# 21st Century Community Learning Centers: Texas Afterschool Centers on Education

## **2017–18** ( [ H F X W L Y H  6 X P P D U \

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# Executive Summary

**Table ES.2. Texas Afterschool Centers on Education Grantees and Centers by Cycle, 2017–18 Programming Period**

| Grant cycle | Number of grantees | Number of centers |
|---|---|---|
| Cycle 8 | 34 | 209 |
| Cycle 9 | 32 | 251 |
| Both cycles | 56 | 460 |

Source. Tx21st Student Tracking System (Tx21st) data for 2017–18.
Note. These numbers only reflect grantees with attendance data in the Tx21st. Grantee Tw At

**Youth Programs and Activities.** During the 2017–18 programming period, students participating in Texas ACE spent most of their time in one of three activities: academic enrichment (29%), recreation (26%), or homework help (22%). In examining the subject areas that youth spent their time in, 63% was spent attending reading-related activities, and 58% was dedicated to mathematics-related activities. Students also spent substantial amounts of time in activities classified as science or STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), 50% and 49%, respectively. Tx21st data for summer participation in programming also was analyzed and compared with the school year, revealing a similar pattern. Differences also emerged by grade levels on time spent in activities and subject areas while participating in Texas ACE. These differences often emerged between elementary to middle and high school programs.

Across Cycles 8 and 9 grantees, the majority of centers relied on the use of school-day teachers (44% and 38%, respectively). Centers across both cycles also relied on other staff (18% and 19%, respectively), college and high school students (13% in both cycles), center administrators (8% and 9%, respectively), youth development workers (4% and 7%, respectively), volunteers from the community (2% and 3%, respectively), or other employees (8% and 13%, respectively) to provide Texas ACE programming.

## Chapter 3: Texas ACE Program Implementation

The primary goal of Chapter 3 was to explore which center characteristics and approaches to program design and delivery were associated with positive student outcomes. This task was done by analyzing interview, focus group, survey, and observation data from a sample of centers funded in Cycle 9 visited by members of the statewide evaluation team in spring 2018 to support the identification of promising approaches and practices.

AIR selected the sample in a way to highlight both higher implementing and lower implementing centers. The goal was to maximize the contrast between these two categories of centers to more easily identify practices and approaches found in the higher implementing centers that may be lacking or absent in the lower implementing centers. Twenty centers were selected and visited in spring 2018: 10 higher implementing centers and 10 lower implementing centers. The sample included 12 elementary schools, five middle schools, and three high schools.

A key attribute of

- Centers with greater adoption of mathematics and verbal communication practices described on the APT-O

Based on these results, it is recommended that analyses undertaken in the next report focus on further exploring if these relationships hold true more broadly across multiple samples. The goal in undertaking these analyses would be to assess how each characteristic may be related to the types of approaches to Texas ACE program design and delivery highlighted in Chapters 3 and 4. For example, in Chapter 4, steps were taken to describe how students who reported more opportunities to experience a sense of agency and better relationships with activity leaders and other youth in the program were more apt to indicate that the program helped them with their confidence and feel better about themselves, both of which were connected to the school-related outcomes examined in this section of the report. In this sense, there may be an opportunity to further describe a sequence of practices, youth experiences, and school-related outcomes when conducting analyses for the next report that builds from this set of findings.

## Chapter 6: Local Evaluation Summary

One of the guiding objectives of the statewide evaluation of the Texas 21st CCLC program is to provide support and assistance to Texas ACE grantees and centers on how to engage in effective and meaningful local evaluation activities. To accomplish this objective, the statewide evaluation team began work in the first 2 years of the evaluation to develop and refine resources and guidelines to assist grantees in engaging in local evaluation efforts for continuous improvement.

**Local Program Evaluation Concept.** In 2018–19, AIR and the Diehl Consulting Group continued the work started in the 2017–18 evaluation year to reimagine the local evaluation support that TEA provides for Texas ACE. In 2017–18, a new Local Evaluation Guide and accompanying Local Evaluation Toolkit, which replaced the original Texas ACE Independent Evaluation Guide, were produced. The guide walks centers step-by-step through how to plan and conduct an evaluation, while also providing a toolkit of templates, tools, and measures to support implementation of the new guide. A goal for Year 2 of the local evaluation work included updating the Local Evaluation Guide and Toolkit to reflect additional input from Texas ACE and stakeholders after having had time to absorb and implement concepts and tools from both resources. To aid the updating process, the statewide evaluation team reengaged a Local Evaluation Advisory Group consisting of key Texas ACE stakeholders that served as a platform for obtaining stakeholder input for the development of the guide and the cre Cons6.1(s)-2(ou)-1.3(c)-2(r)-1.3g(e)6.1(d )0.5(as5 (et)-2-.1(y4]TJ -1(gi)1.4(3(v)-0.5(i)1.5(w)-1.5( 51.4(o)6.1(c)-2(5l)1.5)3.5(he )0.5(c)-2.7( )]Tal)1.4( )0.6(f)04( :))4.7(m)1.02 Tf

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This set of analyses focused on average effects across all students enrolled in programming in 2017–18 meeting these attendance thresholds. Results from these analyses were generally mixed, as described in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Thus, the evaluation team then took steps to isolate those centers found to have a positive effect on student outcomes, both for students attending 60 days or more during the 2017–18 programming period and those attending 60 days or more during the 2016–17 and 2017–18 programming periods. Key findings from these analyses are as follows:

- The percentage of centers found to have a positive effect on student outcomes varied considerably from one outcome to the next, ranging from only 39% of the centers with a positive effect on STAAR Reading scores to 96% of the centers having a positive effect on school-day attendance.
- When examining centers with a positive effect on a given student outcome, there were some instances where performance on a given outcome appeared to continue to improve across multiple years of participation in the program. These results may suggest that students may continue to derive benefits from sustained participation in the program in select centers. This was the case in relation to the STAAR assessment scores and disciplinary incidents.

These findings related to the STAAR assessments and disciplinary incidents are important and suggest two hypotheses that likely warrant further consideration in the future.

- There is potentially a subset of centers designing and delivering programming in a way that supports the achievement of desired outcome, and more can be learned about effective practices by studying these centers specifically.
- There are certain student outcomes where sustained enrollment in Texas ACE may be cumulative in the sense that students benefit the more they participate in programming across programming years.

Exploring each hypothesis would seem especially valuable to learn more about how positive outcomes can be achieved and the role sustained participation in programming plays in this process.

**There appears to be a pathway from select program practices to key youth experiences in programming to positive youth outcomes.** In the past 15 years, the afterschool field has come to rely on quality improvement processes anchored in formal quality assessment tools (e.g., the PQA, the APT-O) to help afterschool programs better understand the practices and approaches that result in developmentally appropriate learning environments for participating youth. When conducting visits to the 20 higher and lower implementing centers selected for inclusion in the site visit sample, Texas ACE programming was observed and scored using the PQA and the APT(ed )6.5(us)-2(i)1.5(us)-.5( )0.5(J 0 Tc 04and )4dTJ -0.

importance of creating environments characterized by the space needed for these types of interactions to take place in a meaningful and substantive way. The social environment associated with learning activities plays a critical role in shaping students' academic, behavioral, and motivational outcomes (Allen & Bowles, 2013; Patrick, Anderman, & Ryan, 2002; Wentzel, 2002). Similar but not quite as consistent results were found in relation to the written communication scale of the APT-O.

Certain types of youth experiences also were associated with certain ways in which students indicated benefitting from program participation. More opportunities to experience a sense of agency, better relationships with activity leaders and other youth in the program, and feelings of being engaged in program activities were all associated with students indicating that the program helped them with their confidence and to feel better about themselves.

These are rather important findings because each of the ways that students indicated benefitting from programming were positively related to center-level effect sizes calculated in relation to a series of school-related outcomes described in greater detail in Chapter 5. More specifically, centers with a greater proportion of Texas ACE participants indicating that the program helped them feel good about themselves or with their confidence were positively associated with STAAR Mathematics assessment scores, STAAR Reading scores, fewer disciplinary incidents, and greater school-day attendance.

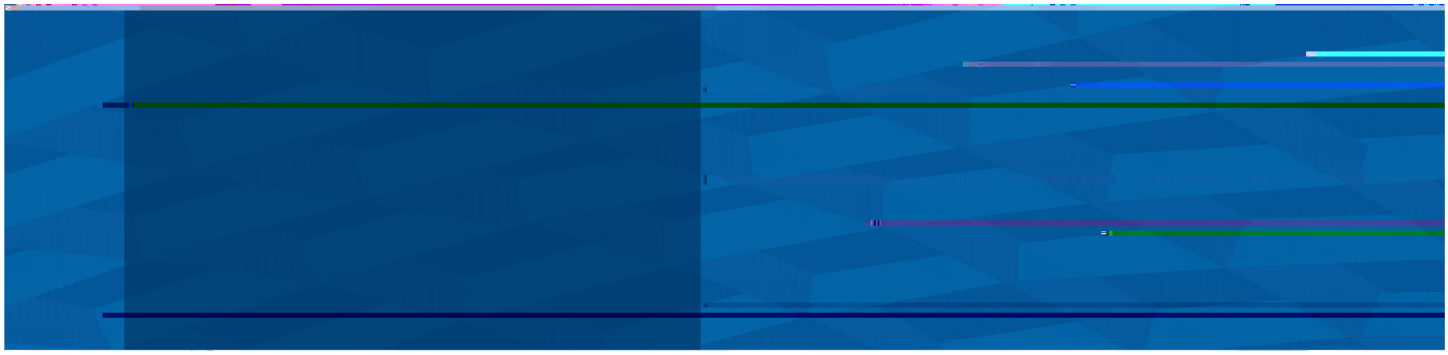
Based on this sequence of results, there is some evidence of a pathway from select program practices to key youth experiences in programming to positive youth outcomes that looks akin to the following:

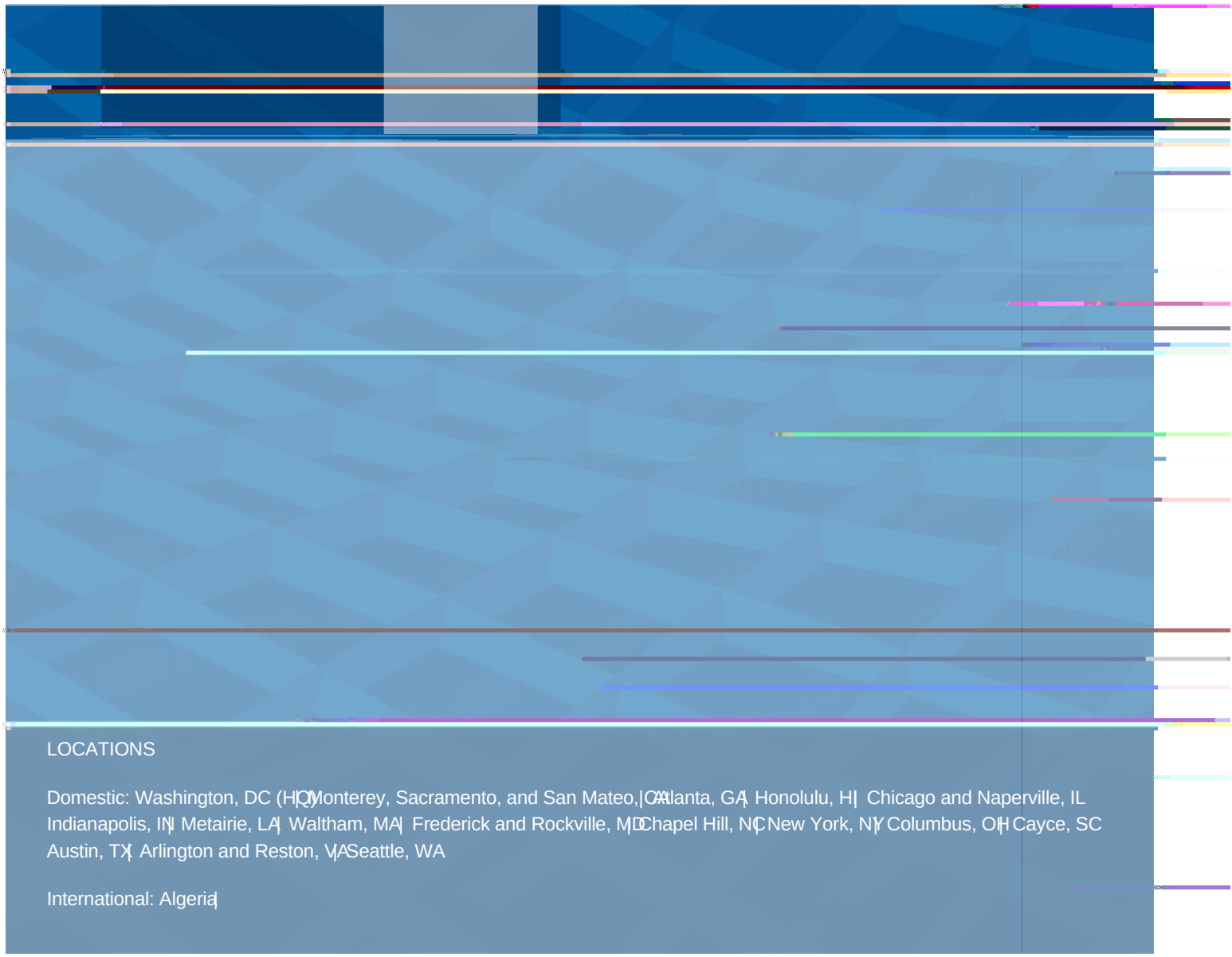
- Higher PQA and APT-O scores were associated with better youth-reported experiences in programming.
- Certain types of youth experiences in programming, notably more opportunities to experience a sense of agency, better relationships with activity leaders and other youth in the program, and feelings of being engaged in program activities were all associated with students indicating that the program helped them with their confidence and feel better about themselves.
- When a greater proportion of Texas ACE participants indicated that the program helped them feel good about themselves or with their confidence, centers were more apt to demonstrate larger effect sizes in relation to STAAR Mathematics and Reading assessment scores, fewer disciplinary incidents, and greater school-day attendance.

This sequence of significant relationships connecting program quality to positive youth experiences in programming to larger effects related to school-related outcomes should be considered of particular

There is a need to further understand how these distinguishing attributes associated with higher implementing centers potentially influence how centers design and deliver developmentally appropriate and impactful programming.

In addition, the LESI was designed to better support the ability of centers to collect and use data to support program improvement efforts as part of their local evaluation efforts. Activities undertaken by the evaluation team during the 2018-19 school year involved refinement of the local evaluation guide, development and rollout of the local evaluation toolkit, and engaging a subset of centers through a process of designing and conducting local evaluation activities to maximize the collection and use of data relevant to supporting local program improvement efforts. Efforts in the 2019-20 school year will serve to develop a series of training and support materials that can be used after the end of the evaluation to allow for the adoption of practices described through LESI across the Texas ACE community more broadly.





LOCATIONS

Domestic: Washington, DC (HQ), Monterey, Sacramento, and San Mateo, CA; Atlanta, GA; Honolulu, HI; Chicago and Naperville, IL; Indianapolis, IN; Metairie, LA; Waltham, MA; Frederick and Rockville, MD; Chapel Hill, NC; New York, NY; Columbus, OH; Cayce, SC; Austin, TX; Arlington and Reston, VA; Seattle, WA

International: Algeria