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Bright Futures 2022 Summative Report



Center for Evaluation and Research Services in the
Georgia State University
College of Education & Human Development

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Center for Evaluation and Research Services

Georgia State University College of Education & Human Development
P.O. Box 3977
30 Pryor St, NE, Suite 450
Atlanta, GA 30302-3977

The Center for Evaluation and Research Services improves the educational and developmental experiences of students, teachers, and other program clients by providing program evaluation and research services to local, state, national, and international agencies and educational institutions. Its work, which includes the evaluation of professional development programs for teachers and of the education and training of P-12 and postsecondary students, enhances the reputations of the GSU College of Education & Human Development and of the program-providing agencies.

Susan L. Ogletree, Ph.D., Director
William S Boozer, Ph.D., Research Scientist
C. Michael Harmon, Ph.D., Research Associate II
Nurah Moffett, L.M.S.W., Graduate Research Assistant
Hannah Scarbrough, M.Ed., Graduate Research Assistant

Robert Hendrick, Ph.D., Research Affiliate
Brennan Collins, Ph.D., Faculty Affiliate
Janice Fournillier, Ph.D., Faculty Affiliate
Richard Lakes, Ph.D., Faculty Affiliate
Laura May, Ph.D., Faculty Affiliate
Jonte Myers, Ph.D., Faculty Affiliate
Sheryl Cowart Moss, Ph.D., Faculty Affiliate
Nick Sauers, Ph.D., Faculty Affiliate
Yinying Wang, Ph.D., Faculty Affiliate

For more information about this report or the Center, please email sogletree1@gsu.edu

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

1.1

Program Overview

The Bright Futures program serves students in the Clarkston area of the DeKalb County School System. Most of the students come from refugee and immigrant families who have settled in the area after coming to the United States. For many students, English is not the primary language spoken at home, and they are learning it for the first time. The specific goals of the program are to improve students' academic achievement, to provide social adjustment and therapeutic support to students, and to empower refugee families to engage in students' academic achievement and social adjustment.

The Bright Futures program operates after school hours in association with four school sites: International Community School, Jolly Elementary School, Freedom Middle School, and Clarkston High School. The program is implemented by a partnership involving New American Pathways, under the direction of Kristin Hiler, and Inspiritus, under the direction of Whitney Conner, with a target of serving 235 students and their parents through a holistic model that includes after-school programming, summer programming, and family liaisons. In 2021, the program was delivered online because of pandemic safety restrictions established by the school system. Over the 2021-2022 school year, the program has been able to transition back to in-person program delivery at some sites, but not at all of them. While schools have resumed in-person instruction, logistical considerations at some sites prevented the Bright Futures program from doing likewise.

1.2

Program History and Operation

The Bright Futures program is ending its fifth year of operation in providing support for targeted students in DeKalb County schools. This year marked the second year that the program was provided at International Community School. The program has grown in additional ways since its inception, as described by program staff:

1. Implemented a more robust and continual orientation and training structure for program teachers and staff. The program is mainly made up of part-time instructors and AmeriCorps members and as full-time opportunities arise for part-time staff and the AmeriCorps members' service year ends, the program sees routine annual turnover. The program's development structure has grown to include:
 - a. A dedicated, at minimum, week of orientation for new and returning part-time instructors with a focus on review of grants, program goals and services, expectations. This orientation also includes soft skills such as establishing leadership roles, team communication, time management, etc.
 - b. A dedicated orientation for AmeriCorps members who begin their service year in early September.
 - c. Within both dedicated training periods, staff participate in a mandatory cultural orientation, Teach English as a Second Language, behavior management, First Aid certification, and being a mentor.
 - d. Whole team (full time Coordinators, part-time instructors, AmeriCorps member) review of orientations, program and day-school expectations, roles, and school rules and student safety.
 - e. Program has enhanced team trainings happening throughout the school year (see p. 21 for a list of trainings).
2. Continually upgraded enrichment services to mirror student and parent needs with a focus on a Bridge curriculum. This curriculum is dedicated to supporting students as they begin to look toward graduating from one grade school to another—Elementary to Middle School, or Middle School to High school. Built into the curriculum are enrichment sessions based on skills associated with the next grade school, including topics such as “the role of a guidance counselor,” “how to pick your class schedule,” “standardized tests,” and “note taking,” with a final session where students visit a middle school, high school, or college. This curriculum has supported the program and students by (a) addressing transitioning stress; (b) implementing intentional life skills; and (c) 21st CCLC program recruitment for students entering the following grade school.
3. Provided weekly SAT and ACT preparatory classes at Clarkston High School. Inspiritus implemented refugee youth mentoring programs to pair students with not only 21st Century afterschool teachers, but also community members connected with areas of their interest. Inspiritus provided opportunities for career development and educational assistance regarding 4 year colleges, FAFSA,

scholarships, apprenticeships, and tech/trade schools. Inspiritus was able to connect graduating students as well as program alumni to many different career opportunities (some with starting salaries of \$70k) through the refugee youth mentoring program and our afterschool program.

4. Improved data collection of 21st CCLC documentation both directly from participants and from the school system. Program staff have also provided improved program outreach—advertising 21st CCLC parent workshops, advisory councils, and other after-school events, leading to increased stakeholder attendance at those events.
5. Secured robust community partnerships from life skills to community leadership. For example, the director of Camp Koinonia comes on Wednesdays to provide lessons on Human Rights and Nobel Peace Prize winners, and the Museum of Design Atlanta provided graphic design and storytelling mentorships with middle schoolers during the school year..
6. Implemented sessions named “Student Mentoring” in which 1 or 2 students are paired with one after school teacher for the entire year as a mentor pair or small group. Student mentoring sessions allows students to have individualized and uninterrupted time to work on what the student needs each week such as extra homework support, project completion, goal setting, or a space to speak freely about what they are confronting in their educational journey. The program has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from students who mention that they feel that they can trust their teachers and that they value having a space to vent if needed.

1.3

Program Goals and Objectives

The goals, objectives, and activities of the Bright Futures program are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Bright Futures Program Goals and Objectives

<i>Measurement Tools</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>
Goal 1. Improve Academic Achievement		
Objective 1a. The average annual increase of literacy levels for Regularly Participant Students (RPS) in the Afterschool Program will be 3 or more levels on Reading A to Z or a similar increase on a complementary curriculum to be determined for older, more advanced readers.		
Reading A to Z	Weekly small-group literacy intensives	3 assessments over year
Assessment tool for more advanced readers	Daily individualized literacy support and GSE-aligned ELA tutoring	3 assessments over year

<i>Measurement Tools</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>
Objective 1b. 100% of K-2 students who are working on letter recognition and sight words will demonstrate increased acquisition of English letter and sight word recognition.		
Letter Recognition Assessment	Daily small-group literacy intensives	Pre-/post- assessments over year
Dolch Sight Words Assessment	Daily individualized literacy support and GSE-aligned ELA tutoring	Pre-/post- assessments over year
Objective 1c. 100% of RPS will receive daily GSE-aligned tutoring in small groups for core content areas.		
(1) Attendance records (2) Participant survey regarding students' access to homework assistance	Daily comprehensive tutoring in core subjects	Year-long
Objective 1d. 90% of RPS demonstrate an increase in confidence in their ability to navigate American schooling and understanding of academic expectations.		
Student survey or pre-/post-tests, professional observation	(1) Daily individualized tutoring, homework help (2) Cultural orientation activities designed to promote English language development and knowledge of U.S. school system expectations	Pre-/post- assessments over year
Objective 1e. This objective applies to summer activities, which are not addressed in this report.		
Objective 1f. RPS will demonstrate greater than average gains in GA Milestones scores as compared to English Learner students in the same grades at each site.		
GA Milestones EOC and EOG scores	(1) Daily individualized literacy support and GSE-aligned ELA tutoring (2) Daily individualized tutoring, homework help	Test scores provided by school administration (end of year)
Objective 1g. 60% of RPS will show one step positive improvement from one performance band to another on the ACCESS test for English Learners.		
ACCESS test scores	(1) Weekly small-group literacy intensives (2) Daily individualized literacy support and GSE-aligned ELA tutoring	Test scores provided by school administration
Goal 2. Youth Development: Provide social adjustment and therapeutic support		
Objective 2a. This objective applies to summer activities, which are not addressed in this report.		
Objective 2b. This objective applies to summer activities, which are not addressed in this report.		
Objective 2c. This objective applies to summer activities, which are not addressed in this report.		
Objective 2d. 100% of RPS will participate in activities designed to empower them and build enthusiasm for learning.		
Student survey, attendance logs	(1) Character education lessons (elementary & middle school) (2) Empowerment lessons (high school) (3) Educational field trips (4) STEAM activities	Year long

<i>Measurement Tools</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>
Goal 3. Empower refugee families to engage in students' academic achievement and social adjustment.		
Objective 3a. 65% of RPS families referred for adjustment services, including English language services, will participate.		
Collection of proofs of participation	(1) Families are informally assessed via engagement consultations and referred to services via New American Pathways, Inspiritus, or another provider. (2) Families who participate in English services will attend per the guidelines of the English program.	Year-long
Objective 3b. 75% of elementary and middle school RPS families will make changes to home environment, including setting up a study area, checking student work, promoting literacy or integration of another strategy for which the home liaisons advocated.		
Parental Engagement Survey	(1) During home visits, liaisons will assess home environment and work with parents to make improvements, creating studying space for students, establishing homework routines, setting home library, and practicing parenting behaviors that reinforce good learning habits. (2) Promote literacy by taking parents to the local library, familiarizing them with the resources and getting a library card. (3) Educating parents how to select the book on student's Lexile reading level	Year-long; fall assessment and spring assessment
Objective 3c. 100% of high school RPS' parents will have a graduation plan in place for their student (crafted in cooperation with the student and Site Manager).		
Checklist of graduation plans for high school RPS	Through home visits and consultations, the CHS Site Coordinator will collaborate with families and students to develop a graduation plan to be implemented by the student and family. Ongoing student and family supports are aligned to the contents of each plan.	Graduation plans completed and collected by May 2020.
Objective 3d. 80% of RPS will demonstrate an increase in competencies in 1 or more domains of Parental Engagement Survey.		
Parental Engagement Survey	(1) Home visits and family consultations (2) Referrals for family services (3) Translation services and supports at parent-teacher conferences, school events, etc.	Initial parent surveys in Oct 2021; final surveys at end of spring 2022
Objective 3e. This objective applies to summer activities, which are not addressed in this report.		

<i>Measurement Tools</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>
Objective 3f. RPS promote to the next grade on time.		
Report of promotion provided by school	(1) Families receive ongoing translation and support services to access school information. (2) Families receive parent-teacher conference participation support and translations. (3) CHS families and students collaborate with Site Manager to create graduation plans. (4) Resources and references for academic family support provided on an as-needed basis to families. (5) Family participation in after-school programming.	Year-long

EVALUATION OVERVIEW AND DATA SOURCES

2.1

Overview

The Center for Evaluation and Research Services (CERS) is the independent, third party evaluator for the Bright Futures program. A part of the Georgia State University College of Education & Human Development, CERS supports faculty, students, and other educational agencies with proposal and budget development, research design, and external evaluation. CERS is currently evaluating multiple large federal grants and has personnel with decades of program evaluation experience at the local, state, and federal levels.

In fall 2021, New American Pathways accepted CERS's bid to provide evaluation for the Bright Futures 2021-2022 academic program. The main purposes for the evaluation have been (a) to provide detailed information about the continuing program implementation to the program director and site facilitators and (b) to assess the progress of the program in meeting the goals and objectives as outlined in the grant proposal during this year of implementation.

2.2

Data Sources

The summative evaluation of the Bright Futures program relies heavily on documentation of program data in CAYEN software, reporting software selected by the granting agency, Georgia Department of Education. Additionally, the evaluation team relied on site observations conducted during the academic year, once during fall and once during spring, and on interview data collected from the site facilitators in conjunction with those site observations. The partnering agencies—New American Pathways and Inspiritus—have also provided information to address some of the summative evaluation components. Specific information about data sources is provided in each reporting section of this report.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT

3.1

Program Participation

As shown in Figure 1, the Bright Futures program had a target enrollment of 155 students for the 2021-2022 school year, and it enrolled 194 students, with Freedom Middle School's exceeding its enrollment target by 32 students. Of these, 133 students attended program activities at one of four school sites for 30 days or more. These students are considered "active participants."

Total number of participants (who attended at least once during 2021-2022) for each school is as follows: Jolly Elementary School (41); International Community School (25); Freedom Middle School (76); and Clarkston High School (16).

Site facilitators reported that online delivery presented a strong challenge to students' participating in the program, as they encountered technology problems, competition for resources at home, and family pressure for some high school students to seek employment while in-person school attendance was not required. Additionally, when schools became open for in-person learning during the day but restricted the after-school programming to online delivery, transportation from the

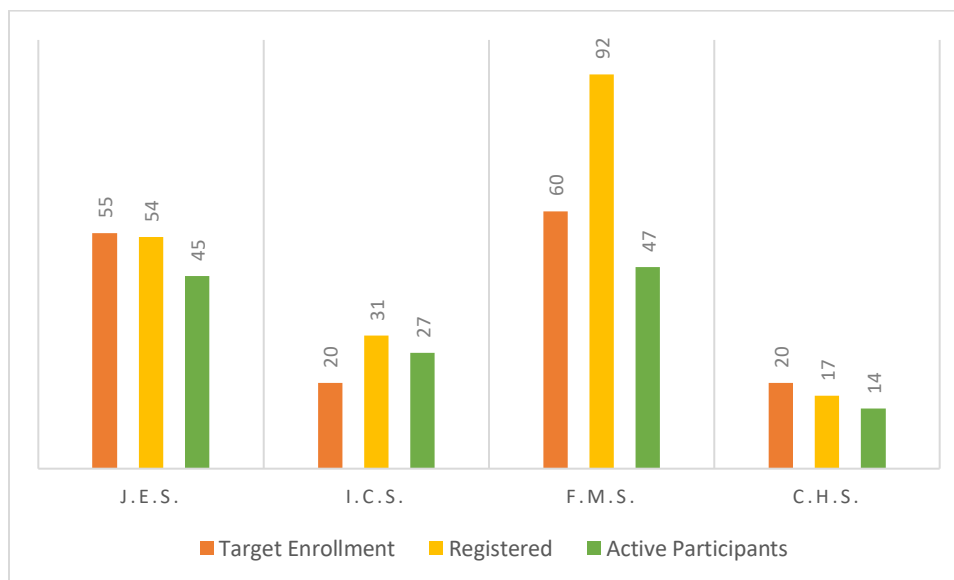


Figure 1. 2021-2022 enrollment and participation.

school to their homes delayed students' attending to the program and reduced the amount of contact-time the program could provide them.

Figures 2 and 3 compare program registrations and the number of active students for the previous academic year and the current academic year. The number of active students has increased this year as pandemic restrictions have eased at the schools.



Figure 2. Comparison of program registrations by site for 2020-21 school year and 2021-22 school year.

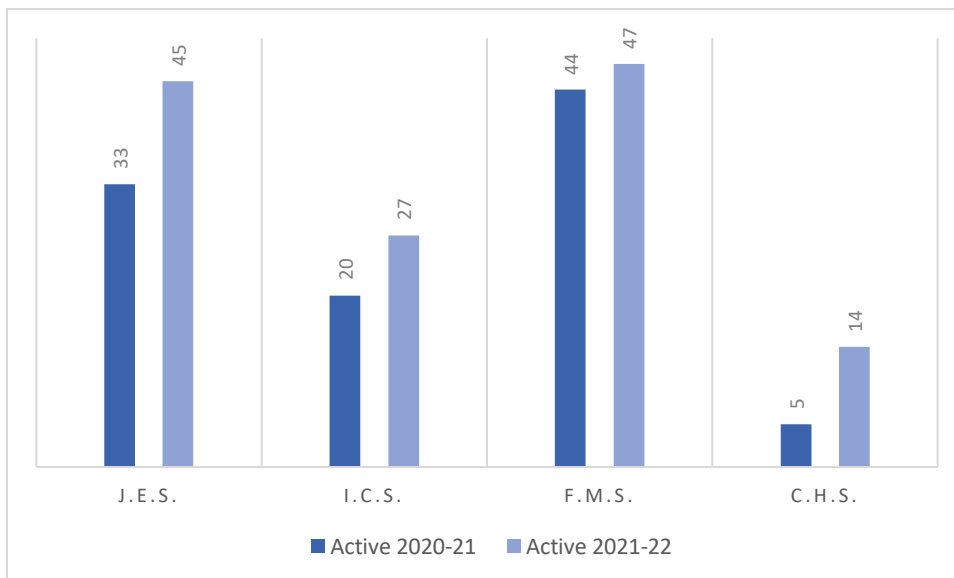


Figure 3. Comparison of number of active participants by site for 2020-21 school year and 2021-2022 school year.

3.2

Participant Demographics

Information on student participants' race/ethnicity, gender, English proficiency, and eligibility for the National School Lunch Program are provided in Tables 2 and 3. These data are summarized from the APR reports in CAYEN.

Table 2. Race/ethnicity Data of Student Participants (School Year 2021-2022)

Site	Asian	Black	Hispanic/Latino	Not provided
J.E.S.	20	9	2	10
I.C.S.	21	3		1
F.M.S.	12	11	1	52
C.H.S.	3	7		6
Total	56	30	3	69

Note. Many participants fall in the “Not Provided” category because they are from areas of the world (e.g., southwest Asia, Africa) where their families do not categorize themselves in one of the provided options.

Table 3. Gender, LEP, NSLP, and Special Needs Status Data of Student Participants (School Year 2021-2022)

Site	Female	Male	LEP Status	NSLP Status	Special Needs
J.E.S.	17	24	13	38	1
I.C.S.	15	10	11	25	
F.M.S.	40	36	41	64	
C.H.S.	8	8	2	16	
Total	80	78	67	143	1

3.3

Average Daily Attendance

The 2021-2022 average daily student attendance was 27 students for Jolly Elementary School, 18 at International Community School, 27 at Freedom Middle School, and 7 at Clarkston High School. (These data are provided by the CAYEN.) The programs at International Community School and Clarkston High School transitioned from online delivery to in-person delivery over the course of the year.

3.4

Program Barriers

After having shut down schools the previous year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, school systems throughout the nation were feeling political pressure to reopen. DeKalb County Schools gradually reopened its school campuses, first using a hybrid model and then hosting in-person learning that attempted to match the normalcy of prepandemic education. The transition to in-person learning has been slower for after-school programs because of concern about health protection and because of various logistical issues, such as transportation.

In the narratives that follow, program staff describe some particular challenges the program has encountered during the previous two years and how they were addressed.

A drawback of providing the program online has been the difficulty of recognizing particular student needs that would be more apparent in an in-person interaction. At the end of the school day, particularly if they have spent much of that day online for their classes, students experience fatigue, and they may not be as effusive as they would be if they were in the classroom. Consequently, our teachers learned quickly to read students' moods through their interactions online. In one case, this led to discovering a young student who was not participating in the online activity because he had not learned enough English to communicate with others or to read questions posted to him in the chat. Once we noticed that the student could not understand, we began to work with him during tutoring time on his English and reading. In the beginning of the year, the student could not keep a basic conversation with the teachers, nor read on any measurable scale. At the end of 2022, we are so proud that the student has been tested at level B in Reading A to Z. The student still has a long way to go on his proficiency in reading and English, but we are so glad we were able to connect with him and begin this journey with him. In addition, another student moved up 5 levels in Reading A to Z between October 2021 and April 2022.

During the pandemic, one of the greatest challenges faced by our students was access to technology needed to participate in online

learning activities. DeKalb transitioned to remote learning immediately after school buildings closed in March 2020. No devices were supplied to elementary students at that time, and most of our students were completing their schoolwork on a phone. But many had no access to a phone or tablet, and they did not participate in online learning for the remainder of the year. The afterschool program created workbooks for children to have some form of continued education during this time and met with kids weekly to review and practice reading. Many kids were incredibly frustrated during this time. In the fall of 2020, DeKalb began distributing devices to students, but because of supply chain issues and shortages, many of our students did not receive a Chromebook until January of that year. After the county supplied devices, attendance at the school and our afterschool program greatly increased. The students participated more, moods lifted, and grades at school improved. When students returned to in person learning, their devices were returned to the school. Although school was in person beginning in March 2021, the county did not allow outside visitors or volunteers into the school buildings until March 2022. The Bright Futures program remained online, and attendance dropped. Children were again without devices needed to participate in virtual learning. Beginning in the fall of 2021, we were able to distribute 29 Chromebooks, tablets, and headphones to our students. We have noticed a sharp increase in attendance and participation compared to last year. We were also able to enroll far more newly arrived students than ever would have been possible before this technology was available. This has been an invaluable resource for our students to not only participate in afterschool, but also complete homework independently. Because of this technology, we have been able to serve an additional 29 students who would otherwise be without learning support.

During the pandemic, another challenge faced by our students was a lack of exercise. Students were learning virtually and sitting in front of phones, Chromebook, or tablets from 7:30 am until 5:30 pm. During in-person learning, students have physical education, walk from class to class, and have recess. None of this occurred during virtual learning. Many playgrounds were closed for months during 2020 as well. Parents expressed anxiety about their children's health because of the lack of exercise. In the fall 2021, we began dedicating 30 minutes twice a week

to physical fitness during the program. Teachers led students in aerobics, Pilates, yoga, and games to increase their physical activity at home. In the spring, the students competed to see which class could have the highest daily participation during our exercise warm-ups. Many students' siblings joined in during this time and participation greatly increased. Some students requested exercise daily and even played the videos used, outside of afterschool time. Feedback from parents was extremely positive, and we plan to continue the practice next year.

PROGRAM OPERATION

4.1

Program Schedule

This report reviews program operations and outcomes for the 2021-2022 academic year. Program operation times are presented in Table 4. In cases where the school's day extended later into the afternoon and evening, Bright Futures staff adjusted their schedule to accommodate these changes when they occurred.

Table 4. Summary of Program Operations

Site	Start/End Dates	Total No. of Weeks Open	Average No. of Days per Week Open	Average No. of Hours Per Week
J.E.S.	9/13/21 to 5/20/22	32	3.60	12.17
I.C.S.	9/20/21 to 5/20/22	31	4.23	7.19
F.M.S.	9/13/21 to 5/20/22	32	4.34	9.13
C.H.S.	9/13/21 to 5/20/22	32	4.34	10.14

Source: CAYEN. Summer hours are not captured in this assessment.

4.2

Activities Offered

Table 5. Types of Activities Offered

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Objective(s)</i>
Homework Help	Students receive small group and individual homework support by after school teachers.	Objectives 1.3, 1.6
Virtual Homework Help	Students receive small group and individual homework support by after school teachers.	Objectives 1.3, 1.6
Literacy Support	Students participate in individual or small group reading groups led by after school teachers. The group participates in guided reading and literacy games based on students' reading level.	Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.7
Virtual Literacy Support	Students participate in individual or small group reading groups led by after school teachers. The group participates in guided reading and literacy games based on students' reading level.	Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.7
CORE	Students participate in small group or whole group activities based on CORE subjects (Math, ELA, Science.) and standardized test prep led by after school teachers.	Objectives 1.3, 1.6, 1.7
Virtual CORE	Students participate in small group or whole group activities based on CORE subjects (Math, ELA, Science.) and standardized test prep led by after school teachers.	Objectives 1.3, 1.6, 1.7
Arts & Crafts	Students participate in guided lessons or projects on art and craft techniques and arts based on worldwide cultures. General art materials are provided to students prior to activity, and students will participate live with teachers in creating their artwork/project.	Objective 2.4
Virtual Arts & Crafts	Students participate in guided lessons or projects on art and craft techniques and arts based on worldwide cultures. General art materials are provided to students prior to activity, and students will participate live with teachers in creating their artwork/project.	Objective 2.4
Virtual Brain Break	Students participate in short, guided physical activities to take a break from the screen for virtual programming.	Objective 2.4
BRIDGE	Students participate in sessions, including field trips focused on societal adjustment, preparation for summer and next school year, and student goals. Topics focus on appropriate transition to the next grade level.	Objectives 1.4, 2.1, 2.4, 3.3, 3.6

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Objective(s)</i>
Virtual BRIDGE	Students participate in sessions, including field trips focused on societal adjustment, preparation for summer and next school year, and student goals. Topics focus on appropriate transition to the next grade level.	Objectives 1.4, 2.1, 2.4, 3.3, 3.6
Community Impact	Students participate with community partners and organization who facilitate activities that foster community engagement and supplemental learning outside of school. Topics include mental health and conflict resolution/transformation.	Objective 2.4
Virtual Community Impact	Students participate with community partners and organization who facilitate activities that foster community engagement and supplemental learning outside of school. Topics include mental health and conflict resolution/transformation.	Objective 2.4
Student Clubs	Students participate in weekly project-based clubs that focus on topics of student interest, such as student government, visual arts, journalism, languages.	Objective 2.4
Virtual Student Clubs	Students participate in weekly project-based clubs that focus on topics of student interest, such as student government, visual arts, journalism, languages.	Objective 2.4
Student Mentoring	Students are assigned to one after school teacher who will mentor and meet with student weekly. The mentorship focuses on student check-in, additional homework support, goal setting, and a space for students to speak with a trusted teacher.	Objectives 2.1, 2.4
Virtual Student Mentoring	Students are assigned to one after school teacher who will mentor and meet with student weekly. The mentorship focuses on student check-in, additional homework support, goal setting, and a space for students to speak with a trusted teacher.	Objective 2.1, 2.4
Teamwork Time	This activity will include snack in addition to students participating in guided games that focus on teamwork and getting to know their peers. Games will include word searches or puzzle activities, trivia based on CORE subjects (ex: jeopardy), literacy and comprehension games (ex: charades or hot seat) or introduction games (ex: “never have I ever” or “this or that”) that are appropriate for English Language learning and with the focus to practice English when they first enter the program each day.	Objective 2.4

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Objective(s)</i>
Virtual Teamwork Time	This activity will include snack in addition to students participating in guided games that focus on teamwork and getting to know their peers. Games will include word searches or puzzle activities, trivia based on CORE subjects (ex: Jeopardy), literacy and comprehension games (ex: charades or hot seat) or introduction games (ex: “never have I ever” or “this or that”) that are appropriate for English Language learning and with the focus to practice English when they first enter the program each day.	Objective 2.4
Enrichment	Students participate in guided lessons or projects on art and craft techniques and arts based on worldwide cultures. General art materials will be provided to students prior to activity and students will participate live with teachers in creating their artwork/project. Additionally, students participate in weekly project-based clubs that focus on topics of student interest such as student government, visual arts, journalism, languages, etc.	Objective 2.4
Virtual Enrichment	Students participate in guided lessons or projects on art and craft techniques and arts based on worldwide cultures. General art materials will be provided to students prior to activity and students will participate live with teachers in creating their artwork/project. Additionally, students participate in weekly project-based clubs that focus on topics of student interest such as student government, visual arts, journalism, languages, etc.	Objective 2.4
Social Adjustment	Students are assigned to one after school teacher who will mentor and meet with student weekly. The mentorship will focus on student check-in, additional homework support, goal setting, and a space for students to speak with a trusted teacher. This activity also includes students participating with community partners and organization who facilitate activities that foster community engagement and supplemental learning outside of school. Topics will include but not limited to mental health, conflict resolution/transformation, etc.	Objectives 1.3, 1.4, 2.4, 3.6

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Objective(s)</i>
Virtual Social Adjustment	Students are assigned to one after school teacher who will mentor and meet with student weekly. The mentorship will focus on student check-in, additional homework support, goal setting, and a space for students to speak with a trusted teacher. This activity also includes students participating with community partners and organization who facilitate activities that foster community engagement and supplemental learning outside of school. Topics will include but not limited to mental health, conflict resolution/transformation, etc.	Objectives 1.3, 1.4, 2.4, 3.6
Structured Recreation	Students will participate in guided games/sports that focus on teamwork and physical education facilitated by after school teachers. Sports/games will include soccer, basketball, Catch Me if You Can, Four Square, Kickball etc.	Objective 2.4
Virtual Structured Recreation	Students will participate in guided games/sports that focus on teamwork and physical education facilitated by after school teachers. Sports/games will include soccer, basketball, Catch Me if You Can, Four Square, Kickball etc. Virtually, students will do dance competitions, scavenger hunts, and other activities to promote being active.	Objective 2.4
Character Education	Students will participate in activities and discussions that focus on positive self-improvement, communication, adjustment, etc. Topics may include healthy friendships, conflict resolution, diversity and inclusion, and social adjustment.	Objectives 2.4, 3.6
Virtual Character Education	Students will participate in activities and discussions that focus on positive self-improvement, communication, adjustment, etc. Topics may include healthy friendships, conflict resolution, diversity and inclusion, and social adjustment.	Objectives 2.4, 3.6

Source: Agency Reporting.

Field Trips 2021-2022 - 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC)

Date:	12/5/2021
Program:	International Community School & Jolly Elem
Destination:	Amy's Christmas Party
Description:	The students attended Amy's Holiday Party in Factory Atlanta. They played holiday games, made crafts, decorated cookies and received prizes to take home.
21st CCLC Funded:	Yes
# of Students Attended:	10

Date:	12/18/2021
Program:	Freedom Middle & Jolly Elem
Destination:	Milam Park
Description:	An end of year party at Milam Park for the students to come together and socialize and for us to give out student gifts.
21st CCLC Funded:	Yes
# of Students Attended:	82

Date:	4/4/2022
Program:	Jolly Elem
Destination:	Milam Park
Description:	Grades K-2 students went on a field trip to Milam Park. The children played on the playground, had snacks, and painted with watercolors. The main goal was to have the kids play together in person because the program had been virtual for so long.
21st CCLC Funded:	Yes
# of Students Attended:	19

Date:	4/7/2022
Program:	Freedom Middle, International Community School, & Jolly Elem
Destination:	Refuge Coffee
Description:	The 5th grade girls from ICS and Jolly were invited to this field trip to meet the 6th grade girls from Freedom middle school. This was planned in order to create a bridge event for our girls to feel less nervous and create relationships with other students already in middle school.
21st CCLC Funded:	No
# of Students Attended:	13

Date:	4/8/2022
Program:	Jolly Elem
Destination:	Milam Park
Description:	Grades 3-5 students went on a field trip to Milam Park. The children played on the playground, had snacks, and painted with watercolors. The main goal was to have the kids play together in person because the program had been virtual for so long.
21st CCLC Funded:	Yes
# of Students Attended:	12

Date:	5/7/2022
Program:	Freedom Middle & International Community School
Destination:	Plaza Fiesta
Description:	A trip to Plaza Fiesta to explore Mexican and Latin American culture through a scavenger hunt.
21st CCLC Funded:	No
# of Students Attended:	20

Date:	5/21/2022
Program:	Freedom Middle
Destination:	Milam Park
Description:	An end of year party at Milam Park for the students to come together and socialize and for us to give out student awards.
21st CCLC Funded:	Yes
# of Students Attended:	46

Date:	5/24/2022
Program:	International Community School & Jolly Elem
Destination:	Movie Tavern
Description:	Students of the year from both elementary sites were invited to watch a movie at the Movie Tavern. They received kiddie combos that included popcorn, an Icee, and gummies. They enjoyed it and most expressed that it was their first time in a movie theatre.
21st CCLC Funded:	Yes
# of Students Attended:	5

QUALITY OF STAFFING

Students at each site were served by staff members from either New American Pathways (elementary school, middle school) or Inspiritus (high school). As identified in CAYEN, the number of staff at each site was as follows: 10 at Jolly Elementary School; 5 at International Community School; 7 at Freedom Middle School; and 2 at Clarkston High School. Elementary school and middle school students were supported by AmeriCorps volunteers, while high school students were supported by college interns placed through Inspiritus. All programs were supported by community volunteers, family liaisons, and representatives of partner organizations. None of the staff are certified teachers who teach at the school sites; however, the three site coordinators have been working with the program since its beginning.

The student-to-staff ratio at each site based on average daily attendance is 2.7:1 at Jolly Elementary School; 3.6:1 at International Community School; 3.9:1 at Freedom Middle School; and 3.5:1 at Clarkston High School. Table 6 presents details about professional development provided to the program staff during the year.

Table 6. Professional Development for Program Staff (2021-2022)

<i>Training Topic</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>No. of Attenders</i>	<i>Date</i>
Leadership Foundation	8 hrs	5	Dec 2 & 9, 2021
Behavior Management and Classroom Management	2 hrs	22	Jan 10, 2022
Teaching English Language Learners	2 hrs	22	Jan 10, 2022
<i>Reading A to Z</i> Training	2 hrs	22	Jan 10, 2022
Talk, Listen and Communicate	1.5 hrs	18	Feb-Mar 2022
Ethics	1 hr	18	Feb-Mar 2022
Conflict	1 hr	18	Feb-Mar 2022

OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT

The status of each of the program objectives for the 2021-2022 school year is summarized below.

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Objective 1a. The average annual increase of literacy levels for Regularly Participant Students (RPS) in the Afterschool Program will be 3 or more levels on Reading <i>A to Z</i> or a similar increase on a complementary curriculum to be determined for older, more advanced readers.	Not Met	Jolly Elem. School: 2.53 levels International Comm. School: 2.375 levels Freedom Middle Sch.: 2.85 levels
Objective 1b. 100% of K-2 students who are working on letter recognition and sight words will demonstrate increased acquisition of English letter and sight word recognition.	Met	All students assessed showed improvement in sight-word and letter recognition.
Objective 1c. 100% of RPS will receive daily GSE-aligned tutoring in small groups for core content areas.	Met	Homework assistance in core content areas provided daily
Objective 1d. 90% of RPS demonstrate an increase in confidence in their ability to navigate American schooling and understanding of academic expectations.	Not Met	No. of students showing increase on Student Attitude Survey: 31.7%
Objective 1f. RPS will demonstrate greater than average gains in GA Milestones scores as compared to English Learner students in the same grades at each site.	N/A	Milestones data pending
Objective 1g. 60% of RPS will show one step positive improvement from one performance band to another on the ACCESS test for English Learners.	N/A	ACCESS data not available
Objective 2d. 100% of RPS will participate in activities designed to empower them and build enthusiasm for learning.	Met	Students received weekly enrichment activities.

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Objective 3a. 65% of RPS families referred for adjustment services, including English language services, will participate.	Met	83% participation
Objective 3b. 75% of elementary and middle school RPS families will make changes to home environment, including setting up a study area, checking student work, promoting literacy or integration of another strategy for which the home liaisons advocated.	Not Met	25% of parents who did not answer “yes” to all items at both assessments indicated a growth from “no” to “yes” on at least 1 item.
Objective 3c. 100% of high school RPS’ parents will have a graduation plan in place for their student (crafted in cooperation with student and Site Manager).	Not Met	Students completed graduation to-do lists.
Objective 3d. 80% of parents of RPS will demonstrate an increase in competencies in 1 or more domains of Parental Engagement Survey.	Met	80% of parents (N = 74) in at least 1 Parenting Behaviors domain
Objective 3f. RPS promote to the next grade on time.	Met	All RPS promoted to the next grade per DCSD

Objectives that only pertain to the summer program (which is not a subject of this evaluation) have been omitted from this table.

N/A. Program is unable to measure progress on standardized assessment because results have not yet been released or other circumstances.

6.01

Objective 1a

The average annual increase of literacy levels for Regularly Participant Students (RPS) in the Afterschool Program will be 3 or more levels on Reading A to Z or a similar increase on a complementary curriculum to be determined for older, more advanced readers.

Table 7 shows the averages for elementary school students and middle school students. The objective was not met.

Table 7. Averages for Increase in Reading Levels for Elementary and Middle School Students

<i>Site</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>No.</i>
Jolly Elem. School	2.97	2	2	26
International Comm. Sch.	2.37	2	1	16
Freedom Middle School	2.85	2.5	3	32

6.02

Objective 1b

100% of K-2 students who are working on letter recognition and sight words will demonstrate increased acquisition of English letter and sight word recognition. The program reported initial and end-of-year data regarding word recognition and English letter recognition from participants at Jolly Elementary School. All students assessed for sight-word recognition ($N = 7$) showed improved scores, with a mean increase of 36.7. All students assessed for letter recognition ($N = 3$) showed improved scores, with a mean increase of 16. The objective was met.

6.03

Objective 1c

100% of RPS will receive daily GSE-aligned tutoring in small groups for core content areas. The program provided homework assistance to all attending participants each program day, typically using break-out rooms to create small groups if online. This objective was met.

6.04

Objective 1d

90% of RPS demonstrate an increase in confidence in their ability to navigate American schooling and understanding of academic expectations. Results from the Student Attitude Survey (See Section 7.2) for 26.3% of Jolly Elementary School students, 66.7% of International Community School students, and 18.75% of Freedom Middle School students show an increase in their attitude toward school and learning. Overall, 31.7% of students showed an increase in their attitude survey score. No data were received regarding the high school students. The objective was not met.

6.05

Objective 1f

RPS will demonstrate greater than average gains in GA Milestones scores as compared to English Learner students in the same grades at each site. At the time of this report, the school system had not provided the program with Milestones data for program participants. The objective is not measurable at this time.

6.06

Objective 1g

60% of RPS will show one step positive improvement from one performance band to another on the ACCESS test for English Learners. The program has not received ACCESS data for its participants or for comparable English Learners at the program sites. The objective is not measurable at this time.

6.07

Objective 2d

100% of RPS will participate in activities designed to empower them and build enthusiasm for learning. The program provided weekly academic and enrichment activities that supplemented their day-school learning activities, provided them environments to socialize and build friendships with others, and allowed them to use their learning in games and entertaining competitions. The objective was met.

6.08

Objective 3a

65% of RPS families referred for adjustment services, including English language services, will participate. During the 2021-2022 academic year, eighteen parents were referred to adjustment services, and 15 followed through with those referrals. Family liaisons also referred parents to external sources for assistance in a variety of areas, including English language services, immigration services, their child's health, applying for Pre-K, enrolling at I.C.S., applying for employment, vaccinations, and the C5 program. This objective was met.

6.09

Objective 3b

75% of elementary and middle school RPS families will make changes to home environment, including setting up a study area, checking student work, promoting literacy or integration of another strategy for which the home liaisons advocated. Three items on the Parent Engagement Survey that were part of the Home Learning Environment and Literacy domain were used to allow parents to self-report what changes they had made to support their child's education during the year. These items were "I check my child's homework," "We have a home library," and "My child has a special learning space at home." Seventy-seven parents completed the initial survey and the end-of-year survey, and 58% of parents responded affirmatively to all three items both times. Of the remainder, 8 showed a change from an initial "no" to an end-of-year "yes" on at least one item. This objective was not met.

6.10

Objective 3c

100% of high school RPS' parents will have a graduation plan in place for their student. In January, approximately six graduation to-do lists for Clarkston High School students had been signed by parents, demonstrating those parents' involvement in a plan leading to the student's graduation. The program uses the graduation to-do lists to provide students with the specific requirements they need to complete to graduate from high school and includes supplemental activities, such as meeting with the school guidance counselor, visiting colleges and technical schools, and applying for scholarships. The to-do lists appear to be beneficial to the

students, particularly during their senior year. However, it does not serve as evidence of parental involvement in helping the student plan for graduation, particularly when it is not completed until late spring term. Moreover, the site coordinator has noted that some high school students experience conflict with their parent which can lead to the parent's withholding support for the student's academic progress. The evaluation team strongly recommends that, in the future, this objective be amended to meet better the circumstances of the students at the high school and to become reasonably achievable. This objective was not met.

6.11

Objective 3d

80% of parents of RPS will demonstrate an increase in competencies in 1 or more domains of Parental Engagement Survey. Of 74 parents who completed the initial and end-of-year Parental Engagement Survey, 59 showed an increase in at least one Parenting Behaviors domain. This objective was met.

6.12

Objective 3f

RPS promote to the next grade on time. DeKalb County School District notified the program directors that all students who attended school regularly during the year would be promoted to the next grade level for fall. This objective was met.

OBSERVATIONS

7.1 Teacher Survey of Student Engagement

At each school, teachers of participants in the Bright Futures program were invited to provide feedback regarding how individual students were performing in their classes during the day. Figure 4 presents teachers' responses regarding student performance. Following the figure, Table 8 shows the responses at each site.

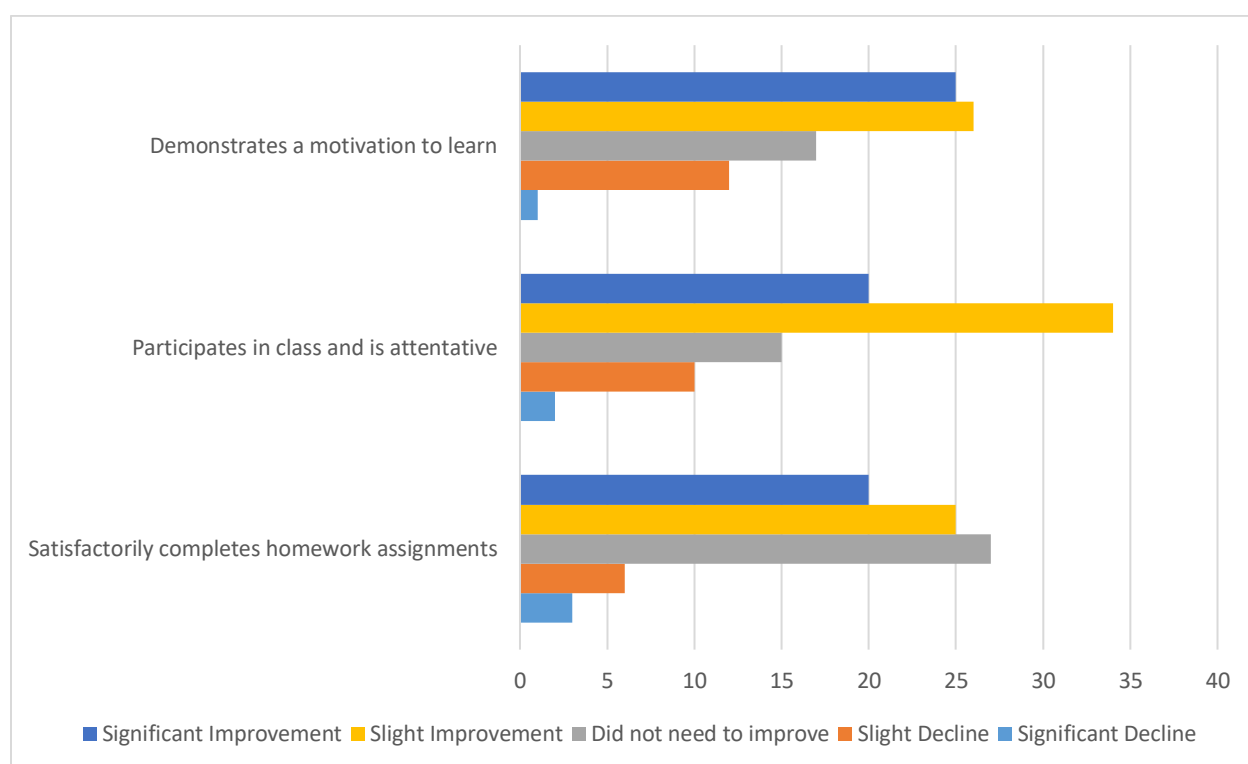


Figure 4. Teacher Survey of Student Engagement responses. *Note.* N = 81.

Prompt: "To what extent has the student changed . . ."

Source: CAYEN.

Table 8. Teacher Survey of Student Engagement Results by Site

Item	Significant Decline	Slight Decline	Did not need to improve	Slight increase	Significant increase
Jolly Elementary School (N = 23)					
Demonstrates a motivation to learn		9%	22%	30%	29%
Participates in class and is attentive		4%	22%	39%	35%
Satisfactorily completes homework assignments		4%	30%	30%	35%
International Community School (N = 18)					
Demonstrates a motivation to learn		6%	44%	17%	33%
Participates in class and is attentive			17%	61%	22%
Satisfactorily completes homework assignments			11%	39%	50%
Freedom Middle School (N = 33)					
Demonstrates a motivation to learn	3%	6%	39%	42%	9%
Participates in class and is attentive	3%	21%	18%	39%	18%
Satisfactorily completes homework assignments		27%	21%	33%	18%
Clarkston High School (N = 7)					
Demonstrates a motivation to learn	29%	14%	14%	14%	29%
Participates in class and is attentive	14%	29%	14%	14%	29%
Satisfactorily completes homework assignments	14%	29%	14%	14%	29%

7.2

Site Observations

Over the academic year, the external evaluation team observed the programs at each of the four school sites twice, once in the fall (all online) and once in the spring (two online, two on site). The evaluators found the program staff to be enthusiastic and friendly in their interactions with students. In several cases, parts of the lessons consisted of academic games/contests through online platforms, where program staff encouraged participation and lauded success while also providing support to students who may have been struggling with the activity.

During the fall observations, staff members showed that they had developed more expertise in using technology for program delivery. However, site coordinators told us that they still encountered some concerns with technology access within students' homes, such as wi-fi access, devices in disrepair, and lack of computer knowledge within the family. During Zoom sessions, some students often turned off their video, so it was difficult to tell if they were engaged.

In spring, two of the sites were able to meet in-person at their schools, and the site coordinators were very happy about that change. The other sites continued to meet online while their site coordinators negotiated with school administrations to transition to in-person instruction.

While the programs were online, program staff made effective use of break-out rooms for homework assistance, so students could join the room associated with the subject area they needed assistance in. Additionally, students who did not need to complete homework but wanted to participate in activities could do so without disturbing those getting homework assistance.

However, the site coordinators acknowledged that the extended online delivery of the program and day-time instruction had created some learning gaps among the students. In addition to covering content material they had missed, many students have had to relearn how to interact as students within the school environment and how to get their homework turned in on time.

7.3

Program Achievements

One goal of the Bright Futures after school program is to provide dynamic and influential lessons. This year we have been able to do that by dedicating all Wednesdays to learning about a new and different country. We focused on the students' and their parents' countries. We also have a diverse team of teachers and have each done a presentation ourselves as well. As a way to finalize our country unit, we took a group of students on a field trip to Plaza Fiesta, a Latin American shopping mall on Buford Highway. Buford Highway is an extremely diverse street located near most of our students. This was an excellent way to demonstrate to our students the diversity and appreciation for cultures that our country can have! We also love to have lessons in which the students can create and take a product home. For example, during a building lesson, they used popsicle sticks, building blocks and other pieces of wood in order to build a structure. A group of students built a room, with bunk beds, a table, and chairs. Another lesson we did was to create a class cookbook. Each student submitted a recipe, and we combined all of them to put together a cookbook. We also had a cookbook cover contest and had students submit covers and chose one as our official cover. We were able to distribute these at the end of the year, and the students were so excited to see the physical version of their cookbooks.

This year in the Bright Futures after school program we have noticed a great enthusiasm for reading. Consequently, we have decided to start a summer reading club. All participants are girls and in either 5th or 6th grade. The main goal was to create a bridge program for the 5th and 6th grade students. We want to give the 5th graders the space and time to create relationships and gather information about their upcoming school year in middle school. Another feature of the summer program is to acquire public library cards for the participants. We want to make sure that they can still access all the perks our libraries offer when the program ends. We decided to contact a local librarian from the Toco Hill Library to coordinate the best way to get the girls library cards. This partnership has already started off great, as they have offered to ask for a grant from their DeKalb Library Foundation in order to purchase books that our girls can keep. This is amazing as most of our girls are not able to purchase books themselves. Another idea that came out of this partnership was hosting a library outreach event next year. We hope to host this event in order to teach and provide the clients at New American Pathways all the benefits and services offered by our public libraries in DeKalb county.

During the fall of 2021 in Bright Future's Afterschool Program all eligible 7th graders learned about the importance of leadership and the opportunity to develop their leadership skills in the Georgia C5 program. Then, in the winter and spring of 2022, students were supported in completing the lengthy application, which included a 1-page essay about the hardest thing they have ever faced. Specifically, this essay was a challenge to one student who arrived in the country in 2019. This student was able to write the entire essay but needed help checking his grammar to submit a competitive essay. In addition, this student had no professional clothes to wear to the interview, and New American Pathways happily provided a collared shirt for him. In terms of the application, the student's mother speaks no English, and could not have agreed to let him apply if she had not been able to speak with our family support liaison in her home language to understand the program. Lastly, the student's family does not have a car, and he needed a ride to the interview location. Although the student was enthusiastic about applying for this program, he would not have been able to finish his application without the help of Bright Futures after-school program. We are so proud of him and our other three students who were accepted into the Georgia C5 Program. We are looking forward to next year when we will once again encourage 7th grade students at Freedom Middle School to apply for this program.

During the past year, we have made and strengthened several partnerships with New American Pathway's Bright Futures after-school program, specifically with Marilyn McGinnis and Meg Williams. Since September, Marilyn, co-founder of Peacebuilders Camp at Koinonia Farm, has attended our afterschool program weekly. During fall semester of 2021, Marilyn conducted weekly lessons for the students to learn about human rights and the importance of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. In spring 2022, each week she taught our students about a different Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and the impact that individual made on society and their community. Students engaged in critical thinking scenarios to discover what they are passionate about and what they would try to do to improve their community, or the entire world. Marilyn has also granted New American Pathways five spaces in Camp Koinonia this year for our students so our students can continue to learn about building peace in their lives and communities.

Our program also had the opportunity to partner with Museum of Design Atlanta (MODA), where several staff members worked with students on a series of lessons about graphic design, storytelling, and art as a career for our students. Meg Williams, the Education Coordinator for MODA, has gifted New American Pathways 30 free tickets for our students to tour the museum later this summer.

7.4

Success Stories

One student, who attended CHS since her freshmen year, came to the USA from Somalia, knowing little to no English. She had received little schooling, lost a parent, and been raised by her older brother in a refugee camp after the death of their mother to preventable illness. The consistency and steady relationships of the 21st Century Afterschool program at CHS helped her to develop her language skills, a safe place to land that felt like "home," and a place to receive the academic support and attention she needed to thrive. She is now on her way to a four-year university on scholarship to continue her education.

Another student, who was new to CHS this year, was moved into the district after being placed in the foster care system. He was a referral to the program from a school administrator after a number of behavior violations. He came to the program with mental health concerns, high academic needs, and failing grades. He began to attend the program weekly, building rapport with the Inspiritus staff and students. He began to come out of his shell, becoming one of the best helpers in the classroom and even agreeing to engage with his academic growth. The administrators and school security guard have seen great growth in this student. He is now a contributing school attendee who is thriving in the safety offered by consistent and safe adult and peer relationships that are supportive, trauma informed, patient, and compassionate. This is something that purely academic afterschool programs cannot offer and something that allows for this student to have the brain space to retain information, grow in reading competency and literacy levels, and see school as a safe and healthy place for learning.

One student has been a participant in the afterschool program since her freshmen year in high school, being a third-year student currently. She is a girl from Iraq who is Muslim, though not as conservative as other girls at school. She has been bullied by other students for dressing in a Western style and not wearing a hijab. This student has come to the program regularly, finding friends and safe students who accept her as she is. Her grades have remained straight A's as she is able to get the academic help that she needs in a space that is safe for her to be unconditionally accepted. She was also able to receive advice and guidance this year when she found herself in a potentially violent dating relationship. She was able to receive support and coaching around healthy relationships, her rights as woman in the United States, social adjustment, and how to end the abusive relationship and get freedom from what could have been very unsafe. She was also referred for counseling

services. This student is thriving now, empowered in herself and her autonomy and with a healthier understanding that dating violence is not tolerated or allowed because she has rights as a woman.

One of the parents in our program is a single mom with two children. Since her kids were little, she has worked very hard to pay bills and provide for her children. She struggled to find help with childcare while she was hard at work. The children ended up joining the New American Pathways afterschool program. This not only allowed Mom to work, but it helped the kids grow in their education and social skills. Her oldest child was even accepted into the C-5 leadership program with the help of our after-school teachers and liaison team. It has been wonderful to witness their many areas of growth. They used to live in a small apartment, but they now have a house, and they even own a car. The family is now truly thriving in America because of their hard work as well as the help from the New American Pathways team. With virtual learning during the pandemic, this mother has had many challenges helping the children just like many other parents. She was very relieved because the afterschool team stepped in and helped the children in every way that they could. The children had afterschool teachers to lean on during this difficult time of virtual learning.

A mother, father, and 5 children, who are refugees, arrived in the United States in 2015. Soon after their arrival in this new country, the couple experienced culture shock as well as language barriers. The most challenging hardship was how to help the couple's children who attended U.S school. The mother and father had no experience with the U.S school system and did not know how to help their children with schoolwork or how communicate with teachers. But in 2017, the parents had a breakthrough when their two older daughters joined the Bright Futures after-school program. New American Pathways' liaison and afterschool program helped with homework and provided many activities to engage the family's daughters. They made new friends and improved academically in reading, writing, and also in speaking English. The children's ability to speak English helps the parents tremendously because their daughters sometimes help them with interpretation. Unfortunately, during the pandemic, the children studied virtually. And with no background in technology, the parents faced a new challenge. But Bright Futures was there to provide the help they needed.

Currently, the eldest daughter is in 5th grade, the second daughter is in 4th grade, third son is in 2nd grade, and the fourth one is Kindergarten. The father says, "Our youngest son will be in kindergarten next school year, and we plan on letting him join New AP's Afterschool Program because I know my children receive all the

help they need, and we don't have to worry about their homework. I thank New American Pathways for advocating for us regarding the U.S. school system, how to check my children's homework, and how to be positive when there are challenges. We also encourage our children to do the same. It was hard during virtual learning, especially for us on using technology, but New AP's Liaison and afterschool teachers are helping us step by step. However, I think it is best if the afterschool program is offered in person at school because with virtual, we encounter many connection issues and we are unable to resolve as fast as we wish to since we are still learning how to use devices ourselves. After all, I am so glad that I let my children participate in the New AP afterschool program and I am recommending this Program to my friends who have school aged children."

PROGRESS TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY

Bright Futures relies on the support of community-based and other partners to supplement services provided through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant. These included the following:

Table 9: Partner Contributions

<i>Agency (Site[s])</i>	<i>Contribution Type</i>	<i>Contribution</i>
Agnes Scott College	Provided in-kind donations (volunteer) for (a) community engagement and career planning workshop and (b) alternative break student volunteers	\$750.00
BlackRock	Provided in-kind donations (volunteer) for financial literacy and career planning workshop	\$500.00
Camp Koinonia	Provided in-kind donations (volunteer) for weekly human rights lessons/- education with Marilyn (F.M.S.)	\$350.00
First Second Books	Provided in-kind donations/book donations (F.M.S.)	\$150.00
For the Kid in All of Us	Provided in-kind donations/holiday gifts, books, school supplies and backpacks	\$6,250.00
Georgia State University	Provided in-kind donations for art education activities (I.C.S.)	\$500.00
Greenleaf Foundation	Provided in-kind donations for community gardening	\$200.00
Museum of Design Atlanta (MODA)	Provided in-kind donations for art education activities (F.M.S.)	\$500.00
National Council for Jewish Women	Provided in-kind donations for backpacks and school supplies	\$1,000.00
Project One80	Provided in-kind donations (volunteer) for mental health lessons (J.E.S., F.M.S.)	\$700.00

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Bright Futures program has experienced a challenging transition as some of the program sites returned on in-person instruction while others remained online during the 2021-2022 school year. While online learning can be a beneficial approach in certain circumstances, it was a particular challenge for the Bright Futures program because of the importance of developing personal relationships with children, many of whom may be experiencing displacement trauma. The pandemic itself was also experienced by many people in the U.S. as traumatic.

Program attendance has increased compared to the previous year's attendance at all four sites. Site facilitators where the program was able to resume in-person instruction felt that that change contributed a great deal toward improving enrollment and participation in the program. In addition to implementing in-person strategies, such as hands-on learning, small-group projects, and team-based recreation, we recommend that the program also devote some time to helping students maintain the computer-based skills they developed during the online learning sessions so that if such a transition happens again in the future, then they will be better prepared for it. Participants who became particularly skilled at using computer applications could mentor other students who struggled with the changed learning environment.

We encourage the program to develop and provide learning opportunities for students, particularly in middle and high school, that lead to discussions of content or issues rather than activities that ask students to provide one-word or short answers. Many of the students in the program are working on their fluency in English, and many of the students in the program are accomplished in their English speaking. Being able to discuss content, such as a book they have read or a news event they have shared, provides them the opportunity to refine their speaking skills and to exercise critical thinking skills.

When the program staff does not include content-matter experts in instructional areas, staff should enlist someone from the school to provide advice or guidance with the lesson, if such a person is available. A content-matter expert is someone who has been trained specifically to understand and to teach about the content. Students, particularly English language learners, must receive technically accurate information as the program may be their only source for information on that topic. Information provided to students should be open to their questioning so that they can learn more about the topic and, as above, develop critical thinking skills.

We recommend that program staff regularly seek student feedback about activities as one means of letting students have a voice in the planning, development, and implementation of programming. Getting feedback could be as easy as asking younger students to raise their hand if they enjoyed the activity or if they want to do it again later. Older students can be asked what they enjoyed most about the activity and how it can be improved for the future. Giving students a meaningful way to affect their own learning can be empowering and it can help them develop their own independent voice.

