

MEMORANDUM

July 25, 2022

TO: Debbie Brown
Interim Afterschool Programs Manager

FROM: Allison Matney, Ed.D.
Executive Officer, Research & Accountability

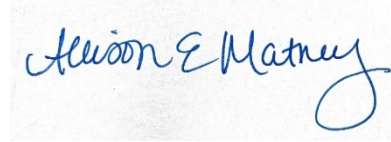
SUBJECT: **HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, TEXAS 21ST CENTURY AFTERSCHOOL CENTERS IN EDUCATION (ACE), CYCLE 10 REPORT, 2021–2022**

Attached is a copy of the executive summary for the Cycle 10 Texas 21st Century Afterschool Centers in Education (ACE) programs. The summary addressed unique Center attributes and provided information considered important for understanding successes and areas for improvement to deliver high-quality afterschool programs locally and throughout the state of Texas. This is the fourth year of the five-year Cycle 10 grant.

Key findings include:

- The largest proportion of Texas ACE students were Hispanic (55.8%). African Americans represented 40.2% of ACE students. More than half of all students were female (53.2%).
- Most ACE students were economically disadvantaged (94.4%) and 6.6% were at risk of dropping out of school. Further, 37.1% of ACE students were identified as limited English proficient and 7.0% participated in special education programs.
- The ACE program offered homework assistance and tutorials in core content areas. Health and fitness activities helped students manage obesity and stimulate their minds during and after the pandemic. Arts and crafts, builder's corner, and computers were available at each site, and gardening was offered at most sites. Team building activities encompassed strategic gaming and theatre to assist students with social-emotional development to increase peer-to-peer contact.
- Family engagement was a central component of the program to help parents successfully support their children in school. Parents participated in English as a second language classes (ESL), technology, and fitness. Most parents that were surveyed indicated that the program was "excellent" overall.
- A needs assessment revealed that students expressed "a lot" of interest academic enrichment, including reading, math, science, and STEM.
- The majority of surveyed teachers noted that the program was "excellent" toward increasing students' academic achievement, social skills, behavior, and class attendance.

Further distribution of this report is at your discretion. Should you have any further questions, please contact me at 713-556-6700.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Allison E. Matney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped final letter.

AEM

Attachment

cc: Millard L. House II
Shawn Bird, Ed.D.
Candice Castillo, Ed.D.
Scott Crawford, Ed.D.



RESEARCH

Educational Program Report

HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT,
TEXAS 21ST CENTURY AFTERSCHOOL CENTERS
IN EDUCATION (ACE), CYCLE 10 REPORT,
2021-2022



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EVALUATION REPORT

BUREAU OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

Houston Independent School District, Texas 21st Century Afterschool Centers in Education (ACE), Cycle 10 Report, 2021–2022

Prepared by Venita R. Holmes, Dr.P.H.

Executive Summary

Overall Purpose

The Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program is authorized by Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. The Texas 21st CCLC program operates as the Texas Afterschool Centers on Education or Texas ACE. Texas ACE strives to improve student attendance, behavior, and academics, while providing a safe supplemental learning environment for students and families who otherwise would not have such opportunities. High-quality supplemental enrichment activities are aligned with the regular school-day academic program, delivered in creative, hands-on, and exploratory ways. Texas ACE supports meaningful engagement of families in their children’s education (Texas ACE Blueprint, 2020–2021).

The 2021–2022 academic year was the fourth year of the Houston Independent School District (HISD), Cycle 10 ACE program. During the current year, the program operated at the ten Centers listed below.

- Emerson Elementary
- Fondren Elementary
- Gallegos Elementary
- Gregory-Lincoln Education Center (PK-8)
- Law Elementary
- Madison High
- Milne Elementary
- Pleasantville Elementary
- Pugh Elementary
- Wisdom High

This Executive Summary includes attributes considered important for identifying successes and areas for improvement. The data were gathered from interviews and surveys with the ACE Project Director, Site Coordinators, students, parents, and teachers.

A. Overall Strengths and Next Steps

During the 2021–2022 academic year, the HISD ACE program continued to focus on targeted goals of improving academic achievement, behavior, promotion, and graduation rates among a diverse student population. A strength of the program during the current year was the full transition to face-to-face activities following the COVID-19 pandemic. Site Coordinators and the Family Engagement Specialist partnered with school staff and community organizations to meet the interests and needs of students and to strengthen student and family participation in the program throughout the year.

Key accomplishments during the 2021–2022 academic year were observed at each ACE site. Specifically, it was an exceptionally productive year for ACE students in the Robotics class at Pleasantville Elementary School. This STEM-driven group worked in conjunction with nearby Holland Middle School students to design and program robots and drones of all shapes and sizes. The Robotics class held an exhibit for students, parents, and community stakeholders during Pleasantville’s Texas ACE Showcase (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1: Robotics class at Pleasantville Elementary School



Figure 2: Girls On the Run event at Rice University (right), with ACE first place winner (left)

Girls On the Run (GOTR) was designed to impact the physical and emotional development of females by strengthening their confidence during critical stages of life. In spring 2022, some ACE students used practice runs as a fun way to increase awareness of physical fitness and conditioning, while other ACE students ran in the actual event at Rice University stadium on April 30th. **Figure 2** depicts ACE students participating in *Girls on the Run* (right). An ACE second-grade student from Emerson Elementary School finished the race in first place ahead of third and fourth-grade students (**Figure 2**, left).

The Emerson Elementary School ACE partnered with Awty International School in a weekly “Read-A-Long” program hosted by the Awty International School’s Literacy Club (**Figure 3**). The Read-A-Long sessions were held each Wednesday using a virtual format. The event culminated with a special final Read-A-Long visit from Literacy Club students of Awty International.



Figure 3: “Read-A-Long” for Emerson ACE and Awty school students

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, philanthropist, Oprah Winfrey, funded the creation of Angel Lane in the Hiram Clark community of Southwest Houston. Students at Madison High School partnered with the Houston Area Urban League to renovate and maintain an “Angel Garden” at the adjoining Angel Lane Community Center during the 2021–2022 academic year (**Figure 4**). Gardening was the responsibility of the Madison ACE Gardening Club with the assistance of Madison’s Future Farmers of America (FFA) staff.

The Houston Area Urban League held Literacy Night for HISD campuses and communities at the Pugh Elementary School ACE (**Figure 5** and **Table 1**). Parents and students were inspired to build stronger students, schools, and communities through the



Figure 4: Madison HS ACE 21st Century Gardening Club partnering



Figure 5: Literacy Night at the Pugh Elementary School ACE

Table 1: Houston Urban League, Literacy Night Events, 2021–2022	
Campus	Literacy Night Date
Emerson ES	18-May-22
Fondren ES	8-Apr-22
Gallegos ES	17-May-22
Gregory Lincoln (PK-8)	22-Apr-22
Law ES	22-Mar-22
Madison HS	10-May-22
Milne ES	3-May-22
Pleasantville ES	17-Feb-22
Pugh ES	20-May-22
Wisdom HS	14-Apr-22

power of reading. The Urban League provided free books to parents to supplement their home libraries. The event included prizes and give aways for parents in attendance. Free COVID vaccinations and booster shots were available to all parents and stakeholders.

B. Brief Grantee and Center Overview

Demographic characteristics for students who participated in the HISD Cycle 10 ACE program in 2021–2022 are presented in **Table 2a** (p. 3) by race/ethnicity and gender. **Table 2b** (p. 3) includes the number of ACE students who were economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient (LEP), at risk, and identified as receiving special education services. Grade level data are shown in **Table 2c**.

		Total	African Am.	Asian	Hispanic	White	Two or More	H/PI*	Am. In.**	Male	Female
All Cycle 10 Students	N	1,829	736	23	1,021	45	0	1	3	856	973
	%	100.0	40.2	<.1	55.8	2.4	-	<1	<1	46.8	53.2
All HISD Students (TAPR) (2019–2020)	N	209,309	44,064	8,683	121,437	19,405	2,808	140	397	99,339	97,604
	%	100.0	22.4	4.4	61.7	9.9	1.4	0.1	0.2	50.4	49.6

*Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; ** American Indian

		Total	Eco. Disadv.	LEP	At Risk	Spec. Ed.	G/T
All Cycle 10 Students	N	1,691	1597	627	112	119	113
	%	100.0	94.4	37.1	6.6	7.0	6.7
All HISD Students (TAPR) (2020–2021)	N	196,943	154,511	65,638	103,805	16,238	31,472
	%	100.0	78.5	33.3	52.7	8.2	16.0

Note: Economically disadvantaged (eco. disadv.), limited English proficient (LEP), at risk, special education (spec. ed.), and gifted/talented (G/T) data were extracted from PEIMS; a total of 1,691 ACE students were found in PEIMS

	All Cycle 10 Students (N = 1,829)		TAPR (2020–2021) (N = 196,943)	
	N	%	N	%
Early Childhood	0	-	277	<1
PreK	106	5.8	10,991	5.6
Kindergarten	134	7.3	13,886	7.1
1st	134	7.3	15,108	7.7
2nd	187	10.2	15,159	7.7
3rd	229	12.5	15,590	7.9
4th	246	13.4	15,725	8.0
5th	247	13.5	15,963	8.1
6th	36	2.0	13,309	6.8
7th	37	2.0	13,480	6.8
8th	27	1.5	13,915	7.1
9th	116	6.3	14,976	7.6
10th	114	6.2	14,001	7.1
11th	145	7.9	12,597	6.4
12th	71	3.9	11,966	6.1
Total	1829	100.0	196,943	100.0

Table 2a reveals that the largest proportion of ACE students were Hispanic (55.8%) and the largest proportion of students in the district were Hispanic (61.7%). District comparisons are based on the 2020–2021 Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR), which was the latest available report at the time of this evaluation. African Americans were much more likely to be an ACE student relative to students districtwide (40.2% vs. 22.4%). The majority of ACE students were female (53.2%); whereas, the majority of students in the district were male (50.4%) (TAPR, 2020–2021).

Table 2b shows that 94.4% of ACE students were economically disadvantaged and 6.6% were at risk of dropping out of school. Further, 37.1% of ACE students were limited English proficient (LEP) and 7.0% were identified as participating in special education programs. The district’s student population was comprised of lower percentages of economically-disadvantaged (78.5% vs. 94.4%) and LEP students (33.3% vs. 37.1%) but higher percentages of at-risk (52.7% vs. 6.6%), special education (8.2% vs. 7.0%), and gifted/talented (G/T) students (16.0% vs. 6.7%) (TAPR, 2020–2021).

Table 2c reveals that the highest percentages of ACE students were in fifth grade, followed by fourth grade (13.5% and 13.4%,

respectively). Compared to the 2020–2021 TAPR, fourth and fifth-grade students represented about 8.0% of the student population.

Figure 6a shows the number of “regular” and “non-regular” ACE students at each elementary school site. Figure 6b shows similar data at secondary school sites. Students are considered “regular” students if they attended the program at least 45 days during the school year. Among ACE elementary schools, Law had the highest number of “regular” ACE students (n = 212), followed by Fondren (n = 159) and Gregory-Lincoln (n = 146). Among the high school ACE sites, Madison had the highest number of “regular” ACE students compared to Wisdom (n = 223 vs. n = 156, respectively).

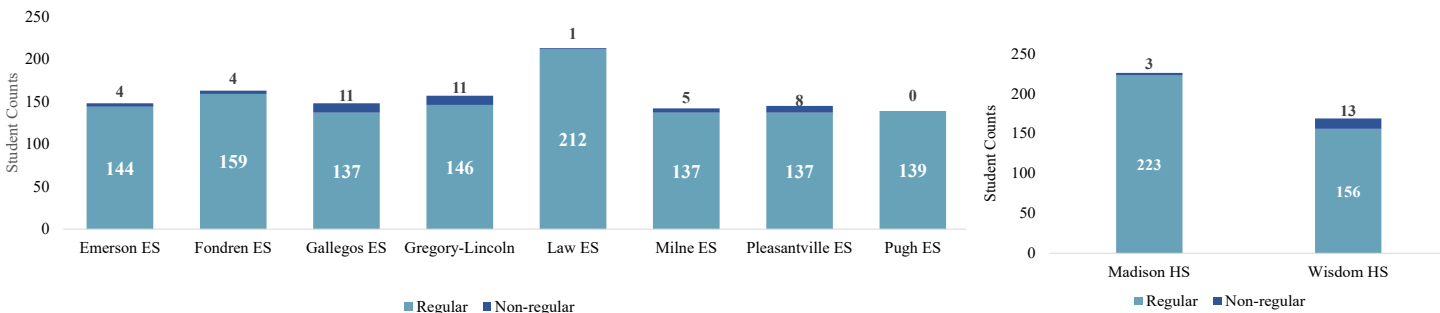


Figure 6a: Number of ACE students by elementary site (left); Figure 6b: Number of ACE students by secondary ACE site (right)

Table 3: Needs of ACE Youth and Families and Programs/Activities to Address Needs, 2021–2022

	Needs of youth and families	Programs/activities implemented to address the needs of youth and families
Emerson ES	Food, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, counseling, academic support	Referred students to Wraparound services for counseling, to Backpack Buddy and Brighter Bites food programs; provided ESL classes to families; provided academic tutorials in reading, math, science on Monday through Thursday and homework help
Fondren MS	Increased need for literacy support	Offered programmatic supports for school and community literacy efforts, such as the continuation of the Houston Area Urban League’s Family Literacy Night Program.
Gallegos ES	Students needed assistance with homework, such as reading, writing and math	Established an hour of homework help for all students; students that were struggling received extra one-on-one academic assistance
Gregory Lincoln	Needed additional STEM based academic interventions for the extended day program	Provided new vendors offering high impact tutorials and STEM based academic enrichment opportunities
Law ES	Need for increased social skills development	Offered a positive behavior program such as Sanford Harmony; invited students to attend and play an active role in feeling validated and confident. Talked about issues, why and more about them
Madison HS	Social and emotional activities	Offered boxing and character building activities
Milne ES	Students needed greater access to educational software applications for recently received technology devices	Adopted additional software and apps for new technology devices received this year
Pleasantville ES	Character building, college and career-related activities, and family ESL classes	Implemented Character Stars for 1st through 5th-grade students and Robotics/Drones enrichment activities for 3rd through 8th-grade students
Pugh ES	Homework help	Offered homework help; teachers volunteered to give students extra help after school
Wisdom HS	Transportation, financial support, clothing, and English literacy	Sought help from donors, mentors, and created ESL classes for parents and students

C. Implementation

Site Coordinators were asked to describe the needs of youth and families at their Center along with activities implemented to address these needs. A summary of their responses is presented in **Table 3**. In general, Site Coordinators identified the need for academic support, personal items, and English as a Second Language (ESL) assistance for families. Collaboration with internal and community partners helped ACE students and families meet their needs. More specific strategies included comprehensive academic and enrichment activities to strengthen students’ skills in core content areas that complemented regular-school day instruction. Homework assistance was provided at all elementary and middle-school programs, while high-school ACE students were provided tutorials. Health and fitness activities included dance, hip hop, Zumba, cheer leading, and weightlifting to help students manage obesity and stimulate their minds and bodies during and after the pandemic. Hands-on activities, such as arts and crafts, builder’s corner, computers, and gardening were available at each site (**Figure 7**). Team building activities encompassed strategic gaming and theatre to assist students with social-emotional development to increase peer-to-peer contact. Robotics exposed ACE students to STEM. During one hour weekly, FlowServe offered a STEM-based group facilitation at Gallegos.



Figure 7: STEM-based group facilitation offered at Gallegos ACE

D. Local Needs and Outcomes

In spring 2022, this evaluation gathered feedback on how the program addressed needs and influenced outcomes related to student participation in afterschool activities, academic performance, and family engagement. The results were derived from observations, surveys, and interviews with teachers, students, parents, the Project Director, and Site Coordinators. ACE students were asked to rate various program components and to indicate their needs and interests based on a list of activities that were designed to improve student outcomes. In addition, a modified version of the Student Engagement Instrument (SEI) was administered to ACE students to measure their cognitive and affective engagement in the program. Teacher and parent surveys were distributed at ACE sites to explore the extent that students benefited from the program. Descriptive statistics were calculated based on rating scales associated with survey instruments. A total of 148 ACE students, 30 teachers, and 66 parents completed the survey.

- **Figure 8** shows students’ ratings on afterschool activities. The highest percentage of students rated arts and crafts as “excellent” (67.4%), which is an enrichment activity to

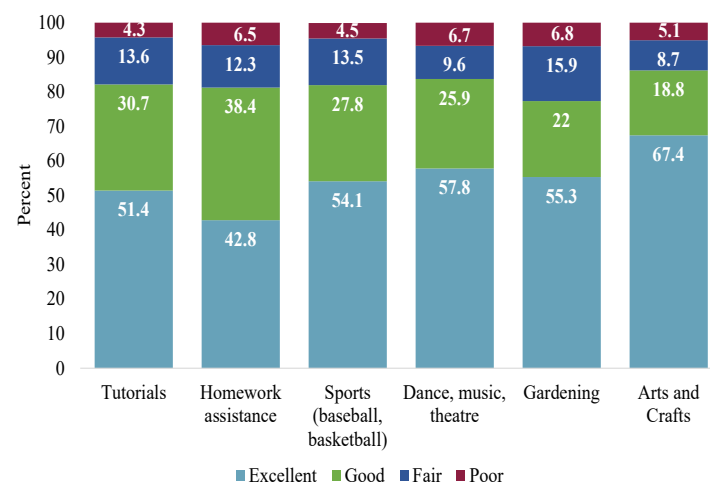


Figure 8: Students’ perceptions of ACE activities, spring 2022

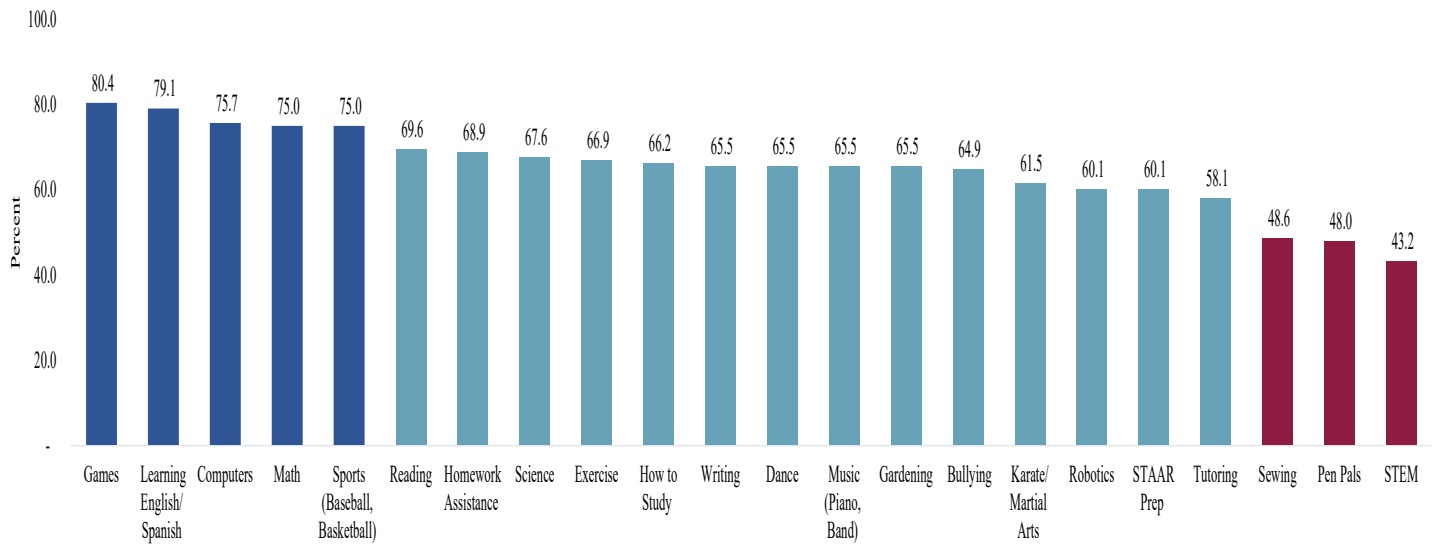


Figure 9: ACE students’ needs assessment results, spring 2022

increase student interest and motivate them to participate in the program.

- The majority of ACE students perceived dance, music, and theatre (57.8%); gardening (55.3%); sports (54.1%), and tutorials (51.4%) as “excellent”.
- On the needs assessment, most students (between 58.1% and 80.4%) expressed “a lot” of interest in academic as well as enrichment activities, including reading, math, science, writing, how to study, STAAR preparation, computers, homework assistance, arts and crafts, understanding bullying, dance, music, exercise, sports, and gardening (**Figure 9**).
- ACE students expressed the highest interest, on the needs assessment, in games and learning English and Spanish

(80.4% and 79.1%, respectively).

- Social emotional learning (SEL) for ACE students was measured on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) (**Figure 10**). The mean score was highest on the survey items: “My education will create many chances for me to reach my future goals” (3.7); “My family/guardian(s) want me to keep trying when things are tough at school” (3.7); “My parent/guardians(s) are there when I need them” (3.7); and “I have friends at school” (3.7).
- The lowest ratings among ACE students on the SEL survey was on the items “I don’t pay attention during class” (2.0) and “If I don’t do well in school, it is because I am not smart” (2.1).

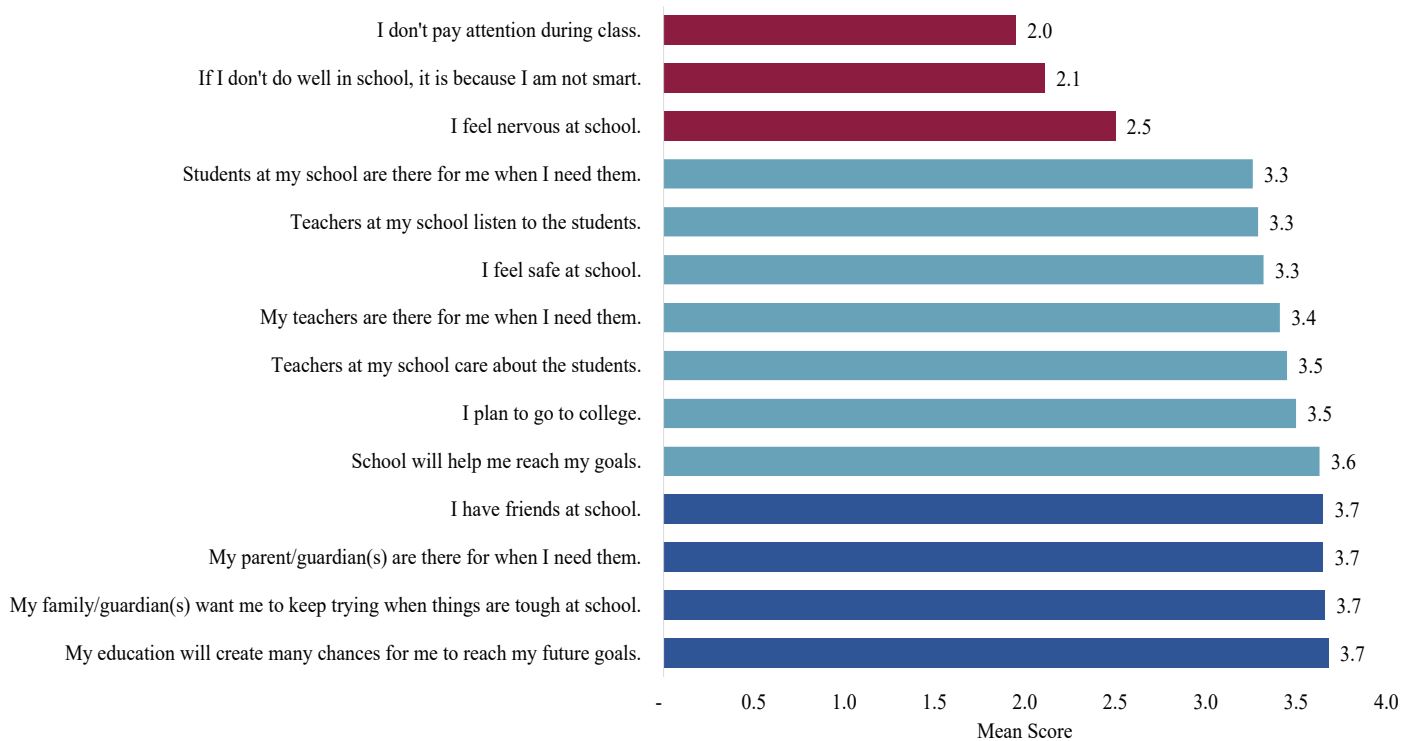


Figure 10: ACE students’ perceptions of social emotional learning (SEL), spring 2022

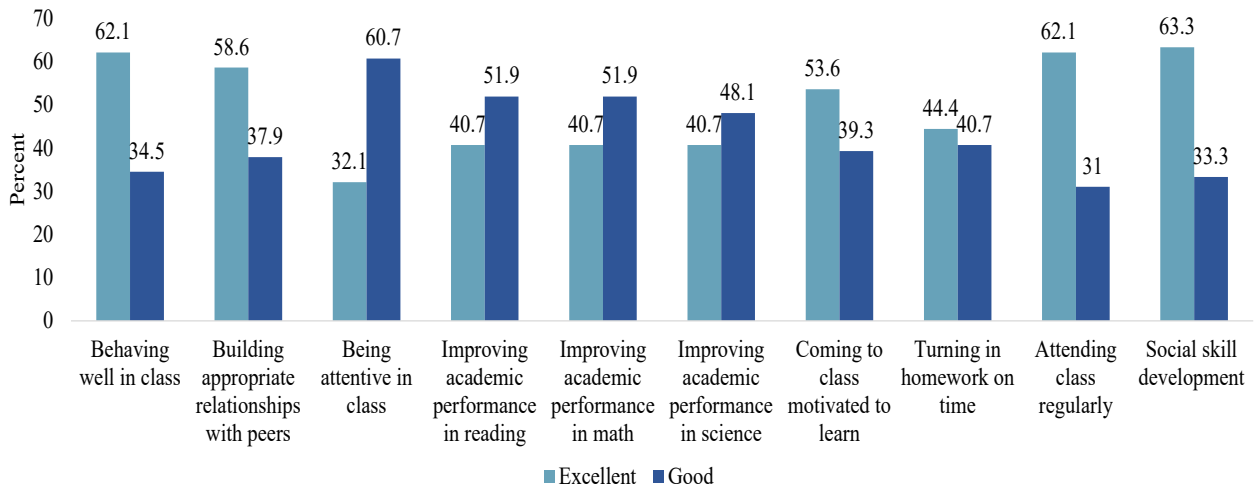


Figure 11: Teachers’ at ACE sites perceptions of the afterschool program, spring 2022

- Among the 30 teachers who completed the survey, an overwhelming majority revealed that ACE staff “regularly” provided training to teachers on communicating effectively with families using multiple strategies (76.7%); understanding and respecting the cultural differences of all families (70.0%); improving academic outcomes for students (76.7%); improving social outcomes for students (80.0%), and building strong relationships with families (70.3%).
- **Figure 11** shows that the highest percentage of teachers rated the afterschool program as “excellent” in helping students develop social skills (63.3%), attend class regularly (62.1%), and behave well in class (62.1%). Further, the majority of teachers indicated that the program was “excellent” toward building appropriate relationships with peers (58.6%), improving academic performance in reading (51.9%), and improving math performance (51.9%). Moreover, the majority of teacher respondents noted that the program helped students come to school motivated to learn (53.6%).
- At least 80% of teachers “strongly agreed” that the afterschool program is a worthwhile program for students (80.0%) and that

ACE staff works well with teachers (90.0%). Approximately, 77.0% of teachers noted that the program provides an enriching environment for students through exposure to activities, such as health, fitness, arts, and technology.

- A total of 66 parents responded to a survey to gather their perceptions regarding how the afterschool program has helped their child.
- Parents of ACE students were overwhelmingly positive about the program (**Figure 12**). The highest percentage of parents expressed agreement that their child enjoys attending the after school program (98.5%) and that their child has a better attitude toward school after participating in the program (98.5%). Parents also noted that they were satisfied with the kinds of programs and activities offered (97.0%), and they were satisfied with the overall performance of the after school staff (97.0%).
- Finally, 68.8% of ACE parents noted that the program was “excellent” overall, while 71.2% considered the hours of operations were “excellent”.

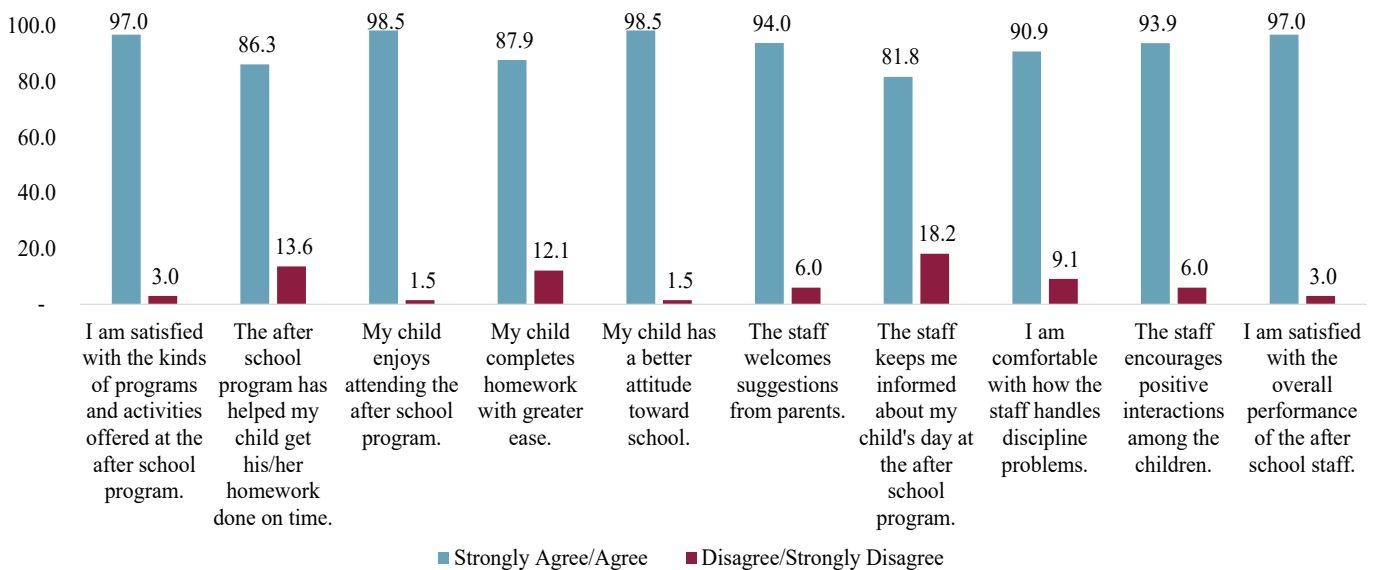


Figure 12: ACE parents’ perceptions about how the afterschool program has helped their child, spring 2022