September 2020
Publication 19.35

Afterschool Centers on Education

Cycle 10 Boys and Girls Clubs of the Austin Area

Final Report 2019–2020

Executive Summary

The Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) is the program administered through the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for the federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grants authorized under Title IV, Part B, of the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (Public Law 114-95). The Boys and Girls Clubs of the Austin Area (BGCAA) received Cycle 10 21st CCLC funding to provide a comprehensive range of out-of-school-time (OST) academic assistance, academic enrichment, college and career readiness, and family engagement activities. Building on the existing infrastructure of evidence-based OST activities and partnerships, ACE BGCAA collaborates with a range of partners to provide a comprehensive menu of before-school, afterschool, and summer programming. The ACE BGCAA's Cycle 10 program exists to provide intentional afterschool program experiences that are high quality, are challenging, and inspire all program participants to improve their school outcomes. The main goals of the youth and family afterschool programs offered by ACE BGCAA are based on narrowing the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students and students of more affluent families. Across activities and centers, the afterschool program focuses on three primary objectives:

- decrease school-day absences
- decrease discipline referrals
- increase academic achievement

Key Accomplishments

The ACE BGCAA's Cycle 10 program is aligned with the campus needs assessments and goals identified in the campus improvement plans (CIP) of each center. Overall, program participation was significantly related to students' academic grades in reading and math, school-day attendance, and discipline, controlling for students' demographics, such as socioeconomic status (SES), gender, English language learner (ELL) status, and race. Despite school building closures due to COVID-19, the ACE BGCAA's Cycle 10 program remained committed to providing quality programming that was accessible, flexible, and supportive toward the development of students' full potential. Table 1 summarizes the major key accomplishments, based on Texas 21st CCLC ACE component areas.

Table 1.

Summary of Key Accomplishments

Program measure and outcome	Result
Student population served	☺
Program quality	☺
Reading	☺
Math	☺
School-day attendance	☺
Discipline	☺

Note. Regression analyses were conducted using the number of days of program participation to predict each student outcome (i.e., reading and math grades, school-day attendance rate, and number of discipline referrals).

☺ Program participation was significantly positively related to the outcome.

😐 No relationship was found between program participation and the outcome.

☹ Program participation was significantly negatively related to the outcome.

Areas for Improvement

ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 program staff continue to identify opportunities to assist students in maximizing the benefits from participating in the ACE program. One area worthy of exploring for program improvement is the development of a monitoring system to track identified student needs linked to associated outcomes. At present, students in the ACE program are recruited for a variety of reasons, such as to improve school-day attendance, discipline, college and career readiness, or academic performance. While staff know where to place students in the program, no mechanism exists to record students' needs and then to evaluate students' outcomes based on those targeted needs. Tracking the unique reasons students are enrolled in ACE would make it possible to ascertain the effectiveness of the programming provided for those specific purposes. Additionally, all virtual lesson plans and online modules developed and created by the site directors, program directors, and facilitators should be systematically cataloged, based on Texas 21st CCLC ACE component area, subject area, grade level, or electronic platform. Finally, within the current situation due to the pandemic, the site directors, program director, and evaluators should continue to explore new ways to support students' learning and development for program improvement.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Introduction and Purpose of the Program

The Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) is the program administered through the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for the federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grants authorized under Title IV, Part B, of the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (Public Law 114-95). The Boys and Girls Clubs of the Austin Area (BGCAA) received Cycle 10 21st CCLC funding to provide a comprehensive range of out-of-school-time (OST) academic assistance, academic enrichment, college and career readiness, and family engagement activities. Building on the existing infrastructure of evidence-based OST activities and partnerships, ACE BGCAA collaborates with a range of partners to provide a comprehensive menu of before-school, afterschool, and summer programming. The ACE BGCAA's Cycle 10 program exists to provide intentional afterschool program experiences that are high quality, are challenging, and inspire all program participants to improve their school outcomes. The main goals of the youth and family afterschool programs offered by ACE BGCAA are based on narrowing the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students and students of more affluent families. Across activities and centers, the afterschool program focuses on three primary objectives:

- decrease school-day absences
- decrease discipline referrals
- increase academic achievement

The ACE program is at 32 schools across the district, with the support of the TEA. BGCAA was granted Cycle 10 CCLC funding to support 9 campuses at AISD. At each school, activities are offered at least 15 hours per week for 30 weeks during the academic year and 16 hours per week for 6 weeks during the summer. All activities are in one or more of the four Texas 21st CCLC core component areas: academic assistance, enrichment, family engagement, and college and career readiness (Figure 1).

Figure 1.

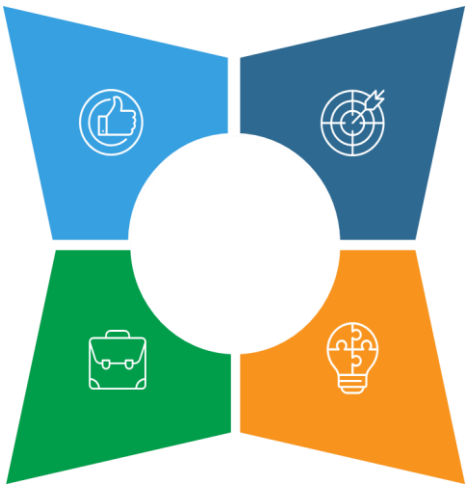
ACE BGCAA Texas 21st CCLC Core Component Areas

Family engagement

ACE BGCAA staff partner with the AISD Adult Education Department and parent support specialists to provide family engagement activities that help connect families to schools and enable them to support their student's academic achievement.

College and career readiness

The ACE BGCAA participants are provided with activities to help them prepare for college and career. Students investigate careers, visit area colleges and universities, practice public speaking skills, and participate in service projects.



Academic assistance

ACE BGCAA offers activities designed to improve students' achievement by providing extra assistance and support through tutoring and homework help for students who are struggling in core subjects, including science, math, reading, and social studies.

Enrichment

ACE BGCAA offers skill-building enrichment activities to which some students would otherwise lack access, including fine arts, technology, games, health and fitness, outdoor and environmental education, and youth leadership and development.

Evaluation Strategy

Expectations

The Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) staff and ACE BGCAA program staff together reviewed the grant requirements and developed an evaluation plan and timeline for the program, which were published online (http://www.austinisd.org/dre/about-us), as part of the DRE work plan. Throughout the duration of the grant program, evaluators worked closely with program staff to collect and submit identified data in a timely fashion and met regularly to monitor progress and make any needed adjustments.

The evaluation plan was used to ensure continuous improvement for (a) program management, by monitoring program operation; (b) staying on track, by ensuring the program stayed focused on the goals, objectives, strategies, and outcomes; (c) efficiency, by streamlining service delivery and lowering the cost of services; (d) accountability, by producing evidence of program effects; and (e) sustainability, by providing evidence of effectiveness to all stakeholders.

The ACE BGCAA program staff used the TX21st Student Tracking system to track students' attendance and other program data needed for TEA reports. The DRE evaluator extracted students' records from AISD's data warehouse and assisted program staff with formatting and data entry into the TX21st Student Tracking system to ensure accurate reporting to the TEA.

Measurement

Program participation files and AISD student records provided demographic information and results for each of the school-related outcomes. Due to COVID-19, AISD closed all school buildings and facilities on March 13, 2020, and pivoted to a distance learning model. Buildings remained closed through the end of the school year. No State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) or end-of-course (EOC) exams were conducted for this school year, and the program was not able to collect student or parent surveys.

While end-of-year program outcome measures for the 2019–2020 school year were limited, efforts were made to keep the measurement of program outcomes consistent. School-day attendance, grades, and discipline data were still examined but were limited to the time period for which data were available (i.e., from August 12, 2019, through March 13, 2020). Data analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between students' outcomes (i.e., academic achievement in reading and math, school-day attendance, and discipline) and program participation. Tables 2 and 3 present a summary of the methodology used in this report, based on program objectives.

Table 2.

Summary of Program Methodology Prior to Required School Building Closures Due to COVID-19 (March 13, 2020)

Program objective	Measurement and data analysis	Data collection/ source
Improve participants' academic performance in reading and math	Multiple linear regression examined relationships between program participation and academic outcomes (grades in reading and math), controlling for gender, English language learner (ELL) status, socioeconomic status (SES), and race	Program participation file; AISD student grades and demographic records
Improve participants' school-day absences	Multiple linear regression examined relationships between program participation and school-day attendance, controlling for gender, ELL status, SES, and race	Program participation file; AISD student attendance and demographic records
Improve participants' behavior	Multiple linear regression examined relationships between program participation and discipline, controlling for gender, ELL status, SES, and race	Program participation file; AISD student discipline and demographic records

Table 3.

Summary of Program Methodology After Required School Building Closures Due to COVID-19 (March 13, 2020)

Program objective	Measurement and data analysis	Data collection/ source
Create continuous learning	Number and type of learning modules, virtual lessons, or catalog developed; platform used; and services provided to support students with their learning and development	Program managers' description
Provide family support and engagement	Services, training, or support given to parents to help them assist their students with "new" learning	Program managers' description

Grantee and Center Overview

During the 2019–2020 school year, ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 provided afterschool services to 9 AISD campuses: four elementary schools (Cook, McBee, Overton, and Walnut Creek), three middle schools (Burnet, Garcia, and Webb), and two high schools (Navarro Early College and LBJ). District data indicated that the percentage of students at Cycle 10 campuses who were low SES (i.e., qualified to receive free or reduced-price lunch) and the percentage of students who were considered at risk of dropping out of school were above the district and state averages. Also, the percentage of students who were classified as English language learners was above district and state averages at eight of the nine Cycle 10 campuses (Table 4).

Table 4.

Cycle 10 Campuses Served and Relevant Demographics

School	Percentage low SES	Percentage at risk	Percentage ELL
Cook Elementary School (*n* = 500)	91%	81%	69%
McBee Elementary School (*n* = 451)	95%	85%	80%
Overton Elementary School (*n* = 540)	97%	78%	64%
Walnut Creek Elementary School (*n* = 653)	95%	85%	77%
Burnet Elementary School (*n* = 924)	92%	83%	59%
Garcia Middle School (*n* = 411)	95%	81%	47%
Webb Middle School (*n* = 681)	96%	87%	65%
Navarro Early College High School (*n* = 1,548)	85%	79%	44%
LBJ High School (*n* = 840)	80%	71%	25%
AISD	54%	27%	49%
State	61%	20%	50%

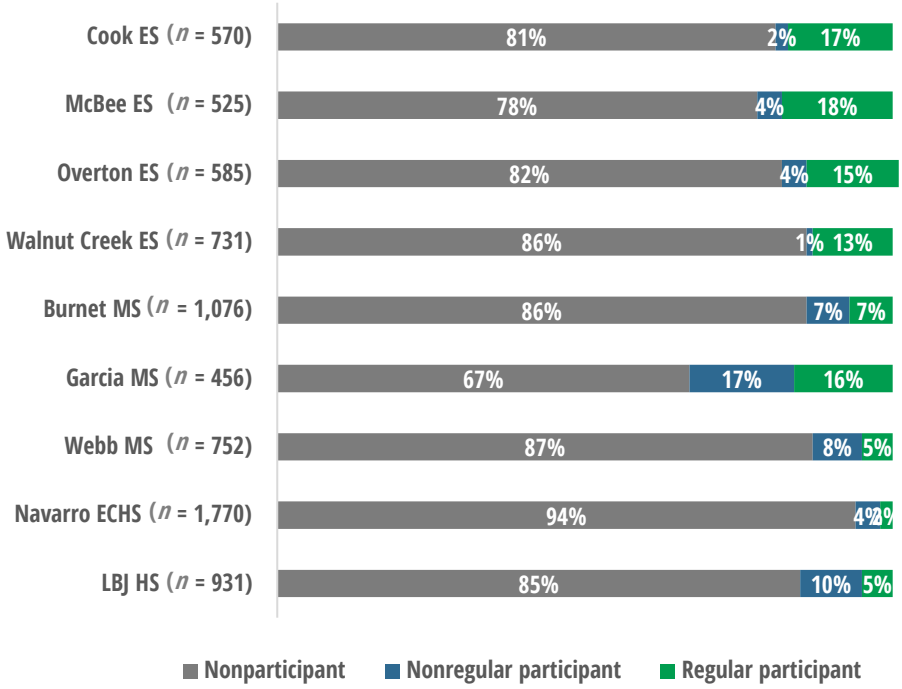
Source. 2019–2020 AISD student data; 2018–2019 TEA Academic Performance Report

Participants

The ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 program served 1,076 students and hosted events or activities for 247 families. Program participants represented less than a fifth of the students enrolled at Cycle 10 campuses. Most (n = 635) of the ACE BGCAA's Cycle 10 program participants were regular participants (i.e., attended the afterschool program for 45 days or more). Participation at secondary schools was less consistent, with greater percentages of nonregular participants than of regular participants (Figure 2). Campus-level demographics mirrored the cycle-level demographics, and all campuses served similar student groups (Appendix A).

Figure 2.

At the campuses served, ACE regular participants ranged from 2% to 18% of the student body.



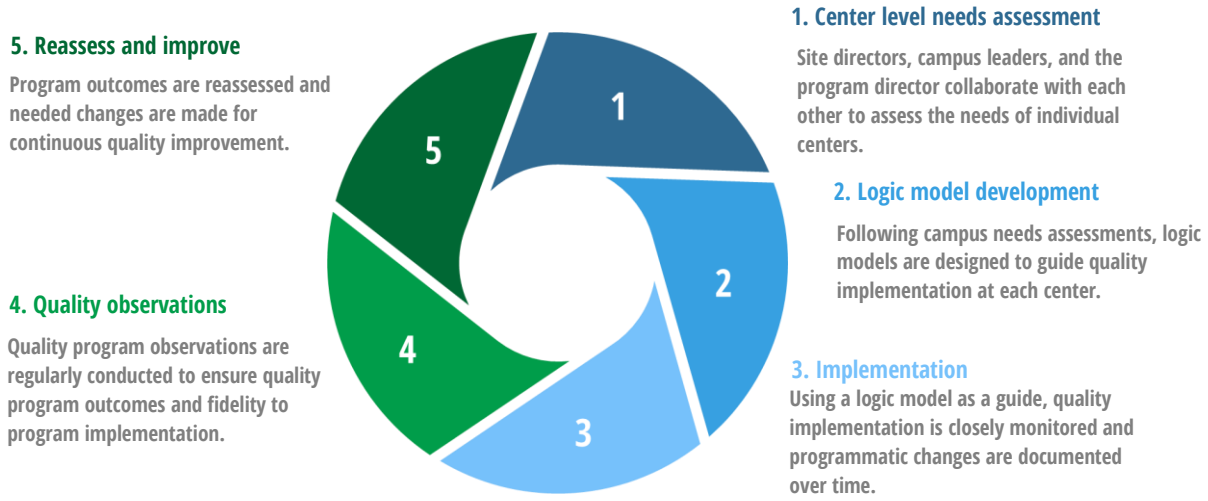
Source. TX21st Student Tracking System 2019–2020; AISD student records.

Program Quality Implementation

Guided by the ACE BGCAA continuous quality improvement cycle, programming was developed based on the needs of each campus (Figure 3). Campus needs assessments were conducted collaboratively by site directors and the project directors. The BGCAA administrators reviewed each school's test results and student data to determine what types of afterschool activities to offer. The site directors created campus needs assessments with which they surveyed principals, teachers, other school administration, and parents. They also reviewed the school's campus improvement plan to further guide them in determining the activities needed. The project directors and site directors met or

emailed on a monthly basis with principals to check in and see how the program was going and ask for feedback. In addition, site directors had daily or weekly contact with school principals to inform them about what was going on in the program.

Figure 3.
ACE BGCAA Continuous Quality Improvement Cycle



Following campus needs assessments, logic models were designed to guide quality implementation at each center. Site directors, in collaboration with the project directors, developed the logic models, which also served as a tool for documenting programmatic changes over time. Each center logic model included six components: resources, implementation practices, outputs/activities, outputs/participation, intermediate outcomes, and impact.

Outcomes

Because we expected the program would have a bigger impact on students who participated more than on students who participated less, we examined the relationship between the number of days of program participation and each of the expected student outcomes (i.e., academic achievement in reading and math, school-day attendance, and discipline). Due to school building closures because of the pandemic, some of the proposed student outcome measures (e.g., STAAR, EOC, and college and career readiness) were not available this year, and so are not included in this report.

Regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between program participation (i.e., total number of days in the program) and each anticipated outcome (Figure 4), controlling for SES, ELL status, gender, and race. Due to very few participants

not in the free or reduced lunch category, SES was eliminated from all analyses. Below are the results for all students in the program; see Appendix B for campus-level results.

Figure 4.
Texas 21st CCLC ACE Program Impact Areas

Academic Achievement Outcomes: Grades in Reading and Math

One of the ACE BGCAA program goals was to have a positive impact from program participation on reading and math achievement. We examined the relationships between students' number of days of program participation and their grades in reading and math. Because different grading systems are used at different school levels, and because we wanted to examine across grade levels, we transformed all grades into *z* scores to standardize grades within subjects. Results revealed that program participation was significantly positively related to reading *z* scores and math *z* scores. In other words, students who participated in the program more days had better reading and math grades than students who participated less.

Nonacademic Student Outcomes: School-Day Attendance and Discipline

We also examined the relationships of program participation with two nonacademic student outcomes: school-day attendance rates and discipline referrals (including both discretionary and mandatory referrals). Results revealed that program participation was significantly positively related to school-day attendance and significantly negatively related to discipline. In other words, students who attended the afterschool program

more days had both better school-day attendance rates and experienced fewer discipline referrals than students with less afterschool participation.

College and Career Readiness

Because state-standardized testing was cancelled due to the pandemic, no data were available to examine the relationship between program participation and college and career readiness.

After Required School Building Closures Due to COVID-19

On March 13, 2020, ACE BGCAA stopped operations at all Cycle 10 centers, which set into motion Club on the Go™, a weekly curbside pickup program that provided academic resources, meals, and snacks for Club Kids and families (Figure 5). These kits were designed by the ACE BGCAA program services team. Each week had a different curriculum theme such as STEM, arts, academic success, or healthy life styles. BGCAA also launched their own YouTube channel with over 300 videos created by program staff to accompany each week's lesson plans as well as creative and fun activities to engage kids. These videos have now collected over 240,000 impressions.

Each week, the BGCAA staff stuffed the Club on the Go bags, loaded and unloaded shuttles, and directly served kids and families at the curbside program. The Club on the Go kits included:

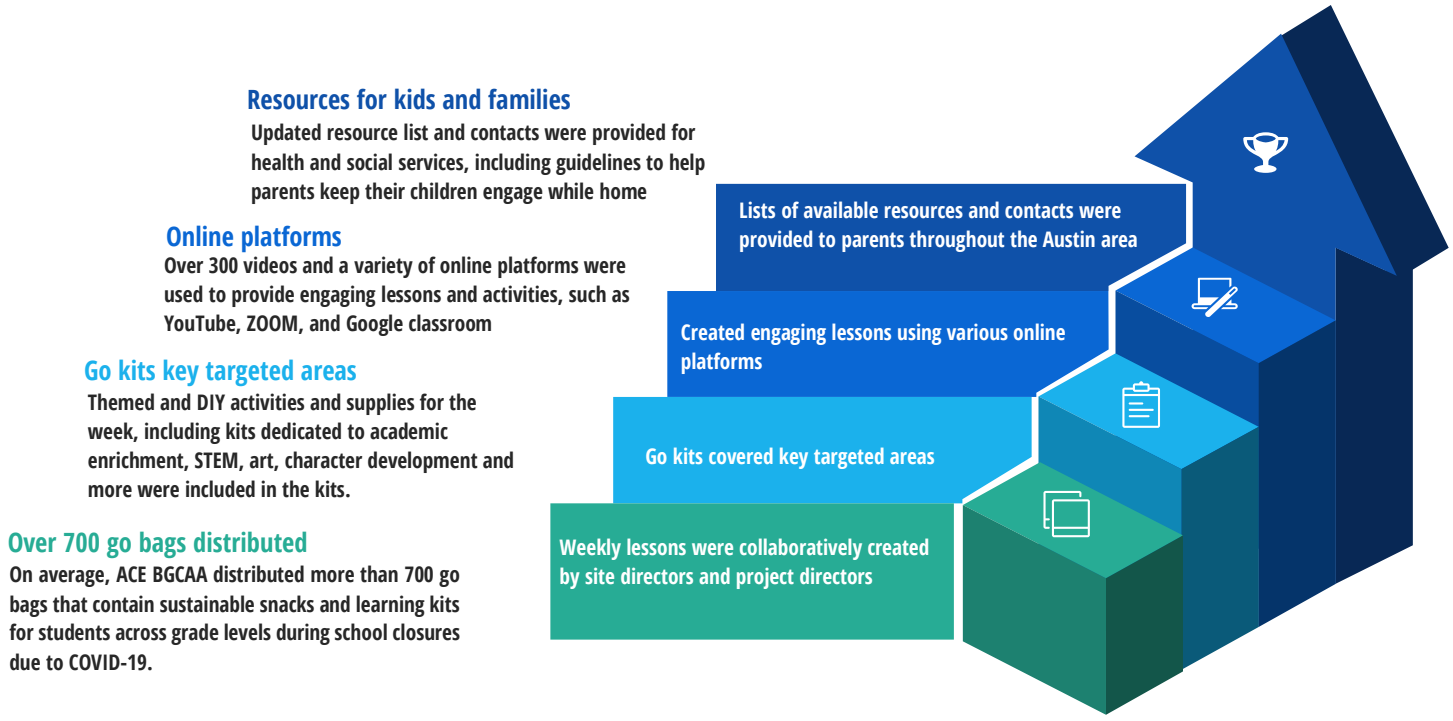
- sustainable snacks for the week that align with USDA nutritional guidelines
- themed and DIY activities and supplies for the week, including kits dedicated to academic enrichment, STEM, art, character development and more
- nutritional and healthy habits tips and recipes
- guidelines to help parents keep their children engaged while home
- updated resource list and contacts for health and social services available throughout the Austin area.

These much-needed resources, both academic and nutritional, came at a time when 98% of BGCAA parents of elementary aged children reported during wellness calls by BGCAA that they had lost employment due to COVID-19[1]. The weekly lesson plans included in Club on the Go were very beneficial, as only 48% and 33% of our elementary and middle school parents, respectively, reported being able to continue schooling online with the school district.

[1] Note: BGCAA serves students from across the Austin metro area. Not all of these families represent ACE students participating from these Cycle 10 campuses at AISD.

Figure 5.

ACE BGCAA Program During The Pandemic



ACE BGCAA's Cycle 10 program was running 2 locations to support families who need essential child care and summer camp care. They saw roughly 100 -150 students in person between 2 locations to which students were bused. They also offered virtual summer camp to families as well. The supplies for virtual camp were handed out in the same format as Club on the Go™ described above. In addition, ACE BGCAA staff regularly communicated with parents through virtual platform (e.g., Microsoft Teams) calls, weekly emails, and club on the go check-in with families. The support line was also offered from 10:00 a.m. through 7:00 p.m. each day for families.

SUMMARY

Despite school building closures due to COVID-19, the ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 program remained committed to providing quality programming that was accessible, flexible, and supportive toward the development of students' full potential.

Key Accomplishments

The ACE BGCAA's Cycle 10 program is aligned with the campus needs assessments and goals identified in the campus improvement plans (CIP) of each center. Overall, program participation was significantly related to students' grades in reading and math, school-day attendance, and discipline, controlling for students' demographics, such as SES, gender, ELL status, and race (Table 1).

Table 5.
Summary of Key Accomplishments

Program measure and outcome	Result
Student population served	☺
Program quality	☺
Reading	☺
Math	☺
School-day attendance	☺
Discipline	☺

Note. Regression analyses were conducted using the number of days of program participation to predict each student outcome (i.e., reading and math grades, school-day attendance rate, and number of discipline referrals).
☺ Program participation was significantly positively related to the outcome.
😐 No relationship was found between program participation and the outcome.
☹ Program participation was significantly negatively related to the outcome.

Areas for Improvement

ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 program staff continue to identify opportunities to assist students in maximizing the benefits from participating in the ACE program. One area worthy of exploring for program improvement is the development of a monitoring system to track identified student needs linked to associated outcomes. At present, students in the ACE program are recruited for a variety of reasons, such as to improve school-day attendance, discipline, college and career readiness, or academic performance. While staff know where to place students in the program, no mechanism exists to record students' needs and then to evaluate students' outcomes based on those targeted needs. Tracking the unique reasons students are enrolled in ACE would make it possible to ascertain the

effectiveness of the programming provided for those specific purposes. Additionally, all virtual lesson plans and online modules developed and created by the site directors, program directors, and facilitators should be systematically cataloged, based on Texas 21st CCLC ACE component area, subject area, grade level, or electronic platform. Finally, within the current situation due to the pandemic, the site directors, program director, and evaluators should continue to explore new ways to support students' learning and development for program improvement.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Campus-Level Participants

Table A.1.

ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 Campus-Level Participants

School	School enrollment	Number of participants	Number of regular* participants	Average number of days of participation
Cook Elementary School	570	106	96	89
McBee Elementary School	525	116	96	83
Overton Elementary School	585	107	71	84
Walnut Creek Elementary School	731	99	93	96
Burnet Middle School	1,076	150	70	48
Garcia Middle School	456	150	71	45
Webb Middle School	752	96	34	36
Navarro Early College High School	1,770	109	40	37
LBJ High School	931	143	50	34
ACE BGCAA Cycle 10	7,396	1,076	635	59

Source. 2019–2020 AISD student records; 2019–2020 ACE data file

Note. Regular participants are those who participated in the ACE BGCAA program at least 45 days.

Table A.2.

ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 Campus-Level Participants' Demographics

School	Female	Low SES	ELL	At risk
Cook Elementary School (*n* = 106)	51%	96%	67%	81%
McBee Elementary School (*n* = 116)	53%	95%	74%	85%
Overton Elementary School (*n* = 107)	53%	93%	64%	75%
Walnut Creek Elementary School (*n* = 99)	52%	98%	72%	87%
Burnet Middle School (*n* = 150)	50%	97%	31%	77%
Garcia Middle School (*n* = 150)	.	93%	31%	77%
Webb Middle School (*n* = 96)	49%	94%	45%	86%
Navarro Early College High School (*n* = 109)	52%	91%	22%	78%
LBJ High School (*n* = 143)	59%	73%	20%	72%
ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 (*N* = 1,076)	45%	92%	45%	79%

Source. 2019–2020 AISD student records; 2019–2020 ACE data file

Table A.3.

ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 Campus-Level Participants' Race

School	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Two or more race	White
Cook Elementary School (*n* = 106)	1%	11%	85%		1%	2%
McBee Elementary School (*n* = 116)		7%	88%		1%	4%
Overton Elementary School (*n* = 107)		22%	76%		2%	1%
Walnut Creek Elementary School (*n* = 99)		13%	78%			9%
Burnet Middle School (*n* = 150)	1%	20%	75%			3%
Garcia Middle School (*n* = 150)	1%	44%	49%		3%	4%
Webb Middle School (*n* = 96)		18%	75%		1%	6%
Navarro Early College High School (*n* = 109)	4%	35%	47%		6%	8%
LBJ High School (*n* = 143)	1%	52%	45%	1%	1%	
ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 (*N* = 1,076)	1%	26%	67%	< 1%	2%	4%

Source. 2019–2020 AISD student records; 2019–2020 ACE data file

Table A.4.

ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 Campus-Level Participants' Grade Level: Elementary

School	Kindergarten	Pre-K	1	2	3	4	5
Cook Elementary School (*n* = 106)	10%		17%	19%	16%	21%	17%
McBee Elementary School (*n* = 116)	13%		13%	16%	20%	21%	17%
Overton Elementary School (*n* = 107)	13%	3%	9%	20%	15%	18%	22%
Walnut Creek Elementary School (*n* = 99)	3%		14%	16%	24%	23%	19%
ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 (*N* = 1,076)	4%	< 1%	5%	7%	7%	8%	8%

Source. 2019–2020 AISD student records; 2019–2020 ACE data file

Table A.5.

ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 Campus-Level Participants' Grade Level: Secondary

School	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Burnet Middle School (*n* = 150)	23%	31%	47%				
Garcia Middle School (*n* = 150)	37%	34%	29%				
Webb Middle School (*n* = 96)	17%	50%	33%				
Navarro Early College High School (*n* = 109)				16%	34%	24%	27%
LBJ High School (*n* = 143)				6%	30%	36%	27%
ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 (*N* = 1,076)	10%	13%	13%	2%	7%	7%	6%

Source. 2019–2020 AISD student records; 2019–2020 ACE data file

Appendix B: Campus-Level Student Outcomes

Regression analyses were conducted for each campus to examine the relationships between program participation and each student outcome (i.e., reading, math, school-day attendance, and discipline referrals), controlling for SES, ELL status, gender, and race. Due to limited variance in free or reduced price lunch status (92% of participants qualified), SES was eliminated from the analysis. Although positive relationships between program participation and all four of the student outcomes were found at the cycle level, results were mixed across campuses. Program participation was significantly positively related to school-day attendance at four of the nine ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 campuses. No relationships were found between program participation and other student outcomes at the campus level (Table B.1.).

Table B.1.

ACE BGCAA Cycle 10 Campus-Level Student Outcomes

School	Reading	Math	School-day attendance	Discipline referrals
Cook Elementary School (*n* = 106)	😐	😐	☺	.
McBee Elementary School (*n* = 116)	😐	😐	😐	.
Overton Elementary School (*n* = 107)	😐	😐	😐	.
Walnut Creek Elementary School (*n* = 99)	😐	😐	☺	😐
Burnet Middle School (*n* = 151)	😐	😐	☺	😐
Garcia Middle School (*n* = 150)	😐	😐	☺	😐
Webb Middle School (*n* = 95)	😐	😐	😐	😐
Navarro Early College High School (*n* = 109)	😐	😐	😐	😐
LBJ High School (*n* = 143)	😐	😐	😐	😐

Note. ☺ Program participation was significantly positively related to the outcome.
😐 No relationship was found between program participation and the outcome.
☹ Program participation was significantly negatively related to the outcome.
. Campus had no or very few students with discipline referrals; analyses could not be conducted.

Austin Independent School District

Authors
William dela Cruz, EdD, PhD
Melissa Andrews, MA, MEd
Cinda Christian, PhD

Department of Research and Evaluation

4000 S IH 35 Frontage Road | Austin, TX 78704
512.414.1724 | fax: 512.414.1707
www.austinisd.org/dre | Twitter: @AISD_DRE

September 2020
Publication 19.35