

Regular Meeting 12/13/01

TO: Juvenile Welfare Board Members

FROM: James E. Mills, Executive Director 
Vicki L. Sprague, Senior Research Consultant *VS*

21st Century Community Learning Center – Annual Evaluation Report (FY 2000-01)

This is the final evaluation report of the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC), an initiative designed to expand learning opportunities for children and community members through an innovative community alliance. This program provides an after-school, weekend, and summer program for middle school students and provides activities in academic tutoring and mentoring, field-based science, arts enrichment, cultural communication, social services, career awareness, and wellness. 21st CCLC is funded primarily by the U.S. Department of Education with matching funds provided by the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County (JWB) and services delivered through the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (IMA). The Juvenile Welfare Board (JWB) contracted with Michelle Watts, Ph.D., Pansy Houghton, Ph.D., and Jan Schwartz, Ph.D to conduct a multi-year evaluation of the 21st CCLC.

The 21st CCLC was designed for middle school age youth attending or living near John Hopkins Middle School. The project included a partnership between the public school district and community agencies that formed to create an enriched learning environment in an area where cultural and socioeconomic factors limit youth in succeeding in academic and employment success. Local agencies involved in this partnership include the Juvenile Welfare Board, the City of St. Petersburg, the National Conference for Community and Justice, the University of South Florida, the Pinellas County Arts Council, St. Petersburg College, the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, and the Pinellas County School District.

The Evaluation Report discusses the evolution of the program during its three years of operation, the participation rates and demographics of students enrolled in the program, and data on student, parent, staff, and community satisfaction with the 21st CCLC. Data on several student learning outcomes, including post-secondary aspirations of the participants, student learning competencies, and academic performance, are also presented and discussed. Finally, the report includes an analysis of the impact of the 21st CCLC on the community. The major findings from the evaluation, as well as the evaluators' recommendations for the further development of the program, are summarized in the report's Executive Summary.

A copy of the full report is available upon request.

Staff Resource: Vicki L. Sprague, Ph.D.

Executive Summary
21st Century Community Learning Center
Third Year of Operation: September 2000 to August 2001

The 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) is a community partnership providing an after school, weekend, and summer program. During the first year, the program was designed to serve 75 to 100 students. The second year (1999-2000) of the program was planned for 125 to 150 students while the third year of operation was to serve 150 to 200 students attending John Hopkins Middle School or living in the school's vicinity. A total of 268 student were enrolled in the 21st CCLC and 182 students were enrolled for 30 or more days.

The program offering were varied and included academic programs such as tutoring, computer technology and marine science as well as enrichment programs in the arts including clay, jazz, Caribbean Dance and piano. Social and cultural program like teen issues and triathletes were program favorites.

This third year evaluation was primarily summative and included a description of the evolution of the program, the long term impact on students including their career aspirations and goals and the impact on the community. A series of eleven evaluation questions were established using the Juvenile Welfare Board Request for Proposals, input from project staff, and the federal evaluation guidelines. The findings to those questions are summarized below.

Program and Activities Implementation

- * There were a total of 268 students enrolled at the 21st CCLC while 182 students attended the program for 30 or more days. The students attending the 21st CCLC were predominately in middle school (73%, n=133) with 21% (n=39) in elementary school and 5% (n=10) were in high school. The students were equally male (49%, n=89) and female (51%, n=93) and the majority of the students were black (82%, n=150). Approximately 14% (n=25) of the students were white with 2% or less Hispanic, Asian, or multi-cultural students.
- * The students attending the 21st CCLC were predominately on free or reduced price lunch (70%, n=123) and 81% (n=147) of the students registered to attend the program four days a week. One-half of the students lived in the weed and seed area. While attending the center, over 90% received tutoring as well as participating in a variety of enrichment courses. Daily student attendance varied greatly from 65 students to 92 students on four randomly selected dates. Approximately 50% of the students were enrolled for 6 or more months and attended more than one-half of the time they agreed to attend.
- * The staff working at the 21st CCLC were 65% black (n=31) and 25% were white (n=12). As well as the staff working with the students, twenty-three volunteers contributed service to the students at the program.

- * The students and parents, as consumers of the program were clearly satisfied with the 21st CCLC. Less than 10% (n=5) of the students and none of the parents rated the program negatively. Over 75% of the students and 90% of the parents rated the overall program as good or excellent. The staff were also extremely positive in their satisfaction with the program. Over 90% of the staff rated their satisfaction as good or excellent.
- * Although 75% (n=6) of the community partners rated the program favorably, two members of the community group were dissatisfied. When reviewing the comments of the dissatisfied members, it appears that a major concern was on the definition of program eligible students. The negative comments did not address the program directly but rather communication and implementation problems.
- * The program offered to students changed little throughout the three years of operation. The curriculum areas; academic, arts, and social/cultural, remained constant but the specific course offerings were modified based on the interests of the students. Almost all of the students were enrolled in tutoring and a variety of enrichment programs.
- * The management of the program also evolved in an attempt to better serve the community. A parent advisory council was added during the second year of the program and the advisory council focused on program sustainability during year three.
- * The role of the social worker remained as a service provider to the students and parents enrolled in the 21st CCLC during the three years of program operation. Although the role of the social worker was initially planned as a community referral resource, the function of the position became more of direct service provider to center students.

Student Learning Outcomes

- * Based on the student interviews and case study reports, it was apparent that the long term plans of these students have been impacted by their attendance at the 21st CCLC. Although they have not specifically thought about high school, they have thought about attending college. More importantly, the students believe that they have learned to study and are confident in their academic abilities.
- * Both the interviewed and case study students identified goals after high school graduation that involved attending college. Only one student did not plan to attend college and had a limited idea of his plans after high school. Although most of the students indicated that they had not changed their plans since attending the 21st CCLC, many of the students indicated that they were helped reaching their goals by attending the program.
- * The course semester grades for the students attending the 21st CCLC were highest in Reading/Language Arts and lowest in Mathematics. The Reading/Language Arts grades were between a B and C as were the science and social studies grades. The mathematic grades were closer to a C.

- * The *FCAT* criterion referenced data indicates that approximately 60% of the 21st CCLC students were at level one in reading and mathematics. Approximately 20% of the students were at level two. Using the State of Florida school grading criteria, the 21st CCLC would receive an F grade based on the *FCAT* reading and mathematics results. The *FCAT* norm referenced data indicates student achievement in the low average range. The mean percentile was 36 in reading and 39 in mathematics.
- * Other indicators of student school achievement and behavior including discipline referrals, promotion, special program participation and attendance complete the information on the educational outcomes of the 21st CCLC students. Over one-half of the students (56%, n=102) were referred for one or more disciplinary actions while virtually all of the students were promoted to the next grade. Most of the 21st CCLC students were not served in the exceptional education or dropout prevention program and had a school attendance rate of 96.5%
- * Learning competencies such as study skills, self-management, and self-efficacy will allow the students to have continued success in school and to develop life-long learning skills. In order to determine if the 21st CCLC impacted the students' learning competencies, information was collected from students, parents, 21st CCLC staff and the students' classroom teacher. Each group of subjects consistently rated the program as very successful at impacting the students' ability to be independent learners. The learning competency of improved study habits was positively rated by 75% of the students, 93% of the parents, 93% of the staff and 75% of the classroom teachers.

Community Impact

- * As evident from the Community Interview and the service log, the community outside the students enrolled in the program were not using the center. Only 39% of the community members were aware of the after school program and only 5% of the interviewed community members had used any services provided by the center. It was unclear from the grant application the extent to which community extended beyond the students and parents enrolled in the program. This question, or who was the target population, was also a source of difference from comments made by members of the advisory council when interviewed.
- * Members of the community living in the area surrounding the school were generally unaware of the program and did not indicate that the program had a major impact on the safety of the community. Parents and staff directly involved with the program had a different perception of the program's impact on the community. Approximately 85% of the surveyed parents and staff felt that the programs was effective in improving community safety.
- * During the third year of the program operation, there was a meaningful contribution to the 21st CCLC through volunteerism. The majority of the volunteers were high school and college students but volunteers also participated in specific events through St. Anthony's Health Care and the University of South Florida. During the first year of operation, volunteers were not a significant

component of program delivery but over 1500 hours were contributed to the students by volunteers during the third year of operation.

- * The initial misunderstanding of which students were to be served was a costly one. Community partners viewed the program as community out-reach and yet perceived that community children were not welcome while the School Board staff strived to create a quality program. It was evident from the low response rate as well as the comments by the community partners that the community was involved primarily as program clients. While some partners were heavily involved, others felt they were unable to contribute.

Based on the third year evaluation of the 21st CCLC the following commendations are offered.

- * During the first year of operation, the 21st CCLC had few volunteers contributing to the success of the center. In this third year of operation, volunteers contributed over 1500 hours to the students attending the program.
- * Despite any difficulties that have resulted with the community partners, the students and parents attending the program have consistently rated the program positively. Those students who regularly attend the program report increased academic achievement and self-confidence in their ability to be academically successful.
- * The satisfaction of staff working in the program has improved consistently and can be considered to be high. The management of the 21st CCLC appears to have effectively operated the center.
- * The academic course grades of the students regularly attending the 21st CCLC were between a B and C and may be a reflection of the homework assistance provided to the students at the center.

All programs have areas in which growth opportunities exist. The following recommendations are offered, based on the evaluation, for the 21st CCLC staff to consider.

- * Public awareness of the program continues to be an area in which growth could occur. In previous evaluations, Pinellas County school staff were found to have a low level of program awareness and the community was found in this evaluation to have a low level of program familiarity. Sustainability and continued funding for growth may be easier to accomplish if the public were more aware of the program.
- * Program daily attendance varied greatly from approximately 60 to 100 students. This may indicate that the program was over utilized at the beginning of the school year or under utilized as the school year progressed. Plans to stabilize the student attendance should be considered.
- * The program established a large number of broad goals which in retrospect may have been ambitious. Some of these goals were not accomplished because program resources were focused on the tutoring and enrichment program students.

It may be appropriate for the 21st CCLC staff to re-evaluate the program goals with the wisdom three years of program operation can provide.

- * Attempt to reestablish contact with the community partners that felt excluded. These partners may still have an contribution to make to the students enrolled in the 21st CCLC.
- * The tutoring assistance provided to the students appears to have impacted course grades, but the *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)* results indicate student achievement at the lowest performance levels. In addition to homework assistance, direct instruction on the content areas measured on the *FCAT* may have been beneficial.