

21st Century Community Learning Centers

2018-2019

Site Visit Report

Bellows Falls Middle School AIM Program

**Submitted by Emanuel Betz
21st CCLC State Coordinator**



Project Director: Orianna Baez

Visit Dates: July 24, 2018, October 25, 2018

Visiting Team: Emanuel Betz (Agency of Education) Wendy Steager (People's Academy) Kate Burt (Brattleboro Area Middle School)

Report Date: November 13, 2018

The site visit, or peer review process uses a team of practitioners and other educators to review, assess and develop this report. The focus of the peer review process will use the 21c state evaluation plan as its framework along with additionally selected focus items* for 2018-19. The statewide evaluation results as detailed in the 21c statewide evaluation plan and the associated 2017-18 *Cognito* Annual Performance Report (APR) questions and data points will frame the agenda and questions, with the Annual Performance Report serving as a baseline data set.

Authority to Monitor

Title IV Part B of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* Section 4202 (a) (3) (A)

Goals

1. To provide accountability and oversight as required by law
2. To provide projects with an on-going opportunity to reflect and improve in their practice
3. To promote regular dialog and information sharing with and among projects

Response to this Report

Please submit a written response(s) to Emanuel Betz at Emanuelbetz@vermont.gov. The responses should include detailed steps to address any 'Findings' and "Priority Action Items" by the date indicated. Recommendations and comments do not require a formal response. See *definitions* below to guide your thinking on how to interpret this report. Items needing a response are numbered sequentially within each column from top to bottom.

Definitions:

- **Findings:** Steps that need to be taken immediately to be in compliance with a law or regulation.
- **Priority Action Items:** Action items requiring follow-up by the grantee to meet a 21C afterschool standard.
- **Recommendations:** Recommendations are judgments that could be classified as a "strong suggestions." They do not require action on the part of a project.
- **Evidence Statements:** Evidence statements are -generated from the team or from observations that warrant sharing. No action is required of a statement.

Overview Narrative

The Bellows Falls Middle School's Afterschool Programs were visited for one day in the summer and one day during the school year where interviews were conducted and programs were observed. Extensive documentation was provided and analyzed in its entirety including a self-assessment, program materials, policy handbooks, brochures, planning forms, program artifacts and promotional materials, Annual Performance Reports and grant and budget information. Interviews and/or discussions were completed with the project director, site coordinator, accountant, principal, assistant principal, teachers, staff, parents, partners, and students.

The project continues to grow and evolve in a positive direction. Improvements of note since the last visit include:

- A further demonstrable commitment to a student centered approach to programming
- Enhanced collaboration with the school day systems including school and district
- More partnership development and connections to the community
- Strong sustainability action particularly in receiving grant funding
- More cohesion and continuity in expectations, team, staffing and approach
- Food choice and quality

Potential growth areas include:

- Expanding leadership opportunities systemically beyond the current ambassador program
- Unifying or aligning the summer program with the early a.m. summer school
- Getting off campus to leverage community resources and opportunities and other green space more fully during afterschool sessions
- Greater intentionality with regard to specific transferrable skills or learning goals targeted within projects

Reviewing the site visit report from three years ago is also recommended. There are a number of similarities and there is a convergence of need demonstrated over time.

There are no significant systemic findings in this report. There are several recommendations and two priority action items that will further tighten systems and hopefully support your on-going work. There are no issues of non-compliance.

Thank you for all the hard work, as well as preparing for and participating in this process. We hope that the process has and will have a positive impact on the program and youth outcomes.

Review Area and Alignment to Statewide Evaluation Plan	Evidence and Analysis (Evidence Statements, Recommendations Priority Action Items, Findings)
<p>1. Success Stories <i>What is working well and how do you know?</i></p>	<p>Students starting to co-lead programming for the first time Students involved in community, e.g. chamber mixer presentation Project director and site coordinator working together as a team for three years Summer program advancements noted New student summer academy High quality engaging program choices across the curriculum Continuation of school based staffing model Transportation during school year and summer Excellent numbers using statewide evaluation plan District connected committee and leadership collaboration and participation</p>
<p>2. Youth Centered Leadership and Activity <i>How are programs youth centered? How do programs support youth leadership? 2. Youth Centered Activity and Leadership continued-</i></p>	<p>Engagement levels youth centered (see observations) Youth co leading programs for first time in grades 5-8 Youth ambassador program serving 10-12 youth Friday town hall meetings taking place in school, afterschool, and summer Community based trainings available for youth through local coalition Program graduates now in high school coming back to program, especially in the homework center</p> <p>School leadership and staff quotes:</p> <p>“This is a student centered program” “She is empowering students to have a voice” “They have ownership” “Students can explore alternative skills and subject matter” “ I always see good relationships everywhere” “ There is an increase in student voice as a result of AIM” See related youth quotes below as well</p>

	<p>Recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Work to expand younger grade leadership structure (grades 5-6) to the program 2) Expect and generate student led classes every session with explicit goals 3) Review areas that did and did not receive observation checks (doing, leadership, social/emotional) and consider how to improve/reflect on this data with teachers and others
<p>2. Challenges/ Lessons Learned</p> <p><i>What barriers or challenges are you encountering this year that may be affecting the continuous quality improvement of your program?</i></p> <p><i>What lessons have you learned about your project and what adjustments will be made to ensure the site is continuously improving?</i></p>	<p>Current 5th grade class reported as taking a lot longer to settle down (30% of enrollments)</p> <p>Summer program is still “a work in progress”</p> <p>Youth in sports programs could use a solution when in the building</p> <p>No recess for youth during the day</p> <p>It was reported that “Bellows Falls has a huge heroin problem”</p> <p>Varsity Sports can take 8th graders so AIM attendance can be lower</p> <p>“We have kids in homework who don’t have homework”</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Create written goals by January 1 with school leaders that will better drive the summer unification vision 2) Create more flexible outside choices or time for 5th graders 3) Create more school year field trips in nature such as hiking 4) Consider new publicity enhancements as time allows

<p>3. Evaluation Plan</p> <p>4. Local evaluation outcomes</p> <p><i>What are the components of your comprehensive evaluation plan?</i></p>	<p>Revised plan created as part of 21c grant approved</p> <p>Summer and end of session surveys are completed</p> <p>Changes are made based on survey data</p> <p>“Track my progress” data used as part of tutoring</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>1) Add explicit goal of number of youth led classes and or activities tracking youth numbers and or program numbers</p>
<p>5. Equity and Access; Dosage and Numbers</p> <p><i>Result 1.2: 21c funded programs are open for enough hours, days, and weeks to meet student and family needs during the school year.</i></p> <p><i>Result 1.3: 21c funded programs provide enough summer programming to address summer learning loss</i></p> <p><i>Result 1.4: 21c funded programs have a solid base of regular attendees</i></p> <p><i>IEP and Low income rates meet or exceed school averages*</i></p> <p><i>Program income practices do not limit program access*</i></p>	<p>Bussing exists in summer and afterschool (summer bussing is accessible for all however)</p> <p>Work occurs with homeless liaison</p> <p>Regular communication with special education department</p> <p>Annual Performance Report data: Data shows low income regular attendees at +20% the school’s average.</p> <p>Annual Performance Report data 43% of regular attendees listed as being on an IEP.</p> <p>Summer now 24 days.</p> <p>Priority Action Item #1 (July 1, 2019)</p> <p>Program income (fee) language assuring access in summer brochure is missing. Must include “no one will be turned away for inability to pay” that includes specifically what families can do to access the program if they feel they cannot pay or alternate inclusive language. Or, consider removing fee if that is needed to unify the summer programs.</p>

<p>6. Leader information</p> <p>7. Staffing (Including Licensed Teachers)</p> <p><i>Result 3.1: 21c funded programs are led by experienced leaders (includes adults and youth)</i></p> <p><i>Result 3.2: 21c funded programs utilize high quality staff to run programs</i></p> <p><i>Result 3.3: 21c funded programs have appropriate staff retention rates</i></p> <p><i>Result 3.4: 21c leaders participate in professional development and networking opportunities</i></p>	<p>Most staff are school based</p> <p>Staff induction system exists managed by the project director and includes an observation component.</p> <p>Planning: requirement to fill out a form for planning of programs</p> <p>Relies on teachers understanding of curriculum development</p> <p>Staff retention is good</p> <p>Staff Quote:</p> <p>“Afterschool is what keeps me coming to this building”</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Have the site coordinator participate in a middle school site visit.
<p>8. Physical activity</p> <p><i>Result 2.3: 21c programs provide healthy food and physical activity</i></p>	<p>New green space outside used</p> <p>Program specific enrichment and general offerings occur during summer and afterschool</p> <p>Food system is vastly improved (see program observations)</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Youth quote: “Maybe we should go further out of Bellows Falls as a group, like to a field” 2) Include and promote 10 minute movement breaks, or a choice within programs or for anyone at a set time. Director or site coordinator could lead. 3) Consider low stakes recreational/intramural programming, particularly between sports seasons. 4) Be more aggressive with youth hand washing reminders. Monitor food carts after initial servings to assure youth hands don’t touch food when getting seconds.

<p>10. Culminating end products or performances <i>Result 2.2: 21c funded programs allow participants to experience interests in depth</i></p> <p><i>Result 2.4: 21c programs support learning</i></p>	<p>High Quality End products as demonstrated from visit artifacts (newspaper)and APR report artifacts</p> <p>Youth Quotes</p> <p>“You get better with people skills You get to know the town better You learn how to write a story You get a sense of a nice outlook on the world If you are honest and behave they will trust you They are really great people There is not a lot I would change I think some students may look up to me We have access to move around and great programs”</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>1) Theater programs, junior iron chef, robotics and chess clubs have been great projects in other middle school programs generally and might be worth trying to develop if there are the right staff people over time.</p>
<p>11. Intentional Academic Components <i>Result 2.4: 21c programs support learning</i></p> <p><i>Does the site have at least one program strategy, beyond homework help, that is specifically designed to support students who are performing below grade level or struggling academically?</i></p>	<p>Tutoring Program exists using licensed teacher staff Program uses “Track my Progress” and SBAC data</p> <p>Youth quote</p> <p>“You can choose to have tutoring there, the teachers will help you.”</p>

<p>12. Sustainability and partnerships <i>Result 4.2: 21c funded programs utilize diverse sources of funding</i></p> <p><i>Result 4.3: 21c funded programs benefit from meaningful community partnerships</i></p>	<p>Partnership Examples</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. River Valley Tech Center “tech time” program offered to 6th - 8th graders 2. Prevention coalition-Youth equity program 3. Bellows Falls bike project 4. Parks Place - non-profit coordinates service providers around health and wellness 5. Chamber of Commerce 6. Rockingham Free Public Library 7. Terrier Times “community” newspaper <p>Revised sustainability plan as part of 21c approved award Holt funding likely to continue Administrator stated it feels like AIM is out ahead of the school in community development/relationships</p>
<p>13. Family engagement and parent communication <i>Result 4.3: 21c funded programs benefit from meaningful community partnerships</i></p>	<p>Family celebration nights included youth designed demonstrations with up to fifty people attending 7th Grade New student family academy in August An active Facebook Page exists and is utilized Terrier Times has a distribution of 500 with a goal to increase circulation Brochures and other documents circulated</p>
<p>14. Private school participation <i>Result 4.3 21c funded programs benefit from meaningful community partnerships (private schools)</i></p>	<p>There are no private schools in Rockingham requiring consultation.</p>

<p>15. Safety standards <i>See 21c safety standards and annual reporting safety questions</i></p> <p><i>Result 2.4: 21c funded programs strive for continuous improvement through the use of the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA)</i></p>	<p>Priority Action Item #2 (Feb 1, 2019)</p> <p>Afterschool Chain of Command clarity is needed: Review the safety plan including this area with the assistant principal and athletic director (or safety committee) to determine a written chain of command. Revise written language based on any new agreements made. Include discussion inclusive of all programs afterschool, not just AIM for the safety of all youth in the building. Further, unify paperwork into one handbook document. Add aquatic plan, bullying info which is missing, and emergency policies. Submit unified revised handbook. If you feel the unified document is not helpful, you may submit multiple documents if changes are made.</p>
<p>16. Governance <i>How does a governance system meet regularly with diverse stakeholders who help guide the program?</i></p>	<p>Team exists meeting three times annually Both school and community members are on the team Director is member of the district administration committee as well</p>
<p>17. Budget <i>How does the director maintain a well-developed system and provide sound fiscal management for the program?</i></p> <p><i>How does the fiscal agent provide proper oversight, organizational support, and fiscal management for the program?</i></p>	<p>Program income is generated and a check and balance system is in place with multiple signatures Supplies do not come from federal funds Business office produces financials for director every two weeks No financial issues as a result of the visit Financial reports and two cost centers analyzed</p>
<p>18. Annual Performance Report Statewide Evaluation other items <i>Which systemic items or expectations may need new strategies or additional funding to be achieved?</i></p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Indicator 4.2 (Having multiple sources of funds without a 50% reliance on one source.) The project is to be commended for its sustainability work. Any further diversification, especially beyond grant funds, will lessen the long term strategic funding risk for the project. In this vein, implementing the revised sustainability plan is important; it's a quality plan. Also continued work and outcomes in the youth centered area has the potential to have positive and likely new funding results. The more intention paid to this in everything you do, the better, for quality and funding.</p>

Afterschool Observations

Youth Observations

Newspaper: Youth laughing, talking, writing.

Library: Youth on Chromebooks.

Pickleball: 2 playing, one drawing on side. Kids uninterested later.

Cooking: youth asking many questions of leader, one after another

Destination Imagination: Youth writing and brainstorming and discussing team names with each other and staff.

Snack: Youth at six tables, socializing, eating, talking.

- Kids in cafeteria waiting in line for snack - respectful "please" "thank you"
- Kids happy to be gathering with other kids at tables. "Sit here"
- Kids eating - a few mentioned that they liked today's snack. I heard "I love hummus!"
- Kids running, playing, shouting, laughing (playing tag game outside in green space)
- Kids engaged in conversation with adults
- Kids with raised hands to ask a question
- Kids giving kids instructions

Quotes:

"Building trust" "School rules apply" "Get work done first"

"Teachers there to help" "Like to get a snack" "Get to move around"

"Get to go outside"

Staff Observations

Library: One staff person sitting at table, not observed assisting student. Site Coordinator engaging in Sudoku with one student.

Pickleball: staff playing with youth and helping with building serving skills

Cooking: staff showing proper cutting technique.

Destination Imagination: staff leading brainstorming activity. Agenda on white board.

Snack: staff serving snack. Greeting youth, often, but not always by name

- Giving instructions "wash your hands before you sit down" "wash your apple" "please get the knives out of the drawer"
- Getting every student a cutting board
- Demonstrating how to use a knife - sharp edge/dull edge (Intro to cooking)
- Demonstrating how to use a knife - sharp edge/dull edge (Intro to cooking)
- Suggesting kids introduce themselves and tell us what is their favorite food (Intro to cooking)
- Demonstrating how to play (Pickleball)
- Reading instructions out loud

Afterschool Observations

Each x refers to a unique observation by program

<p>Spirit: Smiling ___xxx___ Laughing ___xx___ Choosing ___xx___ Playing ___x___ Calming/Relaxing ___xx___</p>
<p>Health/Physical: Moving ___xxx___ Eating ___xx___ Drinking ___x___ Handwashing ___x___</p>
<p>Dialog: Speaking ___xxx___ Listening ___xxx___ Questioning ___xxx___ Discussing ___xxx___ Explaining ___xx___</p>
<p>Doing: Thinking ___xx___ Reading ___x___ Writing ___xxxx___ Making ___xxx___ Creating ___x___ Designing ___x___ Collaborating ___x___ Focusing/Immersing ___xx___ Persevering ___x___ Productive Failing _____ Reflecting/Evaluating _____ Collaborative Problem Solving _____ Researching _____ Performing ___x___</p>
<p>Leadership: Leading _____ Facilitating _____ Planning _____ Prioritizing _____</p>
<p>Social/Emotional: Cooperating ___x___ Advocating _____ Helping _____ Negotiating _____ Empathizing _____</p>
<p>Negativity: Arguing _____ Complaining _____ Not-doing/Not-interested ___x___</p>

Summer Program Observations
Site: Bellows Fall Middle School
Date: 7/24/18

Engagement Actions (Check all observed of youth)

eating_xxx_ drinking_xx_ thinking_xx_ reading_____ writing_____ moving_xx_
speaking_xxxxx_ listening _xx_ questioning _____ discussing_xxxx_ explaining_x_
smiling _xxxxxxx_ laughing _xxxxxxxx_ playing _xxx_ handwashing _x_
moving_xxxx_ creating _____ designing _____ choosing_xxxxx_ leading _____
cooperating _xxx_ advocating _____ helping _x_ negotiating _____
facilitating _____ planning _____ prioritizing _____ collaborative problem solving_____
persevering_xxx_ opportunities for productive failing_xxx_ reflecting _____
arguing _____ complaining_x_ not-doing/not-interested _____

Evidence statements: Evidence statements are non-judgmental detailed observations of youth action

-Youth repeatedly ice skate and fall and get up over one hour. Used boxes to assist. Much laughter and perseverance. Most skaters were beginners. Staff sit on bench. Director skated and persevered.

-Youth think about question of why statehouse golden dome is gold.

-Youth throw rocks and skip them on the river.

-Youth walk to river

-Youth sit on bench and listen quietly to birds for 2 minutes

"It's not a bird, it's a squirrel." Adult: Let's go look for animal tracks."

Youth have 8 choices of food for lunch. Youth sit in tables at lunch and talk.

Youth stop skating after one hour. Two youth show an arm from falling, another just misses the boards.

After 15 minutes in the circle, three youth start rubbing their eyes.

Youth sit in circle during morning meeting and actively participate in morning greeting.

"This is my last week and I'm very sad."

"We cannot touch glass or cans because they may have fentanyl and if it touches our skin, it would kill us."

"Can we go back now?" "I don't like this!" Adult: "It's that boring, huh?" "Can we go to Well's street?"

CIT youth helps youth walk near wall with clear direction when going down narrow road.

Girl creates snow man from rink ice with eyes by herself.

Visit schedule changed due to weather

Meal: chef's salad, hot dog, watermelon, cantaloupe, two milks, veggie packet, hummus, bread and butter. Lady very friendly around choices and good communicator with youth.