Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Statewide Evaluation Plan

September 22, 2023

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Purpose

Evaluation is a systematic assessment of the design, implementation, and/or results of an initiative for the purposes of program improvement[1]. As such, this evaluation plan will be used to guide activity within the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program (21C) starting in July of 2023 and can help inform other initiatives that support out-of-school time (OST) learning. Connected strategies may include but are not limited to the work of Agency of Education's (AOE) supportive accountability activities and associated technical assistance, grant administration and monitoring; and it can act as a road map to program quality and coherence to support the State and local grantees achieve desired outcomes for Vermont learners. AOE will also track its aligned work and strategies to these goals and results.

Introduction and Background

This evaluation plan aligns with the [strategic goal](#) adopted by the Vermont State Board of Education to **"**Ensure that Vermont's public education system operates within the framework of high expectations for every learner and ensure that there is equity in opportunity for all." In addition, the federal 21st CCLC initiative over time has been designed to support Vermont's vision for Vermont learners articulated in Title 16, the Education Quality Standards, and the Vermont Portrait of a Graduate. Most recently, this plan also supports the pillars of Vermont's Education Recovery and Revitalization Framework: Academic Achievement, Social-Emotional Learning and Well-Being, and Educator Well-Being.

Vermont's 21st CCLC program and this evaluation plan are committed to acknowledging connections to other state and federal programs, funding sources and legislation, such as Vermont's Act 77 (2013), Act 173 (2018), Act 1 (2019), Act 28 (2021), Act 67 (2021), and others, and federal programs including those in the areas of nutrition, federal title programs and special education to name just a few. The AOE recognizes the importance of braiding and blending, where possible, funding across systems and aligning and integrating programs, reporting and evaluation systems, and performance and quality indicators.

This plan updates and replaces the last plan finalized in 2014 that informed Vermont's 21CCLC program through the pandemic of 2020. Due to the results of the evaluation conducted during the pandemic, the focus of this plan is on implementation, with a goal to meet and/or exceed pre-pandemic performance.[2] As such, the updated evaluation plan includes, overall, 13 new items, 20 revised items and 14 items were retained. The following codes are used in the chart below to indicate ***=new, **=maintained, or *=revised. [3]

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[1] We are using the same definition being used throughout the 21st CCLC system in concert with USDOE.

[2] Creation of this plan took place over two years and involved meaningful feedback from over [35] people including many local, state, and national level 21st CCLC stakeholders. Emanuel Betz was the author.

[3]

What	New # compared to old plan	Maintained#	Revised #
Goals	1	3	1
Results	4	8	5
Indicators	8	3	14

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The following principles guided the design of this updated plan:

Principle 1: Design to avoid replicating existing scholarly research and to complement but not duplicate State and Agency goals and Federal Reporting "GPRA" indicators.

Principle 2: Focus on a unified statewide evaluation, where both state and local programs will use and/or adopt it.

Principle 3: Support accountability, implementation, and continuous improvement efforts.

Principle 4: Identify projects that exceed the result statements in a majority of items as statewide models that can offer new approaches to support growth and improvement.

Principle 5: Maintain continuity with historic data indicators while engaging in improvement activities.

This plan will be in effect for at least five years or until July 1, 2028. In the first year of the plan, and in subsequent years for new projects as they are funded, local grantees will be asked to voluntarily adopt all or any parts of the plan to complement and/or extend their local comprehensive evaluations. In addition, in the first year of the plan, indicators and results may be amended at the discretion of the Agency of Education. Using this plan as a broad-based growth model over time, the Agency seeks to have all funded programs meeting or exceeding the results statements described below.

Goals, Results, and Indicators

Goal 1: 21C funded programs assure access and equity for all children, youth, and their families.

Result 1.1   21C funded programs serve children and youth who have fewer opportunities to learn[4] outside of the school day. **

Result 1.2   21C funded programs are open for enough hours, days, and weeks to meet children's, youth and family needs during the summer and school year. **

Result 1.3   21C funded programs have a varied base of attendees within the federal hour bands.[5] ***

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[4] Learning is meant to be an inclusive phrase, for example, validating all areas of multiple intelligence theory.

[5] The three research bands include: 90-179 hours, 180-269 hours, and 270 hours plus.

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Indicator	Below the Result statement	Meets the Result Statement	Exceeds the Result Statement	Why this matters
1.1a.21C funded sites serve <u>economically</u> <u>disadvantaged</u> <u>participants</u> [free and reduced lunch eligible] at rates that meet or exceeds the school rate.**	*Under the school average by minus 10% or more*	*TBD 2023* *parity*	*= > 10%*	Research shows that low income/ poverty includes many who have experienced opportunity gaps and lower educational attainment
1.1b.21C-funded sites serve youth with disabilities [IEP/504} at rates that meets or exceeds the school rate.**	*Under the school average by minus 20% or more*	*TBD 2023* *parity*	*= > 15%*	While just one indicator, tracking this metric can bring focus to serving and caring about potentially marginalized children and youth.
1.1 c 75% of 21C funded sites are in communities where there are <u>no</u> <u>other</u> comprehensive (>150 day) afterschool options *	*<50%*	*75%*	*>75%*	Like 1.1a, Funds will go to low income and "low opportunity" communities at the state level.
1.2 *75% of* 21C-funded sites meet or exceed the state average range and <u>are open for enough days and hours</u> to meet student and family needs during the school year and summer ***	*<10%*	*Average*	*= > 10%*	Sustained program duration is tied to positive outcomes in the research literature.

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Indicator	Below the Result statement	Meets the Result Statement	Exceeds the Result Statement	Why this matters
1.3a 75% 21C funded sites have <u>youth attending</u>[6] in at least 5 of 6 federal hours bands *****	<5	5+	75%+	This indicator reflects and measures how programs are supporting the diverse needs, interests, and program access for afterschool participants.
1.3b Site, Project, and Statewid**e** Attendance rates exceed 50% for the <u>research-based hour bands</u>[i] *******	<50%	50%	>50%	This replaces the previous federal collection methodology and previous state regular attendee designation of 30 days or 60 hours.

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[6] A minimum of three must be attained to count in an hour band.

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Goal 2: All 21C Funded programs are of high quality

Result 2.1   21C funded programs provide diverse[7] opportunities for learning, including social emotional growth.***

Result 2.2   21C funded programs encourage participants to develop skills by experiencing interests and/or content in depth. **

Result 2.3   21C funded programs use data for continuous improvement. *

Indicator	*Below the Result statement*	*Meets the Result Statement*	*Exceeds the Result Statement*	*Why this matters*
2.1a Larger sites with more than 100 (not counting PreK) youth offer a minimum range of 15-25 <u>unique program choices/offerings</u>[8] within any given week or session; or a 10-15 minimum range for smaller schools of under 100. *	<15 <10	Within the range	= >20% of avg	Numerous authentic choices, engaging options, keeps programming continually rich, flexible, and exciting.
2.2a Each 21C-funded site's programs will result in a minimum of 5 concrete examples of <u>culminating end products or performances</u>[9] during the school year***	*<5*	*5+*	*5+*	Programs with identified ends and/or a clear purpose combined with managing effective and developmentally appropriate pedagogy over time is the foundation for quality.

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[7] Diverse is meant to convey the need for the idea of a multiplicity of program types (e.g., different content) as well as building to multiple approaches or initiatives (e.g., enrichment, tutoring, youth leadership) so that a program is robust and multi-dimensional in its implementation over time.

[8] "Unique program offerings" are listed programs in a timebound program brochure yet may include other intentionally designed regular program components that occur within the same time period.

[9] There are many types of examples ranging across different content areas and experiences from short projects to evidence of accumulated knowledge or skills gained to specific artifacts or evidence created across time.

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Indicator	Below the Result statement	Meets the Result Statement	Exceeds the Result Statement	Why this matters
2.2b Each 21C funded site serving grades (4-12) will offer <u>at least 1 program offering</u> [10](3 for sites in schools with more than 100 youth) that meets for at least 30 hours and systematically builds lasting physical artistic, academic, or other skill sets**.**	TBD Below the average	TBD average	TBD Above the average	In addition to the above reasons, these programs can support outcomes and growth at a deeper more personal, or transformative level. See: <u>VT Portrait of A Graduate</u>
2.3a 90% of 21C projects complete a <u>continuous improvement recognized process</u> annually such as PQA or SELPQA after year 1 of funding. ***	Partial process completion	Observation, meetings, scores, and plan completion	Evidence of executing plan improvements	Every high-quality program should use a validated continuous improvement methodology as part of its core system infrastructure.
2.3b 90% 21C projects beyond year 3 report on <u>local evaluation measurements</u> beyond surveys and state requirements.*	Metrics exist but may not be active and/or SMART	At least 3 metrics exist with outcomes reported	More than 5 reported SMART outputs and/ or outcomes	Projects are expected to use meaningful local measures that complement or extend state and federal reporting and evaluation systems.

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[10] In this case a program offering is meant to be a specific long-term choice with substantial practice such as Jazz Club, Girls on the Run, or a musical production for example.

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Goal 3: All 21C funded programs are led by effective leaders

Result 3.1   21C funded programs are led by knowledgeable and skilled leaders.***

Result 3.2   21C funded programs utilize high quality staff to run programs.**

Result 3.3   21C funded programs have appropriate staff retention rates.**

Result 3.4   21C funded staff are valued for their work.*

Indicator	*Below the Result statement*	*Meets the Result Statement*	*Exceeds the Result Statement*	*Why this matters*
3.1 a: 95% of 21C programs will be led by <u>directors with significant levels of knowledge and skill</u> *** (B.A or higher) **3.1 b**: 75% 21C sites will be led by site <u>coordinators with significant levels of knowledge and skill</u>*** (B.A or higher)	NA <75%	equal Average	greater 75%+	21C funded programs do not require a degree to work in programs and as such values every worker regardless of degree or credential attained. Tracked data includes from high school completion through to a doctoral degree attainment.
3.2 21C sites will be staffed by at least 33% <u>licensed educators and/or equivalent subject matter experts</u>.***ii11	<10%	Average or 33%, whichever is lower	>10% avg	Leveraging talented + skilled staff from both the school and community enhances the diversity and breadth of programming and associated relationships built.

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[11] Subject matter experts are proven educators from the school or community who have mastery of a content area and/or may be working toward a credential of value.

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Indicator	Below the Result statement	Meets the Result Statement	Exceeds the Result Statement	Why this matters
3.3a. After 2025 75% of project directors have <u>been in their position</u> for at least 3 years. ***	<75%	75%	>75%	Leadership continuity is essential for consistency and growth.
3.3b. 75% of site coordinators <u>have been in their position</u> for more than one year or meeting the state average, if greater than one year.***	<75%	75%	>75%	Leadership continuity at this level is essential for consistency and growth in a position that is often a stepping stone for employees.
3.4 80% of projects implement at least one strategy intentionally designed to value their staff's work.*	<80%	80%	>80%	Implementing authentic strategies in this area can be intrinsically motivating and support building a positive organizational culture.

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Goal 4: All 21C funded programs develop youth leadership, agency, and voice

Result 4.1   21C funded program sites implement intentional strategies that support youth collaboration [12].*

Result 4.2   21C funded projects offer explicit opportunities for youth to build leadership experience.

Indicator	*Below the Result statement*	*Meets the Result Statement*	*Exceeds the Result Statement*	*Why this matters*
4.1 100% of 21C funded program sites use multiple strategies that support youth collaboration.[13] *	<100%	100%	100%	Youth collaboration is an inclusive and flexible tenet that validates multiple approaches in tracking Goal 4.
4.2a 50% of 21C funded projects in secondary programs have youth who teach or lead programs*	40%	50%	>60%	This is an emergent approach that fits well into the afterschool context. Programs should only attempt this approach when the system supports are ready.
4.2b 25% of Projects after year 10 have a documented youth leadership program or system in place.[14].*	<25%	25%	>25%	Programs that achieve this likely have a youth-led culture in place.

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[12] Youth collaboration relates to an intentional action a project takes to include all children, youth, and students in the development and implementation of quality programming and activity in a developmentally appropriate manner. As such, it is broadly inclusive of "voice and choice" type activity as well as more advanced examples that could include: Informal querying, listening and acting on recommendations, co-leading activities or holding jobs/tasks as helpers or buddies, teaching as lead/with adult assistance/mentorship, apprentice or counselor in training type programs, *Capstone* integrations, youth led performances, student council work, part of district hiring team for directors, advocacy activity of varying types, acting as youth ambassadors: state, speaking at school board meetings or presenting to town or other officials [to name some actual examples]

[13] ibid

[14] A leadership program system would have documented program components/processes that are active such as in the areas of: clear expectations, on-boarding, training, intentional support structures, evaluative activity.

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Goal 5   All 21C funded programs are sustainable

Result 5.1   21C funded programs are integrated with school day systems.***

Result 5.2   21C funded programs utilize diverse sources of funding.**

Result 5.3   21C funded programs include meaningful community partnerships.**

Result 5.4.   21C funded programs are cost-effective.***

Indicator	*Below the Result statement*	*Meets the Result Statement*	*Exceeds the Result Statement*	*Why this matters/notes*
5.1 75% of project directors are active members of the district leadership or another <u>district level administrative team</u> ***	<75%	75%	>75%	Evidence of deep school-community integration leads to quality + sustainable outcomes.
5.2 90% 21C-funded projects that have been in operation for more than five years have at least <u>five different sources of funding</u> contributing more than 50% to their annual operating budget ***	<90%	90%	>90%	This goal was used and met in the first 20 years of the program. (This may need to be adapted after 2023 actuals are calculated)
5.3a 100% 21C-funded projects work with a minimum of 5 <u>community partners</u>[15] that contribute at least $100 to the project annually. *** 5.3b 100% 21C-funded projects work with at least <u>one significant partner</u> that contributes a minimum of $1000 in resources to the project annually. ***	90% <100%	95% 100%	100% NA	Both minor and major partners and collaborators are essential contributors to a high- quality sustainable community learning center. Note that language includes "at least" and" at a minimum," much more can be achieved excluding important non-financial supports.

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[15] A partner is an organization that shares ownership of the project and its intended results. Partners may assume responsibility, manage, contribute, or create activity that supports the project. For communities without organizations in reasonable geographic proximity or of sufficient quality, an individual or organized group may also act as a partner.

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Indicator	Below the Result statement	Meets the Result Statement	Exceeds the Result Statement	Why this matters/notes
5.4a per <u>total hour costs</u> are not over 30% of average when comparing similar projects by type and size *** 5.4 b) <u>per attendee costs</u> are not over 30% of average when comparing similar projects by type and size ***	NA	Within average range	Within average range	These measurements will be much more precise than the 2014 plan to understand what a sustainable high-quality program should cost.

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Every three years-GPRA Aligned Analysis

Indicator	Below the expected Result	Meets the expected Result	Exceeds the expected result
In-school attendance rates for elementary and middle/high school youth increase by at least three days for youth attending afterschool regularly when compared with low hour participation** *(GPRA #3)*	*<3*	*3*	*3-6*

Appendices

The 21C Federal level hour bands:

Grade Level	Less than 15 hours	15 – 44 hours	45 – 89 hours	90 – 179 hours	180 – 269 hours	270 hours or more	Grade Level Totals
6th Grade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0/0
7th Grade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0/0
8th Grade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0/0
9th Grade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0/0
10th Grade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0/0
11th Grade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0/0
12th Grade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0/0
Hour Band Totals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0/0

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(21C Legislation Related to Evaluation)

State Level:

(14) describes how the State educational agency will evaluate the effectiveness of programs and activities carried out under this part, which shall include, at a minimum—

(A) a description of the performance indicators and performance measures that will be used to evaluate programs and activities with emphasis on alignment with the regular academic program of the school and the academic needs of participating students, including performance indicators and measures that— (i) are able to track student success and improvement over time; (ii) include State assessment results and other indicators of student success and improvement, such as improved attendance during the school day, better classroom grades, regular (or consistent) program attendance, and on-time advancement to the next grade level; and (iii) for high school students, may include indicators such as career competencies, successful completion of internships or apprenticeships, or work-based learning opportunities;

(B) a description of how data collected for the purposes of subparagraph (A) will be collected; and

(C) public dissemination of the evaluations of programs and activities carried out under this part

(Grantee Level)

(2) PERIODIC EVALUATION.— (A) IN GENERAL.—The program or activity shall undergo a periodic evaluation in conjunction with the State educational agency's overall evaluation plan as described in section 4203(a)(14), to assess the program's progress toward achieving the goal of providing high-quality opportunities for academic enrichment and overall student success.

(B) USE OF RESULTS.—The results of evaluations under subparagraph (A) shall be— (i) used to refine, improve, and strengthen the program or activity, and to refine the performance measures; (ii) made available to the public upon request, with public notice of such availability provided; and (iii) used by the State to determine whether a subgrant is eligible to be renewed under section 4204(j).

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