforts or engagement activities designed to understand the needs of underrepresented or marginalized student groups during the recruitment process?
12. What stakeholders (e.g., school or district admin, school staff, partners, students, etc.) are most important to recruitment success and why?\*
  13. How does your center evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment efforts?
  14. How does the center foster a sense of community and belonging among students to encourage them to stay engaged and committed?\*
    - a. Probe for different types of students.
  15. What measures do you take to identify potential issues that may lead to student attrition, and how do you proactively address these concerns? (probe for high-need student difficulties at home or school)\*
  16. [Cycle 11\*] Can you describe the various retention strategies your center has implemented?
    - a. [Cycle 11\*] What strategies have been successful?
    - b. [Cycle 11\*] What strategies haven't worked? What challenges do you continue to face?
  17. [Cycle 11\*] How does your center evaluate the effectiveness of retainment efforts?
  18. [Cycle 12] Can you describe the various retention strategy6 06 (n)2..3 (t)-2.6 (y)-1.5 4 (o)-3.(.)TjEMC ET/Artifact <<>>E



## T

T tests were used to examine subgroup differences around Texas 21st Student Tracking System staff types, examining staff type mean differences between groups (in terms of percentage of total staff).<sup>16</sup> Subgroups examined included locale (rural, town, suburban, and city), grade levels served (elementary compared with middle and high school together), grant school-based status (i.e., whether the grant entity managing the grant funds is a school district, or is some other entity such as a community-based organization), and grant program cycle (Cycle 10 versus Cycle 11).

All statistically significant results are shown in this appendix (based on chi-square,  $p < .05$ ).

“Which of the following represent the top three goals for your 21st CCLC program at this center? Please place a 1 next to the goal that represents the highest priority for your 21st CCLC, a 2 next to your next highest goal, and a 3 next to the third highest.”

Chi-



b. Raise the academic performance level of all participating students.	65%	56%
f. Provide opportunities for students to try new things and develop new interests	17%	25%
h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and/or careers	2%	14%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. Primarily elementary  $N = 404$ , primarily middle/high school  $N = 225$ . Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

e. Provide youth with a place where students feel they belong and matter	42%	51%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. School-district  $N = 403$ , non-school-district  $N = 226$ . Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

“Students and families served by your Texas ACE program may have a variety of needs, including those that your program is not able to meet with current programming or the funding resources you have available. Please indicate if you are currently taking steps in your Texas ACE program to try to better address student and family needs, either by making

e. Need for food assistance	33%	24%
j. Other (Please describe)	11%	5%

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* For item e, Cycle 10 *N* = 292, Cycle 11 *N* = 301; for item j, Cycle 10 *N* = 199, Cycle 11 *N* = 202.

Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

c. Need to address college and career readiness for students	26%	19%

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* Cycle 10 *N* = 292, Cycle 11 *N* = 301. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

|--|--|--|--|--|

b. Need for programming that addresses academic learning loss	53%	37%	42%	41%
g. Need for counseling resources for parents/adult family members	47%	36%	44%	30%
h. Need for health-related resources for families	48%	34%	44%	35%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. City *N* was about 235 for most items, 152 for item j; suburban *N* was about 143 for most items, 91 for item j; town *N* was about 120 for most items, 84 for item j; and rural *N* was about 117 for most items, 73 for item j. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

d. Need to address health and physical wellness	7%	4%	9%	5%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. City *N* = 240, suburban *N* = 144, town *N* = 123, and rural *N* = 117. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

c. Need to address college and career readiness for students	26%	39%

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* Elementary *N* = 402, middle/high *N* = 222. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

c. Need to address college and career readiness for students	41%	50%
d. Need to address health and physical wellness	33%	41%



What were your center's *recruitment* priorities this year? Please indicate how important each recruitment focus was for your program's overall student recruitment during the 2022-23 school year.





Not at all

13%

Town

Not at all	2%	3%
A little	7%	8%
Some	21%	33%
A lot	69%	56%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. Elementary  $N = 405$ , middle/high  $N = 222$ . Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

Not at all	3%	3%
A little	8%	9%
Some	21%	30%
A lot	69%	57%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. Elementary  $N = 404$ , middle/high  $N = 222$ . Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

Not at all	38%	9%
A little	26%	23%
Some	23%	38%
A lot	13%	30%





Not at all	7%	14%
A little	17%	16%
Some	31%	32%
A lot	45%	38%

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* School-district grant  $N = 399$ , non-school district grant  $N = 224$ . Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

Not at all	24%	33%
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A little	18%	8%
Some	25%	24%
A lot	48%	59%

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* Elementary *N* = 403, middle/high *N* = 222. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.



Most of the activities at this site	15%	24%
All of the activities at this site	74%	68%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. School-district grant *N* = 402, non-school-district grant *N* = 226. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

How many of the afterschool activities provided at this site are only able to support limited enrollment and are therefore filled on a first come, first served basis?

None of the activities at this site	30%	27%	46%	50%
Some of the activities at this site	32%	37%	31%	28%
Most of the activities at this site	16%	18%	11%	9%
All of the activities at this site	21%	18%	11%	13%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. City *N* = 240, suburban *N* = 144, town *N* = 125, rural *N* = 116. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

None of the activities at this site	30%	48%
Some of the activities at this site	31%	34%
Most of the activities at this site	18%	9%
All of the activities at this site	21%	10%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. Elementary *N* = Sp 9-13 (n)-6.1 (i)-1d2 (g 2019 (e)3 (s)-7/.1 (i)-0.9 )-0gh2 (g 20J/TT2 1 Tf0 Tc 0 Tw 4.89j/TT0 1 Tf0.6580.96d( )Tj-0.

None of the activities at this site	50%	49%	62%	65%
Some of the activities at this site	27%	30%	17%	23%
Most of the activities at this site	10%	9%	14%	5%
All of the activities at this site	14%	12%	7%	7%

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* City *N* = 240, suburban *N* = 141, town *N* = 125, rural *N* = 117. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.





Concerning 2022-23, think about your program's activities that were designed to support academic skill-

*Question 8d. Activity leaders in my program know whom to contact at the students' day school if they have a question about student progress or status and do so as needed to support activity design.*

We do not have processes in place for this to occur.	3%	7%
We have some processes in place to support this but are working to further improve in this area.	44%	56%
We have processes in place for this to occur and these processes are functioning well.	52%	36%

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* Elementary *N* = 209, middle/high *N* = 96. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

We do not have processes in place for this to occur.	7%	2%
We have some processes in place to support this but are working to further improve in this area.	50%	47%
We have processes in place for this to occur and these processes are functioning well.	43%	52%

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* Cycle 10 *N* = 148, Cycle 11 *N* = 157. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

*Did your program also receive funding for Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) Decision 11 High-Quality Afterschool during 2022-23?*

Yes	22%	19%
No	30%	20%
I'm not sure	48%	61%

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* Cycle 10 *N* = 307, Cycle 11 *N* = 321. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.





Very important	70%	82%	62%	79%
Not sure	2%	2%	2%	0%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. City  $N = 240$ , suburban  $N = 141$ , town  $N = 124$ , rural  $N = 115$ . Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

Not important	1%	3%
Somewhat important	25%	23%
Very important	73%	73%
Not sure	2%	0%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. Elementary  $N = 400$ , middle/high  $N = 220$ . Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

#### Question 14f. Copies of lessons from the school day.

Not important	9%	14%
Somewhat important	45%	41%
Very important	44%	39%
Not sure	3%	3%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. School-district grant  $N = 400$ , non-school-district grant  $N = 221$ . Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

Question 14i. Program staff discussion.

Not important	0%	0%
Somewhat important	6%	3%
Very important	94%	96%
Not sure	0%	1%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. School-district grant N = 398, non-school-district grant N = 225. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

Question 14j. Results of a program quality assessment tool (e.g., YPQA).

Question 14I. Curricula chosen by the school or district.

Not important	4%	7%
Somewhat important	25%	26%
Very important	67%	56%
Not sure	5%	11%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. School-district grant N = 398, non-school-district grant N = 224. Texas ACE – Texas Afterss4.55.8r1.41 2.9 (-)-11.8 (Si)-1>552-0.95

Quet10



g. School day teachers	45%	33%
i. District staff	22%	14%
k. Other school-day staff	19%	11%

h. School principal/assistant principal	54%	43%
i. District staff	47%	38%
j. Other program staff	52%	43%
k. Other school-day staff	43%	32%

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* School-district grant status  $N = 397$ , non-school-district grant  $N = 226$ . Percentages shown indicate the percent of site coordinators checking the box associated with this item. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

### Question 16c. Post-activity debrief.

d. Grant independent evaluator	48%	40%

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* Cycle 10  $N = 303$ , Cycle 11  $N = 320$ . Percentages shown indicate the percent of site coordinators checking the box associated with this item. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

b. Site coordinator	73%	81%
c. Project director	52%	60%
d. Grant independent evaluator	41%	49%

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* Elementary  $N = 404$ , middle/high  $N = 219$ . Percentages shown indicate the percent of site coordinators checking the box associated with this item. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.





Yes	54%	65%	42%	45%
No	15%	12%	14%	21%
I don't know	31%	23%	44%	34%

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* City *N* = 239, suburban *N* = 141, town *N* = 124, rural *N* = 117. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.





How has the district supported your program? Please select all that apply.

Curricula Provision	54%	30%
Supplies (Art Supplies, Equipment, Etc.)	55%	33%
Funding	42%	17%
Professional Development and TA	69%	36%
Transportation	66%	48%
Provision of Data	56%	47%
Data Analysis or Analytic Support	68%	50%
Staffing	68%	50%

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.*



Yes	63%	47%
No	6%	9%
I don't know	31%	45%

*Source.* Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

*Note.* School-district grant *N* = 395, non-school-district grant 31%

Provide accelerated learning opportunities (such as high-impact tutoring and access to high-quality instructional materials)	40%	25%
Help parents and adult family members develop new skills that will support their child's education	3%	6%
Other (Please describe)	1%	4%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. School-district grant  $N = 290$ , non-school-district grant  $N = 220$ . Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education. Percentages shown indicate the percent of site coordinators checking the box associated with this item. Non-school-district grants include, for example, community based organizations.

How many years have you worked in the afterschool program at this site [in any capacity?](#)

Less than 1 year	26%	25%
1 to 2 years	20%	59%
3 to 4 years	20%	6%
5 years or more	34%	11%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Less than 1 year	28%	22%	31%	16%
1 to 2 years	41%	37%	42%	41%
3 to 4 years	10%	13%	12%	17%
5 years or more	21%	27%	15%	25%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. City  $N = 237$ , suburban  $N = 139$ , town  $N = 124$ , rural  $N = 116$ . Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

How many years have you worked in your current position for the afterschool program at this site?

Less than 1 year	33%	34%
1 to 2 years	22%	55%
3 to 4 years	20%	3%
5 years or more	25%	9%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. Cycle 10  $N = 299$ , Cycle 11  $N = 319$ . Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

Less than 1 year	35%	28%	39%	29%
1 to 2 years	38%	38%	41%	39%
3 to 4 years	8%	14%	9%	16%
5 years or more	18%	20%	11%	16%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. City  $N = 237$ , suburban  $N = 140$ , town  $N = 124$ , rural  $N = 116$ . Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

Less than 1 year	32%	34%
1 to 2 years	42%	33%
3 to 4 years	9%	16%
5 years or more	17%	17%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. Elementary *N* = 397, middle/high *N* = 221. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.



Do you live in the community served by the school(s) that your program participants attend?

Yes	43%	40%	73%	62%
No	54%	59%	27%	37%
Prefer not to say	3%	1%	0%	1%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. City *N* = 237, suburban *N* = 139, town *N* = 124, rural *N* = 116. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

Yes	50%	55%
No	49%	42%
Prefer not to say	1%	3%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. Elementary *N* = 396, middle/high *N* = 221. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

What is your gender?

Female	82%	71%
Male	16%	25%
Prefer not to say	2%	5%

Source. Texas ACE Site Coordinator Survey, Spring 2023.

Note. Elementary *N* = 396, middle/high *N* = 221. Texas ACE – Texas Afterschool Centers on Education.

What is your ethnicity?

No statistically significant subgroup differences found.



