

# **EVALUATION**

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers  
Grant  
Year 1 of 3**

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers  
Grant**

**X-STREAM  
Implemented  
School Year 2017-2018**

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Columbia School District  
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## 1.0 Executive Summary

### Program Overview

The Columbia School District has completed the first year of a three-year implementation of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) grant entitled **X-STREAM** (“X”ing out learning gaps and providing eXplicit instruction for Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Art, and Math). **X-STREAM** programs were conducted at 4 school sites (Columbia Primary School, Columbia Elementary School, Jefferson Middle School, and Columbia High School) that provide both academic and enrichment opportunities for students and their families. The **X-STREAM** program partners with the Columbia-Marion County Public Library to provide services to pre-school age children, EL students, and their families. The competitive grant was approved by a panel of readers convened by staff in the Office of Federal Programs in the Mississippi Department of Education (OFP/MDE) in the fall of 2017. **X-STREAM** implementation followed the statutory requirement to provide students with academic support, character education, and enrichment activities in an after-school setting. Throughout the grant period, the schedule of after school program components followed a two-hour format with the majority of allotted time focused on academic achievement.

This evaluation report is designed to highlight the multiple strengths and accomplishments of the Columbia School District’s 21 CCLC program, **X-STREAM**, acknowledge challenges, and make recommendations to support grant compliance and continued sustainability.

This report is formatted based on requirements set forth by the Mississippi Department of Education (Department of Federal Programs), and consists of seven primary components:

- 1) Program Overview,
- 2) Program Operations,
- 3) Evaluation Design,
- 4) Objective Assessment,
- 5) Program Background,
- 6) Findings, and

## 7) Recommendations.

This report will be utilized by the program director and site directors in the following ways:

- plan and implement the next year of funding
- guide decision-making on program scheduling/activities, community/family engagement, and overall program operations
- The report may also be submitted to MDE to ensure program compliance as outlined in the approved grant proposal.

The data collected for this report was obtained through on-site visits, interviews with program/site directors and staff members, and analysis of data collected through ongoing internal evaluations and progress monitoring by the program director.

**X-STREAM** is focusing on X-ing out learning gaps by providing eXplicit instruction and eXperiences in **STREAM: Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Art, and Math**. **X-STREAM** programs targeting the at-risk students. Truancy, discipline, K-readiness, graduation rate and dropout were areas identified as in need of improvement while keeping academic achievement and college readiness as a priority. During the 2017-2018 School Year **X-STREAM** programs operated before school by adding a **Zero Period** at each campus, during school, and **Power Hour** after school as well throughout the week. Attendance was not as high as hoped so the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC planning committee decided to turn **Zero Period** to **XL Period** (eXtended Learning) for the 2018-2019 school year. The thought is that **XL Period** is a positive connotation. This has helped with attendance. The High School TST committee assigns students to the **XL Period**. If high school students have a conflict with extracurricular activities they will be assigned to the morning sessions.

Teachers tracked progress of academic achievement and they have seen improvement. The use of student mentors has been very successful not only for the younger students but it has instilled a sense of pride for the student mentors. Their contribution is effective and often the key to improved achievement as they served as peer tutors.

This federally funded program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, particularly in reading and math, it offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that complement the students' regular academic programs, including art, music, reading, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math).

The ***X-STREAM*** program is well-designed and effectively-implemented before and after-school program that diligently strives to create an engaging and impactful experience for its participants. Based on data collected, teachers, parents, and students are enjoying being a part of the program. Students are benefiting both academically (specifically in reading and math) and behaviorally. The ***X-STREAM*** program has been able not only to attain most of the SMART goals which were created by the program director and staff but in some cases exceed them. Consistent student attendance and the staff's dedication to planning engaging enrichment and remedial activities, is a key to attaining these goals.

According to interviews with the program director and each site director there are areas for growth and improvement within the program. Parental involvement is a concern. The program director expressed concern over the lack of parental involvement opportunities; however, there are plans in place to remedy this issue.

## **Evaluation**

### Evaluation Purpose

The evaluation of ***X-STREAM*** is a continuous improvement model to provide information to measure the progress of grant objectives over a specified amount of time. All data collected and subsequently analyzed will be used to guide and improve program implementation. Future data collection and evaluation reports will be used to assess, plan, design, and implement strategies to improve the program. The evaluation report will be submitted to Program Director and Site Directors so that they may analyze the findings and make necessary changes to the program design in order to maintain grant compliance and achieve their program's SMART goals. Finally, the report may be submitted to MDE for program auditing purposes. Multiple research measures were used to collect and analyze data. The evaluation used a mix method design examining quantitative measures (i.e.

report card grades, teacher progress reports, survey results, attendance, and demographic information) and qualitative measures (i.e. interviews, document review, and observations). Quantitative data were analyzed using spreadsheets and descriptive statistics such as percentages and means presented. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis procedures to confirm and support the evaluation findings. The measures, timeline, and data sources indicated are consistent with the evaluation plan provided in the approved grant application. These data were provided to the External Evaluator throughout the spring and during this fall term. There were no issues or barriers to collecting data for the evaluation because the Program Director had all necessary data organized. The following table provides information about the measures and data resources that were used for assessment of each objective.

## **Program Background**

### Program Description

**X-STREAM** is a before and after school program administered by the Columbia School District. The program operates at each of the Columbia School's four locations and off-site at the Columbia-Marion County Public Library.

Tutors and assistants strived to offer a multi-faceted after-school program that was both remedial and enriching. Homework help in all subjects, library time for independent reading, remedial computer programs, and enrichment activities (i.e. STEM lessons and healthy character) were all offered. A reading fair make and take at the Primary School was highly successful.

### Scale and Size of the Program

The Columbia School District is home to approximately 1650 students. In spring 2018, **X-STREAM** served approximately 34% of the population of the students in the district. Overall student attendance patterns by gender, race, and special services reflect the overall student population at the five schools/sites where the program operates.

To be considered a regular attendee, students must participate a minimum of 30 days each year. **X-STREAM** only began operation starting in the Spring 2018; therefore, it was a challenge for students to meet this attendance goal. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC **X-STREAM** 30-day completers were lower than expected. Still 12.4% of the district student population attended 30 or more days of the **X-STREAM** program. Plans for the retention of students is on going. Informal and formal invitations to provide program input from students and parents have been used. Academic recognition events are being planned. Student leaders are being involved in activities to improve student recruitment and retention.

#### Quality of Staffing

A high quality program relies heavily upon well-qualified and experienced staff members who provide superior services. The **X-STREAM** program has a clearly defined organizational structure that highlights each staff member's strengths. The Project Director and building principals/assistant principals work directly, collaboratively, and provide guidance and oversight with the Site Directors on major program decisions regarding funding, programming, and staffing. The Project Director serves as the final decision maker on major issues that affect the program's structure.

The Site Director serves as the "face of the program" for various stakeholders and collaborators, program staff, program participants and their parents. He/she is in charge of making decisions dealing with the daily operations of the program. The Site Director is the first line of communication with the **X-STREAM** sites. Site Directors are responsible for ensuring sites are fully staffed, following approved schedules, and implementing quality instruction and remediation. The Site Directors work to build community partnerships that eventually will support sustainability. The Program Director works closely with Site Directors at each site to ensure grant compliance.

Site Directors oversee staffing, scheduling, and student participation at each site. They serve as a mediator between the Program Director and the academic and enrichment staff. Site Directors are responsible for overseeing snack distribution, attendance, and personnel, as well as, working with school principals to help reach school goals. Site Directors

maintain and collect documentation that ensures grant compliance and efforts towards meeting internal SMART goals. They also work directly with students each day during the after school program.

The **X-STREAM** program was fortunate to secure experienced certified staff members to provide remedial and enrichment activities. There is a continuum of staff experience. Certified teachers are assigned to each classroom/rotation and are supported by non-certified assistants or student mentors. All staff members attend ongoing professional development opportunities focused on program orientations and curriculum development. Plans are in place for varied professional development opportunities in the future.

Staffing for Spring 2018

| Site                | Administrator | Teacher | Assistant | Student Mentors |
|---------------------|---------------|---------|-----------|-----------------|
| Columbia Primary    | 1             | 6       |           | 6               |
| Columbia Elementary | 1             | 20      |           | 9               |
| Jefferson Middle    | 1             | 10      |           | 2               |
| Columbia High       | 1             | 2       |           | 1               |

Partners

**X-STREAM** is still working on adding to the list of community partnerships. This shows that Columbia School District is dedicated to this wonderful program for their students' academic achievement. **X-STREAM** operates mostly under funds provided by the 21st Century Community Learning Center grant. A strong partnership between the CSD and the Columbia-Marion County Public Library is evident in the 21st CCLC joint collaboration to target improving pre-K literacy, EL literacy, parents' ability to help children academically. The Ferguson Federal Credit Union did not participate as much as expected due to the late implementation of the 21st CCLC program and the late implementation of the school based

Wildcat Federal Credit Union. Plans are in place to increase participation with all lending institutions including the Credit Union in order to promote financial literacy for both students and parents.

#### Vision and Goals

The program operates under a 21st CCLC competitive grant funded by the MS Department of Education through the U.S. Department of Education. The program also collaborates with various community organizations for additional funding. Therefore, all program services are provided to the child **free of charge**. Operations take place at each school in the district which is located in a rural, high-poverty area of South West Mississippi. **X-STREAM** focuses its efforts on the bottom quartile of students and students with any need at each site. This data comes from previous MAAP assessments, classroom grades, and current universal screening reports.

The goal and vision of the **X-STREAM** program and Columbia School District is to create and enrich the lives of the participants and increasing parental and family engagement. It is important to provides a safe place for students before and after school where remediation in ELA/Math, extended library hours, career and college readiness activities, and extracurricular activities are provided.

**X-STREAM** has developed a set of SMART goals to guide their program's design and development. These SMART goals are monitored throughout the school year and are used internally to measure the quality of the program. The following were SMART goals established for the Spring 2018 semester.

#### **S.M.A.R.T. Goals Spring 2018**

- **Measureable Objective #1.1**  
50% of regularly participating students (attending the program 30 days or more) will demonstrate improved proficiency in ELA, Math, and/or Science as indicated by report card grades and/or State Assessment scores
- **Measureable Objective #1.2**  
At least 125 0-4 year-old children who do not attend a pre-k and at least three EL students will attend at least 5 sessions of literacy provided by the Columbia-Marion County Public Library
- **Measureable Objective #2.1:**

50% of Regularly Participating (RP) students per site will meet or exceed the school's Average Daily Attendance

- Measureable Objective #2.2:  
50% of RP students per site will have 0 - 2 fewer discipline referrals than the previous year

## Goal Changes

After careful examination of the program's SMART goals and newly-found guidance set forth by MDE, the Program Director will revise the SMART goals for year two. These goals increase the program's focus on youth development and family engagement, yet still maintain superior goals for student achievement that were present in the original set of goals.

## Program Weaknesses

After speaking with the program director, one major weakness in the program design has been parental and community involvement. Most parents are working during program hours or have other children which poses a conflict for participation. The program director has plans in place to address the lack of parental and community engagement in the upcoming term. Ongoing family and parent engagement sessions will be offered once a month. The sessions will emphasize ways to support academic achievement. Grab-and-go family engagement pieces will encourage educational dialogue during transportation from the center to home.

## **Evaluation Methodology and Limitations**

### Methods and Data Collection Tools

During site visits and observations, impromptu interviews were held with program director, site directors, principals and staff members. Unstructured and conversational interviews were used to evaluate the program and gather insight from participants, staff, and others affiliated with the program. Observations were conducted spring of 2018 through fall of 2018. The evaluator visited all four sites operating under the grant to observe teacher and student interactions, review program documents, and engage in

informal conversations. Survey data, testing data, universal screener data, demographic data and attendance data were all shared with the external evaluator.

Types of data collected

| Source              | Frequency   | Source                   |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Report Card Results | Quarterly   | Local Schools            |
| Site Observations   | Bi-Annually | Sites                    |
| Parent Involvement  | Monthly     | Sign-In Sheets           |
| Student Mentors     | Daily       | Sign-In Sheets           |
| Teacher Survey      | Annually    | Sponsoring Site Teachers |
| Student Survey      | Annually    | Enrolled Students        |
| Parent Survey       | Annually    | Parents                  |
| Staff Survey        | Annually    | Staff Members            |
| Program Attendance  | Daily       | Attendance Reports       |

Sources of Information

Information was collected from parents, staff members, and students in the form of surveys. All stakeholders in these groups were asked to evaluate the program. Academic data was collected from the Columbia School District.

Reasons for data collection tools

Surveys were chosen as a data collection tool to ascertain the perceptions of the program and its success in reaching its goals. Assessment, benchmark, accountability and progress monitoring data were used to quantify and measure the program’s achievement of its goals.

Stakeholders

Parents, regular school day teachers, students, staff and advisory team all were asked to participate in surveys that helped program leaders evaluate the program’s success.

## Confidentiality

All data exchange was available only to the external evaluator, program director and site directors. The external evaluator agreed to keep confidential all data in the contract between the evaluator and the program.

## Evidence

The evaluation questions were all answerable by academic data collected throughout the year. Data was checked by the teachers, staff and site director for accuracy.

## Limitations

The nature of the timeline of the 2017-2018 grant year was the source of the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology. We know now that site evaluations and surveys should be done with much more frequency and site visits should occur more at all of the sites during a variety of activities.

## Findings

### Analysis of Evidence

The Columbia School District has completed the first year of a three-year implementation of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) grant.

### Description of Findings

#### **S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Evaluation Results for Spring 2018**

##### **Measureable Objective #1.1**

50% of regularly participating students (attending the program 30 days or more) will demonstrate improved proficiency in ELA, Math, and/or Science as indicated by report card grades and/or State Assessment scores

##### **Evaluation Results Growth Points on MAAP**

##### **MATHEMATICS**

CPS- 57.90%

CES- 63.95%

JMS- 18.20%

CHS- No

Data available due to the start date of 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester and the high school is on a block schedule.

**ELA**

CPS- 82.00%

CES- 59.25%

JMS- 44.10%

CHS- No

Data available due to the start date of 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester and the high school is on a block schedule.

**Measureable Objective #1.2**

At least 125 0-4 year-old children who do not attend a pre-k and at least three EL students will attend at least 5 sessions of literacy provided by the Columbia-Marion County Public Library

**Evaluation Result**

Program started late in the year and material were late arriving. Plans are being adjusted to improve this objective. EL parents are not familiar with the setting. Discussions are in place to improve participation from this group of parents

**Measureable Objective #2.1:**

50% of Regularly

Participating (RP) students per site will meet or exceed the school's Average Daily Attendance

**Evaluation Results % Met Objective Goal**

CPS- 58.90%

CES- 80.66%

JMS- 54.80%

CHS- 60.00%

**Measureable Objective #2.2:**

50% of RP students per site will have 0 or 2- fewer discipline referrals than the previous year

**Evaluation Results %Met Objective Goal**

CPS- 70.60%

CES- 60.69%

JMS- 78.60%

CHS- 60.00%

## Conclusions and Recommendations

| Conclusion  | Recommendation   | Evidence  |
|---|--|---|
| Student attendance and retention needs to be reduced                  | Schedule professional development opportunities for site directors to collaborate and share ideas and brainstorm retention tactics   | Attendance sheets from various sites  |
| Parental involvement and community support.                           | Promote the program during the school day and send fliers home and out in the community.<br>Recruit additional community support/partnerships, as well as, plan more intentionally for parent engagement opportunities | Interviews with site directors and program director identify this as a weak area of the program                           |
| Communication between school-day teacher and program staff is needed. | Provide formal feedback on student improvement/achievement as a means for ongoing progress monitoring  | Communication is ongoing via PLC and staff meetings<br>No formal form of student feedback exists between the two programs |