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ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION MAKING AND GOAL SETTING IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL-TIME PROGRAMS

A Dissertation Presented

by

JENNY HEMMINGSON

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 2011

Education

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ABSTRACT

ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION MAKING AND GOAL SETTING IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL-TIME PROGRAMS

MAY 2011

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Currently, there is a large body of research examining Out-of-School Time (OST) programs, the goals of these programs, and their reported impact on the youth they serve.

However, there is little evidence of research on how organizations determine which goals best fit the needs of the communities they serve. Concurrently, studies of how organizations put these goals into action are virtually non-existent in the literature.

This study examines how organizations in Massachusetts receiving federal 21st

Century Community Learning Center funding make decisions about Out-of-School Time programming. Although the federal grant requirements and the Massachusetts

Department of Education impose some uniformity on these programs, they still vary considerably in their design and the target audiences they serve. Through an online

survey, document review and semi-structured interviews, the research identified several themes about the decision making used in these organizations. Cohen, March & Olson's Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice was used as a framework to better understand the data and to organize the discussion. A stakeholder analysis was also used to evaluate the influence of participants on the decision making within the Out-of-School Time programs. The research identified a loose connection between the decisions made about the types of activities selected and the prescriptive goals of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs. There were several factors that contributed to this loose connection, including the influence of stakeholders, the learning outcomes identified by the assessment tools, and the evaluation of programs by the state.

The research also leads to several recommendations about the evaluation of these programs in Massachusetts, including a review of the assessment tools designed by the state and a study of whether the mission shift evidenced in these communities is a tacit decision made by the Department of Education and grant recipients. Further research on the alignment of federal and state programming goals is also recommended.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction

This chapter introduces the reader to the Out-of-School Time (OST) program movement and provides an overview of the typical goals of OST programs, including those of the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) OST programs. This chapter identifies a gap in the research in understanding how organizations make decisions about OST programming and how those decisions help achieve program goals. This chapter outlines the purpose of this qualitative study, identifies the research population to be studied and introduces the conceptual framework, the Garbage Can Model for decision making. The specific research questions are also first identified in this chapter.

OST Programs

Out of School Time (OST) is a general term that describes any structured programs outside of the normal school day hours. "The National Institute on Out-of-School Time defines out-of-school time programs as encompassing a wide range of program offerings for young people that take place before school, after school, on weekends, and during the summer and other school breaks " ("Making an Impact on Out-of-School Time: A Guide for Corporation for National Service Programs Engaged in After-School, Summer, and Weekend Activities for Young People," 2000, p. 3). The programs are sometimes referred to as "after-school," "extended day," or "school-aged care" programs and can

occur before or after school or during the vacation days. These terms are often used interchangeably. OST programs provide children and youth, kindergarten through high school, with a range of supervised activities. Some activities are designed to encourage learning or development outside of the typical school curriculum, while other programs intend to enrich or extend the regular school curriculum (Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008). Some OST programs are topic-specific and focus on categories like the arts, sports, theatre, math or science. Other programs integrate a broader spectrum of disciplines that could include academic enrichment, physical or recreational activities, cultural awareness or service to the community (Peter, 2002).

In their intended form, OST programs are not daycare or open-gyms, but structured, supervised activities that have specific objectives they wish to achieve, like higher test scores or improved social skills. Extracurricular activities, like baseball teams or the school debate club, do not fall within the definition of OST program, as they typically have their own programs that differ from the specified goals of the OST programs. The same is true for clubs affiliated with a particular organization, like Boy Scouts or Future Farmers of America. While the definition of OST is quite broad, the OST programs reviewed for this research study are those specifically created to meet the goals outlined in the 21st CCLC.

The term "OST Program" encompasses a breadth of different types of programs. Riggs and Greenber (2004) distinguish between two types of OST programs. The first type simply provides a safe environment for youth during out-of-school time hours. These programs are often unstructured and include recreation activities, homework time, arts and crafts, or socializing. The other type of OST program seeks to promote positive

youth development and is often more structured. Typically, this second type of program incorporates activities around academic success, socio-emotional competence, technology, the arts or health and fitness (Riggs & Greenber, 2004). It is this second, more structured type of program that describes the work of those programs operated by communities funded by the U.S. Department of Education's 21st CCLC program.

Under Title IVB of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, 21st CCLC programs are intended to provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly for those children who attend high-poverty and lowperforming schools. The specific program goal for the 21st CCLC OST Programs is, "To establish community learning centers that help students in high-poverty, low-performing schools meet academic achievement standards; to offer a broad array of additional services designed to complement the regular academic program; and to offer families of students opportunities for educational development." The Performance Plan goes on to state the three main objectives of the programs: "(1) Participants in 21st CCLC programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes, (2) 21st CCLCs will offer high-quality enrichment opportunities that positively affect student outcomes such as school attendance and academic performance, and result in decreased disciplinary actions or other adverse behaviors, and to (3) Improve the operational efficiency of the program" (Guide to U.S. Department of Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education Office of Communications and Outreach, 2009).

OST programs have become the popular response to combat the factors facing at-risk youth and to meet the academic and social needs of youth. According to research in

2005, approximately half of all public elementary schools offer after-school academic instruction programs for students who need assistance (Strizek, Pittsonberger, Riordan, Lyter, & Orlosfsky, 2006). The sheer number of programs and the tax dollars devoted to OST programs seems to legitimize their existence as an intervention for at-risk behaviors, as a means for filling in the gaps left by the educational system and for developing the thoughtful citizens communities crave. However, not enough is known about whether programs are being selected with goals in mind whether the right programs are being designed to meet the organizations goals or whether the chosen programs are truly effective in making the changes they promise.

OST Program Goals

There are four common themes for OST goals that have emerged from the literature: academic support, enrichment and citizenship, youth development, and a reduction in youth risk-taking. These goal areas will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Because these goals often overlap, and many OST host sites seek to achieve one or more of these goals, it leaves the researcher to wonder how organizations determine which goals will best serve their population. If the host organization is faith-based or school-based, it may influence which OST goals are selected. Equally true, if the OST is housed in a non-profit, for-profit or community-based organization, the stakeholders may have different priorities for which goals deserve the focus of their efforts. For 21st Century Community Learning Centers communities, the goals for the OST programs are predetermined for the grant recipients. However, the methods for achieving those goals are not clearly defined. In fact, in some organizations it is difficult to make the connection between certain programs and the goals of the OST. Despite the clear

guidelines for OST programs under 21st CCLC, there is reason to suspect that some organizations are designing programs that are like the first type of programs described by Riggs and Greenber, which are unstructured, include recreation activities or focus heavily on socializing (Riggs & Greenber, 2004). In light of these prescribed 21st CCLC goals, it is important that we understand how and why organizations make decisions about their programming needs. Theoretically, the goals guide the programming choices, impact how resources are allotted, and shape the target audience of the OST programs. In order to determine whether OST programs are successful, it is important to understand which goals the organization hopes to achieve and how they are connected to the selected programs. Without this clarification of the connection between goals and the decisions made for programming, program success or effectiveness is nearly impossible to measure.

As part of this research study, an extensive review of the literature was conducted. The literature revealed that not all 21stCCLC OST programs are aligning perfectly to the prescribed goals of the 21st CCLC. Pressure to provide safe supervised places for youth, to provide funding for a local sports team, or to please an influential member of the community can influence decisions about programming. In school sites there may be pressure from a well-intended administration or school board to sponsor a particular activity. A particular community may not have access to the same types of activities, talents or resources as another, and therefore would not offer the same rigor of programming. Some OST programs end up competing with other organizations in their community for resources and support; many of these may be targeting the same population, but have deeper pockets or fewer restrictions for program implementation.

Surprisingly, with the volume of research on the many aspects of OST programs currently in existence, there is little evidence of research on how organizations determine which goals best fit their community and organizational needs. Concomitantly, studies of how organizations put these goals into action through programming decisions are virtually non-existent in the literature. An area of research that has not been fully explored is how school administrators and coordinators of 21st CCLC OST programs, when faced with the vast number of OST programs and potential benefits, set their priorities for OST programming. Interestingly, even with the predetermined goals set out for organizations receiving 21st CCLC grant funding, there is little research to understand how these organizations make decisions when designing programs to meet these goals. Research on organizational decision making may serve to help us better understand how school administrators and coordinators make their programming decisions, either in deference to, or in ignorance of, their OST program goals.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how organizations made decisions about OST programming by utilizing an organizational decision making model to describe and help understand the processes. Specifically, this study looked at 21st CCLC programs and how grant recipient organizations made decisions about programming. Even though the federal grant requirements impose some uniformity on these programs, they still vary considerably in their design and their goals. Through an online survey, document review and interviews, the research identifies themes and draws conclusions about the decision making used in these organizations. Cohen, March & Olson's Garbage Can Model (GCM) of organizational choice is used as a framework to understand the data and to

organize the discussion. Lastly, the research serves to identify connections between the types of activities selected during the decision making process and the prescriptive goals of the NCLB OST programs and their recipient host communities.

The Research Population

This study solicited information on 21st CCLC programs in Massachusetts. Selecting schools from this population provides some general consistency in goals and design, as well as some geographical consistencies. School sites receiving funding for OST programs through 21st CCLC programs have been identified as "at-risk" schools based on standardized test scores. Under Title IVB of the NCLB Act of 2001, 21st CCLC programs are intended to provide academic enrichment opportunities during nonschool hours for children, particularly for those children who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. All of the 38 Massachusetts communities chosen for this study qualified and received 21stCCLC grant funding for the 2009-2010 school year. The specific program goal for the 21stCCLC OST Programs is, "To establish community learning centers that help students in high-poverty, low-performing schools meet academic achievement standards; to offer a broad array of additional services designed to complement the regular academic program; and to offer families of students opportunities for educational development" (No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title IVB 21st Learning Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Year End Report - Fiscal Year 2009, July 2010, p.1). The Performance Plan goes on to state the three main objectives of the programs: "(1) Participants in 21st CCLC programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes, (2) 21st CCLCs will offer highquality enrichment opportunities that positively affect student outcomes such as school

attendance and academic performance, and result in decreased disciplinary actions or other adverse behaviors, and to (3) Improve the operational efficiency of the program" (Guide to U.S. Department of Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education Office of Communications and Outreach, 2009).

Conceptual Framework

Cohen, March and Olsen's Garbage Can Model (GCM) of organizational choice (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972) was used as a framework to better understand the data collected from these organizations about their decision making processes. The GCM model challenges the assumption that organizations make decisions by first identifying problems, then identifying all possible solutions, and then rationally choosing which solutions best address the problems. Instead, GCM proposes that organizational decisions are guided and influenced by a number of different factors. The four streams of the GCM model – problems, solutions, participants and choice opportunities – were used to help identify consistent themes or influences on the decisions made within the organization. Problems are identified as all of the concerns facing the participants in the decision making, including time management, personnel issues or stress at work or in the home. The second stream, solutions, is a product or answer, and is distinct from the problems of an organization. In the case of OST programs, a solution may be a pet project, like an art club or cross country team, which a participant would like to see implemented. A solution can even be an outside agency (like the Boys and Girls Club or a local theatre) that has been looking for an opportunity to collaborate with the site. The third stream, participants, refers to all of the members of the decision making team, including the program coordinator, administrator or the leadership committee, as

applicable. The fourth stream, choice opportunities, are those occasions when an organization elects to create a response or a program in response to the opportunity, such as creating programs when a significant funding opportunity or access to transportation has surfaced. The GCM was used to help better understand the problem activity, or the problem latency, within each of the host organizations making decisions about OST programming. This model will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

The Research Study

This qualitative case study design sought to understand the process used by organizations to make decisions about OST programming. The study used an online survey to gather information about OST programs in Massachusetts receiving funding for fiscal year 2010, and conducted follow-up interviews with the OST program coordinators from selected communities. The Garbage Can Model was used to frame and describe the results of this study. In examining the decision making of these OST programs, the following questions provided guidance for the inquiry. The central question, "How do host organizations make decisions about OST programming?" was examined by using the theoretical framework, the Garbage Can Model, to interpret decision making within the context of organizational dynamics (Cohen et al., 1972). Using the four themes identified as part of the choice opportunities presented in this model, interview questions probed about the process used to make decisions and the influences on those decisions. Lastly, the research study looked to understand the relationship between the programs selected and the prescribed goals of the OST program.

Overview of Study

The second chapter of this study provides more background information on OST programs and the 21st CCLC program. This chapter also provides the reader with a brief overview of some of the criticism of OST programs in the research, including the gap in the research on how organizations make decisions about programming. It introduces the reader to the GCM and explains why the application of this model helps us more fully understand the decision making taking place in host organizations.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the research population for this study, including background information on the 21st CCLC program in Massachusetts.

Information about research sampling, data collection and the research design is fully discussed in this chapter, including the procedures to be used for data analysis. Research limitations of the study are also discussed.

In Chapter 4 the Participants in the study are introduced. Information about each Grantee is provided, as well as an overview of the state 21st CCLC program and its requirements. Chapter 5 uses the Garbage Can Model and the Stakeholder Analysis to describe and understand the results of the study. The final chapter provides a discussion of the findings and makes recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to provide an overview of Out-of-School Time (OST) programs, present the social and educational issues propelling their existence, explore common program goals and give an overview of the current research surrounding OST programs, including a critique of the current research. Information on the 21stCCLC communities is also included in this review. The second portion of this chapter looks at the Garbage Can Model and how it helps us to better understand organizational decision making. This chapter shows where the research has shown some commonalities in the priorities of OST programs, and where more research is needed. Finally, it makes the link between the OST program goals and how organizations, like the schools that sponsor OST programs, make their decisions about programming.

OST Programs

Out of School Time (OST) is a general term that describes any array of structured programs outside of the normal school day hours. "The National Institute on Out-of-School Time defines out-of-school time programs as encompassing a wide range of program offerings for young people that take place before school, after school, on weekends, and during the summer and other school breaks " ("Making an Impact on Out-of-School Time: A Guide for Corporation for National Service Programs Engaged in After-School, Summer, and Weekend Activities for Young People," 2000, p. 3). The intention of OST programs is to provide children and young adults with a range of

activities that are supervised by an adult. These activities may be academic in nature, an extension of the regular school day, or may be strictly recreational. Some OST programs offer activities that have a specific focus, like music or sports, while other programs offer a wide variety of activities to engage students.

As noted in Chapter 1, the term "OST Program" could refer either to a relatively unstructured program that simply provides a safe environment for youth during out-of-school time hours, or to a more structured program that seeks to promote positive youth development and is often more structured to emphasize goals such as academic success, socio-emotional competence, technology, the arts or health and fitness (Riggs & Greenber, 2004). It is this second, more structured type of program that describes the work of those programs operated by communities funded by the U.S. Department of Education's 21st CCLC program, which are the focus of this study.

Host Organizations for OST Programs

There are several types of OST programs in schools and communities. OST programs have been established by private and public schools, community centers, churches, for-profit organizations and nonprofit agencies such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, or The Organization of Boy Scouts. Depending on the goals of the program's host organization, be they faith-based, civic-minded, academically focused, or focused on service learning, the OST program is established to offer children and youth a broad range of activities in a safe, supervised setting. The growth and popularity of OST programs has been propelled by societal concerns for youth, and consequently, for communities. In response to those concerns many communities have developed OST programs to help supervise and guide youth, either academically or socially. These

programs have also been offered as an alternative for working parents who need assistance with childcare. There is a wide breadth of organizations that host a variety of different OST programs for youth. These organizations, be they government-sponsored non-profits or for-profit businesses, hope to tackle one or more of the issues identified as a need in their communities.

In 2008, the National Household Education Surveys Program reported that 40 percent of students in kindergarten through eighth grade spent at least one day each week in a non-parental care arrangement like daycare or OST programs outside of the school day (Parsad & Lewis, 2009). According to Strizek (2006), half of all public elementary schools offer after school academic instruction for youth in need of support or assistance (Strizek et al. 2006). With 49.8 million students attending public elementary and secondary schools – 34.9 million in pre-kindergarten through 8th grade and 14.9 million in grades 9 through 12 in the year 2008 – the numbers of youth attending programs is significant. OST programs are impacting a large number of youth as more families require or desire the services of out-of-home and out-of-school care.

Out-of-school time programs are funded in a variety of ways, depending on the organization or partnership that hosts them. Some OST programs receive grants and or subsidies through local, state or federally-funded initiatives. Some OST programs are offered at no cost to parents, some programs offer a sliding-scale fee and others charge all participants the full fee for their services. Operating costs of many programs are offset by funding from nonprofit agencies, funds allocated to public schools or through federal grant funding. Other OST programs are offered by for-profit agencies that generate revenue through program fees charged to participants. While there are many local and

state initiatives supporting OST programming, there are significant tax dollars being invested in these programs at the federal levels as well. With the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110) (NCLB) emphasis on academic performance and accountability, OST programs have been provided supports to grow (Dynarski et al., 2003). Some major federal funding sources are the Child Care and Development Fund, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds, and workforce Development funds, and 21st CCLC grants, all of which have added momentum to the adoption of OST programs (Little, 2007).

Goals of OST Programs

The goals of OST programs vary in their delivery and in their specificity. Sample goals from the research include increases in academic achievement, decreases in involvement in risky behavior, enhancements in life skills, improved citizenry and increased access to employment and future success. Brooks-Gunn and Roth's research (2003) identified common characteristics of program goals from the 71 programs they studied. The main themes that emerged were skill and competency building, connections to others, and prevention. Skill and competency goals focused on improving life and social skills, bolstering personality development, enhancing motivation and providing support for academic improvement. Goals around building connections targeted youth and adult relationships both in the school and in the community. And, logically, prevention goals worked toward preventing at-risk behaviors, particularly around substance use (Brooks-Gunn & Roth, 2003). These categories of goals are consistent with the types of goals found in the literature.

During this review of the literature, numerous examples of OST programs in place across the United States were cited and reviewed. Included in this analysis were examples of programs that focused on academic enrichment, tutoring, mentoring, homework support, music, theater, fine arts, drama, technology, science, literacy, reading, math, civic engagement, community service, health and fitness, activities to support healthy emotional development and countless others. When they were identified, the outcomes promised by programs were almost as varied as the types of activities offered by the OST Programs.

Based on a review of the current literature, common themes were revealed in the goals for OST programming. In order to better understand and review the literature for this research study, the goals have been organized into four common themes based on the areas of academic needs, societal or community needs, and youth at risk. However, there are overlaps in each of the goal areas and many programs, upon evaluation or in presentation of the benefits of the individual programs, expanded to include outcomes attributed to other goal areas. The four main goal areas identified for this review are academic support, enrichment and citizenship, youth development, and a reduction in youth risk taking.

Academic Goals

Many of the OST programs, including the ones funded through 21st CCLC monies, have an academic or tutoring component. By definition, schools hosting OST programs are struggling academically and are in need of assistance. For at-risk schools to qualify for funding through the 21st CCLC grants, they must have not met their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as demonstrated by standardized test scores. Goals for academic

achievement are common in OST programs, particularly in those programs that are in partnership with or housed by school sites. The most recent data (2007) shows that approximately 87% of youth are graduating high school. In comparison to other industrialized nations, this puts the United States graduation rank at 10th in the world. Thirty years ago, the United States was ranked first in graduation rate among developed countries. Of this graduating population, only 76% graduate on time with their class, putting the United States 20th among the developed countries. A person without a high school degree earns two-thirds of the income of what someone with a high school diploma earns. 42% of those individuals without high school degrees have incomes that are less than half of the United States median income ("Education at a glance OECD Indicators," 2007). In an extensive review of the literature, Zhang et al. (2006) concluded that quality, after-school programs contained scholastic development, social behavior, caring environment and personal inspiration components (Zhang, Lam, Smith, Fleming, & Connaughton, 2006). Several researchers agree with this conclusion, asserting that quality OST programs help students improve grades and standardized test scores (Baker & Witt, 1996; Nash & Fraser, 1998). Carver and Iruka (2006) draw similar conclusions about the positive impact of quality OST programs from the analysis of the data from the After School Program and Activities Survey, which provides a representative sample of youth in grade kindergarten through grade 8 that attend OST programs (Carver & Iruka, 2006). However, the research indicates there is still much debate about the definition of quality programming and how programs are being evaluated to assure this level of quality.

Enrichment and Citizenship Goals

In addition to the academic goals, OST programs have also been looked to as a means of strengthening youth in preparation for their future as contributing citizens. Advocates of OST programs assert that the programs can provide youth with opportunities for enrichment, exploration, choice and the independence skills they need in order to be successful in school and in their current and future lives (Hornbeck, 2002). Research on OST programs has also purported that participation in OST programs reduces risky behavior by youth and help them access their full potential (Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001; "Community programs to promote youth development: Executive summary," 2002; Fauth, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2007). The Department of Juvenile Justice (1999) reports that youth need supervised activities after school in order to avoid the risk of being either victims or perpetrators of crime. Many OST programs view reducing risk for youth as one of the objectives for their programming. The Department of Justice reports that youth are at a greater risk of anti-social and risky behaviors during the hours of 2pm - 6pm; and the peak hour for juvenile crime is 3pm to 4pm, right after students are dismissed from school ("Violence after school," 1999). The data collected on juvenile crime have shown that these hours directly after school dismissal are the peak times for youth to commit crime, use illegal substances or be the victim of a crime ("After-school programs fact sheet," 2001; Newman, Fox, Flynn, & Christenson, 2000). OST programs are proposed as a means to keeping youth supervised and safe from these potential risks, presumably by giving them alternatives to the non-structured after school hours. While many proponents of OST programs cite juvenile crime data as a justification for the need to create OST programs, there is little research to show that OST programs have actually decreased crime.

Drawing from the literature and from their surveys of 71 OST programs across the United States, Brooks-Gunn and Roth attest that these OST activities work, not just to keep youth safe, but to broaden youth's perspectives, improve their socialization skills, bolster academics and enhance their lives in general (Brooks-Gunn & Roth, 2003). In their review of the research, on-site observations, and interviews with program facilitators and 2,995 youth participants, Zhang et al. conclude that quality, effective OST programs positively impact student attitudes and behavior in school, help them achieve learning goals, avoid risky behavior, and help them achieve more peaceful conflict resolution (Davis, 2001; Zhang et al., 2006). Beyond eliminating risks for youth, they assert that these programs help provide youth with the skills and knowledge they need to function as contributing citizens in their communities. Little, Wimer and Weiss assert:

Debate continues about the range of academic, social, and other types of knowledge and skills that children and youth will need to succeed as workers, citizens, and family and community members in a global world. However, most would agree that this list of knowledge and skills includes the kinds of outcomes that research suggests can be achieved through sustained participation in well-structured and well-implemented after school programs and activities. (Little et al., 2008)

OST programs aim to address children's and adolescents' health and physical well being, personal and social competence, cognitive and educational competence, preparation for work, leadership and citizenship (Davis, 2001; "A matter of time: Risk and opportunity in the out-of-school hours. Recommendations for strengthening community programs for youth," 1995). OST programs also hope to give youth the

opportunity to socialize and make connections to peers and adults. Many of these programs encourage youth to develop an appreciation and respect for others, to develop their self-esteem and to build character (Williams, Yanchar, & Jensen, 2003). Among other opportunities, OST programs seek to provide enrichment opportunities for youth through sports, visual and performing arts, hands-on activities, peer tutoring, and other community activities. These types of enrichment activities are common in OST programs that view social needs or youth development as essential goals.

Youth Development Goals

It is more common in this generation for youth to be living in households with two working parents or a single parent. Many of these single or two-parent working homes are facing a demanding job market and have limited time to be with their children, particularly during the critical after-school hours. According to the 2002 U.S. Census, one-third of all school youth in the United States spend time in an unsupervised home. The U.S. Census Bureau found that 15% of these youth were home alone before school, 76% after school and 9% of youth were home alone at night (Overturf Johnson, 2005). The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (2009) estimates that approximately eight million children between the ages of 5 and 14 were often unsupervised during the hours after school ("Making the case: A 2009 fact sheet on children and youth in out-of-school time," 2009). This means that many youth who need adult supervision after school and into the evening hours are unsupervised until their parents are able to return home from work (Brooks-Gunn & Roth, 2003; Kane, 2004; Peter, 2002). The youth development movement gained more recognition in the field of youth programming and was endorsed at the 1997 Presidential Summit for America's Future when several programs designed to support youth were highlighted (Naughton & Afterschool Alliance, 2003). One of the major pieces of work that have come from the youth development wave is the 1992 Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development report, *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Out-of-School Hours*. This report focused on how communities have failed to respond to the changes in the workforce that have impacted the social structure of families and negatively impacted the lives of youth (Naughton & Afterschool Alliance, 2003). The Carnegie Council's 1992 report shifted the focus from after-school care to OST programs that focused on academic achievement and youth development.

Youth development theory embraces the concept that when mutually beneficial relationships exist between youth and the people in their environment, it enhances youth development and the likelihood that they will be healthier, more successful individuals. Multiple studies have been conducted to review programs that are created using concepts of youth development theory. Fusco and her research group studied 436 students, grades kindergarten through 12 in twenty different OST programs in New York City over the course of two years (Fusco, 2008). Linver, Roth & Brooks-Gunn (2009) recently assessed OST programs using the Child Development Supplement of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, a nationally-represented sample of 1,711 youth ages 10 -18 attending five different types of youth-development programs (Linver, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2009). Kahne's study of 125 students in grades 6-12 attending youth development programs has also added to the bank of research in this area (Kahne et al., 2001). These research studies support the conclusions of youth development theory that if youth participate in opportunities that promote skills and competencies with guidance from

supportive adults, that they will be able to productively participate in society (Fusco, 2008; Kahne et al., 2001; Linver et al., 2009; Naughton & Afterschool Alliance, 2003).

Youth development theory is used as a framework for understanding the roles of all people and institutions in the lives of youth. It is most commonly used to explain the developmental consequences of youths' experiences during the non-school hours. Specific qualities used to describe healthy development vary, but typically include categories like competence, confidence, character and general mental and physical health (Linver et al., 2009). Many out-of-school time programs strive to provide opportunities for these types of enrichment and healthy development activities. These types of OST programs are defined as having "...the potential to support and promote youth development because they (a) situate youth in safe environments; (b) prevent youth from engaging in delinquent activities; (c) teach youths general and specific skills, beliefs, and behaviors; and (d) provide opportunities for youths to develop relationships with peers and mentors" (Wimer et al., 2008, p. 179-180).

The intentions and purpose of OST programs that are grounded in youth development are expansive and seek to dramatically influence the lives of youth. Wimer used data from the nationally represented sample of children from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics-Child Development Supplement (PSID-CDS) to draw the conclusion that there is a significant body of research to demonstrate that participation in various structured OST contexts benefits youth socially, emotionally and academically (Wimer et al., 2008). These are precisely the outcomes the supporters of these program activities provided under the auspices of youth development hope to achieve:

Program activities provide formal and informal opportunities for youth to nurture their interests and talents, practice new skills, and gain a sense of personal or group recognition. Regardless of the specific activity, the emphasis lies in providing real challenges and active participation. Program activities also broaden youth by exposing them to new worlds, including new people, ideas, cultures and experiences. Activities can have both direct (i.e. homework session and tutoring) or indirect (i.e. encourage youth to stay in school and try harder) links to education, but present information and learning opportunities in a way that is different from school. The activities at many youth development programs offer leadership development opportunities, academic supports and health education information. (Brooks-Gunn & Roth, 2003)

Supporters of youth development theory claim that the skills taught in OST programs are valuable for youth and serve to benefit communities. Supporters often use juvenile crime data as a justification for the creation of youth development programs. As an example, The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention states, "that preventing one adolescent from turning to a life of crime can save society up to \$1.8 million" (*National report: Juvenile offenders and victims*, 1999). These cost savings are based on the projected educational and program costs associated with youth who repeat grades or are placed in special programs to help rehabilitate them. Proponents argue that how youth spend their free time shapes their success as individuals, students, community members and future adult citizens.

Engaging youth in productive, safe activities outside of the school day is a challenging task. In their longitudinal study of high school students participating in extracurricular activities, the researchers identified a relationship between extracurricular activities and positive academic, psychological and behavioral outcomes (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b). Barber et al. examined a group of 900 participants in pro-social activities and the positive impact of these activities on future social outcomes (Barber et al., 2001). Many schools have set curricula, a formulated framework for learning and a rigid schedule that can be an unforgiving system for some youth, especially those that struggle

in a particular subject or fall behind academically for other reasons. Not all individuals learn the same way or in the same time frame, and the array of programming and opportunities in OST programs are often able to address the academic and social needs of youth who are not always successful in the traditional school setting. This group of researchers concluded that OST programs can provide a vital set of complementary learning supports, enhance and promote learning and development, and augment the academic strengths of youth by complementing the efforts taking place in schools. (Barber et al., 2001; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a; Weiss, Coffman, Post, Bouffard, & Little, 2005). However, the same logic would apply that, if a group of students does not have their needs met in a typical school setting, it is unlikely that they would then turn to the same institution to meet their needs in a program offered after school, regardless of the program structure. Critics of this research point out that youth who are inclined to participate in voluntary after-school activities are already the types of students who are engaged in school and thus positioned to have more successful social outcomes, regardless of the impact of OST program participation or the rigidity of a typical school day.

Beyond the review of the academic needs of students attending OST programs are those who advocate that there are other strengths and competencies that could be provided through OST programming. One camp of the research on OST programs advocates that the social, emotional and physical health issues of youth need to be addressed before they are able to learn. During their site visits and interviews in 36 states, Lawson and Briar-Lawson used the Family-Supportive Community Model to assess the impact of OST programs on communities. They assert that, until the social,

emotional and physical needs of students are met, schools will not be able to accomplish their academic goals for their students (Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997). In their extensive review of the literature, Taylor and Adelman draw similar conclusions (Taylor & Adelman, 1996). Proponents of OST programs look to the programs to provide youth with a variety of supports, including academic instruction, cultural enrichment, and safe and supervised places to socialize. Research conducted in the past ten years credits these programs for keeping youth engaged and connected to positive adults and to their community, and as a means to provide youth with opportunities for personal and vocational growth (Carver & Iruka, 2006; Cooper, Valentine, Nye, & Lindsay, 1999; Kahne et al., 2001; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). It should be noted, however, that there is a body of research that questions the impact of these programs and seeks more understanding of the tools used to evaluate OST programs and the methods used to draw these conclusions.

Risk Prevention and Resiliency Goals

As identified earlier, concern about youth at risk is one of the driving forces behind the OST program movement. The Risk and Resilience Framework is proposed as a framework to unify programs and inform policies, like those of OST programs, for reaching at-risk youth and their families. The Risk and Resilience Framework dates back to the 1960s and 1970s when theorists and scholars asserted that the development of children was affected by the conditions of their community, peer group, family and school (Anthony, Alter, & Jenson, 2009). The framework was later used to better understand issues facing youth, like drug use, early pregnancy, abuse and violence (Hawkins, Jenson, Catalano, & Lishner, 1988; Jenson & Fraser, 2006). Risks are defined

as the events, conditions or experiences that increase the likelihood that an adolescent will experience something negative in his or her life, either temporarily or as a long term condition (Anthony et al., 2009; Jenson & Fraser, 2006). Examples of risk factors are aggression, antisocial attitudes, poor peer relations, family conflict, instability, negative community norms or community disorganization around the needs of its youth (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2006; Early & Vonk, 2001). Conversely, protective factors, or positive influences, are also identified in this framework. Protective factors are the individual traits or environment resources that minimize the potential effects of the risk factors in a youth's life. "By this definition, protective factors act to buffer the effect of risks, interrupt the chain of cause and effect (for example, peer rejection, which leads to involvement with antisocial peers, which leads to delinquent and criminal behavior), or block the negative effect of a risk factor altogether" (Fraser & Terzian, 2005). The third element of the risk and resilience framework is the matter of a youth's resilience in the face of risk and adversity. Examples of resilient traits are high intelligence or a naturally positive temperament in a child, both of which are seen as traits that may help a youth prevail over adversity (Anthony et al., 2009; Jenson & Fraser, 2006). Common factors in the lives of high-risk youth are identified and categorized into four domains; the individual, family, social and community domains – as sources of both positive and negative influence (Anthony et al., 2009).

In simplest terms, the Risk and Resilience Framework considers the presence of risk factors as a means of understanding how children are at risk and how the presence of protective factors, such as relationships with adults, connections to the community, and safe environments, can help strengthen the lives of youth and ameliorate the lives of

those at-risk youth who have a combination or excess of risk factors. Using this framework, intervention and prevention programs seek to decrease risk factors, increase protective factors, and reinforce the strength and resiliency of all children. Many OST programs use the Risk and Resiliency framework to guide their work and define their goals for youth. The pressure is on schools and communities to find ways to address these risks and to increase the academic success of their youth, as well as provide more protective factors to aid in their resiliency. With the surge of support for OST programs, schools have placed an emphasis on the use of OST programs and activities to provide enrichment activities, academic support and youth development programming to alleviate some of the risks facing youth.

Complementing the data on how youth are at risk, there is an equal amount of research promoting the benefits of OST programs for youth. The longitudinal study conducted by Little, Wimer and Weiss followed children of parents who participated in the larger PSID- CDS. Using this nationally representative sample, data from questionnaires, census tract data and school level data from the National Center for Education Statistics, these researchers make the claim that OST programs can have a positive impact on a range of academic, social prevention and other outcomes for disadvantaged youth (Little et al., 2008; Wimer et al., 2008). Wimer's work supports this research, making the claim that OST programs can provide developmental benefits for youth. Through his review of other research studies, Wimer concludes that participation in OST activities leads, "... to academic success as measured through test scores, absenteeism, school dropout rates, homework completion, school grades, and course

enrollment more pro-social behaviors and positive social development" (Barber et al., 2001; Wimer et al., 2008).

21st Century Community Learning Center Program

The largest and most well-known OST program initiative is the 21st CCLC Program that was introduced under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and is now primarily funded through NCLB. Prior to NCLB, from 1998 to 2001, the U.S. Department of Education administered the 21st CCLC program and used a competitive proposal process to supply funds to local communities. The Mott Foundation underwrites training and technical assistance to 21st CCLC Grantees and has committed 100 million dollars over a multi-year period in support of these programs (Foundation, 2010). According to 2008 reports from the 21st CCLC, approximately one million youth currently participate in 21st CCLC programs in 9,634 school and community-based centers across the nation (Little et al., 2008). In the last ten years, government funds dedicated to OST programs have increased to expand the number of OST programs in communities. Funding for the 21st CCLC programs jumped from \$40 million in 1998 to roughly 1 billion in 2002 (Dynarski, James-Burdumy, Rosenberg, Deke, & Mansfield, 2004). In support of this trend, in 2008, the U.S. Congress authorized 2.5 billion dollars to the 21st CCLC programs, 1.08 billion of which was appropriated ("21st century community learning centers federal afterschool initiative," 2009).

Under NCLB, schools not making AYP are eligible to apply for grant money from the 21st CCLC program. The grant monies clearly support the trend to offer more OST opportunities. The United States Department of Education outlines its program goal for 21st CCLC programs stating its intent, "To establish community learning centers that help

students in high-poverty, low-performing schools meet academic achievement standards; to offer a broad array of additional services designed to complement the regular academic program; and to offer families of students opportunities for educational development" ("21st Century Community Learning Centers," 2009). The 21st CCLC states three main objectives for their OST programs: "(1) Participants in 21st CCLC programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes, (2) 21st CCLCs will offer high-quality enrichment opportunities that positively affect student outcomes such as school attendance and academic performance, and result in decreased disciplinary actions or other adverse behaviors, and to (3) Improve the operational efficiency of the program" (Guide to U.S. Department of Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education Office of Communications and Outreach, 2009). The 21st CCLC are unique in that they have a clearly stated and consistent goal for their programs. Depending on the state agency, there is a rich source of data on the host communities, OST programs, and the participants in these programs. Like other OST programs, the evaluation of the effectiveness of 21st CCLC OST programs is debated in the research, and at the time of this writing, no research could be found that illustrates or explains the connection between programming decisions and the objectives of the 21st CCLC programs.

<u>Criticisms of OST Programs</u>

Much of the rhetoric and discussions around OST programs attribute great academic and social success to them. Extensive research has been conducted on youth development theory, risk and resilience models and how communities and schools can partner together to support the social needs of youth. However, there is a growing body

of research that casts criticism on the studies making grand claims about the benefits of OST programs on youth and communities; many of these refute the conclusions drawn in previous research. The existing evaluations suggest the following general questions: whether the programs actually have a significant impact, whether the existing evaluation and assessment practices used in OST programs are appropriate, and whether the wide-reaching conclusions of some studies are valid.

Program Impact Concerns

Despite the significant amount of research in favor of OST programs, of great concern are the data that seem to conclude that OST programs have no impact on positive youth development whatsoever. The research shows that results from studies that did employ rigorous research designs failed to show any evidence of program impact on participants in the programs. In the case of the study on 21st CCLC, the programs failed to impact the number of students who were without adult supervision during the afterschool hours and it showed no gains in the academic performance of student participants students (Dynarski et al., 2004; Dynarski et al., 2003; James-Burdumy et al., 2005). In regard to the goal of keeping youth safe and supervised, an extensive evaluation of the 21st CCLC programs yielded the strongest evidence that OST programs were unable to reduce the number of unsupervised youth. In a national sample of 2,600 elementary and 4,300 middle school students, research found no reduction in the number of latchkey children resulting from community participation in the 21st CCLC programs (Dynarski et al., 2004; Dynarski et al., 2003; James-Burdumy et al., 2005). This research study suggests that the families in need of adult supervision for their children are not accessing the programs intended to support them.

Understandably, there are limitations to the studies conducted on OST programming. It is difficult to ascertain the impact of a particular factor, like that of an OST program, on the broad goals of academic achievement or youth development. The variation in program implementation also limits the understanding of the relationship between exposure to specific program components and the educational and behavior outcomes for which they are credited (Anthony et al., 2009). In reality, much of the research on the evaluation of OST programs is done in isolation from the rest of the factors that could be impacting the life of the youth, either positively or negatively. Furthermore, this same research is conducted without serving to answer the larger question of whether organizations are meeting their goals for OST programming and the still-larger question of whether the goals of these programs make sense.

A Gap in the Research

Surprisingly, with the volume of research on these aspects of OST programs currently in existence, there is little evidence of research on how organizations determine which goals best fit the needs of the community they serve. Concomitantly, studies of how organizations put these goals into action are virtually non-existent in the literature.

Knowledge of the program goals is important for understanding how organizations use information and make decisions about programming. Organizational goals can be assigned by an outside organization or institution, jointly determined by participative teams, or individually determined by organizational leaders. All organization goals are subject to revision and interpretation by the members of the organization (Austin & Bobko, 1985). Communication of these goals to all participating members of the actors in the organization is also important. Better knowledge and understanding of the

organization goals by all members of the organization leads to greater organization commitment as well as the development of individual sub-goals which are in alignment with the goals of the organization (Ketokivi & Castaner, 2004). For leadership teams developing OST programs, knowledge of the program goals is critical. The vital step of how goals turn into action, in this case the actual programming activities or lessons being linked to goals, is unclear. The academic research has focused on the evaluation or assessment of individual programs, but the misstep in the research may be in how these programs match the organization goals, not in whether they are independently effective.

As outlined earlier, four common themes for OST goals have emerged from the literature: academic support, enrichment and citizenship, youth development, and a reduction in youth risk taking. Because these goals often overlap, and many OST host sites seek to achieve one or more of these goals, it is necessary to ask how organizations determine which goals will best serve their population. If the host organization is faithbased or school-based, it may influence which OST goals are selected. Equally true, if the OST is housed in a non-profit, for-profit or community-based organization, the stakeholders may have different priorities for which goals deserve the focus of their efforts. For 21st CCLC communities, the goals for the OST programs are predetermined. However, the methods for which to achieve those goals are not clearly defined. Despite the clear guidelines for OST programs under 21st CCLC, there is reason to suspect that some organizations are designing programs that are like the first type of programs described by Riggs and Greenber, which are unstructured, include recreation activities or focus heavily on socializing (Riggs & Greenber, 2004). In light of these prescribed 21st CCLC goals, it is important that we understand how and why organizations make

decisions about their programming needs. Theoretically, the goals guide the programming choices, impact how resources are allotted, and shape the target audience of the OST programs. In order to determine if OST programs are successful, it is important to understand which goals the organization hopes to achieve and how they are connected to the selected programs. Without this clarification of the connection between goals and the decisions made for programming, program success or effectiveness is nearly impossible to measure.

It is safe to conclude that not all 21st CCLC OST programs have been specifically designed to achieve the goals set out by their organizations. Clearly, more research is needed to understand how these goals shape programming decisions and help organizations set priorities when designing their programs. The literature on organizational decision making may serve to help us better understand how school administrators and coordinators make their programming decisions. The next section will look at Garbage Can Model of decision making and how this conceptual framework can be used to help us better understand and describe the organizational decision making occurring in 21st CCLC programs.

Organizational Decision Making

Decision making in organizations is often depicted as an orderly, rational process in which alternative interests and perspectives are considered until a decision is determined. Despite the use of prescribed models or agreed upon processes, real decision making in organizations is seldom a step by step, rational and impartial process. Over several decades scholars have studied organizational decision making, including the study of influences in the organization such as conflict, incentives, power, performance, or group

norms. Attention has also been given to the managers and participants in the decision making process, and a body of research has been dedicated to the application of behavioral theories and their influence on these decisions. There is a large body of research on the study of organizational decision making to help us study and better understand the actions and influences of the individuals who make decisions in organizations. These models are not tools to aid administrators in decision making, but are a means for researchers to better understand organizational behavior.

Rational Decision Making

One of the most well known theories for organizational decision making is the rational decision making model. In this model, choices, constraints, and implications of actions are all well known to the decision makers, order is present, rules are carefully and systematically followed, problems are defined, relevant information is analyzed, possible solutions are weighed out and a solution is decided upon based on all of the information that came up during the analysis of the problem (Clegg, Kornberger, & Rhodes, 2007; Masuch & LaPotin, 1989). Rational decision making requires a clear process and a selection of alternative solutions from which the administrator or decision maker can choose. The rational decision maker model pictured modern organizations as rational systems of human interaction and the actions of the rational decision maker were deliberate. Under this model, all participants set out to achieve clearly defined and clearly desired results (Simon, 1955).

Bounded Rationality

James March and Herbert Simon doubted whether decision makers really reviewed all of the different solutions before deciding upon one single, optimal decision. They

suggested that managers looked for 'satisfying' solutions and argued that there is a limited capacity for a human to process information; therefore no single person could possibly come up with all of the different solutions that were possible to them. The same is true for a group of individuals making decisions for their organization. March and Simon also argued that looking at all of the available information would be time-consuming and the endless reflection upon each solution would bring decision making to a standstill. They identified the "bounded rationality" of human beings, believing that people made the best decisions with the constraints they were given (March & Simon, 1958).

To avoid uncertainty, organizations sometimes gather too much information because they are trying to combat a poor or misinformed choice. The abundance of information, as well as the amount of attention an administrator can devote to any decision, negatively influences the individual or leadership team's ability to make a completely rational decision. In sum, administrators make incomplete searches and make tradeoffs between the values that are competing during the decision making (B. Jones, 1999). Leadership teams still tend to use some form of the rational decision making process, even if they aren't truly exploring all of the solutions and determining the optimal solution. Based on the assumption that a rational solution exists, Clegg et al. asserts that we live with bounded rationality, but anticipate that our decisions may turn out rational after all (Clegg et al., 2007). Bounded rationality supports the concept of the individual as rational and goal-oriented, but recognizes that human cognitive and emotional abilities limits the capability of an individual to always act in this manner (B. Jones, 1999). The fundamental premise of bounded rationality is that the behavior of organizations mimics

the bounded rationality of the actors that inhabit them and are thus influenced by all of the factors affecting and influencing the individuals (March, 1994).

The Garbage Can Model

In 1972, Cohen, March & Olsen further explored the concept of bounded rationality and developed the Garbage Can Model of Organization Choice (GCM) framework to further explain some of the behaviors being observed in organizations. Cohen, March & Olson argued that decisions are made when solutions, problems, participants and choices all converge at a certain point in time. They use the metaphor of a garbage can to describe this model of decision making (Cohen et al., 1972). Like articles in a garbage can, the factors that influence the decision are all mixed up together, even randomly organized. The mix of garbage in a single can will depend on the mix of the cans available, on the labels attached to each of the cans, on what garbage is currently being produced and the expediency with which the garbage is collected (Cohen et al., 1972).

The garbage can model represents organizational decision making by looking at the mix of problems, solutions, and choice opportunities. If the right opportunity occurs at the right time, a solution and a problem meet and a rational decision (choice by resolution) is made. Cohen, March and Olson believed that a systematic means of decision making was not always possible, in part because not all values are stable and can be are agreed upon. Links between the means and ends, actions and outcomes, and even actions within the organization can make for unclear decision making. Plans, decisions, and implementation of the decision do not always blend easily, and it is often unclear whether an issue is a problem or a solution, or whether there are alternative choices in the decision (Masuch & LaPotin, 1989). In rational decision making, not everything can be

included in the garbage can. In order for decision makers to achieve their goals, the definition of "important" has to be more limited or narrow (Cohen et al., 1972).

For the administrator, decisions are deemed good or rational if they attain the objective that is sought. Organizational choice can be ambiguous, and the work of the outside expert or scholar is not always helpful to the leadership team that works to achieve practical solutions. The team may be unwilling or unable to go through the long decision making process proposed by theorists, but that does not mean they are not practicing some sort of systematic method to arrive at a decision (Lindblom, 1959). Lindblom argues, "Man cannot think without classifying, without subsuming one experience under a more general category of experiences" (Lindblom, 1959, p. 86). This in itself is a form of systematic thinking. By pushing these classifications into general categories and propositions, the decision-maker is laying the foundation for decision making theory.

The mix in the cans reflects the number of decisions facing the organization, the resources, time and energy available to the organization and the number of people who either have access to, or are part of, the decisions being made. The GCM is often applied when goals are unclear and when the demands of the organization create limits on the time and resources available to the decision makers.

Criticisms of the Garbage Can Model

In the GCM, four independent streams mix together to produce decisions. The researchers believed the GCM was best used to describe what they called the organized anarchy of an organization. The choice opportunities are the garbage cans, which hold various combinations of these streams. The organization's basic structure and rules

constrain the different streams and shape the patterns of choice and problem solving. In this study, the DESE provides many of these constraints and limits the chaos for Grantee organizations. Critiques of the GCM argue that this model does more to explain the factors that go into the cans and influence the process rather than explain when, how and under what circumstances the organizations solve their problems. Individuals, not organizations, make decisions. The choices of a single individual can significantly impact the circumstances of how decisions are made. The GCM does little to explain how the articles in the can become connected. In the context of this study, the debate of whether GCM explains the process or the solution is inconsequential. Learning more about the process and the outcome is valuable information that adds to our understanding about OST programs. However, the limitations of the GCM as a tool for analysis are significant. In this study, the GCM is used to frame and organize the data, or factors that become an article in the garbage can. It is a useful tool for separating and making sense of the various influences on decision making, but the analysis of how these factors affect the outcomes of these decisions cannot be attributed to the GCM framework.

Another criticism of the GCM model is that the four streams are proposed to act independently of one another during the decision making process. Choices are separate from intention and solutions are disconnected from the proposed problems. In this argument critics claim that decisions described by the GCM are made without the rational effect of plans or goals and the influence participants have on which solutions, problems, or opportunities are added to the garbage cans. Along these lines, the second major criticism of the GCM model is that the notion of individual choice is absent from the model. Critics claim that the GCM rejects that individuals are intendedly rational

(Bendor, Moe, & Shotts, 2001). However, the authors of GCM discuss how individuals make choices and how these choices are not always rational. As part of the GCM, these individual choices, when shaped by the constraints and restrictions of the organization, are aggregated into organizational choices. Understanding the role of the individual is critical to understanding how Grantees make decisions in OST programs. Because of this potential limitation of the GCM, a stakeholder analysis was also used to review the role of the individual in the decision making process.

Garbage Can Model as a Framework

Theoretically, the decision making process is a set of steps or activities that begins with an identified issue and ends with an action to address or remedy that issue. Scholars have developed normative processes, models and frameworks to help explain decision making in organizations. To classify these steps or activities, a framework can be used to help identify patterns or themes. For this study, the Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice (GCM) has been selected as the framework to help understand the decision making taking place in the 21st CCLC programs.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the utility of the GCM to analyze decision making in several organizational settings and in varied contexts. The GCM model has been used to understand educational planning in organizations (Clark et al., 1980), in analyzing the process for restructuring a high school (Shindler, 1988), and in investigating the adoption of an English curriculum program for staff development (Furman, 1986). It has also been successfully applied to decision making in the military (Bromiley, 1985) and in reviewing the political decision making in a large institution (Sproull, Weiner, & Wolf, 1978). Most currently, the GCM has been applied to the

Social Security reform initiatives of the Bush administration (Weiner, 2007) and in analyzing the failed Kyoto Protocol (Honda, 2007).

Streams in Decision Making

Cohen, March and Olson believed that a systematic means of decision making was not always possible, in part because not all values are stable and can be agreed upon.

Links between the means and ends, actions and outcomes, and even actions within the organization can make for unclear decision making. Plans, decisions, and implementation of the decision do not always blend easily, and it is often unclear whether an issue is a problem or a solution, or whether there are alternative choices in the decision (Masuch & LaPotin, 1989). In rational decision making not everything can be included in the garbage can. In Cohen, March and Olson's original conception of the GCM, four streams influencing all decisions were identified: problems, solutions, choice opportunities, and participants.

Problems

Problems are identified as all of the concerns facing the participants in the decision making process. This stream includes all of the various issues that face mankind, including individual careers, family stress, financial concerns, personal ideologies, relationships in life and work, political and national concerns. Problems can be defined as anything that requires the attention of the people in the organization and can originate outside or inside the organization. (Cohen et al., 1972). At times, a problem will trigger the decision-making process.

Solutions

A solution is a product or answer that is actively seeking a question to solve. Cohen et al. argued that, "...you often do not know what the question is in organizational problem solving until you know the answer" (Cohen et al., 1972, p. 3). Solutions are distinct from the problems of an organization. Participants in the organization may have ideas for solutions, or pet projects, that they would like to endorse as a solution, even before a specific problem has been identified. Many solutions are created and prepared without knowledge of the problem they may be selected to solve.

Participants

Participants in the organization and in the decision making team fluctuate.

Participants may vary depending on the problem being addressed or by the solution being proposed. Participation of the participants will also vary depending on their other obligations within the organization, such as other time commitments or a conflicting project assignment.

Choice Opportunities

There are times when organizations are expected to produce behavior that can be called a decision or an initiative. As different opportunities arise, organizations make decisions, or produce programs or initiatives, in response to those opportunities.

Occasionally, choice opportunities arise and are supported for reasons unrelated to any decision the organization has made.

Four Variables

Within the GCM four basic variables are considered: A stream of choices, a stream of problems, a rate of flow of solutions, and a stream of energy from participants. All of these variables are influenced by the function of time. First, a stream of choices assumes that there are a fixed number of choices available to solve the problem. Each of these possible choices is influenced by the time at which the choice is activated and the decision structure within the organization. Equally influential are the number and type of participants available to help select these choices. Secondly, a stream of problems assumes a fixed number of problems to be addressed at the time of the decision making. Each of these problems is also influenced by time and the participants available to contribute to the decision making. In addition to these influences, a stream of problems is also influenced by the amount of energy needed to solve the problem and by the extent of the list of choices of solutions to the problems. In turn, these solutions are influenced by the rate of flow of solutions. In other words, the number and frequency of required solutions in an organization influences how much time and energy can be devoted to solving each problem. Lastly, the final variable is the stream of energy from the participants. Depending on the other requirements of the individuals on the decision making team, each participant can provide a limited amount of time and energy to solving the problem at hand.

Cohen et al. used this framework to look more closely at organizational structures.

"Elements of organizational structure influence outcomes of a garbage can decision making process by (a) affecting the time pattern of the arrival of problems choices, solutions, or decision makers, (b) by determining the allocation of energy by potential

participants in the decision, and (c) by establishing linkages among the various streams" (Cohen et al., 1972, p. 4). The authors concluded that decisions are made in three different ways: by resolution, by oversight and by flight. Choices made by resolution were concluded after a period of time was devoted to solving the problem. Problems solved by oversight were done so when a quick solution was available and a minimal amount of time and energy was required. In some cases, decisions were not resolved, but were simply attached to a new choice. A new choice might be a different program or incentive that does not actually solve the original problem, but diverts the energy elsewhere. A new choice is often made after a period of unsuccessful decision making had occurred; marking the third category, flight. This model has been used to better understand the decision style of participants, to measure the activity of a problem, and to recognize problem latency within an organization (Cohen et al., 1972). This model can be used to better understand the decisions made by participants in the organization when an OST program is designed.

More research is needed to understand the steps organizations take to make decisions about the selection and implementation of program goals. Leadership and management theory suggests that individuals or leadership teams look at all the needs of the organization and then use this information to first establish their goals, determine action steps to reach those goals, and create an assessment plan with to determine how successful they are in reaching those said goals (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). In the research on OST programs, there is a gap in the understanding of how OST goals and the programming decisions to meet those goals are determined. The academic research has focused on the evaluation or assessment of individual programs, but the misstep in

the research may be in how these programs match the organization goals, not in whether they are independently effective. The vital step of how those goals turn into action, in this case the actual decisions made about OST programming activities, is unclear. The GCM is an effective tool to better understand how organizations make decisions about programs and how those decisions match the intended goals of the programs. In light of the 21st CCLC goals, the GCM utilizes the four streams of influences on decision making to analyze how communities receiving 21st CCLC funding are making decisions about programs. The research study will gain an understanding of how influences, like limited resources, political agendas, other competing community and school-based programs, or the desires of school officials, might influence the programs being created with 21st CCLC monies. The GCM can also help identify the types of choices made by program coordinators and how those choices shaped the final OST program decisions.

The GCM uses a minimal set of conceptual components to provide a reference that can be used to describe the decision making that was analyzed in this study. The streams identified in the GCM were used to organize the information gathered about the decision making taking place in the 21st CCLC OST programs and to identify influences that occurred during that process. The GCM provided the framework to organize the information gathered from the research study and the data were organized using the four streams identified in GCM. The stakeholder analysis was then used to help better understand the implementation of the decisions that were made. In this study, the implementation decisions were the actual OST program activities that were delivered as part of the 21st CCLC programs.

Stakeholder Analysis

The GCM has a long history of being successfully applied to different educational processes. By design, the framework is constructed to create understanding out of even the most disjointed, chaotic organizational decision making. While there are many formalities and guidelines associated with NCLB, decision making about programming is without a prescribed protocol. The decision making process for OST programs may vary greatly by site, which is why the GCM is the most appropriate model to describe those processes occurring in host organizations. For this study of 21st CCLC OST programs, the application of an empirically derived framework helped identify and organize themes used in the decision making process of these organizations, thus allowing the researcher to further analyze the information using both the GCM framework and a stakeholder analysis. Stakeholder analysis is a tool that has been used to assist policy managers in identifying those interests that should be taken into account when making a decision. Stakeholder analysis is used to assess the nature of a policy's actors, their interests, their expectations, the strength or intensity of their interest and the resources they can provide that can impact the outcome of the decision. A stakeholder is defined as any individual or group that has influence on the decision, or can affect or be affected by the results of that decision (Brinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002). When studying organizational decision making it is important to remember that individuals make decisions, not organizations. The stakeholder analysis is particularly useful for dissecting the role of these individuals and how their influence leads to decisions made in organizations.

The stakeholder analysis uses three criteria to help determine the importance of a stakeholder. The first is the position of the actor or group. In this case, position refers to

the ability of the actor to damage or weaken the authority or political support for decisions or the organization itself (Brinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002). These actors may be a part of the decision-making process or may be outside the process, but have a stake in its outcome. The second criterion in determining the importance of a stakeholder is to look at the degree of support or benefit the stakeholder can provide for the organization. The degree of support is also important if the stakeholder's influence can provide more perceived authority for the decision makers and thus add credibility as well as compliance to the outcomes of those decisions. Third, if a group or individual is capable of influencing the direction or the mix of activities that are implemented within the organization, then they must also be considered as an important influence (Brinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002).

The stakeholder analysis compliments the understanding provided by the GCM framework. The information gained from this analysis adds depth to our understanding of the individuals who make decisions about OST programming and provided a better understanding of the decision making of the 21st CCLC organization. The stakeholder analysis focuses on two key elements: the analysis of actors based on their interest in the issue and the quantity and types of resources they can mobilize to affect the outcomes of the decision making (Brinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002). A stakeholder analysis is particularly useful when reviewing the formulation of a strategy for implementation, which in this case is the implementation of particular OST program activities. This tool provides an analysis of stakeholder expectations and the degree of influence the stakeholder has on the decision. Stakeholders can greatly influence the design of strategies, which strategies will be included or eliminated, and the how those strategies will be communicated.

Summary

This chapter provided the reader with a comprehensive overview of OST Programs, including some criticisms of them and the gap in the research on how decisions are made about programming in these organizations. Its explanation of the GCM and the Stakeholder Analysis will be helpful in understanding how those decisions are made. In the next few chapters the focus will be on OST Programs provided through the 21st CCLC Programs and even more specifically, 21st CCLC Programs in Massachusetts. The next chapter will explain the research study, including its purpose, methods and limitations.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

Overview of Study

This chapter outlines the research design used for this exploration of how organizations make decisions about OST programming. As the literature review in Chapter 2 shows, there is an abundance of research on OST programs, their goals, evaluation instruments and their purported success. Yet, there is little research on the how organizations identify the goals of their OST programs and decide how to pursue those goals. The need to understand why particular activities are selected to solve a need in a community is a critical part of understanding and evaluating the success of any OST program. This essential component of understanding is missing in the research on OST programs.

This qualitative case study design sought to understand the process used by organizations to make decisions about OST programming. In examining the decision making of these OST programs, the following questions provided guidance for the inquiry. The central question, "How do host organizations (Grantees) make decisions about OST programming?" was examined primarily with the use of the theoretical framework, the Garbage Can Model, that interprets decision making within the context of organizational dynamics (Cohen et al., 1972). Using the four themes identified as part of the choice opportunities presented in this model, interview questions probed about the process used to make decisions and the influences on those decisions. Lastly, the research study looked to understand the relationship between the activities selected and the prescribed goals of the OST program.

As explained in Chapters 1 and 2, this study focused on schools receiving 21st CCLC NCLB funding for OST programs. Often, several schools organized their efforts and applied for grant funding. In some cases, the schools collaborating together even may be representative of more than one school district. For these reasons, and to simplify \terminology for the study, schools, school districts, and collaborations of these entities receiving 21st CCLC grant funding for OST programs will be referred to as Grantees. Specific schools that are a member of the Grantee group and host OST programs at their buildings or on their grounds are referred to as Sites. Individual programs, opportunities, or classes offered at each of the Sites are referred to as Activities. Specifically, this study solicited information on 21st CCLC programs in Massachusetts. Selecting Grantees from this population provides some general consistency in goals and design, as well as consistency in the geographic make-up of the population. Grantees receiving funding for OST programs through 21st CCLC programs share the status as being identified as "atrisk" schools based on standardized test scores. Under Title IVB of the NCLB Act of 2001, 21st CCLC programs are intended to provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly for those children who attend highpoverty and low-performing schools.

Characteristics of Massachusetts 21st CCLC Programs

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is in its 8th year of distributing 21st CCLC grants under Title IVB of NCLB ("Secondary School Services," 2009). In 2009 there were 38 21st CCLC Grantees in the Commonwealth that hosted OST programs at 189 Sites. These Sites served 19,300 students in grades K-12 in fiscal year 2008 at a cost of approximately 17.3 million dollars

(Guide to U.S. Department of Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education Office of Communications and Outreach, 2009). These 38 Grantees include school districts, cities and towns, community-based organizations, other public or private entities, or a consortium of two or more of such agencies, organizations, or entities. All Grantees had to meet the minimal eligibility requirements for the Massachusetts 21st CCLC Grant Program (federally funded through NCLB Title IVB - Fund Code 647). An eligibility criterion includes requirements to primarily serve students in schools with 15% or more low-income families. The purpose of the Massachusetts 21st CCLC is to "establish or expand community learning centers that operate during out-of-school hours and provide students with academic enrichment opportunities along with other activities designed to complement the students' regular academic program" ("Secondary School Services," 2009). Each Grantee tailors its OST activities to meet the specific needs of its population. While each OST program may differ by community, the advantage of studying Grantees in Massachusetts is the consistency the state provides in its requirements for data gathering, assessment, and reporting of data.

Grantees of 21st CCLC funding in Massachusetts are required to submit annual data to the DESE. The DESE gathers information related to participation, activities, and hours of service, as well as the results of the Survey of After-School Youth Outcomes (SAYO) evaluation tool required for all Massachusetts 21st CCLC grant recipients. The SAYO was developed by Beth M. Miller and Wendy B. Surr, of the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at Wellesley College, in Wellesley, MA. This tool was designed specifically for the Massachusetts Department of Education and is unique to Massachusetts. The SAYO tool provides a menu of learning outcomes to choose from as

well as a database from which to draw assessment data on existing student activities.

Massachusetts 21st CCLC Grantees have been selected as the focus of this research study because of their eight year history of awarding OST programs and their clear guidelines both for grant awarding and management of program evaluation. As outlined by the DESE, all Massachusetts Grantees have a specified program purpose and required standardized assessment tools. These factors make Massachusetts 21st CCLC OST Grantees a desirable population to study.

Research Design

A qualitative case study approach utilizing an online survey, a review of relevant documents and semi-structured interviews was chosen for this study for several reasons. Prior to interviewing Grantees, I used an online survey to gather basic information about the larger sample of OST programs, including the number, frequency and names of each of the Activities and whether the Grantee offers other OST programs in addition to the 21st CCLC programs. Other OST programs, especially if they charge a fee or target a specific population, may influence what type of Activities are implemented as part of the 21st CCLC program. The purpose of using this method to collect program data was to provide me with quantifiable data on program types (such as academic, enrichment, or wellness activities), to guide my interview plan and to provide information that did not lend itself to the interview format.

I conducted semi-structured interviews because this form of qualitative research allowed me to focus on the information being shared by the participant and allowed me to shape my understanding of the answers within the context of the GCM framework. This structure permitted me to ask questions about influences for analysis using the four

streams of the GCM. This structure gave me the flexibility to ask more in-depth or follow up questions about a response that required further inquiry, such as the implementation of a particular Activity or the continuation of an Activity that drew more of fewer participants than other Activities. This structure allowed me to ask questions about what other OST programs are available at the Sites and to probe about how those programs may have influenced the decision to implement particular Activities as a part of the 21st CCLC program. The semi-structured interview followed a guideline of openended questions (See Appendix A).

From the interviews I hoped to learn what process the Grantee took to design and implement their programs. For example, if a Grantee had an unusual Activity like Ukrainian Egg decorating, I wanted to find out if it was a specific interest to a cultural group in the community, was a part of a unit studied in school, or was perhaps a talent already in existence that needed an outlet. Without asking directly, I wanted to find out if Activities were selected based on the choice opportunities described in the GCM, like a solution or activity looking for an outlet, an activity that was already in existence but lacked funding, or an activity with great student interest but no tie to the goals of the program.

Online Survey

Thirty-three Grantees in Massachusetts received continuation grants for the 2010 fiscal year totaling 9,216,728 dollars of federal funds ("Secondary School Services," 2009). I surveyed these Grantees and selected the ten interview participants from among them. The 33 Grantees who received the online survey represent the 186 Sites offering 21st CCLC OST programs in Massachusetts during the 2010 fiscal year. The online

survey gathered information on the number of Sites in each community offering OST programs, and the types and numbers of activities offered, including 21st CCLC and other OST programs. This information provided a layout of the OST programs offered in Massachusetts from which to draw a representative sample. Additionally, this information was used to guide and inform the interviews with the ten Grantees.

Grantee Interviews

To determine which Grantees I would contact to request an interview, I organized the data into several categories. The purpose of this organization was to ensure that I created a diverse subgroup that represented both urban and rural areas, provided demographic diversity, and represented a range of socio-economic status. This diversity is important because these factors may influence the decisions made about the types of programming offered in any one community. For example, a more urban area may have access to organizations and businesses not available to its rural counterparts, or a Grantee community with a higher population of Spanish-speaking families may tailor its programming to reach out to this population. Of the 186 Sites offering 21st CCLC programs in Massachusetts, 48 of them are in the Greater Boston Area. It was important that this area be represented in the research without dominating the results of the study.

Additionally, I selected Grantees that represented communities with and without leadership teams, those that had programs both part of and apart from school action plans, and those that had one or multiple school sites. I also took two other factors into account when selecting the Grantees: their responsiveness and thoroughness in completing the survey and the types of programs offered by the Grantee. Some of the Grantees responded to the survey almost immediately and gave detailed responses to each of the

questions. Other Grantees needed follow up calls and reminders and did not necessarily provide in-depth responses to the questions. I sought out both those Grantees who presented as willing to share information and who provided adequate detail in their surveys and those who needed reminders. My reasoning for using this as criteria was that I wanted to ensure that I was finding out more about the Grantees and not making assumptions about the organization, enthusiasm or dedication of the Program Coordinator.

Of the 33 Grantees, ten Program Coordinators of Grantees in Massachusetts were contacted for in-depth interviews about their OST programs and their decision making process. These Grantees all had had OST programs in existence for no fewer than two school years ("Secondary School Services," 2009). The ten Grantees represent 53 of the 186 Sites serving students in Massachusetts and include Grantees whose OST Programs have been designated with exemplary, proficient or at-risk status by the DESE.

Information discovered about decision making in these 21st CCLC OST programs should be consistent with other Grantees hosting OST programs in Massachusetts.

Data Collection Procedures

The online survey was piloted with two different 21st CCLC Program Coordinators in Brattleboro, Vermont and a Superintendent of Schools in Northfield, Massachusetts. The two Programs in Vermont currently have 21st CCLC OST Programs, while the district in Northfield did not. In general, feedback from the pilot was positive, citing the simplicity and the brevity of the survey as strengths. From the information gathered from the pilot survey an adjustment to one question (adding an "other" category) was made.

Online Survey Procedures

The online survey was emailed to the Massachusetts 21st Century Grant State Coordinator, Karyl Resnick, for review. For several months before the survey request I had communicated with Resnick about my proposed study and solicited her help in gaining a positive response from the Grantees. Prior to the survey request I drafted a letter requesting support from the Grantees to complete the online survey (see Appendix B). Included in the letter was an introductory paragraph about the purpose of the study, an overview of the survey and my contact information. Resnick was not willing to send me any contact information for the Program Coordinators, but agreed to send out an email to the Grantees on my behalf. Resnick sent out the online survey with my letter in email format to her program coordinators, encouraging participants to complete the survey but emphasizing that it was not a DESE project and was not a requirement. In the first week after receiving the email nine Grantees responded. After two weeks I contacted Resnick again, who agreed to send out a reminder email with a link to the survey. After the second reminder I received another 15 completed surveys. After approximately three weeks, 24 of the 33 Grantees had completed the survey.

I then began to search online to find contact information for each of the nine remaining Grantees who had not completed the online survey. Through an internet search I located school district websites, OST program websites, and newsletters that contained information about the programs. Two Coordinators had email addresses listed on the site, several had phone numbers for the programs, and one had no information about the program online. I sent emails to the nine Grantees with an embedded link for the survey. I then followed up with phone calls to the nine Grantees who had not

responded and spoke either directly with the Program Coordinator or with school personnel to gain information about the coordinator. Of the nine Grantees, it only took this additional contact to prompt seven of these participants to complete the survey. It took several phone calls to make contact with one of the Grantees, who agreed to complete the survey and the remaining Grantee who even after several phone messages and conversations with an assistant, still did not complete the survey. After six weeks, 31 of the 33 Grantees had completed the survey.

Grantee Data Sort

After each of the surveys was completed I created a spreadsheet to compile the data. The spreadsheet included contact information, number and types of programs offered through 21st CCLC and information on whether there were other OST programs offered in the community that were not 21st CCLC-affiliated. Other information included whether the Grantee had a leadership or oversight council that contributed to decision-making or whether the OST program was part of a school action plan. Lastly, I added information about the percentage of low income families in the community, racial demographics and whether the community was considered rural or urban. (See chart in Appendix C).

Of the 31 Grantees that responded, I selected ten Grantees and two alternatives in case any of the ten refused participation in the interviews.

Table 1: Demographic Information for Grantee Sample

Grantee	No. of Sites	% Low income *	% Cau- casian*	Rural / Urban	Other OST prog- rams	Leader- ship Team	Part of school improve- ment plan	Grantee Status Exemplary Proficient At-risk
Rural1	1	49.2	89.6	R	Y	N	N	At-Risk
Rural2	2	49.4	91.0	R	Y	N	Y	Proficient
Rural3	10	44.9	55.0	R	Y	Y	Y	Proficient
Rural4	7	30.1	74.2	R	Y	Y	Y	Exemplary
Rural5	3	16.5	94.3	R	Y	N	N	Exemplary
Urban1	2	28.0	59.3	U	Y	N	Y	Proficient
Urban2	4	74.6	68.3	U	Y	Y	Y	Proficient
Urban3	4	36.2	64.8	U	Y	Y	Y	At-Risk
Urban4	4	57.5	84.7	U	Y	Y	Y	Proficient
Urban5	21	71.8	37.5	U	Y	Y	Y	Exemplary

^{* (&}quot;School/District Profiles-Student Information Management System," 2010)

Interview Procedures

I used information gathered from the online survey to inform and develop the interview questions. The online survey asked participants to identify any documents, such as a School Action Plan or OST contract or plan that may exist, as well as to identify the organizational structure for the oversight of the OST program, such as an Advisory Board or Leadership Team. Understanding the target population for OST

programs by Grantee was important for future analysis of the decision making and the implementation of activities. This data helped in making connections between program intention and selection of particular activities. Also, the data provided information about the formal structure for decision making by each Grantee and when applicable, by each Site.

The semi-structured interviews were first piloted with two OST programs in Brattleboro, Vermont and with the same School Superintendent in Massachusetts. The critical feedback from these pilot interviews, as well as the feedback from my dissertation committee, ensured the interview questions were ready for use with the Program Coordinators in the ten Grantee communities.

The primary method of data collection was a series of interviews with the Grantee Program Coordinators. I contacted each of the ten Grantees by email, thanking them again for completing the survey and providing them with more information about my research study. In this email I requested their help in continuing my research by permitting me to interview them about their programs. In each of the emails I left my contact information and let them know that I would be following up by telephone to arrange a time to conduct the interview. (see Appendix D). Of the ten Grantees, three responded almost immediately. Over the next three weeks I contacted the other Grantees by phone and email until I was able to arrange an interview in person or by phone. I emailed a copy of the questions before the interview and either presented the consent form in person or mailed it with a self-addressed stamped envelope for those interviews conducted over the phone.

Through my contacting of the Grantees I learned that July is a unique month for Program Coordinators for a number of reasons. It is an extremely busy time of year for the coordinators because they have year-end reports due to the DESE and they have to complete the DESE and 21st CCLC continuation grants for the next school year by August 1. Many of the coordinators were also seeking to take vacation time during the six week summer vacation. I discovered that many coordinators were unable to schedule a meeting with me, but were willing to conduct a phone interview if I could call at the beginning or close of the work day.

Each Grantee I interviewed received a packet of information with the project description, informed consent letter, and a copy of the interview questions. I obtained a signed consent letter from each participant prior to each interview. Whenever possible, I conducted interviews in the participant's location using a digital recorder. When necessary or requested, I conducted the interviews by phone using a digital recorder. Participants had the opportunity to allow or refuse the recording of the interviews.

The interviews took place over the course of six weeks. Of the ten Grantees who were contacted to be interviewed, six were conducted in-person and four were conducted over the telephone. All Grantees signed the consent forms and gave permission for the interviews to be recorded. In total, I interviewed ten program coordinators and one site coordinator, representing 53 Sites in Massachusetts. Appropriate procedures based on the University of Massachusetts's Human Subjects requirements were followed (see Appendix E).

I recorded brief notes and questions on my guideline of questions during each of the interviews. I kept field notes during the interview process and added notes and

observations to my field notes immediately after the conclusion of each interview, including recording my own reflections on the digital recorder for later transcription. I later listened to each of the recordings to both further understand the participant's responses and to identify any misunderstandings or potential follow-up questions for the participant. The length of each interview was approximately 60 minutes, although there was some variation. I transcribed all of the interviews.

Data Analysis Procedures

Coding Strategy

I read all of the notes I took when conducting each of the interviews in order to refresh my memory about each of the conversations. Before reading each of the transcripts I reviewed my notes again. I then read each of the transcripts and made notes in the margins about information that stood out to me. I found that as I read I discovered similarities in each of the transcriptions. I then went back to re-read and see if those themes were present in other transcripts. I began by tentatively labeling some data with my first impressions in the margin and then came back to highlight those general themes. I read and re-read the transcripts to identify patterns and regularities.

Since each interview asked the same set of questions, with some differentiation in follow-up, the first steps of organizing the data came quickly. I started to group responses around individual decision making, types of activities, program assessment, and influence of the DESE. I went back again to the transcripts to color-code the general categories. Two other categories, economic influence and administration emerged.

I then went back again and re-sorted the information I had put into the individual decision making and DESE influence categories. Since my color-coding was now no

longer helpful, I began cutting and pasting information into five separate documents by category. This strategy organized my thinking about the information, but was still unclear for me in helping inform me about decision making. I discovered that some data fell into more than one category. I continued to refine my process, combining or eliminating subsections of categories that were not supported by the data. Examples of eliminated subcategories include transportation, target population, and use of SAYO tools. Somewhere during the process I realized that all of the categories influenced decision making - the organization goals, the community demographics, teacher projects, the 21st CCLC goals, the administration, the DESE, and economics. At that point, I went back to my original comprehensive exams and read through all of the organizational decision making models I had researched.

I found that I had to go back and reconfigure my categories based on my research questions. Once I did this the majority of my themes fit into these categories. Although all of the data had to be re-grouped into new categories, configuring the data this way was more logical. Using the GCM and Stakeholder theory as a framework, I sorted the information again into four categories: solutions, stakeholder influence, problems and opportunities. I then went back to the transcripts containing the responses that had not been designated to one of the original categories and re-read them to see if they fit into the new framework.

After I had the information into the four categories I reread each category separately to see which themes emerged. I began with general subcategories within each one, sorting and re-sorting until they made sense. I was conscientious of making certain that the responses and my field notes were representative of the spirit of the interview and

consistent with the whole picture presented by each respondent. After my subcategories were determined I went back and sorted the responses and notes into each subcategory to see if the theme I discovered was represented in multiple interviews. I also re-read the themes to see if they were occurring because I asked a particular question that led to the response or if it was a theme identified as significant by the participant. I kept charts on each subcategory, recording the data from each Grantee that provided evidence of each theme. After I had exhausted this process in each of the four categories, I read through all of the information to identify any overlap of data or illogical categorization of data to theme. Once I had corrected these mistakes I again read through each of the categories and subcategories, coding each of the responses into themes.

Procedures for Ensuring Integrity

I kept a journal throughout the data collection process. I offered to share the electronic transcripts with participants and give them the opportunity to review my notes and conclusions for accuracy before I committed them to writing. All identifiable information was deleted from transcriptions and the digital recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the research. I kept a journal of research memos and field notes as I re-read the data, discovered themes or made connections among the interview transcripts.

<u>Limitations of the Study</u>

In qualitative research there is an interpretation of data and a construction of knowledge, which implies certain limitations. What is asked in the interview places importance on the topic being discussed and can constrain the answers given by the participant. The mood, level of knowledge, level of comfort and commitment of the participant all influence the data gathered during the interview. Responses by

participants are influenced by their own perspectives and memory of events; therefore there is an expectation of a certain level of reflection and bias during the recollection of information. Only the perspective of the participant is gathered; the viewpoints of other members may not be represented during the interview. The ease, comfort and perceived competence of the interviewer also influence the responses of the participant, including his or her level of trust. Also, participants may be cautious to be completely honest in their responses, regardless of anonymity or consent.

In addition to the general limitations of qualitative research, one of the limitations of this research study is its geographic restrictions. The demography of Massachusetts may not be representative of a national sample and the types of programs selected by coordinators in Massachusetts may not be representative of programs in other parts of the US. Massachusetts is a densely populated state with much of its population located in the Greater Boston area. However, western Massachusetts is primarily rural with the exception of urban centers Chicopee, Springfield and Northampton. In general, western Massachusetts has less cultural diversity and the target population served by the OST programs may differ from those in the more urban areas. As an example, it may be that programs in western Massachusetts are more outdoors-oriented while programs in the Greater Boston area may capitalize on the local resources available to them, such as museums, art centers or cultural centers. However, 21st CCLC programs are tailored to meet the needs of the specific communities they serve and can therefore differ greatly from community to community. I regard the decisions being made in each of these organizations in certain respects to be like all other organizations participating in 21st CCLC OST programs.

Summary

The results of this research study are described and analyzed in the next three chapters. The next chapter introduces each of the participants and provides an overview of each of the Grantee communities. An overview of the Massachusetts 21st CCLC Program and structure, and the requirements from the DESE are discussed. The information in Chapter 4 provides an overview of the 21st CCLC Program and its Grantees in Massachusetts that is necessary for understanding the analysis and discussion of the survey results in the final chapters.

CHAPTER 4

CHARACTERISTICS OF GRANT-FUNDED PROGRAMS

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the federal and state 21st CCLC Programs, a summary of the results of the online survey, and a description of each of the Grantee communities interviewed for this study. There are many similarities among the Grantees. All of the Grantees are in Massachusetts, subscribe to the same 21st CCLC Program goals and must adhere to the grant requirements outlined by the DESE. All Grantees in this study are school-based, employ a Program Coordinator and have Site Coordinators to oversee the activities at each of their Sites. What is striking about the information provided in these descriptions is not their similarities, but the great range of the types of Activities provided and the lack of connection between the Activities and the goals of the 21st CCLC. Valuable programming may be taking place in the communities, but the Activities they provide do not always align with the goals of the grant. Grantees' adherence to the DESE requirements and the lack of fidelity in utilizing the required assessment tools, like the SAYO and the APT, significantly hinders the assessment of how effective the 21st CCLC programs are in reaching program goals. While all of the Grantees administer the required assessment tools, the frequency and expanse of these assessments varies greatly. How the data from the assessments are used depends greatly on the interpretation of the Program Coordinator.

Federal 21st CCLC Program

As explained in earlier chapters, the specific program goal for the federal 21st CCLC Programs is, "To establish community learning centers that help students in high-poverty, low-performing schools meet academic achievement standards; to offer a broad array of additional services designed to complement the regular academic program; and to offer families of students opportunities for educational development." The Performance Plan goes on to state the three main objectives of the programs: "(1) Participants in 21st CCLC programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes, (2) 21st CCLCs will offer high-quality enrichment opportunities that positively affect student outcomes such as school attendance and academic performance, and result in decreased disciplinary actions or other adverse behaviors, and to (3) Improve the operational efficiency of the program" (*Guide to U.S. Department of Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education Office of Communications and Outreach*, 2009). These objectives provide the foundation for the 21st CCLC Programs in

21st CCLC Programs in Massachusetts

The purpose of the Massachusetts 21st CCLC program is to establish or expand community learning centers, such as schools or other non-profit agencies, which operate during out-of-school hours and provide students with academic enrichment opportunities along with other activities designed to complement the students' regular academic program. 21st CCLC programs in Massachusetts may also offer literacy and related educational development to the families of students in the program ("Secondary School Services," 2009). Based on community demographic data and the percentage of free and

reduced lunch participants at the schools, 21st CCLC Grantees must have a poverty rate of 15% or higher and have performance levels that are in the category of "failing" or "needs improvement" for one or more subjects on the MCAS in one or more subgroups. Often, several schools in the same school district will organize their efforts and apply for grant funding. In some cases, the schools collaborating together may even be representative of more than one school district. Schools may also combine with local organizations, like a community parks and recreation department or a youth club. For these reasons, and to simplify terminology for the study, schools, school districts, and collaborations of these entities receiving 21st CCLC grant funding for OST programs are referred to as "Grantees." In this study, Grantees are school-based organizations that provide OST programming activities at one or more Sites. These Sites are typically school buildings within the school district, but Sites could also be a local agency, like a youth center or an athletic complex.

The personnel structure for each Grantee is similar across OST Programs. Each Grantee has a Program Coordinator (Coordinator) who is responsible for all of the activity programming and design, the budget, reporting to the DESE, working with school and school district administration, establishing relationships with community partners and recruiting students and families for participation. Each building Site has a Site Coordinator who reports to the Coordinator. At each Site, the Site Coordinator is responsible for the oversight and management of the instructors and program activities happening in his or her Site. Often the Site Coordinator has a working relationship with the school administrator, teachers, and staff of the building at each Site. The Coordinator

and Site Coordinator positions are paid through 21st CCLC grant funding or through matching funds as required by the grant.

In Massachusetts a wide variety of programming has been offered through the 21st CCLC academic and enrichment activities. Nearly all communities with 21st CCLC programs offered a homework component during the school year or a learning skills lab during the summer months. Many of the activities focused on specific mathematics or English language arts skills. Some examples of activities happening in 21st CCLC programs in Massachusetts include: Academic Enrichment, Adventure Education, Arts (including drawing, painting, theatre, music and dance), Drug Resistance Education, College Preparation, Community Service Learning, Group and Individual Sports, Homework Support, Computers and Technology, Culinary Skills, Homework Support, Media Technology, Parenting, Project Based Learning, Physical Health Education and Nutrition, and Team Building (*No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title IVB 21st Learning Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Year End Report - Fiscal Year 2009*, July 2010).

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is in its 8th year of distributing 21st CCLC grants under Title IVB of NCLB ("Secondary School Services," 2009). These 33 Grantees include school districts, cities and towns, community-based organizations (CBOs), other public or private entities, or a consortium of two or more of such agencies, organizations, or entities. In this research study, all of the Grantees selected to be interviewed are school-based entities. Each community tailors its OST programs to meet the needs of the specific population it serves. While the activities offered may differ by community, the advantage of studying Grantees in

Massachusetts is the consistency the state provides in its requirements for data gathering, assessment, and reporting of program achievements.

DESE Requirements

Grantees receiving 21st CCLC funding in Massachusetts are required to submit annual data to the DESE. The DESE gathers information related to student participation, quantity and duration of activities, and hours of service. The DESE also requires that 21st CCLC Grantees report data from the Survey of After-School Youth Outcomes (SAYO) assessment tool. The SAYO uses brief pre-participation and post-participation surveys to gather data from students in the OST program, OST instructors and regular classroom teachers. The SAYO gathers this data based on several learning outcomes. These predetermined learning outcomes are part of the SAYO tool and are selected by the Coordinator at the beginning of each session. Coordinators select from a menu of learning outcomes provided in the SAYO that best reflects the focus and goals of their programming or the goals of the particular Activity they are assessing. (see Appendix F for a full listing of SAYO Learning Outcomes). For example, Coordinators could select SAYO learning outcomes such as "verbal communication" or "math problem skills" or less academic outcomes like "engagement in learning" or "relationships with peers." A Coordinator can select as many different SAYO learning outcomes from the set menu as they desire, and those learning outcomes could be different for each of their activities. For example, the Coordinator may choose "verbal communication" as a measurable learning outcome for a writing class and "engagement in learning" for a cooking class. Each outcome is measured by asking respondents to respond to four or five questions, depending on the audience responding to the survey. These surveys can be completed for all participating youth or from a sample of youth attending the OST program. Instructors of activities, as well as regular classroom teachers, are also asked to complete the SAYO (Education, 2010).

In addition to the SAYO, the DESE requires that Grantees use an observation tool for assessing program activities. The observation tool required by the DESE is the Assessing After-School Program Practices Tool (APT). The APT was developed by Beth M. Miller and Wendy B. Surr, of the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at Wellesley College, in Wellesley, MA, the same researchers who developed the SAYO tool. The APT tool intends to assess the extent to which OST activities are implementing practices congruent with the Grantee's desired SAYO outcomes. The APT is divided into three sections: Activity and Time Period Ratings, Targeted SAYO Skill Building, and Overall Program Ratings, using a four point "how true" scale. The Program Coordinator uses the APT for observing activities at their Sites. The APT is also used for general feedback as well as providing information for professional development (see Appendix G for a more detailed explanation of the APT). Both the APT and the SAYO tools are required by the DESE for evaluation of activities. However, the frequency and application of these assessments are at the discretion of the Coordinator. The results of both the APT and the SAYO are included in the report submitted to the DESE each year. The information contained in this annual report provides the basis from which the DESE determines program effectiveness. This report is used to determine the continuation of grant funding, the identification of Promising Practices, and the assignment of exemplary or at-risk status.

DESE Oversight

The DESE has a 21st CCLC Director, Data Specialist, a Director of Student Support and three assistants who work collaboratively to oversee the 21st CCLC program in Massachusetts. The Director, Karyl Resnick, works most closely with the Program Coordinators. Each year the Grantees must submit an annual report of their programs. Yearly progress updates, an explanation of the frequency and use of the APT, data from the SAYO, attendance and participation data, and demographic information are submitted annually. This information is used to determine whether programs will receive continuation grants for the following year. Evidence for future sustainability as well as evidence of continuous program improvement in each of the 21st CCLC goal areas is part of this annual process. Typically, 21st CCLC programs are funded for a five year period, with the amount of financial support decreasing after 3 years. After the third year, Grantees are expected to find local financial matches that will sustain the 21st CCLC programs at a level equal to the first three years.

The DESE developed an Exemplary Programs Grant for recipients of the 21st CCLC grant funding in fiscal year 2005. Recipients of these monies had to demonstrate successful programs for the five-year grant cycle as demonstrated by SAYO data, participation and attendance data, and feedback from Site administrators, staff and students. These recipients received funding beyond their original five year grant cycle and serve as mentors to other 21st CCLC programs in Massachusetts. Exemplary programs provide peer support, training and technical assistance to other Grantees, both new and existing. Grantees that are determined to be "at risk" are assigned mentors from

these exemplary programs. Of the ten Grantees interviewed for this research, Rural4, Rural5 and Urban 5 have been designated Exemplary status.

Based on the data collected in the SAYO, APT, and from locally created feedback reporting forms, the DESE has identified nine activities occurring in 21st CCLC programs in 2009 as promising practices that have led to positive outcomes for youth. Promising practices are activities, projects, strategies or approaches that have been shown to be effective through the experiences of the staff and youth involved, as evidenced through data collected by the SAYO. The DESE provides a description of some of these promising practices as an illustration for other 21st CCLC Grantees to work from and create their own successful activities (Education, 2010). Of the ten Grantees interviewed, three of the Grantees have activities that have been selected as a promising practice. The activities identified as promising practices are Flag Football, a Newspaper Club, and an Entrepreneurship Activity.

In addition to enforcing all of the program requirements for data and paperwork, the Director also provides network meetings for the Coordinators. These meetings are held regionally across the state and are held approximately once a month. The purpose of the meetings varies. Some of the meetings are dedicated to logistics, such as how to file paperwork, use data collection software, or to gain technical assistance for grant writing requirements. Other network meetings are dedicated to highlighting other 21st CCLC programs in the state. During these types of meetings, one of the exemplary programs will share a successful activity they are offering in one of their Sites and offer suggestions on how to pursue similar opportunities. These meetings also dedicate time for at-risk Grantees to work with their mentors from more successful programs. Other

meetings are dedicated to professional development opportunities, such as how to conduct an activity observation, how to seek out community partnerships, or how to build an effective leadership council. While not required, the support of community partners and the creation of local leadership councils are strongly encouraged by the DESE.

Although not a strict requirement, the DESE also strongly encourages the use of an activity proposal form. It is expected that the proposal form will be used, but data from the proposal form is not collected. This form is used when a new activity is proposed. For example, a new Cooking Class would submit a proposal that would outline the scope and sequence of the class, class objectives, and what materials or costs should be expected. The proposal form acts much like a lesson plan, asking the instructor to identify the SAYO learning outcomes, a time frame, and a description of the activity that will occur during the session. Sessions typically last between six and eight weeks, with activities occurring between one to four times each week. The use of the proposal form varied with each Grantee. On one end of the spectrum, some Coordinators required a written proposal form for each activity each session, while on the other end of the spectrum, some Coordinators considered a conversation with an instructor to be an acceptable plan.

Leadership Councils are also a component of the grant encouraged, but not required, by the DESE. The membership and purpose of the leadership council varies depending on the community it serves. For some Grantees, the leadership council is made up of personnel who are directly involved with the 21st CCLC Program, like the Coordinator, building administrators, school district employees or community partners. These leadership councils tend to meet more regularly and take a more active role in the

decision making about the OST program activities. Other Grantees have leadership councils that only meet one or two times a year. These leadership councils range in size from 10 to 40 people, and can represent not just the 21st CCLC program and school district, but also government agencies, community and business organizations, youth agencies, public officials and other OST or summer programs offered to youth in the same community. These larger leadership councils typically do not have a direct influence on program decision making, but serve as a way of promoting or reporting out the activities taking place in the 21st CCLC programs.

21st CCLC Population in Massachusetts

As a part of this study, all 21st CCLC Programs in Massachusetts were asked to complete a brief online survey. 31 Grantees completed the online survey. This survey collected information on the types of activities offered through 21st CCLC, other OST programming in the community, whether Grantees had a leadership team that helped with programming decisions and whether the 21st CCLC Program was part of a school action plan.

Data from the online survey revealed that 27 of the Grantees were public schools or school districts. One Grantee was a charter school, one was a Youth Center that worked with the public schools, another was the Parks and Recreation Department and another was a collaborative of several public schools in different districts. 29 of the 31 Grantees also had other OST programs in their community that were not 21st CCLC funded. 27 Grantees identified that they had a leadership council in their community. However, the purpose of the leadership council varied greatly. Only seven Grantees identified the leadership council as providing oversight to program decisions. Leadership councils in

the remaining communities did not provide oversight to programming decisions and were often a collaboration of representatives from many different entities in the community. Examples of these representatives included the Superintendent of Schools, local business council members, the mayor, the Chief of Police, Parks and Recreation personnel, parents and community members. All schools in Massachusetts have a school action plan. Interestingly, even though 28 of the Grantees are schools, only 22 Grantees reported that their OST Program was part of a school action plan. All of the Grantees identified at least five activities occurring in their programs and four Grantees identified upwards of 20 different activities.

Demographic information about income and race was added to the information gathered from the online survey. Free and Reduced Lunch rate information from the schools in each community was used to compile data on the percentage of low income students in each Grantee community. The percentage of low income students ranged from a low of 16.5% to a high of 81%. The state average of the percentage of students receiving Free and Reduced Lunch is 52%. The average for the survey group is 51.6%. The percentage of Caucasian students also ranged from a low of 14.7% to a high of 98.9% in the Grantee communities, with an average of 62.6%. In Massachusetts the total average percentage of Caucasian students is 88.4% ("School/District Profiles-Student Information Management System," 2010). (See Appendix C for a matrix of this information.)

Demographic information and data from the online survey was used to organize the Grantees into several categories. These categories ensured that a diverse subgroup was selected to interview. The selected Grantees represent both urban and rural areas,

demographic diversity, and a range of socio-economic status. Other factors that added diversity to this subgroup included the selection of Grantees with a leadership council and those without, programs that were tied to school action plans and those that were not, and communities that had other OST programs that were not funded by 21st CCLC and those that were running only the 21st CCLC program. The range of activities offered in communities varied greatly so finding a diverse selection of activities to be represented in this subgroup was not difficult.

Creating a diverse subgroup was important because of all of these factors could potentially influence the decisions made about the types of programming activities offered in a community. For example, a more urban area may have access to organizations and businesses not available to its rural counterparts, or a Grantee community with a higher population of Spanish-speaking families may tailor its programming to reach out to this population. Of the 31 Grantees that responded, ten Grantees were selected to represent the state. Two alternatives were also selected in the event that any of the ten refused participation in the interviews.

Grantees Where Interviews Occurred

Each of the ten Grantees selected from the online survey to be interviewed are described in the following section. The Program Coordinator from each Grantee community was interviewed. Each of the Grantee descriptions includes information about the Grantee community, including its free and reduced lunch population, student racial demographics, target population and number of students served. The number of physical locations, or Sites, is also identified for each Grantee. A brief history, as well as an overview of programming activities, is also provided.

Urban1

This small school-based program serves approximately 60 students at its one site. The district reports that 28% of its students are free or reduced lunch (FRL) eligible and 59.3% of its students are Caucasian. The target participants for the 21st CCLC program are low SES students, students who did not reach a proficient performance level on their MCAS tests, and struggling English Language Learners (ELL).

Prior to 21st CCLC programming, Urban1 had an OST program for five years.

This OST program focused on summer opportunities for families and outreach to families in public housing for students in grades 4-6. When Urban1 became funded through 21st

CCLC they were able to continue this program under its new title and expand it to grades 7 - 8 at two Sites. In addition to its outreach programming, Urban1 has been able to offer activities such as Hip Hop, Board Games, Cultural Ecology, Rubik's Cube Creations,

Cultural Kitchen, Hula-Hooping, Animation, Urban Ecology and a collection of academic activities and homework support called "After Hours University."

After its second year of funding, Urban1 was not approved for one of its continuation grants at one of its Sites and has only one Site remaining for its upcoming third year of its grant. The first Coordinator resigned after the first year and the current Coordinator is beginning her second year with Urban1. When asked about the local goals for Urban1, the Coordinator recognized a divergence between her own goals for the program and that of the DESE. She explained that the DESE was pushing for use of data and to increase math and science scores on MCAS, however, her feedback from families in the community and her own personal belief was that students needed diverse experiences, time for project-based learning and exposure to new experiences and careers. She

explained that she did use the SAYO toward the end of the last school year to collect the data required by the DESE, but that it was difficult to complete all of the requirements during her first year. She was not able to identify which SAYO learning outcomes would be addressed in current or future activities. Her hope was to work collaboratively with the building principal to determine which learning outcomes would be addressed in the next school year. During the last school year the Coordinator reported that she met only once with the building principal and described administration as "unavailable." When asked about her leadership council she explained that one had not yet been developed, but that she was hopeful for one in the future.

Urban2

This school-based program serves about 200 students during the school year at its four school building Sites and had approximately 200 more students on its waiting list to attend summer activities. Over 74% of the school population in this heavily urban area receives FRL, 68.3% of are Caucasian, and two of the schools in the district are considered underperforming or "level 4" schools according to their MCAS scores from the past four years. The target participants for the 21st CCLC program are its low SES students, students who did not reach a proficient performance level on their MCAS tests, and students in the ELL programs.

The Coordinator in Urban2 was the only Grantee interviewed who had been a part of the original grant writing for her community. The original 21st CCLC grant was for a middle school, but two elementary and one high school program were later added, in part to complement and support an already existing OST program at the Sites. The Coordinator position in Urban2 is a shared position between two long-term professionals

in the District Title One office. During the course of her 33 years in the district, the Coordinator has been the Program Facilitator for all of the OST programs and many of the Title One programs in the District. The 21st CCLC grant was written to support existing OST programs and to expand the activities to other school sites. Urban2 currently works with more than 15 community partners who support OST programming in the community. The OST programs, including 21st CCLC programs, are heavily supported by private donations in the community. The 21st CCLC program in Urban2 offers activities such as Brazilian soccer, local history, sailing, cooking, and an ELL sponsored cookbook.

The Coordinator meets 2-3 times a year with a community leadership council to report out about the different OST programs. As part of the 21st CCLC programming, the co-coordinators meet regularly with the three Site Coordinators. When I asked the Coordinator to quantify what it means to meet regularly, she explained that all three Site Coordinators are retired teachers and long-time friends, so the scheduling of meetings is informal. She also explained that because of the high qualifications of her Site Coordinators she relies on them to provide feedback from the APT and about programming. The Coordinator could not readily identify any of the SAYO learning outcomes at the sites, but was confident that the Site Coordinators could do this easily. There is a designated person in the Title One office who collects and reports on data from the SAYO. The Coordinator does not require proposal forms from her instructors after their first initial session. The Coordinator was confident that her years of experience in the district, her working relationship with the Site Coordinators, and her strong working

relationships with the community partners are the keys to what she views as a successful OST program.

Urban3

This school-based program serves between 95 - 110 students at its four school building Sites. 64.8% of the population is Caucasian and the FRL rate in the district is just over 36%. Like other urban areas, Urban3's target population for the 21st CCLC program is its low SES students, students who did not reach a proficient performance level on their MCAS tests, and students in the ELL programs. There are four Sites with four Site Coordinators; however, there has been significant turnover of these positions. Urban3 will start its second consecutive year with over half of its staff not returning, including two of the Site Coordinators. The Coordinator has been in the position for one year and is the second person to hold this position. Prior to taking on this position, she coordinated a school-based arts-based afterschool program for the district that was predominately focused on after-school childcare. Urban3 is at risk for losing its 21st CCLC monies and the Coordinator has an assigned mentor from the DESE.

Urban3 began its 21st CCLC program with one middle school, added an elementary school in its second year, and has now expanded to two middle and two elementary school sites. Some of the activities offered are knitting, cooking, Geocaching, yoga, Green Team Recycling, pottery, technology, fitness and nutrition, and a sewing class making homemade napkins. During the interview the Coordinator was unable to readily identify any of the goals from the SAYO. The district had hired an independent contractor to compile the data and she had not reviewed the results. She was uncertain about any local goals or focus on MCAS scores and had no clear system for

identifying students within the target population. She explained that the OST program was in a state of flux, and that goals and structure were still unclear. She met with a leadership council 2 -3 times last year and described the team as "strictly political." To her, the purpose of the leadership council was to showcase particular activities or community connections to the council, not to request any true leadership or oversight for the OST program. In her view, the OST programs were valuable, but not seen as a priority by the district.

Urban4

This school-based program serves 836 students at its four school building Sites and has an attendance rate of 85%. 57.5% of the school population in this suburbanurban area receives FRL and 84.7% of the population is Caucasian. The target population for the 21st CCLC program is its low SES students, students who did not reach a proficient performance level on their MCAS tests, and students in the ELL programs. Students who are identified as being part of the target population can attend activities at no cost.

Prior to receiving 21st CCLC funding, Urban4 had an OST program designed for students with autism. In 2002 the grant funding for this program shifted to the DESE and the district decided to expand its current program and apply for 21st CCLC funding. In its first year Urban4 did not have a full-time Coordinator, but attempted to run the four sites with a part time Coordinator and with the support of district administrators. After the first year the district hired a full time Coordinator who is now in her second year in the position. All of the activities offered in Urban4 are required to be project-based and have an academic component woven-in. The pay rate for instructors varies depending on the

level of academic rigor offered during the activities. Some of the activities offered by the program are yoga, sewing, guitar, gardening, photography, fitness, history with American Girl Dolls, Robotics, Fit Math, cooking, community service activities and activities with artists in residence. The majority of the activities offered are teacher- or community-partner driven. The Site Coordinators work closely with school-day staff to develop activities and to recruit instructors for the programming. The SAYO is used as a pre-post assessment of activities, but in the view of the Coordinator, does not give an accurate description of the overall programming. The Coordinator is working to create a system unique to Urban4 that will help collect data about student progress.

The Coordinator uses the APT to observe activities and to provide a "snapshot" of what is occurring at each site. The majority of the instructors in the OST program were also teachers employed by the school district. She explained that the DESE has made it clear that the APT cannot be used to evaluate teachers or their instruction, as this would be in violation of the agreement with the teachers' union and the school. The Coordinator meets twice a month with her school district administration. She also attends meetings 3 -4 times a year with a district leadership council to highlight activities that are occurring at the Sites.

Urban5

This school-based program has 21 school building Sites and serves approximately 1400 students each year. This large urban district is 37.5% Caucasian has a FRL population of 71.8 and has OST programs at 16 elementary and 5 middle school sites.

Urban5 has exemplary status for its 21st CCLC Program and the Coordinator serves as a mentor to a Coordinator of one of the at-risk 21st CCLC programs in the state. The target

population for the 21st CCLC program is its low SES students, students who did not reach a proficient performance level on their MCAS tests, and students in the ELL programs in grades 3 through 8. Only students who are identified as the target population are permitted to attend 21st CCLC activities; which is a source of frustration for the Coordinator.

Urban5 uses the SAYO to determine the different learning outcomes for each of its 21 Sites. However, vocabulary comprehension is a common focus for many of the activities. Teachers were paid stipends to create project-based models and curriculum kits. Many of the activities are dependent on community partners and include karate, golf, ballroom and salsa dancing, ice skating, florist design, and robotics. Much of the time is also spend devoted to MCAS tutoring. Instructors, including community partners, are required to complete a one-page proposal form for each activity session. The APT is used minimally, in part because of the large number of sites. At some sites the Principal is the Site Coordinator, but this situation was not described as optimal.

The current Coordinator is starting her 6th year with 21st CCLC. According to the Coordinator, prior to the 21st CCLC funding, the district ran the OST programs as MCAS tutoring through the Title One office. Due to budget cuts and shifts in personnel, what was once two positions is now one. Starting next year the Coordinator will oversee both the 21st CCLC program and the other OST programs in the district. She sits on a leadership council with 30-40 individuals from different agencies, boards, and constituency groups throughout the community. The council meets 3 times a year to discuss OST programming in the school district.

Rural1

This rural school-based program has only one Site for which the Coordinator is responsible. The school district is 89.6% Caucasian and has a FRL population of 49%. The site is located in a rural, woodsy area in the Connecticut River Watershed and houses a college water research lab on its school grounds. In its three years the program has served 9, 17 and then 12 participants. The Coordinator assumed that the target audience were students on FRL or at-risk academically, but referred me to the building principal to get more information. Rural 1 has an identified at-risk status by the DESE and the Coordinator has been assigned a mentor by the DESE. Rural 1 is at risk of losing their grant funding and a mentor has been provided to help the Coordinator turn-around the Program and improve its status.

The situation at Rural1 is unique. Originally, the 21st CCLC grant was written to create an eQuest software program for students to work with the college research lab to use technology to explore issues of environmental activism and education. As part of this Activity, students used the eQuest software to ask questions or make observations about the environment. The eQuest uses a series of algorithms to analyze the data and to provide students with guiding questions for their own research. The original writer of the grant passed away unexpectedly and the program was left without a leader. During its first year Rural1 had two different Coordinators. At the start of its second year the current Coordinator was hired. Rural1 is in its fourth year of the grant. At the close of last year the Coordinator decided to expand the activities beyond the original eQuest and include activities in cooking, sports, and Robotics. The Coordinator has not used the SAYO to identify goals for the programs and has not yet used the APT.

The Coordinator repeatedly identified conflict with the administration and what she saw as a lack of support for the 21st CCLC activities at Rural1. She identified a leadership council whose purpose is to oversee programming, but also shared that the council met only twice in one year and once in the second year. The Coordinator is not hopeful that the grant will continue for Rural1 beyond this next year.

Rural2

This school-based program has 2 school building Sites and serves 125 students in grades K -4. This small rural community has several other OST programs, including a state-funded 530 grant for childcare. The Coordinator and two Site coordinators oversee all of the OST programs. The FRL rate in the district is 49.4% and 91% of its student population is Caucasian. The target population for the 21st CCLC program is its low SES students, students who did not reach a proficient performance level on their MCAS tests, students who receive special education services, and students identified as having behavioral challenges in the classroom.

Ten years ago Rural2 had an OST program that was predominantly focused on afterschool care for elementary students. When funding ran out for this program, the school applied for 21st CCLC funding to continue and improve the OST program. The 21st CCLC program in Rural2 offers a range of enrichment activities, including making recycled products, cooking, martial arts, board games, community service projects (including making quilts for a local shelter), and creating anti-bullying books for students. Based on the SAYO, the goals for Rural2 are written communication and math communication. Academics are embedded in the enrichment activities and are not specifically taught. Both Sites provide a homework support hour prior to the start of the

enrichment activities. The APT is used regularly to guide activities and provide feedback on instruction.

The Coordinator does not meet regularly with administration or a leadership council, but did not identify this as an area of concern. Monthly meetings are held between the Coordinator and the Site Coordinators. She is the second person to have this position in Rural2 and has completed two years as its Coordinator. She is leaving the position before the start of the next school year.

Rural3

This rural school district has ten school building Sites in its OST program, spread out over a large geographical area. The FRL rate for the district is around 45%, 55% of its students are Caucasian, and the targeted populations for the 21st CCLC program are low-SES students, students who did not reach a proficient performance level on their MCAS exams and students who receive ELL services. The OST program is open to all students. There are a variety of activities offered, including dance classes, fitness and nutrition, art, knitting and Robotics. Some of the Sites offer adult education classes on an as-requested basis. The 21st CCLC program is in its 8th year and is part of the Title One extended day program that has been in the community for more than 12 years. The current Coordinator came into the position mid-way through the first year of the grant, but has been an employee of the district for 28 years.

Each of the ten Sites determines its learning goals based on the results of the SAYO, but the general purpose of Rural3 is to provide a safe place for students after school. MCAS scores and academics are woven into the activities, but are not explicitly addressed. The decision to run activities is determined by the number of students who

sign up for them. The Coordinator meets with all ten Site coordinators one time per month, where they review grant requirements and discuss new activities. The APT is used minimally because it is required of the grant, but decisions about activities are made without any formal procedures. There is no leadership council and the Coordinator sends different site coordinators to the DESE meetings to represent Rural3. The Coordinator recalls being more formalized about procedures in the early stages of the grant, but credits her experience as being the most valuable tool in identifying the potential success for any activity.

Rural4

This school-based program has 7 sites in 7 towns and serves 700 students across three school districts. This rural program is run by an educational collaborative formed specifically to run the 21st CCLC grant. This program targets students who are not performing proficiently on the MCAS as well as students who are in challenging situations at home. It also uses a Composite Performance Index (CPI) assessment to target students who need extra support in math or literacy. The average FRL for the communities Rural4 serves is 30.1%. When looking at all of the schools in the collaborative, the average population of these schools is 74% Caucasian. Rural4 has been identified as an exemplary program and has two promising practices (activities) identified by the DESE.

The 7 sites vary in terms of have some variance in which learning outcomes they selected, but all sites have identified math reasoning and written communication as an area in which students need support. The activities have an average of 8 students to 1 adult, and are created based on the results of student-interest surveys. Some sites have

homework clubs while others have activities focused specifically on academics.

Academic support is provided, as well as activities like theatre, Robotics or Cultural

Cooking. The Coordinator began as a Site coordinator and moved into the Coordinator
position when it opened during the second year of the grant. Prior to 2004 the Mott

Foundation was a significant contributor to OST programs in the area, but when funding
was no longer available through Mott the districts decided to pursue 21st CCLC funding.

From the Coordinator's perspective, the OST programs have become more focused and
academically rigorous in the time since the 21st CCLC grant was awarded. The

Coordinator has an advisory council at each Site that meets multiple times a year to
provide feedback to Site Coordinators. The Coordinator meets with all of the Site

Coordinators one time per month.

Rural5

This school-based program has 3 elementary school sites in three towns, serving approximately 50 students per site. The target population for the 21st CCLC program is its low SES students, students who did not reach a proficient performance level on their MCAS tests, and students who are currently homeless. Over 94% of the students are Caucasian and 16.5% of the students in the school district receive FRL. Now in its ninth year of programming, Rural5 has received exemplary status, primarily for its vision of activities as entrepreneurial exercises for students. The majority of the activities in Rural5 are businesses run by students with an adult supporter, many of whom have businesses in the area. The adult supporter acts as an instructor for these businesses and is paid by the grant to supervise students. These student run businesses include a plant nursery, bake shop, sewing company, and a catalogue of flyers businesses can use to

promote an event or sale. Activities include library literacy, Robotics and theatre production. A separate tutoring program is offered through a different grant at each of the sites.

The Coordinator was an employee in the district running a different OST grant prior to Rural5 receiving grant funding for 21st CCLC. Her professional connections in the district office and immediate access to Title One staff have been critical in securing support for the OST programming. She requires the Site Coordinators to use the SAYO, but identifies the overarching goal of the program as improving MCAS scores. The APT is used as a requirement of the grant, but is not used as data when making decisions about program activities. The Coordinator meets with Site Coordinators on an as-needed basis and serves as a mentor for another Coordinator in the state. The Coordinator also presents regularly about the Rural5 program at the DESE network meetings.

Summary of Participants

Grantees have a lot of autonomy in how they design their program activities. For example, some Sites have academics woven in or embedded in their enrichment activities, some provide a separate homework support time, and others choose to separate academic support from enrichment opportunities. Also, Grantees have complete discretion about which learning outcomes are selected to be measured using the SAYO. Other examples of variations in Grantees are that some utilize a large number of community partners while others have few or none. Some Grantees elect to charge a fee for activities, while others have a sliding fee scale or fully supplement students either in or out of their target population. Even the frequency, duration, and length of activities vary among the Grantees.

DESE Program Requirements

The DESE has set up several requirements for Grantees as conditions for receiving 21st CCLC monies. However, interviews with the Coordinators revealed that there are inconsistencies in how data is collected and how instruments such as the APT, SAYO and proposal form are used.

Grantees are required to collect data using the SAYO, but the manner in which the instrument is used raises questions about its fidelity for assessing the effectiveness of activities. The SAYO has specific learning outcomes that are identified and measured before and after an activity session. Those results are used to determine whether an activity is having an impact on student performance. However, when to use the SAYO and for which activities is determined by the Coordinator. It is not used in every activity and not all participants complete it. Following this logic, it stands to reason that the results of the SAYO, and therefore the performance of an entire Grantee program, could be represented by only the activities selected and assessed by the Program and Site Coordinators.

Another requirement of the grant is the use of the activity evaluation tool, the APT.

One of the purposes of the APT is for the Coordinators to evaluate how successful the activities are in meeting the goals of the program. What I learned is that the frequency of the APT and determining which activities are evaluated is left to the discretion of the Coordinator. The information from the APT becomes part of the annual report for the DESE and is reported in aggregate. Based on the information obtained during the interviews, it is safe to conclude that while the APT is used by all Coordinators, it is not

used consistently for all activities during all sessions. Also, the data derived from the APT is not used by all Grantees as a measurement of the effectiveness of programming.

Lastly, all Grantees are strongly encouraged to use a proposal form when new activities are proposed or created. The proposal form has been modified in each Grantee community and is not consistently used for all activities at all Sites. The research revealed that some Coordinators require a written proposal form for each activity at the start of each new session, while other Coordinators use the formal proposal only upon inception of a new activity, and some do not use it at all. The variation in the system for proposing activities is critical, as all decisions about programming activities derive from whatever system the Coordinator has in place.

Tie to Program Goals

One of the major tenets of the 21st CCLC Program is that Grantees have at least one subgroup struggling in at least one area on the MCAS. Yet the data revealed that some Coordinators were unsure of their MCAS scores or subject areas in which students in their community struggled. Incidentally, only two Grantees kept track of the data on whether MCAS scores improved over the time the 21st CCLC program was in place.

All of the Coordinators were able to identify their target population, but only five actually have systems in place to make certain that their target population is the one they are serving. Urban5 was the only Grantee that made the OST program available exclusively to the targeted population. On the other end of the spectrum, Rural1 collected no data, but made the assumption that her target population was being reached because the majority of students at the site received FRL. The remaining Grantees had

methods for pursuing their target population that fell somewhere on a continuum between these two Grantees.

Role of the DESE

The DESE provides oversight through monthly meetings with Coordinators, but appears either to have little influence or to not be concerned about how consistently assessment tools, like the SAYO and APT, are used. The DESE may not have the infrastructure or personnel to assure that these tools are used consistently and that programming is reaching the target population. The annual report due to the DESE from Coordinators is the time when the success or failure of a Grantee is evaluated. As stated earlier, this annual report includes the aggregate results of the SAYO, a narrative about the results of the APT, participation data, attendance, and hours of service to students. The assurance of meeting a target audience, the selection of learning goals, and the impact on MCAS scores is not measured in this report.

As explained earlier, the DESE also provides mentors to the Coordinators of 21st CCLC programs that have been identified as "at risk". The mentoring system was established in an effort to create a support system for Coordinators in the hopes that OST programs would continue and Grantees would not lose their funding. Mentors provide insight on program scheduling, recruiting community partners, designing activities and budget operations. Coordinators and their assigned mentors meet regularly. Many mentors make visits to the building Sites to demonstrate the use of the assessment tools and provide feedback on what they observe.

Summary

Despite the defined requirements, the evaluation tools, and the careful expectations outlined by the DESE, there is a great deal of incoherence in the programs in these Grantee communities. The use of evaluation tools, the assignment of learning outcomes, and the process for creating activities are widely diverse among Grantees. Factors like the relationship with the building administrator, or even the wishes of the Coordinator, seem to add to the disorder of the decision making process. The next two chapters more closely examine how these factors influence decision making and the impact they have had on OST program goals.

CHAPTER 5

HOW GRANTEES MAKE DECISIONS

Introduction

This chapter examines the themes revealed in the data, including the influences and factors that affect decision making in each of the Grantee communities. The theoretical framework, the Garbage Can Model (GCM) will be used to frame and describe the results of this study. The GCM looks at all the factors that influence decisions being made.

Using the four themes identified as part of the choice opportunities presented in the GCM model, interview questions were used to probe about the process used to make decisions and the influences on those decisions. Stakeholder theory was also used to better understand how participants influenced the decision making in each community. These two frameworks helped organize the data and provided a structure for analyzing the results. The research study looked to understand the relationship between the activities selected and the prescribed goals of the 21st CCLC program.

Themes Revealed in the Data

Several themes about decision making emerged from the data. How decisions were made about programming activities varied slightly with each Grantee, but there were consistent patterns that identified influences on this process. These influences are divided into four themes: Solutions, Stakeholders' Influence, Problems, and Opportunities. The table below identifies each Grantee and the themes that emerged from their data. As you can see in the table below, all of the Grantees identified solutions, problems and opportunities as influences on their decision making about

program activities. The majority of the Grantees also identified the influence of stakeholders as a factor in decision making. The two Grantees that did not identify stakeholders as an important influence identified themselves as autonomous in their decision making for OST programming. This chapter will explain these themes in more detail within the context of the derived data from each Grantee.

Table 2: Identified Theme by Grantee

Grantee	Solutions	Stakeholders' Influence	Problems	Opportunities
Rural1	X	X	X	X
Rural2	X	X	X	X
Rural3	X		X	X
Rural4	X	X	X	X
Rural5	X	X	X	X
Urban1	X	X	X	X
Urban2	X	X	X	X
Urban3	X	X	X	X
Urban4	X		X	X
Urban5	X	X	X	X

Solutions

A major portion of the interview was devoted to trying to learn how decisions about programming activities were made in each Grantee community. Specifically, Coordinators were asked to identify some of the activities offered through their 21st CCLC program and to describe how a particular activity was selected. Follow-up

questions asked about the decisions to keep or eliminate activities, how new activities were instituted, and how these activities were evaluated. A consistent theme identified in every interview was the solution. According to GCM, solutions are a product or answer that is actively seeking a problem to solve. In the Grantee communities, the solution was often presented in the form of a written or oral proposal. Participants in an organization may have a pet project or interest they would like to endorse. Proposals for new activities came from a variety of sources in each of the communities. From the data gathered, four sub-themes of these proposals emerged: Community Organizations, Teachers or Staff, Student Interest, and Administration and 21st CCLC Expectations.

The data revealed that the most frequent type of solutions were the ones that came from teachers or staff members. Staff members often had activities for which they were seeking funding, had clubs that were no longer being funded, or had hobbies or special interests they wanted to share. Proposals from community organizations or members, whether sought out or presented, was the next most frequently identified method. Student interest surveys were also used in some communities as a way to collect this data. The data revealed that many community organizations were searching for a partnership to fulfill an organizational mandate, to match in-kind funding for a particular grant, to recruit members, or to create inroads to a particular population, such as the school district. In two of the Grantee communities the Coordinator and the Site principals played a larger role in the design and selection of activities. In these communities, personality and individual interest, whether personal or professional, seemed to be the most influential factor. Lastly, two communities identified the 21st CCLC grant expectations or the SAYO learning outcomes as being a significant influence when

planning activities. Incidentally, these two communities were also identified with exemplary status.

Table 3: Sources of Proposals by Category

Grantee	Teacher or Staff	Community Orgs.	Student Interest	Admin.	21 st CCLC / SAYO Outcomes
Rural1	X	X			
Rural2	X	X	X		X
Rural3	X				X
Rural4	X		X		X
Rural5	X	X	X	X	
Urban1	X	X		X	
Urban2	X	X			
Urban3	X	X			
Urban4	X	X			
Urban5	X	X			X

Solution Categories

Teacher and Staff Proposals

Every Coordinator interviewed identified teacher and staff proposals as the predominant means for creating activities. Activities from these proposals included sessions on arts and crafts, jewelry making, pottery, board games, scrapbooking, robotics, outdoor activities, gardening, cooking, t-shirt printing, hula-hooping, making homemade napkins, and studying history through American Girl Dolls. Each session lasts

approximately 6 - 8 weeks, with activities occurring between one and three times each week. Students can sign up for different activities for each day of the week. Sessions often offer repeats of activities that were popular in earlier sessions. In all ten Grantee communities, teachers in the schools that hosted OST programs were encouraged to present ideas to the site or Coordinators or Site Coordinators.

Coordinators consistently identified the teachers and staff as a valuable resource for creating activities. Coordinators named teachers and staff as being the experts with their population of students and the culture of the school:

We post positions, and essentially, teachers propose what they want to teach. We have a form that asks that they connect it to our academic and intermediary outcome areas so they know what we want to have happen, they know what skills we want kids to learn, and each session, we ask teachers to propose what they want to do. (Urban4)

... there are some teachers who have some very wonderful hobbies and would be very appropriate, and we want to encourage them, you know, to do that. And they don't sometimes often see that, you know, we can provide you with the resources to be able to do that. Just as an example, we had a few years ago a teacher who was very much into scrapbooking. And we said, "As part of the enrichment piece of the program, if you would like to do that we will get you all the materials and have the kids." (Urban5)

In several other incidents, the Coordinator recognized that the teacher passion or enthusiasm for the subject area would be the key component in making a successful activity session. In eight of the ten interviews the program coordinators conceded that there were times when the teacher or student interest outweighed the expectations of the 21st CCCL grant and they made decisions to offer activities that weren't exclusively academic or targeted to the goals of their program.

From a Coordinator whose program goals focus on science and math:

If there's something in particular that really works for your school, then let's -- let's take a look and try to --we have a teacher at one of our middle schools who's an outdoors enthusiast...he's also a very good science teacher. But he wanted to just have like an outdoor exploration, not have it focused on anything in particular for science. These kids don't get outside. And it would be great for them to go to some of our, you know, wildlife sanctuaries and things to see, just see what it's like to be outdoors. So I said, "All right, we'll do it for eight weeks in the spring. We'll do it. We'll try it and see how it works." And he loved it. The kids loved it. (Urban5)

From a different Grantee community with a focus on math instruction:

Our teacher had sewn her own homemade napkins that she came up with, so they were sometimes a spin-off on another theme, but math was incorporated into it. (Urban3)

From another Coordinator whose school is considered a failing school due to literacy and reading scores:

Depending on the students, depending on who's teaching it, depending on the activities, it can be tough to really push the academics, especially when they're coming at the end of the day, they're tired. From my point of view, of course I want to instill those academics, but I'd rather have them there than not coming at all, so if that means that they're playing a board game and then going to a dance class, I think, once in a while, that's totally fine. (Urban1)

There is evidence to suggest that decisions about activities are influenced by the solutions offered by teachers and staff, even when the proposal is not directly related to the Site's identified learning goals. Many Coordinators accepted proposals for pet projects, like scrapbooking or board games, even though the learning outcomes for those particular activities did not fit the goals of the OST Program. When pressed to explain this disconnect, Coordinators had several explanations. One common explanation was the desire to keep students engaged and coming to the OST program, which often meant offering a "fun"

activity over academics. (It is important to note that the number of participants and daily attendance are two data assessed by the DESE in the Grantee's annual report.) Another explanation was the need to recruit and keep instructors, many of whom had pet projects they wished to share. In rural districts the availability of instructors can be limited, especially if Coordinators are looking to recruit teachers in the school building. Lastly, another common explanation was that Coordinators or building administrators had their own intentions for the OST programming, such as decreasing childhood obesity or keeping students safe after school.

Community Organizations

The second most identified type of solution came from community members, organizations or business partners. In several cases the Coordinator placed ads in the local paper asking for proposals for activities from any interested parties. In some cases, the Coordinator sought out individuals in the community with whom he or she had a connection, and other times the community organizations or members came to the Coordinator unsolicited. Activity proposals in this category include urban ecology, karaoke, theatre, sailing, Brazilian Soccer, yoga, gardening, floral design, Robotics, animation, karate and making wallets out of recycled goods. Also included in this category was a Coordinator who worked closely with the city Investment Board to help youth find jobs and avoid loitering downtown. These types of solutions varied greatly and were clearly influenced by the urban or rural setting and the resources available in participating communities.

From a Coordinator in an urban setting:

Some of the courses we offered this session were ones that we brought in, either other organizations who have curriculum they provide—an example of that is the Urban Ecology Institute was with us this past session teaching the kids all about seasonal change and tree identification and all sorts of different things. (Urban1)

Other proposals focused less on academics and more on enrichment opportunities that engaged students. In this particular community, many of the community-proposed classes were project based, with the coordinator weaving in an academic component to the proposals when possible. As an example:

Karaoke class? That was taught by the martial arts teacher, and it was awesome. He brought in his own karaoke machine, and the kids voted on what karaoke CDs he should go buy, so not only did they sing karaoke, but while the kids were not performing, they were writing their own songs or poems, so obviously there was a lot of writing involved and creativity. (Rural2)

The variety, breadth and rigor of proposals from community organizations varied greatly. In some incidents the proposals came with a ready-made curriculum, where others came from local business owners who wanted to share their craft with youth.

Others, like in the example of a local golf course, saw the OST program as an opportunity to recruit and train students for future employment as caddies.

Student Interest

Many of the Coordinators identified a student survey as a means to assess the interest of the students after they had completed an activity session, but only two Grantees identified offering a student survey to identify potential new activities. Activities that came from these surveys included an auto mechanics course, a music and theatre troupe, and a community service project involving a green-up campaign. Three Coordinators

identified student interests as a tool for creating activities, but they did not have a formalized system for collecting this information. They relied on word of mouth or student conversations with instructors of the activities.

Administration

Two of the Coordinators credited themselves as being the main source of all activities in their communities. Both accepted several staff proposals, but the majority of the programs were by their creation or their solicitation. These Coordinators had activities in place that included a book club, running a greenhouse nursery, exploring careers, studying the works of Shakespeare, working with a local Nutritionist, and conducting a study of the town's history. Of all of the Coordinators interviewed, Rural5 was the most adamant that I understand that she was the main source for activity design and decisions.

This coordinator identified herself as the "heart and soul" of the program. After decades in the community, she believed her understanding of the school community and her networking connections made the programming possible. She shared that many of the activities in her community came from her own inspirations:

I was closing up my pool and had no place to put all these plants that I spent all this money for, and I said, huh, this will solve two problems at once, so that's where [greenhouse nursery activity] started from. (Rural5)

Another idea she had for a student project:

There's also little tables—I bought one from a catalogue this summer, and it's great; it's slatted wood, and you can roll it up and carry it in this carry case with its legs that you just screw on when you get to the beach—unroll it, screw it on, and set it up as a nice table when you get to the beach. That might be something else that they explore; we'll invite them to go in that direction. (Rural5)

21st CCLC Expectations

Of the ten Grantees, only two identified the 21st CCLC goals (or target population) as the main influence when determining which activities would be selected. For the majority of the Grantees interviewed, the activities were a compromise between the grant expectations and the desires of the students, teachers or Coordinator. Rural2 found a way to take a teacher proposal for a cooking class and inject it with some of the learning outcomes for the Site:

The teacher had been teaching cooking in after school for the past two and a half years, and I helped her with incorporating more math and more reading of the recipes and that it's the process and not just the end result, that you don't always have to have something for them to eat at the end, they can just learn about the different utensils. (Rural2)

The DESE recommends that Grantees complete written proposals for 21st CCLC activities. This proposal form requests the stated objectives or standards for the Grantee community, lesson plans for the 8-12 week unit, and a plan for assessing student achievement. Of the ten Grantees interviewed, only two required the use of a written proposal form for each activity. The system for receiving proposals varied greatly, ranging from the written proposal form to conversations with a staff member.

As one seasoned Coordinator explained:

There's always new things. New staff comes in, and you get tired of doing the same thing. For the most part, teachers are in the same building, so there have been people that have been doing this for years. There's always new ideas, new ways of doing things. The grant changes—the grant requirements change—so you have to change with that, no formal process is really needed. (Rural3)

Other times, this expectation from the DESE was completely ignored, and the decision was made to offer activities that were focused on student desires or the desires

of the Site principal or Coordinator. These student needs included more exercise, time outdoors, or even time to unwind after a long day:

They're going to be in the gym, and I'm not sure exactly what their program's going to look like, but they want to get kids that are...You know, we have a lot of overweights. (Rural1)

During the interview process it was discovered that, while some of the Coordinators could provide exact MCAS scores or FRL rates for students, there were others that had only vague ideas about their target population. In one community the Coordinator admitted that in the first years the target population received special invitations, but that this procedure was discontinued. In one of the at-risk programs the Coordinator explained that at least half of the students in the school received FRL; therefore, it was safe to assume that, of the students that came to the OST program, many of them had to be in this population, thus her target population was being served. When asked to talk about the specific goals of the program, this Coordinator responded:

I think this year, I don't know if I had a specific slant to the program, like I really want to introduce students to careers—I think it was more trying a lot of things and seeing what worked and what didn't and seeing what the kids liked and what worked for them. (Urban1)

Two of the Grantees have programs that have a separate homework hour followed by enrichment activities. The expectations of the academic portion of the OST program seems to be unclear, even for the Coordinators. For one Coordinator, the interpretation is that the academic component of the grant is fulfilled through this homework hour. For the other Coordinator, the homework hour is seen as a resource for students, but does not eliminate the need for academic instruction as part of the program activities. The concept of a homework hour created an interesting tension for Coordinators. The homework hour might not produce a consistent focus on specific areas where students need support, but

on the other hand, an hour of focused academic intervention would cut into student homework time and may cause them to slip academically in their classes. The students would then receive the academic support they need, but they may not see academic success as evidenced by report cards, which may reflect poorly on the OST program.

Stakeholders' Influence

Stakeholder theory claims that the organization has relationships with many constituent groups and that the interests of these groups need to be considered and balanced when making decisions (T. M. Jones & Wicks, 1999). This balancing process can be an individual exercise or completed at the organizational level through administrative teams of individuals. Ultimately, it includes behaviors that bring some type of resolution to conflicting needs or requests of stakeholders (Reynolds, Schultz, & Hekman, 2006). Stakeholder theory is useful in examining how the individual program coordinators make decisions about programming activities at their Sites. The Coordinator makes decisions about how to distribute resources and balance the interests of other stakeholders, like the DESE, building administrators, the Program and Site Coordinators, teachers, parents and students. Grantees also have leadership teams or councils that provide oversight and feedback about 21st CCLC programs. These teams wield varying degrees of power, but all of them have a level of influence, whether it is on the School District, the administration, city or local boards, community organizations, or directly on the OST programs. In GCM, stakeholders could be defined as participants. Participants vary depending on the decision being addressed as well as the other obligations or distractions of the participant at the time of the decision.

The online survey asked about the existence of a leadership team for the OST programs and the Grantees were asked more in-depth questions about the influence of the leadership team during the interview process. All of the interviewees were asked about their leadership team, including local councils and the DESE, and how those stakeholders influenced their decision making about program activities. Of the ten Coordinators interviewed, eight identified stakeholders' interest as having an influence on the decision making process. In the course of the second interview the Coordinator brought up the influence of the building administrators and how these individuals greatly influenced the success of the activities in the Grantee community. After the discovery of this influence from this interview, a question about the role of administration was added to the bank of the interview questions for the remaining interviews. A follow up call was made to the first Grantee to ask about the role of the building administration in program decision making. The research revealed that seven of the Coordinators saw the building administrator as having a significant influence on the types of activities offered. Six Coordinators saw the DESE as a powerful influence, but only three identified staff members as stakeholders. The other category represents Coordinators who saw themselves, relationship-building, or community beliefs as chief influences.

Table 4: Identified Influences

Grantee	Building Administrator	DESE	Staff	Other
Rural1	X	X		
Rural2			X	
Rural3				X
Rural4	X	X		X
Rural5	X	X	X	X
Urban1	X	X		X
Urban2	X			
Urban3	X	X		
Urban4		X		
Urban5	X			

Influence of Building Administrators

For seven of the communities, the building administrator was identified as an influential stakeholder not just in the process of making decisions about activities, but in influencing whether the OST program was valued and successful in the school community. For many Coordinators, the influence of the administrator was critical.

To have successful 21st Century programs, it would be impossible without the support of the administrative team. It would be impossible—you couldn't do what you needed to do because you wouldn't have free rein of the school. (Rural5)

For another Coordinator working with multiple sites across a large geographic area, the support of the building administrator was identified as "a deal breaker." Without the

support and influence of the building administrator, the Site Coordinators would face multiple obstacles.

You can sense resistance or indifference or the inability to follow through, and that means if you somehow got that funding, you're going to have three to five years of a hard time just meeting basic requirements—you may not be able to get access to space. You try to sense that before you progress. (Rural4)

In community Urban3 the Coordinator identified the lack of support by the administration as being the key to why the program was failing. She gave several examples of incidents when the administration was simply not present during critical junctures. One of the most striking examples of what the Coordinator perceived as a lack of support was when the 21st CCLC program office was moved out of the office of the administrator in charge of oversight of the grant and into the basement of another building. For another Coordinator, the lack of support by administration was her chief complaint. Throughout the interview she mentioned the lack of clarity about the direction of the program, irregular and infrequent meetings with administration, and feeling unsupported when she tried to implement activities. She specifically mentioned transporting students, school policies around equipment, and advertising for positions as issues that could have been avoided had communication been better. Each of these issues slowed her progress and cost her resources:

I didn't get a lot of support from the admins. When they hired me, they basically said, this is your baby. Make it work. And in a way, that's nice because you don't have a lot of hassle, but on the other hand, you need your admins for this kind of thing. It was a mixed bag. There was a principal there who actually supported it—I knew he was behind me—but he just didn't do things to help me. I was really learning by the seat of my pants, how do you do this, and learning as I went, so I didn't even know what to ask for at first. (Rural1)

Access to Administration

All seven of the communities that specifically named the influence of the building administrator as essential were asked about regular meetings or access to the principal for the Coordinator or Site Coordinators. All seven identified access and regular communication as either keys or barriers to program success. The frequency of meetings varied from weekly meetings or contact (two Grantees) to regularly scheduled monthly meetings (3 Grantees). For two other Coordinators, access to the administrator was identified as an obstacle to program success:

As far as the principal, this past year, I met with him probably only once a session—he was busy and I was still kind of figuring out my place in the school and finding out where things were at. (Urban1)

We're supposed to meet every couple months, but we met twice the first year and once last year. (Rural1)

These seven Coordinators also highlighted the complex role of the principal. Five of the program coordinators mentioned the pressures of high-stakes testing, the clerical and logistical requirements of the position, and the other obligations for these individuals. In many cases, the administrator was not identified as being negative toward the 21st CCLC, but was seen as having other obligations that they prioritized before the needs of the OST programming.

In an urban community with multiple sites:

The problem comes now, in this district anyway, and I don't know about other districts, but it seems that there are more meetings, more times when principals are called away from their schools and after school hours so that it becomes less effective. (Urban5)

In another urban community with multiple sites, the obligations of the Principal are explained:

Two of them [principals] are very involved; one of them is not as involved. But I think the one that's not as involved, she has a great Site Coordinator who she's friendly with, and I think that she's got so much on her plate. (Urban2)

Influence of DESE

Through the course of the interviews, it was revealed that while each Grantee had some form of a leadership council or team, that the council was primarily a means for reporting out information about the 21st CCLC grant and was not utilized as a team for making decisions about programming activities or the direction of the grant. The leadership council was used as an oversight committee, with the 21st CCLC being one of many programs that reported out to the council. In the more urban districts, the leadership council had 30 or more members. While the DESE encourages Grantees to form leadership teams or councils, it is not required. Leadership teams can be made up of several community stakeholders, including the school Superintendent, local business owners, and representatives from a number of town committees. These teams may not directly influence program decision making, but they add a certain level of legitimacy to the OST programs.

Each Grantee Coordinator is required to participate in DESE regional network meetings. The main objective of these network meetings is to provide professional development support for the oversight and clerical requirements of the 21st CCLC grant. The secondary purpose of these meetings is to create colleagueship among Grantee communities and to share information about ideas or resources in each of the Grantee communities.

All ten of the Grantees identified project-based learning as an expectation of the grant, along with an academic influence on activities. Each interviewee was asked to talk

about the role of the DESE on their decision making about programming activities. The influence of these network meetings varied from Coordinator to Coordinator. Six Coordinators identified the DESE as a major influence in OST program decision making. Of the six, three saw the DESE as a positive influence that pushed for stronger programming. One example:

It continues to evolve in that, at the state level, I think, they keep pushing funded sites to do more and better and different—I think those are the three main pieces. The 21st Century grants are more hands-on than any other grant I've ever worked with in that they expect a lot and they continue to give you expectations and tools and training to do more and do better. (Urban4)

Two other Grantees did not look as favorably on the influence of the DESE. Their statements about the restrictions placed on them from the DESE showed their frustration that the needs of the school community were not being met:

At the end of first year I didn't even know if they were going to renew the grant because it was kind of a failure. At then at the end of the second year [state coordinator] said, we are going to renew it but you should get a writing program or something up. I'm like, a writing program? Because they want the academics in there, and actually there are kids that are interested in writing and we may have a writing program; we'll see what happens. I just hemmed and hawed about that because I wasn't sure it was going to fly, but she wasn't really being totally direct. If she had just said, this was a great grant, we think this is a good program, but you need to get other things going like the other programs—if someone had said to me, you've got to look like that—I would have shifted my thinking, but I kept trying to make it work. And we did make it work in the way that any program could work, which is, you're not going to get 40 or 50 kids to take an after school program all year doing one thing; you've got to have variety. (Rural1)

The remaining Coordinators spoke about the role of the DESE or the programmatic responsibilities expected of Grantees, but did not express a positive or negative opinion about its role. It should be noted that, of the three communities that reported the influence of the DESE as positive, two of them have been identified by the DESE as

exemplary programs. Both of the Grantees that saw the DESE as a negative influence fall into the at-risk program category as identified by the DESE during the annual reporting.

Influence of Staff

Interestingly, while staff proposals were the most often used method for creating program activities, individual staff members were not regularly identified as key stakeholders when making decisions. It is unclear why there is a disconnect in seeing the staff members as stakeholders, but it could be attributed to the staff having no formal power in the 21st CCLC programs. While staff members were responsible for the creation and implementation of many Activities, they didn't necessarily have the power to discontinue or create Activities on their own. Staff members were viewed as essential for shaping the actual activities for the OST programs, but as a gatekeeper, the building administrator wielded the most influence. Only three Grantees identified staff as stakeholders in the decision making process.

Through the principal, you need to sense that the majority of school day staff supports your program, because if you have the alternative—teachers who won't let you use their classrooms, teachers...That affects the afterschool program, that attitude and mentality. (Rural4)

This influence of the administrator was particularly clear in one struggling program.

After almost losing the grant funding, the Coordinator elicited the help of a veteran staff member who was seen as influential in the building. The program coordinator explained:

[Teacher] was really helping me get things going, and she spoke to the principal and said, if you don't get onboard here, this is not going to look good. Yeah, although the way it took place at the end of last year is, they're going to shut us down. When [Principal] got onboard, it was like magic; it was unbelievable. She got onboard, she brought it to the staff at a staff meeting—I wasn't there; she should have invited me to that, but that's all right. (Rural1)

Other Influences

The data also showed that the credibility of the Coordinator or Site Coordinator also influenced the success of the OST program in any given building. Often the support of the administrator was seen as the key influence on the credibility and power of the Coordinator. In other communities, the Coordinator identified relationships and knowledge of the community as a means of lending legitimacy to their role in the school. In two Grantee communities, the program coordinator identified themselves as the most influential stakeholder in the process of making decisions. As one Coordinator put it:

If I were a new person coming in to take over my job, I'd probably run out the door as soon as I saw the job description, but because I've built on it over the years, it's doable for me. Many times, I'm overwhelmed, though—I'm not too proud to tell you that because the job is so huge, but it's successful because of me being in this position and having all of the connections that I have and those people above me...It's a whole complete foundation that makes it work. (Rural5)

Other influences included the strength of community partners and promotion within the community. For each community it can be assumed that there are individual stakeholders with more influence than other, like that of a popular superintendent or a veteran teacher in a small community. Economic influences, like the financial capacity to provide transportation, subsidize scholarships for students, or provide snacks, were also identified.

Problems

Problems, or barriers, are identified as all of the concerns facing the Coordinators in the decision making process. The GCM defines problems as anything that requires the attention of the members of the organization and can come from outside or inside the

organization. These problems included a range of challenges, from personal and family stress, to a lack of available resources, to language barriers between the Site Coordinators and their participating families. During the interviews the program coordinators were asked to identify challenges for them when implementing the OST programs at their sites. Three themes emerged as challenges for successful implementation: the population being served by the programs, the geographical restrictions, and financial resources. Two Grantees also identified staff changes as significant to their progress as an organization.

Table 5: Identified Problems

Grantee	Population	Geographical Restrictions	Financial Resources	Staff Changes
Rural1	X		X	X
Rural2	X	X	X	
Rural3	X		X	
Rural4	X	X	X	
Rural5			X	
Urban1			X	
Urban2	X	X	X	
Urban3	X		X	
Urban4			X	
Urban5	X	X	X	X

Population Served

The population being served was identified by seven of the ten Grantees as the most challenging aspect of their programming. This concern was identified nearly equally among urban and rural settings. For the rural settings, students in community Rural4 are identified in part by the issues the families are dealing with at home, such as homelessness, poverty, or family struggles with abuse or addiction. In community Rural2, the fee-schedule for OST programs had become a barrier, even with the opportunity for scholarships for students:

I think that some people, even though I say on the registration form and I tell people, that some people are turned off when they see that there's any amount of money that you have to pay, just because if you're down and out and can't afford it. Luckily, more and more parents have become more open to saying to me, hey, I'm having financial difficulties; what can we do? But there are some people that...Students have come up to me or come up to other staff and said, my parents don't want to pay any money, or they can't pay any money, and that's why I'm not signing up for the program, and so when I hear that, I contact that family to let them know, hey, money should not be a barrier at all. (Rural2)

In the more urban settings, the conversation about family stress continued, including the influence of area unemployment. In community Urban3:

....there's been a lot of layoffs in [town] so a few of the sites don't work for us anymore, so they're not returning. (Urban3)

Geographical Restrictions

Four of the ten Grantees identified geographic restrictions as a challenge for their program implementation. Interestingly, the reasons for each identification varied depending on whether the 21st CCLC program was located in an urban or rural setting. In the urban settings, the challenges faced by the Coordinators had to do with the restrictions of transporting students across the city or in providing safe places into the evening. In the rural settings, the geographic challenges also had to do with transportation, but it was about transporting students to the resources, rather than about transportation within a city. While larger areas had multiple resources in the urban area

from which to draw, more rural communities needed to transport resources in or pay to have instructors travel to the sites. Also, Coordinators in rural settings talked about the limited resource or the many organizations competing for these resources in the small towns:

I don't know how much you know about [Rural2 and nearby town], but we're out in the middle of nowhere and there's no resources. We have a recreation association—they do basketball after school and they do, I think, soccer or something along those lines. They do an amazing job, but if you're not an athlete, there's not much going on after school until these programs came about in the past three years. There's not much going on after school, and it's just because it's a small community; it has nothing to do with anything else. (Rural2)

Financial Resources

Financial constraints were identified as an issue by all ten Coordinators, although the impact was felt more greatly in some communities over others. For six of the ten Coordinators, budgeting the resources through the grant was a concern, particularly for those Grantees that were into years four and five when the funding levels from the grant are reduced:

The funding levels are different each year, and that's part of my responsibility as a program coordinator, is to be constantly seeking out other funding and to manage the budget and to, essentially, let site coordinators know what their budget is per session. It's a challenge, because part of the structure that we've created for the tiers of activities—the academic, the enrichment, and the activity—is financial. (Urban4)

The Coordinators had to make choices about the balance of activities offered for enrichment or academics, with small group academic instruction costing much more than large group enrichment activities. For the program coordinator in Rural3, the responsibility to keep students safe and make certain they had a place to go afterhours outweighed the pressure to provide small group tutoring for students:

I guess for Rural3, it's just, the doors of our schools are never closed, thanks to the grant funding. Kids that are going to, especially our middle school, they're going to a safe environment, which in middle school is definitely a concern—it was one of the main reasons we went for the grant. We are seeing thousands of kids go through our program over the years, and we just feel like we've been successful. We work hard at being successful—it's not always easy. As money is tighter—there's additional competition out there because the money's getting less. Like I said, the doors are never closed. (Rural3)

The economic constraints put on school budgets in the last two years was also identified as an influence on the decisions about OST programming. In Urban5 the Coordinator referred to the gamble the district took when they didn't budget in for the OST programs at one site, but applied for the 21st CCLC grant instead. They were awarded the grant, but the frustration of "chasing soft money" for programs was a great concern for the administration and the OST Coordinator. Activity fees can be used to offset the costs of some subsidized program activities, but they do not generate enough revenue to assure future OST programming. Two other Coordinators gave examples of how activities, like Robotics or Architectural Design, were in-demand and popular in other Grantee communities, but their Sites didn't have the technology to support the activities. One coordinator had to scratch her Robotics offering, while the other chose to use 21st CCLC funds to invest in four laptops for the school. Many of the Coordinators expressed their belief that if it were not for the monies from 21CCIC, the OST programs would not be able to be offered in their communities:

Right now, there just is no money for it, so the district just could never do what we're doing—if it went away, it would pretty much be the end. (Rural3)

Staffing Changes

While staff changes were only identified by two Grantees as a challenge, the impact on these two organizations was significant. In one of the organizations, Urban3, the Coordinator identified a large turnover in staff, including personnel in the district overseeing the grant, all of the instructors of the OST activities at two Sites, and four out of five of her Site Coordinators. The loss of organizational knowledge dramatically impacted the continuity of OST programs and slowed down the process of starting new activities in the upcoming year. In the second Grantee community, changes in staff meant an increase in responsibility for the Coordinator. In Urban5, the change of a Deputy Superintendent and the creation of a Chief Academic Officer position changed the oversight for the 21st CCLC program. The program coordinator inherited more responsibilities that once fell to the deputy superintendent and the communication chain for many of the community partners was broken. In addition to these changes, the retirement of the business manager caused an unintentional funding delay that in turn caused the 21st CCLC program in Urban5 to lose some of their financial support from local organizations.

One Coordinator, Rural1, identified several challenges for her struggling program. Staff changes in her programs, the relationship with administrators, and her own individual needs were identified as challenges. Surprisingly, only one other Coordinator in addition to Rural1 identified their own personal needs as being a challenge to the success of the programs. In reviewing the transcripts from the interviews, all ten Coordinators talked about the stress and pressures of their job and the burden placed on them to complete reports for the DESE, find financial support, and coordinate services, but only these two individuals saw their contribution as a possible challenge to the success of the program. Even more interesting was the high turnover of the Coordinators themselves. Of the ten interviewed, only one was around during the original writing of

the 21st CCLC grant. The Coordinator position is critical to the oversight, coordination and implementation of the grant program. The Coordinator is an important stakeholder and can influence not just the decisions about the activities, but the continuation of funding for any Grantee community depends on the reporting by the Coordinator. This turnover and lack of continuity no doubt influences the success of OST programs.

Choice Opportunities

There are times when organizations are expected to produce behavior that can be called a decision or an initiative. For schools not making AYP, the expected behavior is an improvement in academic performance. The GCM explains that as different opportunities arise, organizations make decisions, or produce programs or initiatives, in response to those opportunities. Occasionally, choice opportunities arise and are supported for reasons unrelated to any decision the organization has made. Funding for 21st CCLC OST programs became an opportunity for many school districts to address both their academic needs and the community desires for OST programming.

DESE Program Goals

Under Title IVB of the NCLB Act of 2001, 21st CCLC programs are intended to provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly for those children who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The specific program goal for the 21st CCLC OST Programs is, "To establish community learning centers that help students in high-poverty, low-performing schools meet academic achievement standards; to offer a broad array of additional services designed to complement the regular academic program; and to offer families of students opportunities for educational development" (*Guide to U.S. Department of Education Programs, U.S.*

Department of Education Office of Communications and Outreach, 2009) In Massachusetts, the measure for whether a school is academically low-performing is based on MCAS scores. All of the Grantees in this study were eligible for 21st CCLC grant funding based on their low MCAS scores and because a significant percentage of their population were identified as living in poverty. All ten Grantees that were interviewed represented school that had not made AYP in one or more areas based on MCAS scores. Also, al ten Grantees had more than 15% of its student population receiving FRL (See chart in Appendix C).

OST Program Goals

All of the Coordinators were asked to talk about the academic goals for their programs. Seven of the ten Grantees identified academic goals for their OST programs and for specific Sites within their Grantee communities. These academic goals ranged from the specific, like written communication or reading comprehension, to the more general, like improving math, reading, or science. Of the seven, five of the Coordinators said the goals were reflective of MCAS scores and were determined in collaboration with the building administrators. The other two Coordinators identified MCAS scores as the basis for determining the academic goals, but did not work in collaboration with building administrators.

Three of the ten program coordinators did not name any specific academic goals for their programs. Of these three, one spoke about career goals for students and helping them prepare for college. During the interview she was asked three different questions about the specific academic goals for the OST program, but her responses were more general than specific:

I think it is a lot of the same goals; obviously we want our students' grades to improve and we want them to be producing higher quality homework and we want them to be exposed to a variety of enrichment activities, we want them to be exposed to colleges and careers. Those are kind of the big ones. (Urban1)

The other Coordinator was unaware of the MCAS scores for her district, but knew the district had not met AYP. Her OST program was considered a success by both community and DESE standards and had been award a continuation beyond the original five-year grant:

If there's no kids in it, you know it's not working. If nobody signs up for it, you know it's not working, so you don't run it. Other than that, the sky's the limit. I say to my people, the sky is the limit, but again, it should be kids doing a project-based activity; I don't want to see them doing worksheets or sitting in their chairs. Throw the desks out the window if you want. The kids have to be learning by doing. As long as it fits in that realm and we have kids that want to go... It's just a freer learning environment for at-risk kids who we are supposed to be servicing during the day. Again, they're not learning by doing paper-and-pencil tasks. (Rural3)

The last Coordinator was running one of the programs considered failing by the DESE. She had mentioned that there was a program called MCAS tutoring, but it was not part of the 21st CCLC OST programming. She was asked to talk about that programming as well as explain how academics were tied into the 21st CCLC programs:

[Referring to MCAS tutoring;] That, the principal did because we're miserable with MCAS, apparently. I don't know exactly what the numbers are, but it was an attempt to get the scores up. We'll see how well it works; it doesn't have a lot of data supporting it. (Rural1)

She was asked to explain how the OST program was helping increase MCAS scores:

[21st CCLC OST:] We're not doing a whole lot of direct...There's no math class, no writing class or reading class, but they're woven in. (Rural1)

Target Population

When asked to speak about their target population, nine of the ten coordinators were able to name the specific population they intended to target through OST programming. As the Coordinator, Rural1 should be able to quickly identify her target population. However, her attention was more focused on activity design and she was unable to readily identify her target population. It can be assumed, because of the criteria for receiving 21st CCLC grant funding in Massachusetts, that all Grantees have a target population that includes both students struggling with their academic performance and students receiving FRL. Six of the ten Grantees identified students receiving ELL as one of their target populations. Four Grantees also had other target populations, including students who were homeless, in challenging home situations, who had behavioral challenges or those who received special education services.

Table 6: Identified Target Population

Grantee	Academic Performance	Low-income (FRL)	ELL	Other
Rural1				
Rural2	X	X		X
Rural3	X	X	X	
Rural4	X	X		X
Rural5	X	X		X
Urban1	X	X	X	
Urban2	X	X	X	
Urban3	X	X	X	
Urban4	X	X	X	
Urban5	X	X	X	X

Only five of the Grantees had developed any systems for collecting data about whether they were actually serving the population they targeted. These five Grantees worked with building administrators and teachers to identify students who had low MCAS scores and to recruit those students to join the OST programs. These five Grantees also targeted their high-poverty population in a similar manner. Students receiving free and reduced lunch were able to join the programs at no-cost, while other students were charged a fee on a sliding scale. The five Grantees that did not collect this information made assumptions about participation based on the general population of the schools they served.

Of the nine coordinators who were able to identify their specific target population for the grant, three of the program coordinators were certain that they were not serving their targeted population. In community Rural2, the target population is students who are low-income and are low performing academically, as evidenced through the MCAS. However; Rural2 decided to focus the attention of the OST programs only on the K-4 population, which doesn't begin taking MCAS until grade three. It should be noted that programming in Rural2 is more devoted to enrichment and social skills activities rather than academic performance. There may also be a relationship between the need for daycare in a rural community and the role an OST program can play:

MCAS doesn't play much of a role because we're just looking at K-4. It's more so knowing the families, knowing which families need help with daycare after school and that the student would benefit from these classes as well. (Rural2)

In community Rural1, decisions about programming to meet the needs of the target population did not seem as deliberate:

The low-income, like I said, they just come because those are kids that apparently don't have anything to do. There has never been a problem; I've always had plenty of low-income. As far as the special ed. and the academically, looking at my group I didn't have a lot of kids who were struggling academically, even with MCAS. I had some, and initially we had a lot, but the kids who actually stayed were not necessarily academically struggling kids. I'm going to have to look at that and see. I think what I may do is, send fliers to those families so that I'm making sure they see what's available and know that their kids can come, and do that as a little extra, but not send it to all the kids, just all those kids who are failing MCAS, is basically the bottom line—failing, or...(Rural1)

In another city the poverty is upwards of 65%. The Coordinator reported that more than one of the schools in the district had over 90% of students receiving Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL). This community became eligible not because of their high-poverty students being at-risk based on MCAS scores not making AYP, but because of

their special education sub-group not making AYP. The program coordinator expressed her frustration about this mismatch of needs and the desires of the 21st CCLC grant:

I can remember at a conference at district saying, you know, it was our special education population that kept us from making AYP and not the SES. (Socio-Economic Status or students receiving Free or Reduced Lunch). So we get the SES funding [for OST programs], but most of those kids aren't income eligible. And it's in this particular district. So now you're asking me to give services to kids who don't need --they're not the reason why we didn't make AYP. And the kids I need to serve in order to help them I can't because of the income eligibility. So, I mean, and that's probably a rare occasion but it's a reality. You know, this is a group that needed the help based on their special needs -this subgroup was the reason why this district or school or whatever didn't make AYP. So the district gets the funding, but most of these kids don't meet the income eligibility, so they can't even offer it out to the subgroup that needs it. So it makes no sense. (Urban5).

This disconnect between target population and perceived needs of the community was unique to Urban5. However; it leaves one to wonder if this phenomenon is actually more prevalent, but is masked by Grantees not being more deliberate about serving their target populations.

Program Assessment

While the purpose of this study is not program evaluation, understanding how programs were assessed, and thus determining which activities continued, was important for understanding the decision making process taking place in each organization.

Grantees were asked to identify how they made the decision to repeat or discontinue activities, and how they determined if a particular activity was successful. When Coordinators were asked about the assessment of the success of their activities many of them relied on instinct, student feedback, and participation data rather than tools that made an empirical link between program goals and the impact on students:

I did not deny any. I have repeated programs, and like you just said, if a program wasn't strong enough in one area, I would suggest ways that they could improve, how they can incorporate a written component or a mathematical component or whatever, so I never denied any proposals. Some classes did not run because not enough people signed up for them, but that's different than me denying the class. (Rural2)

We would do student surveys, we would have our student councils or, we have youth councils in the program and they go out and survey the kids. They kind of, what do you like, what don't you like, what do you like about the program, what don't you like about the program. If you could choose something to participate in, what would your choice be? A lot of it is going directly to the students to see what they would like. (Rural3)

What they would do is say, we ran this activity with this person in the past; the APT observations were not outstanding. Based on the other proposals we have and how much money we have to spend this session, I'm not going to hire this person back. That's generally how those decisions are made. (Urban4)

All of the Grantees used the SAYO and APT tools for evaluation of the program, but only four Grantees used the information gathered from these tools to make decisions about future programming. However; only Rural4 and Urban5 reported tracking the data to determine whether students who participated in the program experienced an increase in their MCAS scores.

Only one Coordinator expressed criticism about the value of the SAYO tool as a means for assessing program effectiveness. Her opinion is interesting, as it unveils a disconnect between the intention of the SAYO and what it is actually assessing:

It does, in part, help us make program decisions, and the reason it's only in part is because, the way our program is designed, I don't feel like it's a 100%, dead-on assessment of what the program, in effect, really is. It's designed to be a pre-, post- survey, and our program design is such that the program is broken into two sessions and that the students can select different activities on different days. Then they are offered another menu of program activities during the second session, so that to get a good pre-, post- survey, we have to select one of up to five instructors the student might have, and they do a pre-, post- survey over the course of one session, which is only sixteen weeks. (Urban4)

Her concern was that the SAYO assessed the popularity or level of engagement of a particular activity, but did not necessarily reflect any impact on student outcomes or the program as a whole. She used the SAYO to provide a snapshot of how students felt about an activity at a particular time, but not as a means for assessing the effectiveness of the OST programming offered in her sites.

Conclusion

Considering that all of these Grantees were awarded funding because of their poor scores and struggling population, it was shocking to learn that some communities didn't have specific goals to address these issues. Furthermore, five of the programs did not specifically target the population they were meant to serve, and three of them blatantly made other choices about their target population. When it came to assessing the programs, the program coordinators relied heavily on subjective data rather than on any instrument that measured success against progress toward their program goals.

The two Coordinators that identified 21st CCLC goals, and concurrently the learning outcomes from the SAYO as foci had some commonalities. Both had a high regard and understanding of how data could be used to determine programming and reach goals, and both saw the SAYO as a tool to prove they were successful. Both were able to readily identify the goals of their Sites, the requirements of the grant, and their vision for OST programming in their community. Personality wise, these individuals were both under 40, former teachers, and had formal schooling at the graduate level. Both were multiple-site Grantees, but that in itself was not unique. Not surprisingly, both were identified as exemplary programs.

Based on the GCM framework, I anticipated that pet solutions or proposals would be a prevalent influence on decision making for 21st CCLC programs. This proved to be true. Choice opportunities, like subsuming a former OST program with new 21st CCLC funding, were not as prevalent as I anticipated. I also thought I would encounter more direct tutoring for MCAS preparation, but that data did not reveal this to be the case in the ten Grantees interviewed.

The most surprising information revealed in the data was the absence of a connection between MCAS goals and OST programming, especially considering the explicit goals of 21st CCLC and evaluation requirements in Massachusetts. The lack of awareness about MCAS scores and whether students were making progress after attending OST programming was evident. It is difficult to know whether this should be attributed to Coordinator turnover, lack of support by administration, a lack of oversight from the DESE or some other factor. No matter the cause, this disconnect is disturbing considering the goals of 21st CCLC is to support academic achievement as evidenced through MCAS scores. In the next chapter, a summary of the findings will be presented, as well as a discussion of why these findings may have occurred.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The study has revealed that there are many commonalities as well as distinctive differences among Grantees and the 21st CCLC Programs throughout the state. This final chapter will look at those similarities and differences and how they have influenced decision making. The GCM and Stakeholder Analysis are used to analyze the decisions made by individuals and how the process influenced the outcomes of the activities and their alignment to 21st CCLC goals. In addition to the influence of the stakeholder, the role of the Activity Proposal forms and the evaluation and assessment of programs are discussed. How Grantees are serving their target population and the needs of their communities is also analyzed in this final chapter. A discussion of the intended goals of the grant, evidence of the mission shift occurring in communities, and the possible explanations for this phenomenon are included in this chapter as well.

Summary of Findings

The research revealed that there were many similarities among the Grantee communities. Grantees have similar target populations, have shared ideas and concepts for programming activities, and have access to common assessment tools as provided by the DESE. All Grantees have some form of a leadership council and eight have community partners. There were similar themes in identified influences on decision making and all of the Grantees identified financial resources as an area of concern.

There are also differences in the Grantee communities. One area in which they differ is how the SAYO and APT evaluation tools are used to make decisions about programming in each community. Another tool, the Activity Proposal form for new activities, was inconsistently used among Grantees. Also, Grantees identified different stakeholders that influenced their decision making. The working relationships between Coordinators and building administrators was also an important factor that varied by community. Problems, like staff turnover or geographical restrictions, influenced Grantees differently as well. All of these factors affect the delivery of OST Programs by Grantees and shape how decisions are made in each community. Cumulatively, these factors affect how Grantees are able to achieve the goals of the 21st CCLC program. The data revealed several themes that have influenced the decisions made about programming. These themes are interwoven and when combined, the cumulative impact on programming is significant. These themes include how the target population is addressed, the use of activity proposal forms, the academic expectations from the DESE, the influence of stakeholders, and how the evaluation of both the OST activities and the 21st CCLC Programs are conducted.

Garbage Can Model as a Tool for Understanding Decision Making

The GCM framework is used to explain how organizations make choices and solve problems. It is often used to look at decision making in times of ambiguity. The GCM recognizes that decisions are happening as a result of dynamic, complex, highly contextual conditions within an organization. The four streams – problems, solutions, choice opportunities and participants – are influenced by time and by the energy available to find a solution. The authors of the GCM concluded that all decisions are made by

oversight, flight or resolution. For this study, the GCM was used to organize the data into the four streams. With the data organized in this way, the GCM was then used to look at how these streams influenced the types of decisions were made about programming, and to identify how those decisions were made.

Decisions by Oversight

Every problem requires an amount of energy to solve it. Decisions by oversight are often made when a limited amount of energy is available to solve the problem. If the amount of energy required to solve a problem is too large, the individual may choose a lesser, less taxing option that requires less energy and may delay but not fully remediate the problem at hand. A pet solution may require little energy on the part of the Coordinator. All of the Grantees identified using 21st CCLC funding to support popular activities, like knitting, pottery making, yoga, karaoke, geocaching, Hip Hop or salsa dancing, even if the activity did not specifically meet the goals of the grant. Urban2's established activity, Brazilian Soccer, is an example. For the Coordinator of Urban2, continuing Brazilian Soccer meant there was no need to make calls for support or recruit participants. The activity was already popular and supported by the community. It was an easy, low-energy solution to a problem.

What is unclear from the GCM analysis is whether the Coordinators are making the decision to continue an activity because of limited energy or if that decision is a deliberate choice. The research showed that the Coordinators are sometimes not aware of the 21st CCLC goals, do not view them as important, or see the needs of the community as more important than the expectations of the grant. Perhaps solutions, like the Handmade Napkins Activity, are not a disconnected non-choice as the GCM would

suggest, but a compromise made by the Coordinator to build trust and support of key stakeholders, like the staff members at a Site. Pet solutions are occurring, but the reasons for these solutions may be more deliberate than the GCM would lead us to believe. In some cases, sponsoring pet solutions may be less of a political struggle, or may gain the Coordinator much needed social collateral. If the Coordinator is responsive to the wishes and needs of their Grantee community, they may make the rational choice to continue with an activity, even though it will not help achieve the goals of the 21st CCLC program.

Decisions by Flight

The GCM describes decisions made by flight as occurring when a problem goes unresolved and a new choice is made. For OST programs, this new choice could mean finding a different activity to serve the same population or offering a new activity that might spark the interest of the population no longer being served by the original activity. The concept of decisions by flight accurately describes Grantees who used 21st CCLC funding to extend existing OST programs. The 21st CCLC Program guidelines are clear that funding cannot be used to subsume the costs of already existing OST programs. However, the money can be used to expand or improve current OST programs. The 21st CCLC grant gave communities the opportunity to continue existing OST programs with some modifications. The attempt by Grantees to make an existing program fit the goals and purpose of 21st CCLC was not always entirely successful once the OST activities were up and running. Compromises were made, and the results were activities that were not necessarily aligned with the goals of the 21st CCLC. The most striking example from the study is Urban1. Urban1 had an existing OST program that focused on family outreach and summer opportunities for families living in public housing. When funding

for that program ran out, Urban1 applied for 21st CCLC monies and then adjusted its programming to adhere to the 21st CCLC expectations. In a short time, Urban1 lost much of its audience that accessed the original program. Additionally, because they did not make enough adjustments for 21st CCLC, they then lost part of their funding during the second year of the grant cycle. Urban1 never resolved the funding problem for the existing outreach program. Rather than find a solution, it modified its program and made a new choice. In the case of Urban1, the decision by flight was not successful.

Decisions by Resolution

The GCM recognizes how the structure of an organization influences how participants, problems and solutions match up with available choices and that decisions are made as a result of those matches. The basic organizational structure of the 21st CCLC Program and the oversight and evaluation requirements of the DESE constrain the different streams and how they match with solutions. Choices made by resolution occur after a period of time and energy is dedicated to solving a problem. The constraints of the 21st CCLC Program and expectations for Grantees may help explain why decision making by resolution was the most frequently represented method amongs Grantees.

Decisions by resolution were evidenced in all of the Grantee communities. Tools like the APT, SAYO and Activity Proposal form slow down the process and require that Coordinators dedicate energy and time to making decisions about programming.

Limitations of the Garbage Can Model as a Tool for Analysis

The GCM is best used to describe decisions made by organizations that are in a state of organized anarchy. The GCM does much to explain the different factors that have contributed to organizational decision making, but the parameters set out by the DESE

limits the "anarchy" that is expected in the GCM framework. The basic organizational structure of the 21st CCLC Program, including the oversight and evaluation requirements by the DESE, constrains the different streams and shapes how the Grantees will make decisions. A second limitation is how the GCM addressed the different streams that influence decision making. The GCM recognizes that the organizational outcomes all come from a mix of the independent streams, but it fails to recognize how the streams interact and affect one another. In the case of OST programs, the GCM falls short in recognizing that these factors, like the activity proposals, academic expectations, and DESE assessments, interact and impact decision making.

In this case study, all of the streams – the problems, solutions, participants and choice opportunities – are influenced by stakeholders at the DESE and in the Grantee communities. The metaphor of the garbage can fails to recognize that the stakeholders determine which articles are included in the garbage cans and that individuals actively select which items will be addressed and which will be discarded. Another limitation of the GCM is that it focuses on process and structure, not necessarily on the choices being made by individuals in the organization. Individual choices exist within the organization, regardless of the prescribed program goals, assessment instruments and recommended practices from the DESE. In order to understand how decisions are being made, it is essential that these individual choices be recognized as important contributions and analyzed for their influence on the outcomes. While not every decision can be made in a lock-step rational manner, it can be assumed that most individuals act in a rational way when making decisions. Options are considered, weighed against the available resources and energy available, stakeholders are consulted and a decision is made.

The 21st CCLC OST program allows for individual, rational choices to be made about Activity programming, even with the prescribed goals and evaluation tools of the 21st CCLC. As demonstrated by this study, the Coordinator has wide latitude for how the Activity proposal is used, who will instruct Activities, which SAYO learning outcomes are selected and how the Activities are evaluated. The Coordinator also determines who will complete the SAYO and how the APT will be used in the OST program. This organizational structure makes a lot of assumptions about the energy and rational decision making capabilities of the Coordinator. It assumes that the Coordinator is cognizant of the 21st CCLC goals, is attentive to the needs of the Grantee community, is able to filter the influence of various stakeholders, and is able to take all of these factors and make reasonable decisions about Activity programming.

The GCM cannot adequately describe all that is happening in the 21st CCLC programs. As a framework the GCM treats the role of the participant as a separate factor in the decision making of an organization. It ignores how participants are individual, rational actors who influence the decisions made in the organizations. To compensate for this limited view of the role of the individual, the stakeholder analysis was also used to analyze the influence of individuals during the decision making process.

Influence of Stakeholders

Stakeholders affected the decision making about programming in each Grantee community. Depending on the degree of involvement, stakeholders had the latitude to suggest, shape or deny activities, regardless of program goals. The role of the stakeholder cannot be ignored. The power, authority and influence of stakeholders in each community shaped how decisions were made and which outcomes were selected. The

structure of the DESE and its monitoring systems reflect its efforts to control and coordinate the actions of the Grantees; however, the study revealed that the stakeholders may have equal to or more influence than the systems put in place by the DESE.

In the formal hierarchy, the DESE State Coordinator has the most legitimate power.

The State Coordinator sets out the expectations for the Grantees, collects the data, and determines whether Grantees will continue to receive funding. The State Coordinator has the most mechanisms to influence the Program Coordinators, and thus the OST Programs. However, as the study reveals, despite the tools and formal authority of the DESE, the Grantees still have a large amount of autonomy for making decisions in their communities.

The Coordinators are the most influential stakeholders. For all ten Grantees, the Coordinator had either the sole or the shared authority to decide which activities will occur, which will be deleted and which will repeat. Even the two Grantees identified as at-risk by the DESE allowed the Coordinator the authority to make these decisions without any further restrictions or oversight by the DESE or administration. The Coordinator is charged with recruiting community partners and instructors, and thereby is in charge of shaping which activities will occur and who will have access to these activities. The Coordinator is responsible for selecting the SAYO learning outcomes, selecting which activities will be surveyed and who will complete the SAYO assessment. What is measured and what data are included in the Grantee's annual report are largely at the discretion of the Coordinator. The Coordinator has influence and power over nearly every aspect of the OST programming for the community he or she serves.

Other stakeholders include the Site Coordinators and the staff members and instructors at each of the Sites. The Site Coordinator is often a key informant to the Coordinator. Three of the ten Coordinators identified the Site Coordinators as one of the key sources to how new ideas or Activities are developed. One of the main responsibilities of the Site Coordinator is to maintain positive relationships with the administration and staff at the Site, who are also influential in decision making. Without the support of the building administration, as evidenced in Rural1, the OST program can suffer. The Coordinator of Rural1, who described her administration as "unreachable" was pessimistic that the OST program would continue after the next grant cycle. Without the support of the administration, the Coordinator was unable to access the staff at the Sites or encourage interest from students. In seven of the Grantee communities, the Coordinator acknowledged the building administrator and the support of the staff as being paramount to the program's success. All ten of the Grantees have staff members from the Sites instructing the activities. Clearly, without instructors to lead the activities, the OST program would not exist.

For three Grantees, Urban2, Urban4, and Rural5, community partners were identified as critical to the operation of the OST program. Positive public relationships with key community organizations encourage other local organizations to provide local funding matches, resources and support to the OST program. In the seven Grantee communities that identified an active leadership council, the community members of the council are identified as key people to keep informed about the importance and value of the 21st CCLC program in their communities. Decision making was influenced by the enthusiasm or apathy of key participants in each Grantee community.

In all of the communities, the stakeholders had a significant influence on how programming was determined. This influence, along with several other factors, led to programs shifting away from the 21st CCLC Program goals. These other factors, Activity Proposals, the evaluation and assessment of programs, reaching the target population and academic expectations for programs are discussed next.

Activity Proposals

This shift away from the original goals of the 21st CCLC program is evidenced in the use of the Activity Proposal forms. As explained in the last chapter, the method for proposing new activities is inconsistent among Grantees. While all ten communities receive proposals from staff members, eight receive them from community partners, two permit building administrators to propose activities and four of the Grantees solicit input from students. The proposal for activities is the foundation for all activities and thus the OST program as a whole. The proposal form is intended to assure that the activity being proposed is consistent with the goals of the Grantee program. Since the method for making decisions about new activities is so loose, the connection between program goals and activity programming is weak, which leaves a great opportunity for pet solutions to occur. Without this initial procedure to assure that activities are being designed to meet the program goals, it is that much easier to shift away from the original intention of the grant.

The Coordinator has both great autonomy and responsibility in making these program decisions, which puts this gate-keeping responsibility in the hands of what often is a single individual. Since this single individual is responsible for recruiting community partners and instructors and working cooperatively with the Site administration, it is

understandable that compromises are made. The adherence to program goals is also affected by the influence and power of the stakeholders, who often have their own ideas about the types of activities they would like to see implemented. Without a clear method for restricting the types of activities proposed, the assurance that activities are being designed to meet program goals quickly erodes.

This disconnect causes a ripple effect in all of the other decisions and choices, like SAYO learning outcomes and evaluation, that occur after an activity is running. Coordinators want a positive evaluation of the activity and their programming, so the selected learning outcomes of the SAYO are adjusted to fit the activity, rather than the goals of the grant. The APT is designed to see how well the instruction is reaching the SAYO learning outcomes, so the effectiveness of this tool is also compromised. Since all of the assessments have been skewed to match the activity, the data demonstrates that the activity is a success. All of this assessment data is compiled and reported in the annual report to the DESE, which then uses this information to evaluate whether the Grantee's 21^{st} Program is a success.

Evaluation and Assessment

The DESE recommends that 21st CCLC programs be project-based, and many of the Grantees comply with this request. Because of the project-based nature of these activities, six of the Grantees identify that academics are woven into instruction (e.g. Students gain an understanding of geometry by playing soccer) rather than directly taught. The rigor of the academics is questionable, and the assessment of the activity falls to the Coordinator through the use of the APT and the SAYO. As is often the case

with project-based activities, discrete academic skills are difficult to discern both in the instruction and in the assessment of the activities.

There are several flaws with this means of assessment. First, the results of the APT are reported in aggregate to the DESE as part of the annual report and are not used to evaluate instruction or to determine whether an Activity should continue. The use of the SAYO is even more complex. The Coordinator, often with the aid of the Site Administrator, determines the SAYO learning outcomes for the Activities. The Coordinator selects which activities and which population will complete the SAYO. The focus or even the belief system of the stakeholders greatly influences the decision making about the learning outcomes and thus the composition and purpose of the Activities. Secondly, the learning outcomes of the SAYO are selected by the Coordinator and do not necessarily measure academic gains. As an example from the study, Urban1 had a Hula-Hoop Building class. The SAYO learning outcomes for this class was "supportive peer relationships". The class was successful in meeting this learning outcome, but these SAYO learning outcomes are not necessarily reflective of the skills assessed by the MCAS. Enrichment activities can be evaluated and seen as successful using the SAYO because the SAYO does not necessarily measure the academic goals that got Grantees funded in the first place. It can be argued that there is no incentive for a Coordinator to subject activities to a more rigorous evaluation, especially when a replacement activity may not be available.

The result is that the activities do not necessarily work to achieve the goals of the 21st CCLC. The structure of how Activities are both determined and assessed allows for stakeholder influences and pet solutions to flourish. What is further disturbing is that the

DESE uses these assessments, along with the annual report, to determine whether a Grantee program is successful. The achievement of SAYO learning outcomes is one of the standards for determining whether Activities will become Promising Practices and serve as a model for other 21st CCLC programs in the state. The system for evaluating program success has resulted in activities that are not working toward reaching 21st CCLC goals. The evaluation system also has no method to assess whether the target population is being reached by OST programming. Either the standards for evaluation or the goals of the 21st CCLC program need to be adjusted for program-goal alignment to occur. It could be argued that the later solution, adjusting the goals of the 21st CCLC program, would serve a greater need. Program success may be better determined through the lens of the local community needs, such as student participation, students' attachment to school, or an expanded enrichment program. Academic achievement resulting in higher standardized test scores may be a limited view of success. Program Coordinators, Administrators, Site staff and local stakeholders may be in a better position to understand the needs of their community and make decisions about how to best serve those needs.

Target Population

One of the initial requirements for receiving funding for 21st CCLC programs in Massachusetts is that schools or communities have a significant percentage of their population living in poverty and that the school in that community is under performing academically (as evidenced by the MCAS). The target population for Grantees is this group of students. For six Grantee communities, the target population also included students receiving ELL services or students in special circumstances.

The data revealed that while the target population has been identified by the Grantees, it is not necessarily the population that is targeted to attend OST programs. Coordinators include demographic information in their annual report to the DESE, but information about how the target population is served is not required. It was clear from the research that this data was not being tracked unless, like in the case of Urban5, it was of importance to the school district. It was also clear from the research that the target population was not always being served by the 21st CCLC program. Six of the Grantees identified a process for recruiting students from their target population, but only two of those Grantees had systems in place for assuring that the target population was the being served by the OST programming. Four of the ten Grantees had no process in place for recruiting students from the target population. This lapse in regulation has allowed for the goals and purpose of Grantee programs to shift from the original goals of the 21st CCLC program in Massachusetts.

Because the 21st CCLC Program was awarded to communities to specifically target these populations, it is interesting that neither Grantees nor the DESE track this information. One explanation may be that the Grantees view this target population as too narrow and have identified a larger audience in need of OST programming. Urban5 is an example of a community whose target population identified by the DESE is not the population identified in the community as most in need of services. Grantees shifting from the original goals of the 21st CCLC may be a deliberate choice. Also, since the DESE does not collect data on the recruitment, participation or progress of this target population, it may be that the DESE endorses the choices made by Grantees. This could

be true about the Grantees choices for the population served and in the activities that are offered in their communities.

Academic Expectations

The expectations from the DESE for academic instruction in 21st CCLC programs are unclear. Three Grantees offer a homework hour and two provide specific tutoring or academic support that is distinct from enrichment. Six Grantees identified academics as being embedded or woven into their Activities. The homework hour in two Grantee communities is required for students to participate in the enrichment activities. For one of the Grantees, the homework hour is taught by the instructors of the activities, who may or may not be qualified to teach. Coordinators are given autonomy to make decisions about how academics will be addressed in their communities.

As explained earlier, there is not a clear expectation that the target population participates in particular academic activities. Data are not tracked by the DESE to see if the students attending the activities are improving academically, as evidenced by either MCAS or report cards. Since this relationship between activity participation and academic achievement is unclear, it is difficult to say that the OST Programs are having any impact on MCAS scores and thus, working toward the 21st CCLC goals.

Again, this data may be evidence that the DESE is not particularly concerned about the target population making academic progress that results in higher MCAS scores. It is possible that the DESE is using the federal 21st CCLC funding as an opportunity to allow local Grantees to create OST programming of their choosing. In recalling the wide breadth of goals for OST programs – youth development, risk and resiliency, enrichment and citizenry and competency skill building – it is very possible that the DESE has tacitly

decided recognized that the scope of the 21st CCLC program is too narrow. Another explanation may be more about the logistical and practical limitation of a small DESE staff that has extensive responsibilities. Monitoring, evaluating, and assuring compliance to 21st CCLC goals in all 33 Grantee communities may be too large a task. Either way, the research indicates that a choice to not adhere to the 21st CCLC goals may be occurring.

Recommendations

This study provides the foundation for research on how Massachusetts 21st CCLC goals inform the creation of assessment tools used in the evaluation of Grantee activities. It would be interesting to find out how the learning outcomes in the SAYO were developed and how these outcomes align with the state assessment tools like the MCAS. On a broader level, it would also be interesting to learn more about how the DESE determines whether a Grantee is "at risk" and if these same evaluation tools are used as a part of that process. Along these lines, studies of whether there is a link between goal-setting methods and the quality of programming would also contribute to this body of research.

The DESE needs more frequent assessment of the Grantee programs. The infrequent evaluation may be because of a lack of staffing or it could be because grants are awarded once a year. Either way, the result is that Grantees are allowed to continue programming activities that are not reaching their target population and that are not aligned with program goals. The DESE needs to develop assessment tools that are aligned with the 21st CCLC goals and develop a system that ensures that those goals are being met.

toward meeting federal 21st CCLC Program goals. Massachusetts Grantees receive the grant funding because their school communities are considered at-risk due to low MCAS scores and a high poverty rate, but the assessment of the activities is separate from these measures.

More interesting would be research about whether the DESE is intentionally allowing this shift from the 21st CCLC goals to occur. The data suggest that the DESE is intentional in allowing Grantees to create programming that does not adhere to the 21st CCLC goals. The DESE does not collect data on the target population being served, on academic progress of participants, or on how OST programs are improving MCAS scores. In fact, much of the data collected in its annual report focuses on participation and attendance data, implying that the true goal is student involvement. The DESEdeveloped SAYO and APT tools do not focus specifically on academics. The majority of the learning outcomes in the SAYO focus on behavior, relationship building and character development. The Activity Proposal form, which is designed as a tool to align Activities to goals, is only recommended and not required by the DESE. Another recommendation, the formation of Leadership Councils, is encouraged by the DESE, but the data revealed they are more symbolic than any true form or governance or compliance to the grant. The DESE encourages project-based Activities, which by design are difficult to assess for specific academic skills. Even the three Promising Practices identified by the DESE, Flag Football, Newspaper Club and Entrepreneurial Activities, are not academic skills classes. All of these factors, from the data collection to which activities are recognized as Promising Practices, are evidence that the DESE may be intentionally permitting this shift from 21st CCLC goals to occur.

The DESE may be allowing this shift because it understands that local stakeholders are in the best position to make decisions about their communities or that it views the 21st CCLC funding as a resource to fill a greater need. In an era of high-stakes testing and accountability, the DESE may recognize the need for communities to offer "softer academics" like art, music and physical education. Another possibility is that it may allow the shift to occur because of its own limitations for oversight to the Grantees.

Choices made by Grantees may also be the reason for this shift. Grantees may be interpreting the 21st CCLC goals differently because they have a different need to fill or because they recognize a disconnect in the desires of their communities and the prescribed goals of the grant. Grantees may also be recognizing that voluntary, OST programs are not necessarily the most efficient or effective method to remediate academics. Conceptually, offering after-school tutoring or remediation to students who are struggling academically makes sense, but in reality this may be the most difficult population to keep in school beyond the typical school day. Those who believe that OST programs should be used to promote youth development, risk and resiliency or citizenry, would argue that OST programs should not focus specifically on academics, but be used to emotionally attach students to adults and to their communities. Stakeholders in Grantee communities may connect more to these goals than to those which focus on academic remediation.

OST programs serve many purposes, which include not just academic instruction, but also include building resiliency, reducing risk and engaging youth in their communities. A last topic that should be explored is the assessment of whether the OST programs are beneficial to students, regardless of whether they reach the 21st CCLC

goals. Perhaps the programs are effective in meeting the other categories of OST programming goals, and the issue is not with compliance to the 21st CCLC goals, but with the goals themselves.

Conclusion

This study reveals a disconnect between the goals of the 21st CCLC program and the OST programs in practice. The themes above describe several explanations for the disconnect between 21st CCLC goals and the decisions made about programming. It describes several possible explanations for this shift, which can lead to future research in organizational decision making, program evaluation, and goal setting. As each shift occurred, the cumulative effect has been a shift in the mission of the 21st CCLC Program and what is actually taking place in the Grantee communities. It also reveals that this shift may be tacit compliance by the DESE and Grantees, opening up the larger question of whether the goals of the 21st CCLC are the right goals for OST programs in Massachusetts communities.

While this study is restricted to Massachusetts, it opens up the question as to how well other states are meeting the federal goals, especially in those states where no formal evaluation tools have been developed. For the DESE in Massachusetts, the results of this study make it clear that the systems for program evaluation are not assuring compliance to the 21st CCLC goals. The larger question this research raises is whether the DESE systems of accountability are intentionally slack in order to permit this mission shift to occur. The research implies that the DESE and the Grantees view student involvement and attachment to communities, rather than higher test scores, as a truer measure of program success.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

Jen Hemmingson

General question and subset of follow -up and deeper questions under each:

- 1. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. The consent forms explain the process I will take for keeping your information confidential, including the deletion of identifiable information from the transcriptions and the digital recordings. Following those guidelines, are you comfortable with me recording this interview for my research?
- 2. Please tell me a little about your background and your experiences working with before and after-school programs.
 - Can you share some of the history around before and after school programs in this community? What about 21st CCLC programs?
- 3. Why did (your organization) pursue a 21st CCLC grant? Were you a part of this process

Target population; Unfilled needs / service - social, academic, wellness; continue existing services

Are there specific needs the programs are trying to fill? In other words, were there particular groups you wanted to reach or specific programs you wanted to involve?

Do the programs target a specific population? How are students selected to participate?

- 4. (If not answered by #3) What are the goals for your 21st CCLC OST programs?
- 5. Please describe some of your responsibilities as the program coordinator.
- 6. Please talk a little about the programs offered at (your organization). *Names of Programs will be collected from the online survey.*

How do you decide which program and what type of program will be offered?

Is the process different for each program that is selected?

Has the process changed from the first session to now?

Have you repeated any programs? Why?

Have you discontinued any programs? Why?

How do available resources affect which programs are offered?

Who is involved in making these program decisions?

Follow up: Specific program examples from the online survey.

7. From the online survey I learned that you have other programs offered in your school that are not 21st CCLC programs. (*If no other programs, skip to question 8.*)

What other programs are offered?

How has this impacted what programs you are offering?

Do you collaborate with the other agency to provide programming?

8. From the online survey you completed I learned that you have an active advisory board / leadership team for your 21st CCLC programs. Can you please tell me a little about the membership of that board/team and its purpose?

What role does the advisory board / leadership team take in making decisions about programming?

How frequently does the team meet?

If no board/ team: How are decisions about programming made? Is there an administrator or team that provides oversight to those decisions, or is there another process not specified?

9. From the online survey I also learned that the 21st CCLC program is part /not part of a school action plan or school district plan.

Please share information about the process of including this in the plan.

Collect relevant documents such as action plan, school vision, 21st CCLC program flyer, etc.

10. What other information should I have to understand what is happening with your OST program?

Date & Time of Interview:

Recipient:

Program Coordinator Name:

Consent Form Completed: YES NO

Relevant Documents Collected:

Audio Recording:

APPENDIX B

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN SURVEY E-MAIL

Dear Program Coordinators,

Embedded is a link for a survey on 21st CCLC programs in Massachusetts. I am a graduate student at UMass, Amherst and this survey is a critical part of my research study and toward earning my Ed.D.

The survey is only 6 questions long and will take about 4 minutes to complete. I greatly appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey, especially during these busy last weeks of school. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Thank you,
Jen Hemmingson

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YHVFHWL

APPENDIX C

TABLE OF INFORMATION FROM COMPLETED SURVEYS

Grantee	Low Income %	Caucasian %	Other OST Programs?	Leadership Team?	Part of Action Plan?
1	16.50	94.30	Y	N	N
2	40.20	98.90	Y	Y	Y
3	75.80	37.80	Y	Y	N
4	32.60	89.90	Y	Y	Y
5	67.90	39.70	Y	Y	Y
6	49.40	91.00	Y	Y	Y
7	49.70	76.30	DK	Y	Y
8	48.30	77.70	Y	Y	DK
9	68.70	47.40	Y	Y	Y
10	30.30	82.20	Y	Y	Y
11	67.90	39.70	N	Y	Y
12	71.00	45.10	Y	Y	Y
13	45.60	74.30	Y	Y	N
14	44.90	55.00	Y	Y	Y
15	49.20	89.60	Y	N	N
16	66.00	43.80	Y	Y	Y
17	74.60	68.30	Y	Y	Y
18	36.30	68.10	Y	Y	DK
19	57.50	84.70	Y	Y	Y
20	28.00	59.30	Y	N	Y
21	26.30	89.00	Y	Y	Y
22	75.60	25.00	Y	Y	Y
23	81.40	14.70	Y	Y	Y
24	42.40	71.10	Y	Y	Y
25	71.80	37.50	Y	Y	Y

TABLE OF INFORMATION FROM COMPLETED SURVEYS (CONTINUED)

Grantee	Low Income %	Caucasian %	Other OST Programs?	Leadership Team?	Part of Action Plan?
26	29.70	95.10	Y	Y	N
27	65.60	51.00	Y	Y	DK
28	36.20	64.80	Y	Y	Y
29	30.10	74.20	Y	Y	Y
30	74.30	18.80	Y	Y	Y
31	45.50	36.40	Y	N	N
Survey avg.	51.60	62.60			
State avg.	52.00	88.40			

APPENDIX D

REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW LETTER

Dear PROGRAM COORDINATOR

This spring you completed a brief survey on the 21st CCLC programs offered in COMMUNITY NAME. This survey allowed me to create a database of all of the 21st CCLC programs offered in Massachusetts and gave me a foundation for which to continue my dissertation work. Thank you for taking the time to tell me about your before and after school programs.

I would again like to call upon your generosity and ask for your help in continuing my research study on 21st CCLC programs in Massachusetts. After analysis of the survey data, I selected ten communities in Massachusetts based on their demographics, target population and programming that could be used to represent the many communities offering 21st CCLC programs in our state. The final step in the data collection will be for me to interview the Program Coordinators of those selected communities.

At your earliest convenience I would like to come meet with you to talk about the 21st CCLC Program in COMMUNITY. The interview consists of ten questions that ask about your after school programs, your leadership team, and the process you undertook to create and sustain successful programs. The interview should take less than one hour. I will gladly send you a list of the interview questions beforehand if it is helpful to you. I can come to your site or we can conduct the interview on the phone if a visit is too difficult to schedule for you at this time.

Again, thank you in advance for your help and support of my research study. I am truly grateful for your willingness to give up your time to speak with me.

I will follow up with a phone call next week in hopes of scheduling an interview date and time. Feel free to contact me at anytime if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Jen Hemmingson Doctoral Candidate, UMass Amherst 413-498-5192

jhemming@educ.umass.edu

APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study University of Massachusetts Amherst

Principal Investigator: Jen Hemmingson

Study Title: Organizational Decision Making and Out-of-

School-Time (OST) Programs

Dissertation Chairperson: Kathryn A. McDermott, Associate Professor

mcdermott@educ.umass.edu

tel (413) 545-3562

1. WHAT IS THIS FORM?

This form is called a Consent Form. It will give you information about the study so you can make an informed decision about participation in this research study.

This consent form will give you the information you will need to understand why this study is being done and why you are being invited to participate. It will also describe what you will need to do to participate and any known risks, inconveniences or discomforts that you may have while participating. I encourage you to take some time to think this over and ask questions now and at any other time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and you will be given a copy for your records.

2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

The characteristics of desired subjects are 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program coordinators, site directors or members of the leadership team currently administering 21st CCLC programs at their school sites.

3. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this research study is to learn more about the decision making process of organizations when they decide upon and implement programs for their 21st CCLC OST programs. Your interview along with those of other program coordinators will be used to develop a more complete picture of the decision making process and its impact on OST programming.

4. WHERE WILL THE STUDY TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

The research will be conducted at each school site of the program coordinator being interviewed. These interviews are scheduled to be conducted during the months of May through June of 2010. Each interview will last approximately 60 minutes. The participant may be contacted within three weeks of the interview to answer any follow-up questions.

If you decide to participate, you may stop participating at any time. If you choose not to participate, or to stop participating, there will be no consequences. You also have the right to ask the interviewer to turn off the recorder at any time.

5. WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in one, hour-long semi-structured interview with the researcher. The questions will cover your professional experience as the 21st CCLC program coordinator. With your permission, the interview will be digitally recorded. At the conclusion of the research, all voice recordings will be deleted from my computer and external hard drive. Personal identifiers will be removed when transcribing the interviews.

6. WHAT ARE MY BENEFITS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You may not directly benefit from this research; however, I hope that your participation in the study may eventually help us develop a better understanding of OST programs and thus improve our instructional practices in this area.

7. WHAT ARE my RISKS OF being in THIS STUDY?

I believe there are minimal risks associated with this research study. A possible inconvenience may be the time it takes to complete the survey and interview for the study.

8. HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE PROTECTED?

The following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of your audio recordings and written transcripts of your interview. The researcher will keep all documentation in a locking file cabinet. All electronic files containing identifiable information (e.g., database, audio files, etc.) will be password protected. Any computer hosting such files will also have password protection to prevent access by unauthorized users. Only the researcher will have access to the passwords. At the conclusion of this study, the researcher may publish her findings. Information will be presented in summary format and you will not be identified in any publications or presentations.

10. WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Take as long as you like before you make a decision. I will be happy to answer any question you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact the principal investigator, (Jen Hemmingson, (413) 498-5192). If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject,

you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at (413) 545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.

11. CAN I STOP BEING IN THE STUDY?

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you agree to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. You may also ask the interviewer to turn off the recorder at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate.

12. WHAT IF I AM INJURED?

The University of Massachusetts does not have a program for compensating subjects for injury or complications related to human subjects research, but if discussing your experiences makes you upset or uncomfortable and you wish to discuss this with someone, the study researcher will assist you in accessing services.

13. SUBJECT STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT

I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. The general purposes and particulars of the study as well as possible hazards and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time.

Participant Signature:	Print Name:	Date:
• • •	that the participant has read and, t details contained in this document	•
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Print Name:	Date:

APPENDIX F

SAYO LEARNING OUTCOMES

Survey of After-School Youth Outcomes (SAYO)

Teacher Version: (SAYO-T)

- Behavior in the Classroom
- Initiative
- Engagement in Learning
- Problem Solving Skills
- Communication Skills
- Homework
- Relations with Adults
- Academic Performance across content areas

After-School Staff Version: (SAYO-S)

- Behavior in the Program
- Initiative
- Engagement in Learning
- Problem Solving Skills
- Communication Skills
- Learning Skills
- Relations with Adults
- Relations with Peers
- Homework

APPENDIX G

ASSESSING AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM PRACTICES TOOL (APT)

In June of 2003, the Massachusetts Department of Education, the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) and the Massachusetts After-school Research Study (MARS), joined forces to create the Assessing After-School Program Practices Tool (APT). The development of the APT took place over a 15-month period, and included a review of research from the arts, education, and after-school literature, a review of existing after-school program observation tools and perspectives from experts in the field. The draft instrument underwent extensive field testing, reviews by a variety of experts including Grantees, and reliability testing.

The Assessing After-School Program Practices Tool (APT) is a new instrument recently developed for use by Massachusetts 21st Century Community Learning Center grantees to compliment the Survey of After-School Youth Outcomes (SAYO) tool. The goal of the APT is to assess the extent to which after-school programs are implementing practices congruent with their desired SAYO outcomes. The APT is intended to be a tool that assists grantees with continuous program improvement and with identifying areas for professional development.

Field testing was conducted at 78 programs sites for the MARS study during the spring in 2004. While few studies explicitly examined causal relationships between specific afterschool practices and individual youth outcomes, the result of this extensive review process indicated that the program features included in the APT are positively linked with the SAYO youth outcomes.

The APT is divided up into three main sections. Observers conduct observations and ratings using a four-point "how true" scale. Section 1, "Activity and Time Period Ratings," includes ratings of arrival, snack time, transitions, pick up time, and homework time, as well as ratings of several activity times. Section 2, "Targeted SAYO Skill Building," focuses on practices related to SAYO outcomes that are not covered in other sections, and is customized to reflect each grantee's desired outcomes. Finally, Section 3, "Overall Program Ratings," includes ratings of the physical environment, schedule, relationships, and the social-emotional environment. The APT also includes an opportunity for observers to provide overall impressions and collect information from the program director.

What does the APT measure?

- 1. Positive program climate (Welcoming & inclusive environment; Staff positively & effectively managing and supervising youth behavior; High program and activity organization; Positive staff; Staff relationships)
- 2. Supportive staff: youth relationships (Positive interest/interaction with individual youth; Emotional support provided; Respectful listening and responding; Abilities & interests encouraged; High expectations for behavior/performance)
- 3. Supportive peer relationships (Peer cooperation; Mutual respect; Enjoyment/friendships; Conflicts resolved constructively)
- 4. Program practices that support youth's individual needs and interests (1:1 Time/Individualized Assistance; Communication between staff and schools/staff and parents around youth needs & interests; Youth choice, input & flexibility of programming)
- 5. Program practices that promote youth engagement and stimulate thinking (Frequent staff and youth discussions; Recognition & feedback to youth; Opportunities to solve challenging or complex problems; Cooperative learning, Project-based and multidisciplinary activities; Time for reflection & peer discussion)
- 6. Opportunities for autonomy, responsibility & leadership (Opportunities for leadership & decision-making; Youth autonomy and extended independent learning; Opportunities to build competence & meaningful skills; Opportunities to contribute to program, school and community; Opportunities to show-case work in culminating product or performance)

The APT is designed to help programs conduct self-assessments. The APT includes those program practices which research suggests are related to the outcomes measured by the Survey of Youth Outcomes (SAYO).

During FY05, 21st CCLC grantees piloted the APT at up to three program sites. All grantees provided the NIOST research team with feedback and suggestions for improvements that reflected on their experiences. The tool was then refined as a result.

21stCCLC grantees are required to implement the APT across all funded sites.

http://www.doe.mass.edu/21cclc/ta/

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