A Report to the Connecticut General Assembly:

Connecticut's State-Funded After School Programs

Prepared for the Connecticut State Department of Education

By the Center for Applied Research in Human Development

University of Connecticut

Submitted by Commissioner, Connecticut State Department of Education

February 2011

Executive Summary

The Connecticut After School Grant Program, as defined in Section 10-16x(g) and amended by Section 26 of Public Act 07-3 of the Connecticut General Statutes, was implemented in the 2007-08 school year and began its second two-year funding cycle during the 2009-10 school year.

This report presents the result of a process and outcome evaluation of state-funded after school programs (ASPs) operating during the 2009-10 school year. The Center for Applied Research in Human Development at the University of Connecticut was commissioned to undertake an analysis of existing data provided by the State Department of Education and participating after school programs. The full report provides an overview of the characteristics of the ASP sites and the youth who were involved in the ASPs. The report also presents information about program implementation (the 'process' evaluation), such as time allocation across core programming areas, the types of activities offered, parent and school communication, and staffing and professional development. Finally, the report presents the outcomes of the programs, examining how 2009-10 program participants performed in the areas of academic proficiency (as measured by the Connecticut Mastery and Academic Performance Tests, CMT/CAPT), school day attendance and school day behavior (as measured by disciplinary infractions).

Characteristics of After School Program Sites

In 2009-10, funding provided by the General Assembly supported 40 grant initiatives. Through these grants, 4,717 students were served at 60 ASP sites in 26 school districts across the state. Of these 4,717, there were 415 participants who had been involved in a program during the prior funding cycle, which allowed for consideration of longer-term changes.

Most programs began operating in February or March of 2010 (a late start due to the delayed release of funding) and continued until June 2010. Most sites reported being open four or five days a week for an average of about 13 hours per week. Over the four to five months they were open, programs varied in the degree to which they served the number of students they had planned to serve.

Across all sites, the average daily program attendance was about 108 percent; meaning that, on average, sites were serving slightly more than their target number of students on any given day. This average varied from site to site, although 42 of the 60 sites had at least 60 percent average daily attendance (ADA) throughout the grant period. Sites serving primarily elementary school students had higher ADA than did sites serving either primarily middle school or primarily high school students. Across all sites, about 68.5 percent of registered students attended regularly (i.e., more than 60% of program days); however, this percentage also varied considerably from site to site. Sites serving elementary school students had, on average, higher proportions of regularly attending students compared to middle and high school sites. Together, these findings suggest that after school sites serving primary middle and high school students may face greater challenges in recruiting and retaining students.

Characteristics of After School Program Participants

In 2009-10, state-funded ASPs served approximately equal proportions of boys and girls. Programs enrolled/served more younger students than older students; older students also attended less frequently. The average participant attended 35 days total over the grant period.

ASPs served students who were demographically similar to the general population of students in the districts where the programs were located. This included a high proportion of Black and Latino students, as well as a very high (68.5%) proportion of students who were eligible for free/reduced price lunch.

When compared with all students statewide, state-funded ASP participants included slightly higher proportions of English Language Learner (ELL) students and students whose home language was not English. However,

these groups were somewhat underrepresented when ASP participants were compared with all students attending schools in the districts where ASPs were located: 6.5% of ASP participants were ELL vs. 10.2 percent in ASP districts; 15.6 percent of ASP participants had a home language other than English vs. 24.2 percent in the ASP districts. This finding suggests that recruitment and retention of students who are English Language Learners and whose families speak a language other than English at home may require attention to the unique learning needs of this population.

Program Implementation

Consistent with the purpose of the After School Grant Program, state-funded ASPs delivered programming in academics, enrichment, and recreation and wellness. Academic programming included homework help, remedial assistance and instruction or enrichment addressing reading/literacy, math, and science. A majority of sites (88%) offered reading- or literacy-focused programming, as well as math (75% of sites) and science (80% of sites) programming. The most common forms of enrichment (offered at over 90% of sites) focused on nutrition/health/prevention, arts, physically active games and other types of games.

All sites provided some form of parent/family programming. About half of the sites (N=28, 47%) had a staff member who served as the parent/family coordinator. The most common types of parent and family programming were social events (offered at 88% of sites), parent workshops (offered at 61% of sites), and opportunities for parents to volunteer (offered at 58% of sites).

Given the academic emphasis of the After School Grant Program, ASPs' relationships with their participants' school is important. Virtually all sites reported that they had some contact with the principal at their site's partner school. Almost 80 percent of sites (N=47) had a staff member who was designated at the school liaison. Twenty-one sites (35%) were formally included in their partner school's School Improvement Plan.

Student Performance

This evaluation made use of three indicators to assess the potential impact of state-funded ASPs on participants' performance: academic achievement (as measured by 2010 CMT/CAPT scores), school day attendance and in-school behavior (as indicated by discipline records). ASP participants were compared with students state wide and with the public school population in the 26 school districts where state-funded ASPs were located. Across the three performance indicators, the general trend was that ASP participants performed fairly similarly to the students in the districts where ASPs were located. This finding is not surprising, given the abbreviated programming year and the fact that all of the three performance indicators were measured in the same year as the programming took place. It is reasonable to expect that at least some time must pass before program benefits can take effect. Nonetheless, the evaluation did reveal both promising trends and a few indicators of clear gains among ASP participants, particularly for the subgroup of students who had been involved in an ASP for more than one year.

In terms of academic performance, the overall proportion of participants who were proficient in reading, math, and writing was similar to that of the districts where ASPs were located. A noteworthy finding was apparent within a subgroup of 415 participants who had been involved in a state-funded ASP for more than one year. This subgroup of participants not only had higher reading, math and writing proficiency rates than the general group of 2009-10 ASP participants but also showed statistically significantly higher proficiency rates—in all three subjects—than the comparison districts. In the case of the Writing section of the 2010 CMT, the multi-year participants actually achieved proficiency at the same rate as the public school population state wide, which suggests that multi-year participants actually succeeded in closing the achievement gap in writing.

On the second performance indicator, school day attendance, ASP participants performed similarly to the public school population statewide and appeared to do slightly better than the public school population in the districts where ASPs were located. In 2009-10, ASP participants had an average school day attendance rate of 95.1 percent, compared to 94.4 percent for students statewide and 93.8 percent for students in ASP districts.

Among multi-year ASP participants, there was a favorable outcome: within this group, students who attended a state-funded ASP for more than 110 days over the course of the previous two-year grant cycle (2007-08 and 2008-09) showed statistically significant improvement in their school day attendance during the 2009-10 school year.

The third performance indicator, school day behavior, was assessed using records of ASP participants' disciplinary infractions during the 2009-10 school year. On this performance indicator, ASP participants showed a favorable divergence from the population in the districts where ASPs were located. In the 2009-10 ASP participant group, 11.6 percent of students had at least one disciplinary infraction. This is slightly higher than the statewide figure, which is 10.6 percent, however, it is substantially smaller than the percentage for students in the comparison districts, where 16.7 percent of students had at least one infraction.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of this process and outcome evaluation indicate that 2009-10 state-funded after school programs delivered programming that was consistent with the After School Grant Program's purpose of providing opportunities for academic enrichment that complement students' school day learning. Moreover, the evaluation results suggest that state-funded ASPs are serving students who are representative of the school districts where the programs are located. However, ASPs served lower proportions of Hispanic/Latino students and students whose home language is not English than was representative of their school districts. This suggests that state-funded ASPs may wish to review their recruitment and retention efforts with this subgroup of students.

The results of the outcome portion of the evaluation are preliminary, because these results are based on measures of performance that were collected shortly after students began attending the program. The three performance indicators show that state-funded ASPs served a group of students that generally performed similarly to the students in the school districts where programs were located. In a few noteworthy cases, ASP participants performed better than the general population in the comparison districts, despite the fact that they had had limited exposure to the program. Perhaps most noteworthy was the success of the multi-year program participants. Those with multi-year involvement in a state-funded ASP performed better than the general group of participants and also better than the population in the comparison districts. These results suggest the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of state-funded ASPs over the course of time. A longitudinal evaluation covering all ASP participants over multiple years will be able to determine the optimal length of participation for maximum student performance outcomes.

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Introduction

Connecticut's state-funded after school initiative began during the 2006-07 school year, when the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) piloted a one-year after school grant program. In the following year, 2007-08, legislation formally established the After School Grant Program, as defined in Section 10-16x(g) and amended by Section 26 of Public Act 07-3 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The purpose of this grant program is to implement or expand high-quality programs outside of school hours that offer academic, enrichment, and recreational activities to students in grades K through 12. These activities are intended to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students.

The grants awarded through the After School Grant Program are available to any organization within the state of Connecticut, including community-based organizations and school districts. The grants are awarded through a competitive process, and those competing for the grants are required to submit their application with a partner applicant with whom they would collaborate to provide the ASP services. Most partner applicants have been school districts, boards of education, or particular schools or community organizations such as museums, youth service bureaus or branches of the YMCA. Many awardees serve multiple locations using funds from a single grant, while the operations of some school districts and community organizations are supported through more than one grant.

As established by the legislature, Connecticut's state-funded after school programs operate on a two-year grant cycle. The first cycle spanned the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years, when 36 grant initiatives operated 69 sites across 29 cities and towns. After a second competitive application process, the second cycle of grants began during the 2009-10 school year. Although existing grantees were eligible for funding in the second two-year cycle, they were not given preference compared with brand new applicants. During the second grant award process, a total of 40 grants were awarded to operate 60 sites throughout the state. Of these 40 grantees, 12 (30%) were new and 28 carried over from the prior funding cycle.

In the 2009-11 grant cycle, individual grants ranged from $30,000 to a maximum of $150,000, with an average of $95,279. The number of students that grantees planned to serve (across all sites operated by the single grant) ranged from 10 to 252, with an average of 56. Per student allocations ranged from $358 to $5538; the average site received $2,239 per-student to apply toward their program budgets, which often also included other grant monies, in-kind donations, and parent fees collected by the programs.

In addition to allocating funds for direct services, the legislation also provides for "technical assistance, evaluation, program monitoring, professional development, and accreditation support," and further stipulates that a report on performance must be submitted based on measures identified by the legislation. As established by the original legislation, the report "shall include, but not be limited to, measurement of the impact on student achievement, school attendance, and in-school behavior of student participants" (C.G.S., § 10-16x(g))[1]. For the 2009-10 fiscal year, the State Department of Education commissioned the University of Connecticut's Center for Applied Research in Human Development (CARHD) to undertake analysis of existing data provided by the State Department of Education and participating after school programs in order to evaluate the state-funded after school programs (ASPs) operating during this period. This report focuses primarily on the programs operating during the 2009-10 period.

This report includes the following sections: (a) site characteristics, such as program locations, availability, and student attendance; (b) details about program implementation and activities, including the academic, enrichment, recreation, and family/parent programming that programs offered, the relationships programs had with their partner schools and the staff who worked in these programs; (c) student performance data, including CMT/CAPT scores, school attendance and disciplinary infractions; and (d) interpretation of results and discussion of next steps in terms of both programming and evaluation.

[1] Connecticut General Statutes, Title 10, Chapter 164, Section 10-16x(g).

Evaluation Methods

This evaluation examined data from several sources. The evaluation data included program-level information on all Connecticut state-funded after school programs (ASPs) that operated during the 2009-10 school year. It also included individual-level data on students who participated in the state-funded ASPs, as well as comparable state and regional information about the general public school population.

Information about After School Programs

Site- and program-level data were drawn from two sources. Basic information such as student enrollment in ASPs and program hours of operation were provided by the CSDE using information stored in the CAYEN A-Plus data system. All participating state-funded ASPs are required to use this data collection system to report to the CSDE regularly and systematically on program operations.

Additional information about program implementation and operations was available from a required End of Year Report (EYR) that was completed by all sites at the conclusion of the 2009-10 grant period. The EYR was developed by CARHD evaluators in collaboration with the CSDE. The survey was used to gather information about specific areas of program operation and implementation, including the academic, enrichment, recreation, and family/parent programming that programs offered, the relationships programs had with their partner schools, and the staff who worked in these programs. The site coordinator at each state-funded after school site completed the End of Year Report.

Information about Individual Participants

The CSDE provided CARHD with data about students who participated in state-funded ASPs during 2009-10, including students' demographics, test scores, school attendance and disciplinary records. Information about individual students' 2009-10 ASP attendance was obtained from the CAYEN database mentioned above.

In addition to information about 2009-10 participants, CARHD evaluators were provided with information about students who participated in state-funded ASPs during the 2007-09 funding cycle. Although the previous years' participants were not necessarily the same as those involved in 2009-10, this report does make use of ASP student performance data from 2007-08 and 2008-09 as a point of comparison with the performance of the 2009-10 ASP cohort.

Information about State and Regional Student Characteristics

For an additional point of comparison, CARHD evaluators used information publicly available on the CSDE's website to examine differences between ASP participants and the general public school population in the state and in the specific districts where state-funded ASPs operated in 2009-10. The appendix to this report provides a profile of the 26 districts where state-funded ASPs were located. Whenever possible, state and district data were obtained for the 2009-10 school year. For school attendance and disciplinary infractions, however, data were not available for the current year; in those cases, data from prior years are used for comparison and this is noted in the applicable sections.

Information about Multi-Year Participants

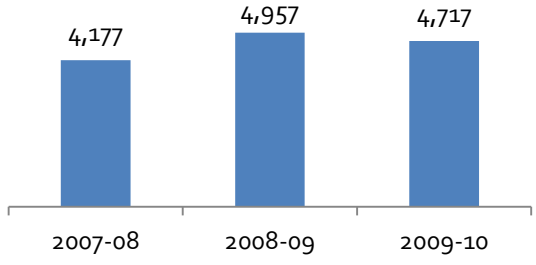
In addition to information about students who participated during the 2009-10 grant period, data were available on a small subset of participants who attended state-funded ASPs across both the 2007-09 and 2009-10 funding periods. These multi-year data were useful for considering questions related to *duration* (for example, are there positive benefits that result from longer-term participation?) and *program retention* (for example, what factors might explain participants remaining involved in ASPs over a period of several years?). The data on multi-year participants also were useful because they allow consideration of whether a longer history of involvement in an ASP might be associated with *present* gains in performance.

Section 1: Site Characteristics

Size, Location, and Participant Enrollment at State-Funded ASPs

Funding provided by the General Assembly for after school programs (ASPs) programs in 2009-10 supported 40 grant initiatives. These initiatives served a total of 4,714 students across 60 sites in 26 school districts. Figure 1 (right) shows the numbers of students that state funded ASPs served across the last three years. The number of students attending a state funded ASP during the 2009-10 grant period was slightly less than the number served during the prior year, although the numbers have been similar over the past three years.

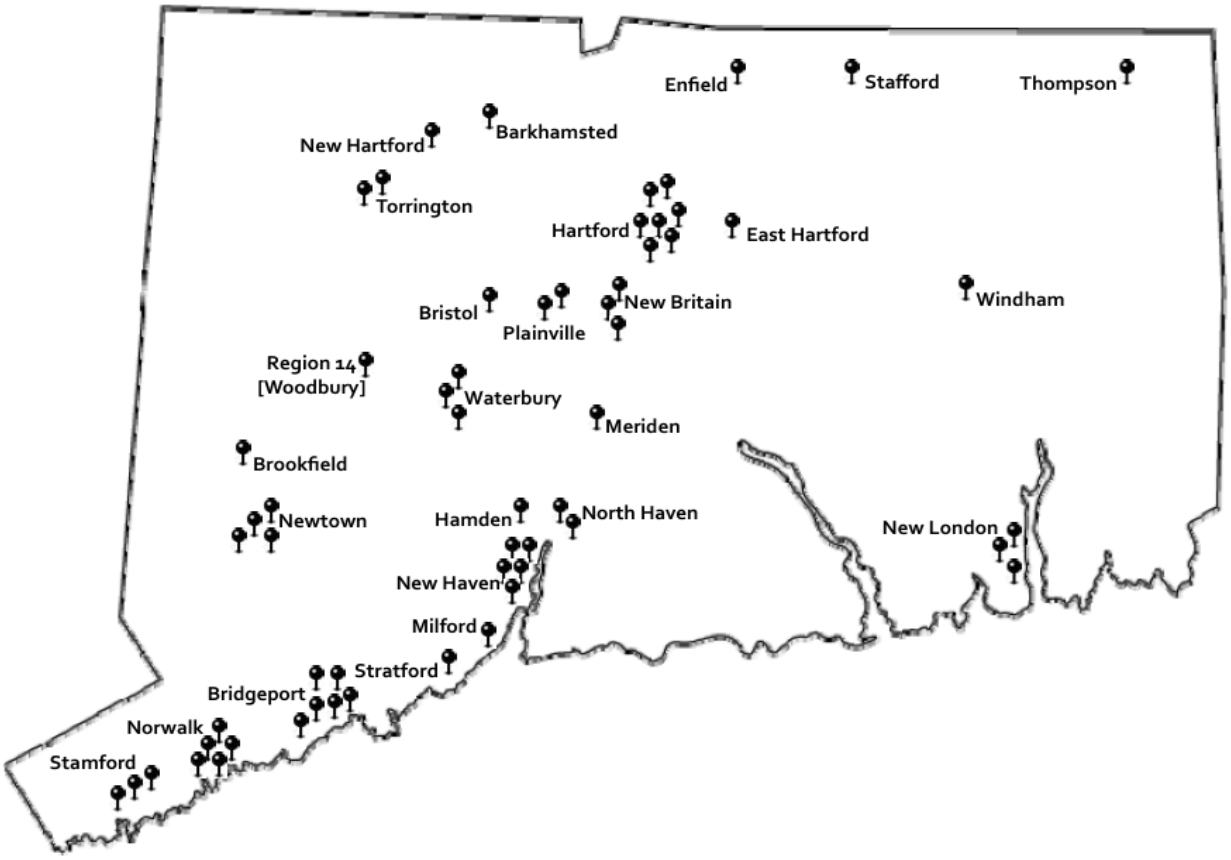
Figure 1. Number of students participating in state-funded ASPs, 2007-08 through 2009-10



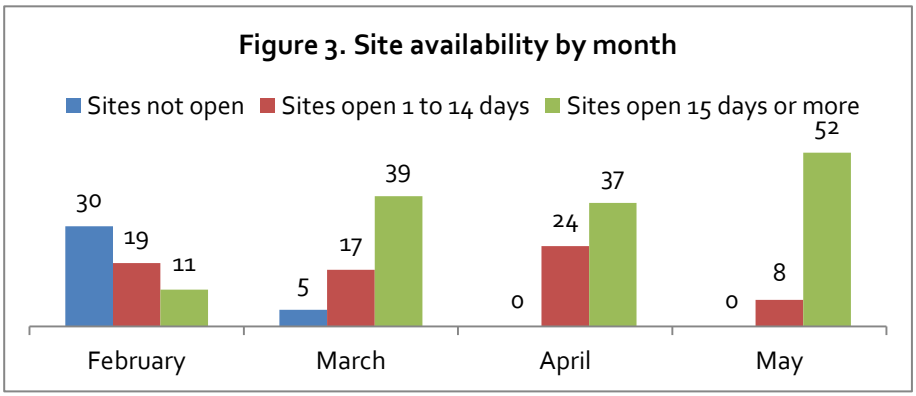
Consistent with the requirements of the After School Grant Program, all 60 sites were operated though collaboration among multiple partners. Thirty-nine sites (65%) were run primarily by a community-based organization, and the remainder (N=21; 25%) were run by a school district. Most sites (N=54; 90%) were located in a school. The majority (N=34; 56%) identified elementary school as the primary age group served, whereas 18 sites (30%) primarily served middle school students and 8 sites (13%) served mostly high school students.

The 60 sites were situated in 26 Connecticut school districts. Figure 2 below shows the geographic distribution of sites throughout the state.

Figure 2. Location of state-funded after school sites in 2009-10

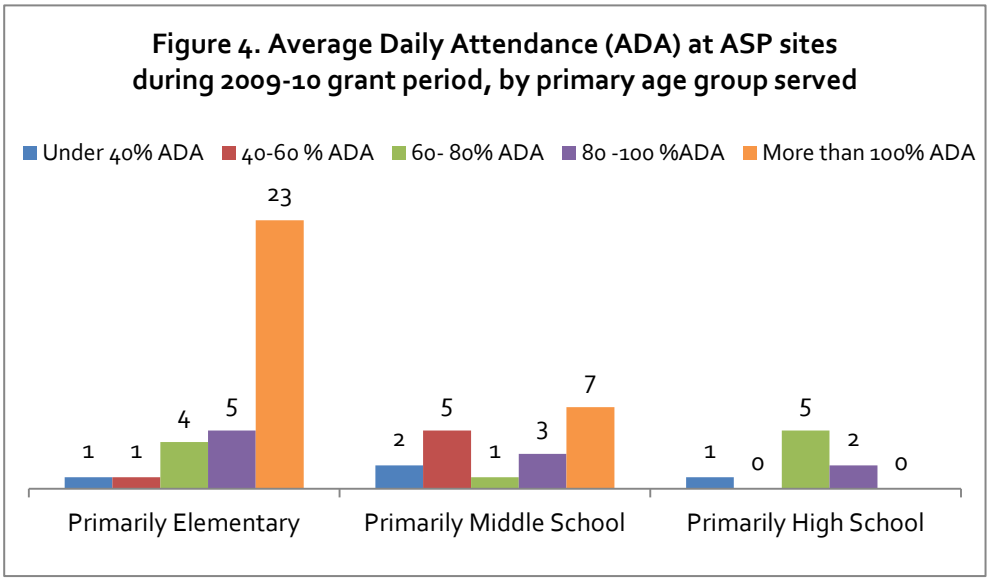


How Often Were Sites Open?



In 2009-10, funds for after school programs were disbursed late, such that most began operating in February 2010. Most sites operated for approximately four months during the academic year. Figure 3 (right) shows the availability of ASP sites for each of these months. In February, half of the sites were operating. By March, most (N=55, 92%) were open, and many were open at least 15 days during that month. During April and May, all sites were open, and the majority were open at least 15 days (62% in April and 87% in May). Most sites operated four (N=21, 35%) or five (N=35, 58%) days a week. The average site was open for about 13 hours a week. Most sites (N=52, 87%) were open after school only.

To What Degree Were Sites Operating at Capacity?



Two metrics were used to assess the degree to which ASP sites were operating at capacity: the average daily attendance and the percentage of youth attending regularly.

Average Daily Attendance

The first metric, "average daily attendance" (ADA), compares the number of youth attending a site on a given day with that site's target number.[2] The CSDE has established 60 percent ADA as the goal for state-funded ASPs. **Across all sites, the average ADA was 107.7 percent, meaning that on average sites were serving a slightly higher number of students than they had planned to serve.** Collectively, sites operating in 2009-10 improved the average ADA, compared with programs funded in 2007-09 when the average ADA was 48 percent.

The ADA ranged from 19 percent to just over 200 percent (meaning that some programs were serving considerably more students than they had planned to serve). An important source of this variation was the primary age group served by the sites. Figure 4 (right) shows sites' ADA across all four months of the 2009-10 grant period, broken down by the primary age group served.

[2] The "average daily attendance" value for each site was calculated using the following formula: (Total Number of Individual Attendances) / (Target Number of Youth to Be Served * Days Open in the Month). An 'individual attendance' refers to one student attending on one day.

As shown in the figure above, sites serving primarily elementary school students had higher ADA than did sites serving either primarily middle school or primarily high school students. Although there were a larger number of elementary sites overall, these sites were more likely to have over 100 percent ADA; 67 percent of elementary sites had over 100 percent ADA, whereas only 38 percent of middle school sites did. No high school sites had over 100 percent ADA; about half of high school sites had between 60 and 80 percent ADA over the course of the grant period. This suggests that recruitment and retention of older students in middle and high school grades presents a greater challenge than recruitment and retention of elementary-age students.

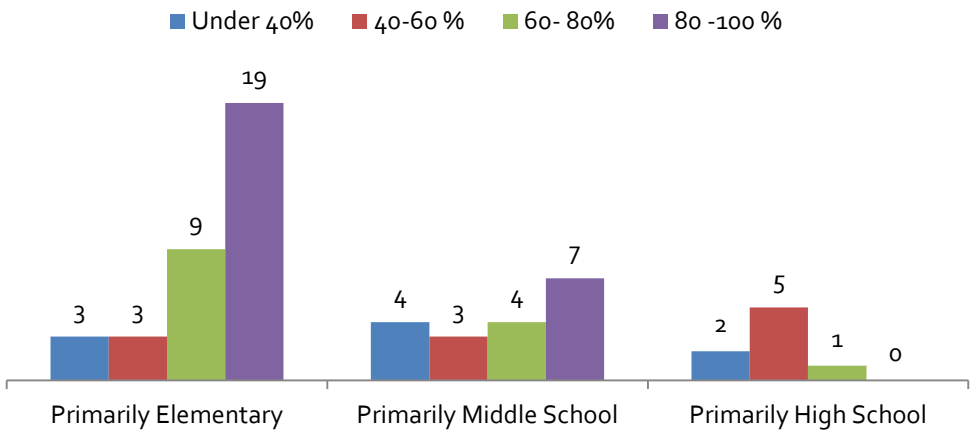
Given the short program operation year, another way to examine programs' ADA is their "peak" attendance, or the highest rate of monthly attendance they achieved over the 4-month grant period. This is an indication of the ADA that programs may be able to achieve over the course of a longer grant period, because if sites are able to sustain a high level of attendance for at least a month, they are likely to sustain it over the course of a longer program year. Only 6 sites had a peak ADA that was lower than the 60 percent threshold established by the CSDE, and only 2 of those sites had peak ADAs that were less than 50 percent. This means that the vast majority of sites were able to meet the 60 percent threshold for at least one of the months during the grant period. **Indeed, 42 of the 60 sites met or exceeded the 60 percent threshold for all of the months that they were open.**

Percentage of Youth Attending Regularly

The second metric for assessing whether sites were operating at capacity was the percentage of *registered* students who attended the program "regularly." Individuals were considered regular attendees if they attended the program at least 60 percent of the available program days. The number of registered students was the number of students who attended the program at least one time. This metric was calculated for each individual site, as well as for all sites collectively. **Across all 2009-10 ASP sites, about 68.5 percent of registered students attended regularly, meaning that, across all programs, slightly over two-thirds of the program registrants attended their ASP at least 60 percent of the time.**

At the site level, the percentage of students attending regularly varied considerably. For this metric, primary age group served also was an important source of variation. Figure 5 (right) shows sites' percentage of students attending regularly, broken down by the primary age group served at the site.

Figure 5. Percent of participants regularly attending ASP sites during the 2009-10 grant period, by primary age group served



As shown in Figure 5, elementary sites showed higher proportions of regularly attending students; eighty-two percent of these sites had over 60% of participants attending regularly, compared to 60 percent of middle school sites. Only 1 high school site (12%) had over 60% of its participants regularly attending. The findings reflected in figure 5 suggest that some sites are doing quite well at retaining participants and encouraging consistent attendance, whereas other sites – in particular, those that serve primarily middle and high school students – are finding attendance and retention to be a greater challenge.

Section 2: Description of Participants

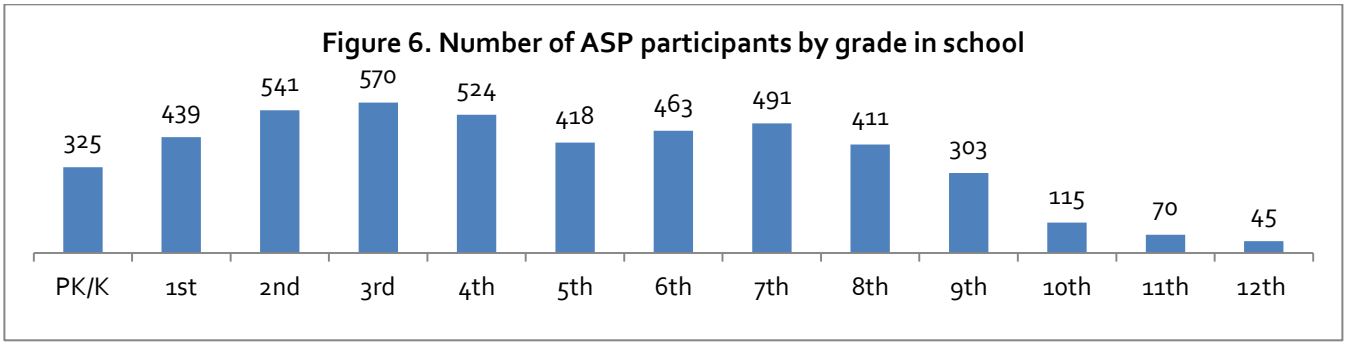
Participant Demographic Information

Gender

In 2009-10, 50.7 percent of ASP participants were female, compared to 48.7 percent in the public school population in the districts where ASPs were located. Males comprised 49.3 percent of participants, compared to a percentage of 51.3 in the ASP districts. It appears that Connecticut's state-funded ASPs served a slightly higher proportion of girls compared with the general school age population where the ASPs were located.

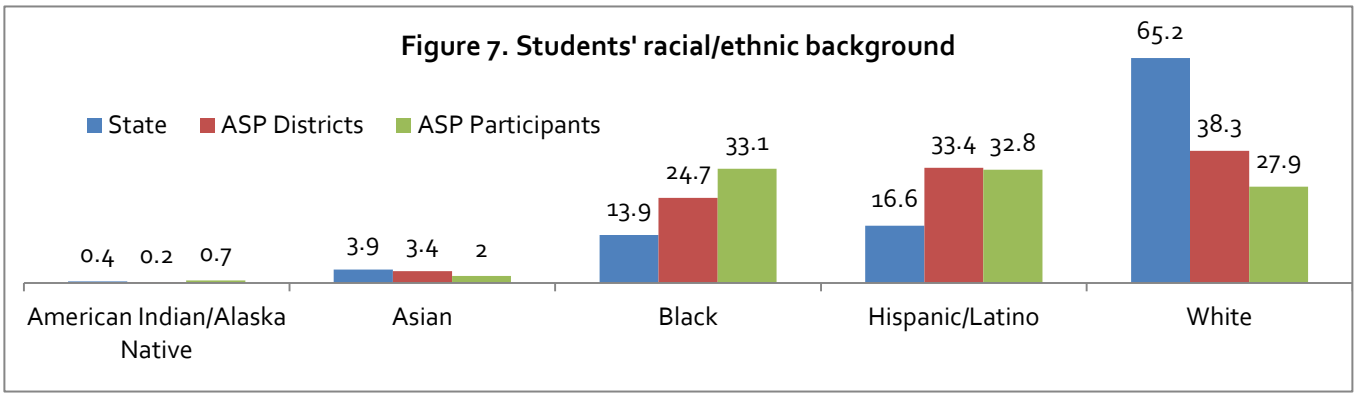
Grade Level

In 2009-10, state-funded after school programs served students from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade. Figure 6 (below) shows the distribution of ASP participants by grade. As the figure shows, the highest numbers of participants were in grades 2, 3 and 4. The participant group included far fewer older students.



Racial/Ethnic Background

Figure 7 (below) shows the racial/ethnic background of ASP participants in comparison to the public school population in the same ASP districts and in Connecticut as a whole. ASPs enrolled a higher proportion of black students and a lower proportion of white students, compared to the student population in the districts where ASPs were located.[3]



[3] Statistical tests were used to evaluate differences between the ASP participant group and the student population in ASP districts. For two racial ethnic groups, the differences were statistically significant. The test statistic was the *z* statistic, which evaluates whether the difference between two population values is larger than expected due to chance, based on the distribution of scores within each population. Statistically significant differences for racial/ethnic background included: proportion of black students (33.1% vs. 24.7%), z=13.224, p=0.0000; and proportion of white students (27.9% vs. 38.3%), z=-14.480, p=0.0000. The difference in the proportion of Hispanic students (32.8% vs. 33.4%) was not statistically significant: z=-0.936, p<0.3493.

Free/Reduced Lunch Status

Figure 8 (right) shows the percentage of students who were eligible for free/reduced lunch across the state, in the ASP districts, and in the ASPs. During the 2009-10 grant period, 68.4 percent of students who participated in state-funded ASPs were eligible for free or reduced price lunch, compared to 59.7 percent of students in ASP districts and 29.7 percent of the general public school population. Compared to the general public school population in Connecticut, students in the districts where state-funded ASPs were located were substantially more likely to be eligible for free/reduced lunch. ASP participants were even more likely to be eligible for free or reduced lunch than students in the districts where ASPs were located.[4]

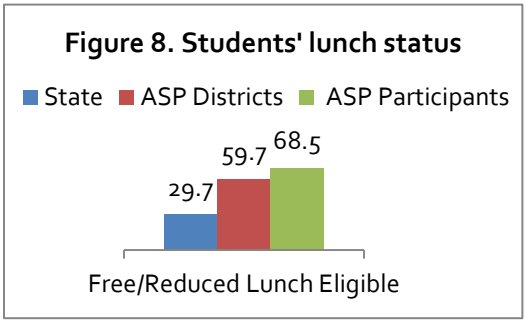


Figure 8. Students' lunch status

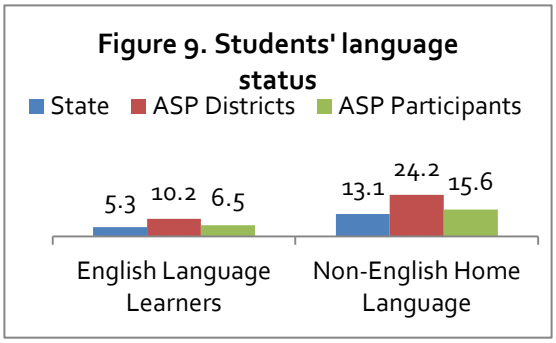


Figure 9. Students' language status

Language Status

Figure 9 (right) shows the percentages of students in ASPs who were English Language Learners (ELL) and who spoke a language other than English at home. These percentages are contrasted with those for all students statewide and all students in ASP districts. Compared with all students statewide, state-funded ASP participants included a higher proportion of students who are ELL and who speak a language other than English at home. However, it appears that state-funded ASPs did not serve an equal proportion of these students as are located in the ASP districts.[5] This finding suggests that recruitment and retention of students who are English language learners and whose families speak a language other than English at home may require additional attention to the unique needs of this population.

Attendance at State-Funded After School Programs

As noted above, state-funded after school programming began relatively late in the 2009-10 school year due to the delayed release of funding. Most programs began serving students in February 2010 and were open through the end of the school year. The average individual participant's attendance reflected this shortened programming year. Individual program attendance varied widely, from just 1 day to over 90 days. The average individual attended an ASP 35 days total during the school year. Boys and girls attended at the same rate. Students in younger grades attended more days, whereas older students came less often. Figure 10 (below) shows the average number of days participants in each grade attended a state-funded ASP. This age-related trend is consistent with the trend observed during the 2007-09 funding cycle. Although these observations about participants' total days of attendance do not take into account how often sites were available (programs for older youth may have been open less often), figure 10 does document that there are age-related differences in the amount of programming that younger and older students received.

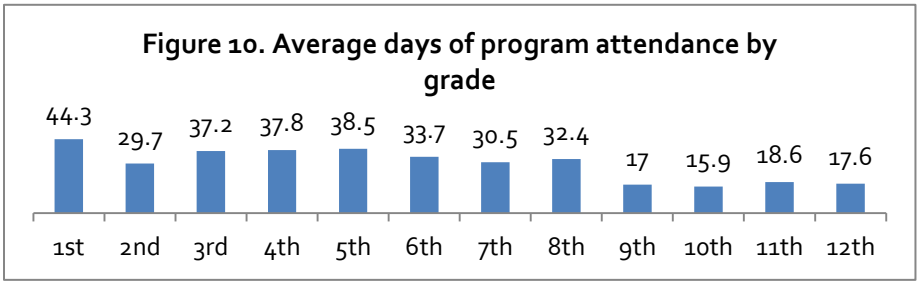


Figure 10. Average days of program attendance by grade

[4] Comparing ASP participants with students in ASP districts, there was a statistically significant difference in the proportions of students receiving free/reduced lunch (68.5% vs. 59.7%), z=12.488, p=0.0000.

[5] Comparing ASP participants with students in ASP districts, there were statistically significant differences in the proportion of ELL students (6.5% vs. 10.2%), z=-8.616, p=0.0000; and the proportion of students speaking a non-English language at home (15.6% vs. 24.2%), z=-18.479, p=0.0000.

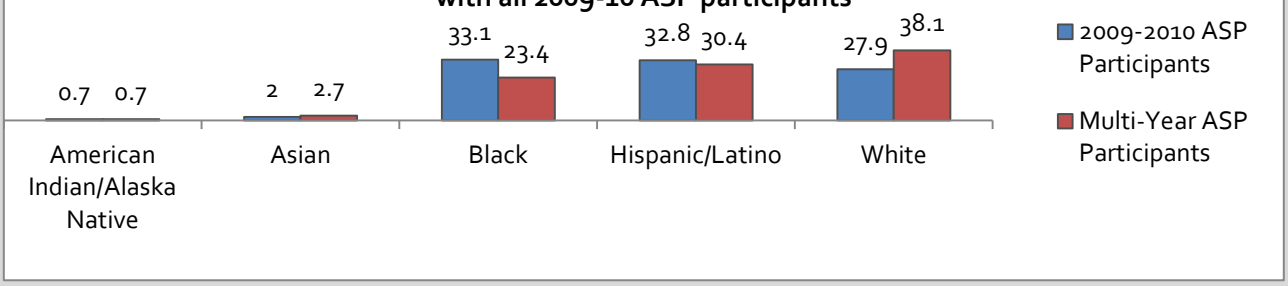
Attendance at ASPs Over Time: Spotlight on Multi-Year Participants

As previously mentioned, multi-year data were available for a subgroup of participants who attended a state-funded ASP across both the 2007-09 and 2009-10 grant funding periods. This subgroup of participants consisted of 415 individuals from over 30 state-funded ASPs across the state. Approximately half of the multi-year participants (N=220, 54%) remained at the same site over the course of time. The remaining 46 percent (N=187) attended more than one ASP site during the three-year period. Thus, some multi-year participants were involved with the *same program* over several years, whereas others were involved with *more than one* program.

Multi-Year Participants' Demographic Information

The demographic profile of the multi-year participants was similar to the general group of 2009-10 participants, with a few small exceptions. Both groups primarily contained students from younger grades (kindergarten through 4th grade). Multi-year participants had a slightly higher proportion of females than the 2009-10 ASP group as a whole (55.2% vs. 50.7%). There were also slight differences in the racial/ethnic backgrounds of the two groups. Black students were proportionally less represented in the multi-year group than in the 2009-10 ASP group as a whole. White students were overrepresented in the multi-year group.[6] The racial and ethnic backgrounds of the two groups are summarized in Figure 11 below.

Figure 11. Racial/ethnic background of multi-year ASP participants compared with all 2009-10 ASP participants



Both groups were similar in terms of eligibility for free/reduced price lunch eligibility. Fewer participants in the multi-year group were English Language Learners (3.9% vs. 6.5%), although more spoke a language other than English at home (21% vs. 15.6%) compared to the whole group of 2009-2010 ASP participants.[7] It should be noted that the demographic profile of the multi-year group of students may have been influenced by which programs (and districts) received funding during both grant periods (70% of grantees were funded in both grant periods), in addition to individual and program characteristics associated with participant retention.

Multi-Year Participants' 2009-10 Program Attendance

Participants who had attended a state-funded ASP during the previous funding period tended to have greater program attendance during the 2009-10 program year. Multi-year participants attended an average of 46 days in 2009-2010, compared to the 2009-10 ASP group as a whole, which averaged 35 days of attendance.[8] Additional comparisons between the multi-year group and the full 2009-10 group are offered in subsequent sections of this report.

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[6] There was a statistically significant difference in the proportion of Black students in Multi-Year Participant group versus the general ASP Participants group (z=-3.852, p<0.00001) but not for Latino students (z=-0.791, p<0.2148).

[7] Both differences were statistically significant, based on chi-square tests (ELL, χ^2=4.933, p<0.026; non-English home language, χ^2=9.461, p<0.002). The chi-square test considers whether two populations differ (greater than expected due to chance) in the distribution of frequencies across categories.

[8] This was a statistically significant difference based on a t-test comparison of means (t=10.654, p<0.00001). The t-test considers whether two population parameters differ more than would be expected due to chance.

Section 3: Program Implementation

Connecticut's state-funded ASPs delivered programming in the core domains of academics, enrichment, and recreation and wellness. At the average site, about half of programming time (45%) was devoted to academics, and approximately a quarter of the time was spent both on enrichment (27%) and on recreation/wellness (28%).

Academic Programming

To assist students with meeting academic achievement standards in core areas, some sites provide tutorial services in the form of homework help and remedial assistance. **On average, sites spent about 36 percent of academic time on homework help**. At the average site, homework help was provided daily and all students were required to attend. Generally, students worked in small groups and were supervised by certified teachers.

In addition to homework help, **45 programs (75%) offered remedial assistance**. On average, about 30 percent of students were designated as needing remedial assistance. These students were most commonly identified through teacher recommendations, test scores, low grades, and poor homework completion rates.

Connecticut's state-funded ASPs also offered programming in the core academic areas of reading/literacy, math and science. Figure 12 (right) shows the percentage of sites offering programming in these areas. Most sites offered reading-/literacy-focused programming. Somewhat fewer sites offered math or science opportunities.

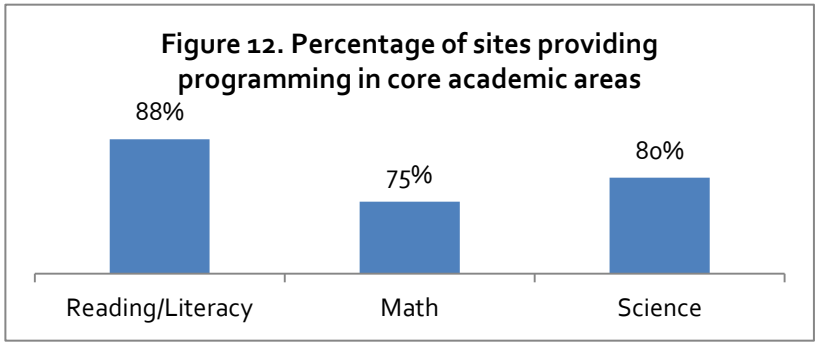


Figure 12. Percentage of sites providing programming in core academic areas

Enrichment, Recreation, and Wellness Programming

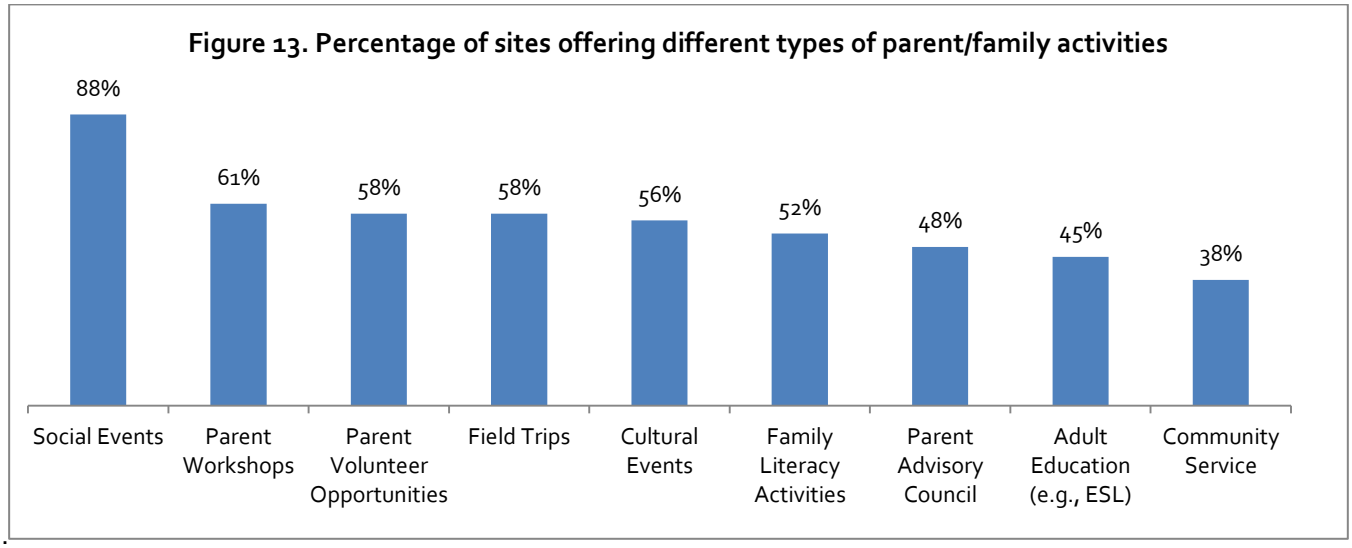
In addition to academic programming, sites provided a broad array of additional activities and services. Enrichment activities may include arts-related programming, entrepreneurial education, and character education, such as programming focused on participants' social and emotional development. Sites offered the following types of enrichment, recreation and wellness programming:

- **Offered at over 90 percent of sites:** nutrition/health/prevention, arts, physically active games, other games
- **Offered at 70-75 percent of sites:** service learning, computers
- **Offered at 40-45 percent of sites:** mentoring, vocational programming

Parent and Family Programming

In addition to providing programming specifically for students, state-funded ASPs are required to include a parental involvement component, which includes both communicating with parents about their student's program activities and providing programming that directly serves parents and families. Given the importance of parental involvement, the End of Year Report contained questions about sites' parent and family programming.

Twenty-eight sites (47%) had a designated person responsible for parent and family involvement. At most sites (N=20), these duties were assigned to a staff member who had other regular duties as well. At all sites, staff spoke to parents in person, and at most sites, staff relayed information home to parents through the participating child. Staff members also commonly spoke with parents over the phone or mailed information to them. Figure 13 (next page) summarizes the types of outreach activities offered to parents and the percentage of sites that offered each type of activity.



As indicated in figure 13, the most common parent and family activities were social events, which were included at nearly 90 percent of the ASP sites. A wide range of parent/family activities, including family literacy activities, were available at least 50 percent of sites. Parent/family community service activities were least common.

Relationships with Partner Schools

A primary goal of after school programs is to provide students with programming aligned with learning objectives in core academic subjects and enrichment opportunities that complement their school day learning. Additionally, many programs are physically located in a school, which means that successful operation of the program requires regular coordination between the school and program around the use of physical resources. For all of these reasons, communication between after school staff and participants' schools are important for ensuring high quality after school programming.

Liaison to the School

Forty-seven site coordinators (79%) reported that the site had a designed person who was in charge of communication with the partner school.

Inclusion in the School Improvement Plan

Twenty-one site coordinators (35%) reported that their site was formally included in the partner school's school improvement plan.

During the 2009-10 grant period, all but one site had at least yearly contact with the principal of their site's partner school. Far fewer sites communicated with the district superintendent; a little over half (N=31, 52%) communicated with the superintendent at least once during the year. Broadly speaking, a large percentage of sites reported regular contact with school day teachers and academic support staff (e.g., guidance counselors). Over 70 percent of sites reported that they had at least monthly contact with school day teachers (whether on the program staff or not) and with academic support staff. Sites were most likely to report weekly contact with teachers and academic support staff, such as guidance counselors.

Staffing and Professional Development

The services provided by quality ASPs are driven by having a well trained, well supported staff. Thus, state-funded ASPs were asked to report on their practices related to program staffing and professional development.

At a substantial number of sites, (N=28, 46%) at least half of the staff had worked at the site for over two years. At a majority of sites (N=42, 70%), less than a quarter of their staff was comprised of people who had worked there fewer than 6 months. Sites with a majority of new staff members (those who had worked at the site less than six months) were generally those that were "brand new" and had not operated during the last funding cycle.

At most sites (N=54, 90%) less than 10 percent of their staff turned over during the course of the year. More than 20 percent of staff turned over during the grant period at only 3 sites.

Regular staff meetings were a part of nearly all sites' program operations. Fifty-six sites (93%) met at least monthly. The average site held staff meetings that lasted for 48 minutes. Over half of sites (N=34, 56%) indicated that their staff meetings lasted for an hour or more.

General Staffing Characteristics

- The average site had **13.75 total staff members** (range: 2 to 38)**.**
- The average site had **9.5 staff members present on a typical day** (range: 2 to 28). This includes administrators, direct service staff, and volunteers or interns.
- At a typical site, **57 percent** of staff were **paid employees who were not certified teachers.**
- On average, **27 percent** of staff members were **certified teachers who were also school day staff**.
- At an average site, approximately **9 percent** of the programs' staff consisted of **certified teachers who were not on staff at the school**.

At most sites, staff meetings regularly addressed general programming considerations (N=56, 93%) and planning for specific program activities (N=42, 70%). Close to two-thirds of sites (N=36, 60%) consistently used staff meetings to discuss the needs of individual students.

Figure 14 (below) summarizes the most and least commonly offered topics of sites' professional development activities. Many topics (e.g., program policies and procedures, parent and family involvement) were consistently addressed at many sites.

Figure 14. Professional development topics addressed by ASPs (percentage of sites offering each topic)

Program policies and procedures (100%)	How to deliver recreational/health activities (95%)
Involving parents and families (100%)	Youth development (87%)
Program goals (98%)	Working with participants from a variety of cultural backgrounds (87%)
Staff-student interactions (97%)	Academic instruction strategies (80%)
Creating structure, behavioral management (95%)	Data management (78%)
Maintaining physical and psychological safety (95%)	How to deliver social development activities (78%)
Working with participants with a variety of academic needs (95%)	

Section 4: Performance Measures

Based on requirements outlined by the legislature, three measures were chosen as performance indicators for students enrolled in state-funded ASPs: academic achievement, school day attendance, and school day behavior.

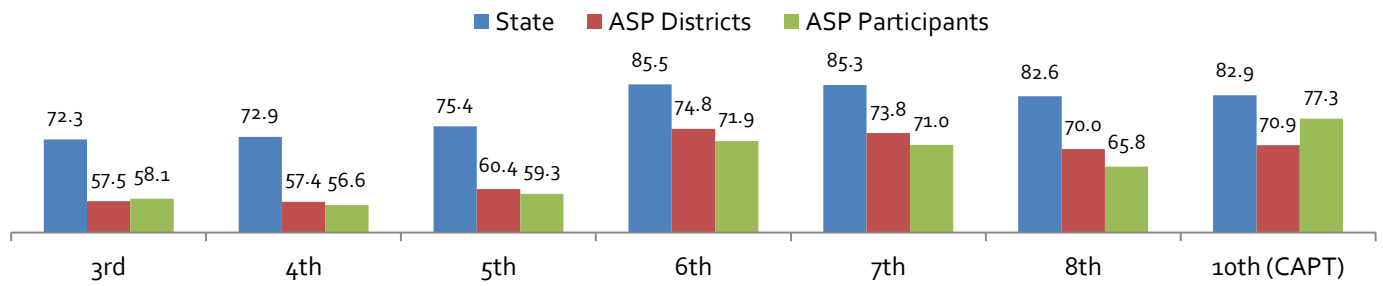
Performance Measure 1: Academic Achievement (CMT/CAPT Proficiency)

The first performance measure was participants' academic achievement, represented by students' scores on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) or the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). CMT and CAPT data from the 2009-10 school year (tests administered in March 2010) were available for approximately 2,500 of the 4,717 ASP participants. Data were not available for the remaining participants because these students did not take the CMT or CAPT during the 2009-10 school year. Only 3rd through 8th graders took the CMT, and only 10th graders took the CAPT. In some cases, English Language Learner students also are exempt from these tests.

Reading Proficiency: Current Cohort of ASP Participants

Across all grades that took the 2010 CMT, 63.5 percent of ASP participants scored at or above proficiency level on the Reading section, compared to a percentage of 65.5 in the ASP districts and a much higher 79.1 percent statewide. The reading proficiency rate for ASP participants was 2.0 percent lower than that of the population in ASP districts, a statistically significant difference.[9] For ASP participants who took the CAPT, however, 77.3 percent achieved proficiency on the Reading section, compared with 70.9 percent in ASP districts and 82.9 percent statewide. The 6.6 percent difference between in reading proficiency between ASP participants and students in ASP districts was not statistically significant, which indicates that ASP participants were performing similarly to all students in their ASP districts.[10] Figure 15 (below) shows the percentage of students, by grade, who scored at proficiency level or higher. Also shown is the percentage of students scoring at proficiency or higher in the ASP districts and in the state as a whole.

Figure 15. Percentage of students achieving 2010 CMT/CAPT Reading proficiency by grade



Across grades, students in ASP districts achieved Reading proficiency at lower rates than students statewide. In general, the Reading proficiency of ASP participants mirrored that of the districts where ASPs were located.[11] None of the grade-specific Reading differences between ASP participants and ASP districts were statistically significant.

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[9] The difference between ASP participants' and ASP districts' overall CMT Reading proficiency rates was statistically significant (63.5% vs. 65.5%, z=-2.079, p<0.0376). These 'overall' numbers do not include CAPT scores. Although a two percentage point difference is not especially large, the statistical significance may be explained by the N for the statewide group being quite large, which adds greater statistical power to the analysis.

[10] The difference between ASP participants' and ASP districts' CAPT Reading proficiency rates was not statistically significant (77.3% vs. 70.9%, z=1.318, p<0.1873). Although the magnitude of the difference was quite large, the non-significant result was due to the fact that only a small number of 10th graders were in the ASP participant group.

[11] Statistical tests for differences, by grade, between ASP participants and ASP districts yielded the following non-significant test statistic values: 3rd: z=0.266, p<0.7902; 4th: z=-0.335, p<0.7376; 5th: z=-0.433, p<0.6650; 6th: z=-1.286, p<0.1984; 7th: z=-1.245, p<0.2131; 8th: z=-1.656, p<0.0977; 10th: z=1.318, p<0.1873.

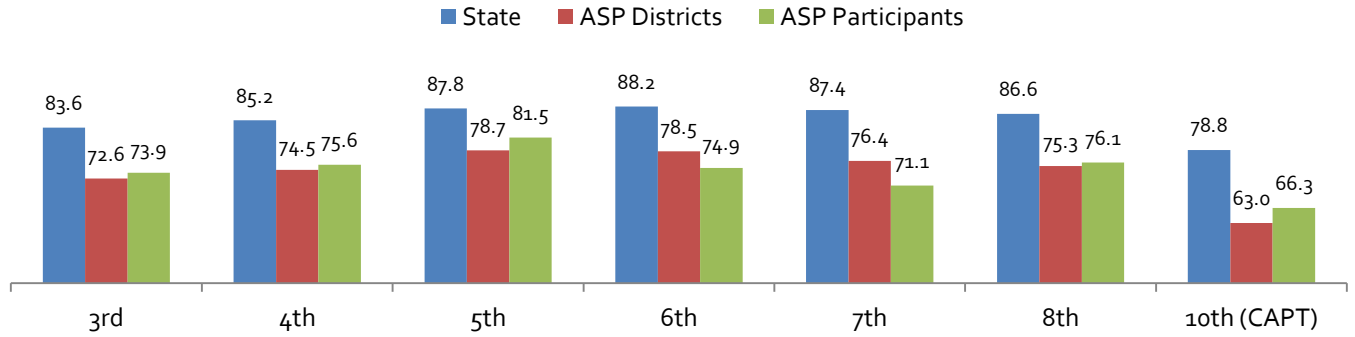
CMT Reading Proficiency: Comparison to Prior ASP Cohorts

The 2010 CMT Reading performance of ASP participants (63.5% proficiency) represented an increase compared with participants during the 2007-09 funding cycle: of the 2007-09 cohort, 55.8 percent achieved CMT Reading proficiency in 2007, and 57.0 percent in 2008.[12] There were not enough 10th graders in the 2007-09 cohort to make a comparison for CAPT scores.

Math Proficiency: Current Cohort of ASP Participants

Across all grades, 75.3 percent of ASP participants met criteria for proficiency in Math on the 2010 CMT, compared to overall percentages of 76.0 percent in ASP districts and 86.5 percent statewide.[13] On the CAPT, 66.3 percent of participants achieved Math proficiency, compared with 63.0 percent in ASP districts and 78.8 percent statewide.[14] Figure 16 (below) shows the percentage of students, by grade, who scored at the proficiency level or higher on the Math section of the CMT/CAPT test. Also shown in the figure is the percentage of students scoring at proficiency or higher in the ASP districts and in the state as a whole.

Figure 16. Percentage of students achieving 2010 CMT/CAPT Math proficiency by grade



The Math proficiency results reported in figure 16 are similar to the results for Reading proficiency. ASP districts have considerably lower Math performance than students statewide, and ASP participants in general have proficiency levels similar to the population of students in the districts where ASPs are located. Across all grades, differences in Math proficiency between ASP participants and students in ASP districts were not statistically significantly different.[15]

CMT Math Proficiency: Comparison to Prior ASP Cohorts

The 2010 CMT Math performance of the ASP group (75.3% proficiency) represented an increase compared with those who participated in programs during the 2007-09 funding cycle: 68.3% achieved proficiency in 2007 and 69.5% in 2008.[16] There were not enough 10th graders in the 2007-09 cohort to make a comparison for CAPT scores.

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[12] From 2008 to 2010, there was a statistically significant increase in CMT proficiency, z=4.583, p<0.00001.

[13] The difference in the overall CMT Math proficiency among ASP participants versus ASP districts was not statistically significant (75.3% vs. 76.0%, z=-0.749, p<0.4539). These 'overall' numbers do not include CAPT scores.

[14] The difference in the CAPT Math proficiency rate among ASP participants versus ASP districts was not statistically significant (66.3% vs. 63.0%, z=0.650, p<0.5157).

[15] The statistical tests for Math differences, by grade, yielded the following non-significant test statistic values: 3rd: z=0.556, p<0.5782; 4th: z=0.524, p<0.6003; 5th: z=1.289, p<0.1974; 6th: z=-1.699, p<0.0893; 7th: z=-2.484, p<0.0130; 8th: z=0.328, p<0.7429; 10th: z=0.650, p<0.5157. Although a few of these results approach significance, in that they come close to the conventional 0.05 significance level, it is considered good practice to use a more stringent significance level when conducting multiple tests at the same time. According to this more stringent significance level of 0.0071 (determined using a Bonferroni adjustment), none of the differences reach statistical significance.

[16] The change in ASP participants' Math proficiency rate from 2008 to 2010 was statistically significant (z=4.542, p=0.0000).

Writing Proficiency: Current Cohort of ASP Participants

Across all grades, 73.7 percent of ASP participants met criteria for proficiency on the Writing section of the 2010 CMT, compared with 73.0 percent in ASP districts and 83.3 percent statewide.[17] Eighty-three percent of 10th grade ASP participants scored at proficiency or higher on the Writing section of the 2010 CAPT, compared with 76.1 percent of students in ASP districts and 86.2 percent of those who took the 2010 CAPT statewide.[18]

Figure 17 (below) shows the percentage of students, by grade, who scored at the proficiency level or higher. Also shown is the overall percentage of students scoring at proficiency or higher in the ASP districts and statewide.

Figure 17. Percentage of students achieving 2010 CMT/CAPT Writing proficiency by grade

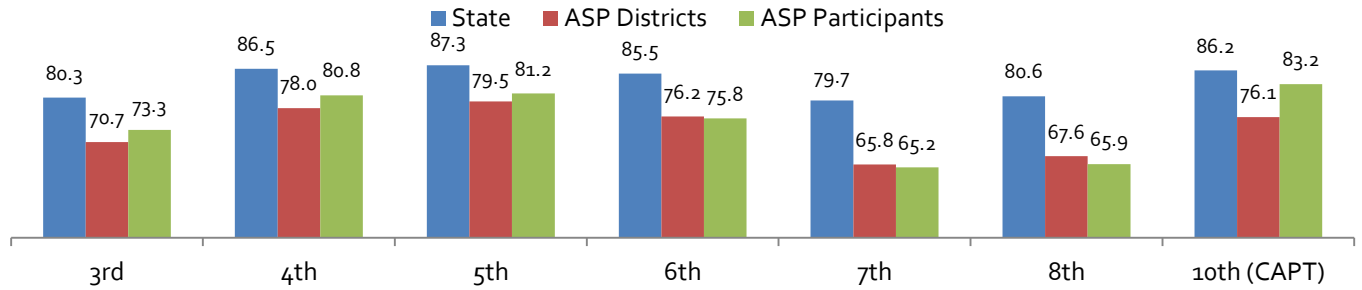


Figure 17 above suggests that, similar to proficiency in Reading and Math, the Writing proficiency rates for ASP participants mirrored those of the general population in the districts where ASPs were located.

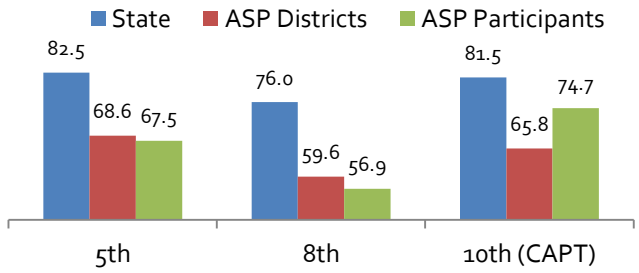
CMT Writing Proficiency: Comparison to Prior ASP Cohorts

Compared with prior ASP participants' performance, the 2009-10 ASP group had a larger percentage of students who achieved proficiency in Writing on the CMT: of the participants from the 2007-09 funding cycle, 73.1 percent achieved writing proficiency on the 2007 test, 71.7 percent on the 2008 test.[19] There were not enough 10th graders in the 2007-09 cohort to make a comparison for CAPT scores.

CMT Science

During 2009-10, a Science test was given only to students in 5th (CMT), 8th (CMT), and 10th (CAPT) grades. Figure 18 (right) shows the percentage of participants in each grade who scored at the proficiency level. Figure 18 also shows the overall percentage of students, by grade, scoring at proficiency or higher in the ASP districts and the state. ASP participants appeared to achieve Science proficiency at rates similar to the students in ASP districts.[20]

Figure 18. Percentage of students achieving 2010 CMT/CAPT Science proficiency by grade



[17] The difference in overall Writing proficiency between ASP participants and ASP districts was not statistically significant (73.7% vs. 73.0%, z=0.773, p<0.4394).
[18] The difference in CAPT Writing proficiency rates of ASP participants and ASP districts was not statistically significant (83.2% vs. 76.1%, z=1.560, p<0.1188).
[19] The change in overall CMT Writing proficiency from 2008 to 2010 was statistically significant (z=1.8937, p=0.0294).
[20] Differences between ASP participants and students in ASP districts were not statistically significant: 5th: z=-0.401; p<0.6884; 8th: z=-1.082, p<0.2793; 10th: z=1.798, p<0.0721.

CMT Proficiency Over Time: Spotlight on Multi-Year Participants

This section presents results for trends over time in the academic achievement of students who participated in an ASP for multiple years (the "multi-year participants"). Of these students, only 9 were in high school during 2009-10, so there were very few multi-year participants who took the CAPT during the three-year period. Consequently, analyses of trends in CAPT scores are not included in this section.

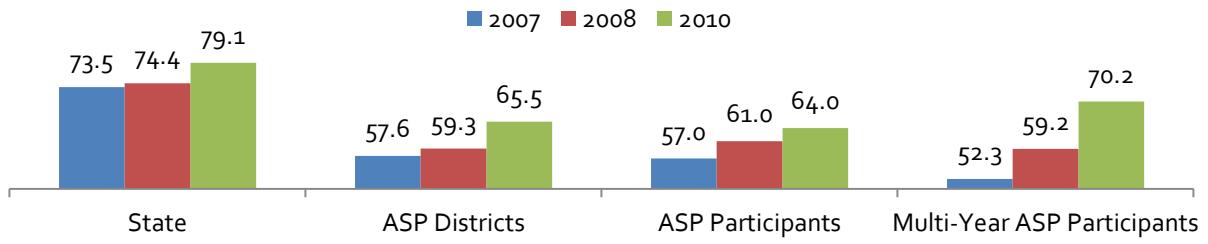
Figures 19 through 21 below show trends over time among the multi-year participants in the percentage who achieved proficiency levels on each section of the CMT. For comparison purposes, CMT proficiencies are listed for the state as a whole, ASP districts in which ASPs operated, the total group of ASP participants, and the subgroup of ASP attendees for whom multi-year data were available. CMT scores for the multi-year participants were available for the 2007, 2008, and 2010 test administrations, but not the 2009 administration. Thus, only those three years are presented in the analyses below.

When interpreting CMT results presented below, it is important to keep in mind that each year represents different groups of students, with the exception of the multi-year students. Other than this multi-year group, the 2007-09 and 2009-10 groups include entirely different groups of students. The data for ASP multi-year participants, however, are from the same group of students followed over time.

CMT Reading

Figure 19 below shows that, at the beginning of the three-year period, ASP multi-year participants were proficient in Reading at lower rates than the general group of ASP participants. By the end of the three-year period, however, the percentage of ASP multi-year participants achieving proficiency was significantly higher than that of the ASP participant group and of all students in ASP districts.[21] These findings suggest that the group of multi-year ASP participants increased in rates of CMT Reading proficiency more than other ASP participants, other students in ASP districts, and even students state wide. The CMT Reading performance of multi-year participants is consistent with the state's mission to close the achievement gap. It is important to note, however, that these findings should be interpreted cautiously. Given the available data, it is not possible to rule out that the positive outcomes for the multi-year group are the result of a selection effect, that is, a result of individual characteristics of students that motivated them to attend more consistently or achieve greater gains in reading.

Figure 19. Percentage of students achieving CMT Reading proficiency

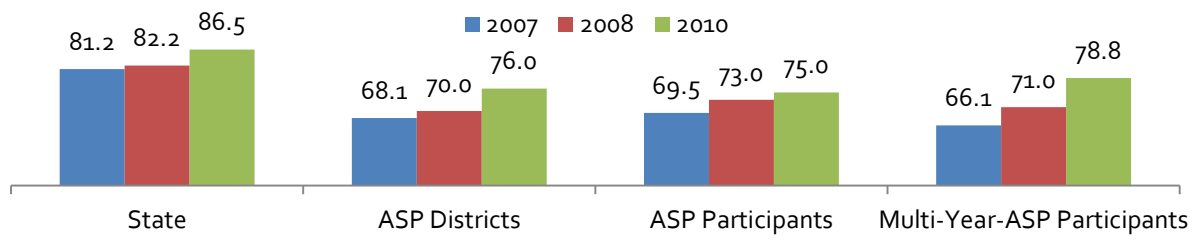


[21] In 2010, there was a statistically significant difference in the Reading proficiency rate of multi-year participants versus the general ASP participant group (χ^2=5.580, p<0.018).

CMT Math

Similar multi-year trends were observed for proficiency on the Math portion of the CMT. Figure 20 (next page) shows that, at the beginning of the three-year period, ASP multi-year participants also were proficient in Math at lower rates than the general group of ASP participants. By the end of the three-year period, however, the percentage of ASP multi-year participants achieving Math proficiency appeared to be higher than the whole ASP participant group and the population of students in the ASP districts (although these differences were not statistically significant).[22]

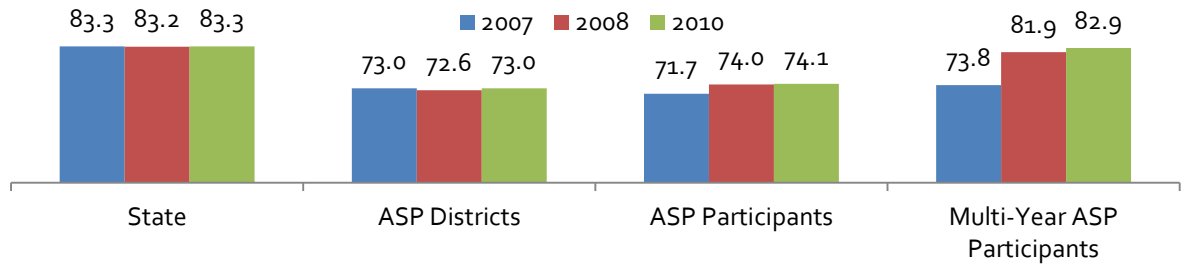
Figure 20. Percentage of students achieving CMT Math proficiency



CMT Writing

The trend observed for CMT Reading and CMT Math also was found for CMT Writing. Figure 21 below shows that, at the beginning of the three-year period, ASP multi-year participants were already proficient in Writing at a slightly higher rate than the overall group of ASP participants. The rate of proficiency continued to increase, however, so that by the end of the three-year period the percentage of ASP multi-year participants achieving Writing proficiency was much higher than the proficiency rate for the general group of ASP participants and the population of students in ASP districts.[23] In the case of Writing proficiency, multi-year ASP participants succeeded in "closing the gap," in that they reached a proficiency rate equal to that of the general public school population in the state.

Figure 21. Percentage of students achieving CMT Writing proficiency



Although encouraging, the above findings regarding multi-year participants should be interpreted very cautiously. These findings, which show larger gains among multi-year participants as compared with the general population of ASP participants, suggest an association between multi-year ASP participation and performance on the CMT. Although these changes might be due to the students' involvement with the ASPs, it is not possible to rule out other factors (such as individual student characteristics, family involvement, or in-school factors) that might have contributed to these changes.

[22] In 2010, the difference in Math proficiency between ASP multi-year participants and ASP participants was not statistically significant (78.8% vs.75.0%, χ^2=2.595, p<0.107).

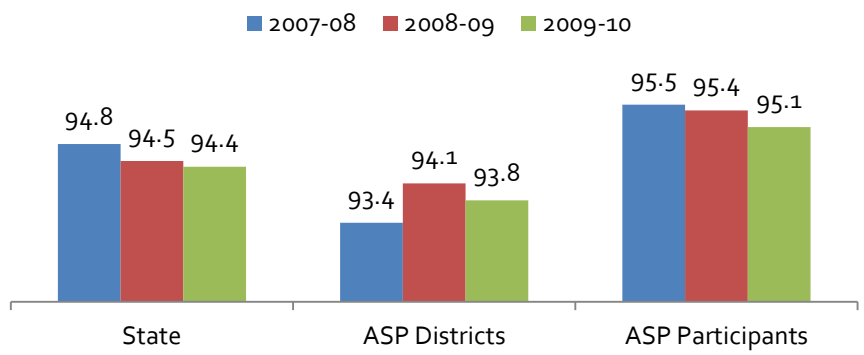
[23] In 2010, the difference in Writing proficiency between multi-year participants and ASP participants was statistically significant (82.9% vs.74.1%, χ^2=13.710, p<0.00001).

Performance Measure 2: School Day Attendance

The second performance measure is based on the school day attendance of ASP participants. Attendance rates were calculated using CSDE school day attendance data for individual program participants. This attendance rate reflects the number of days a student was present as a percentage of the total days he or she was enrolled in school. School attendance for individual ASP participants varied widely, from 46 to 100 percent. The average attendance rate among all 2009-10 ASP participants was 95.1 percent, which is equivalent to missing 9 days in a 180-day school year. The average attendance rate for ASP participants has remained constant across the last three years (2007-08 = 95.5%; 2008-09= 95.4%).

Figure 22 (right) shows average school day attendance rates for the state as a whole, the ASP districts, and ASP participants. As shown in the figure, students in ASP districts have lower average school day attendance rates than students statewide. However, ASP participants have a higher attendance rate than both students in the ASP districts and the general population of public school students in Connecticut.

Figure 22. Average school day attendance rates from 2007-08 to 2009-10



School Attendance Over Time: Spotlight on Multi-Year Participants

Average School Day Attendance Rates

School attendance data for ASP multi-year participants were available for the 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 school years. During each of these years, average rates of school attendance were slightly higher for multi-year participants than for the total group of ASP participants (2007-08: 95.8% vs. 95.5%; 2008-09: 96.0% vs. 95.4%; 2009-10: 95.9% vs. 95.1%).[24] In each of these years, multi-year participants' average attendance rate also was higher than that of students in ASP districts (93.4%) and public school students statewide (94.8%).

Change in School Day Attendance Rates over Time

For multi-year participants, the average amount of attendance change from 2008-09 to 2009-10 was 0.07 %. This was not statistically significantly different from zero, which means that, on average, there was no change in multi-year participants' attendance over this time period. One potential reason for this is that multi-year participants' school attendance rates were quite high to begin with (around 96% for each year) and thus there was not a large amount of room for improvement, on average.

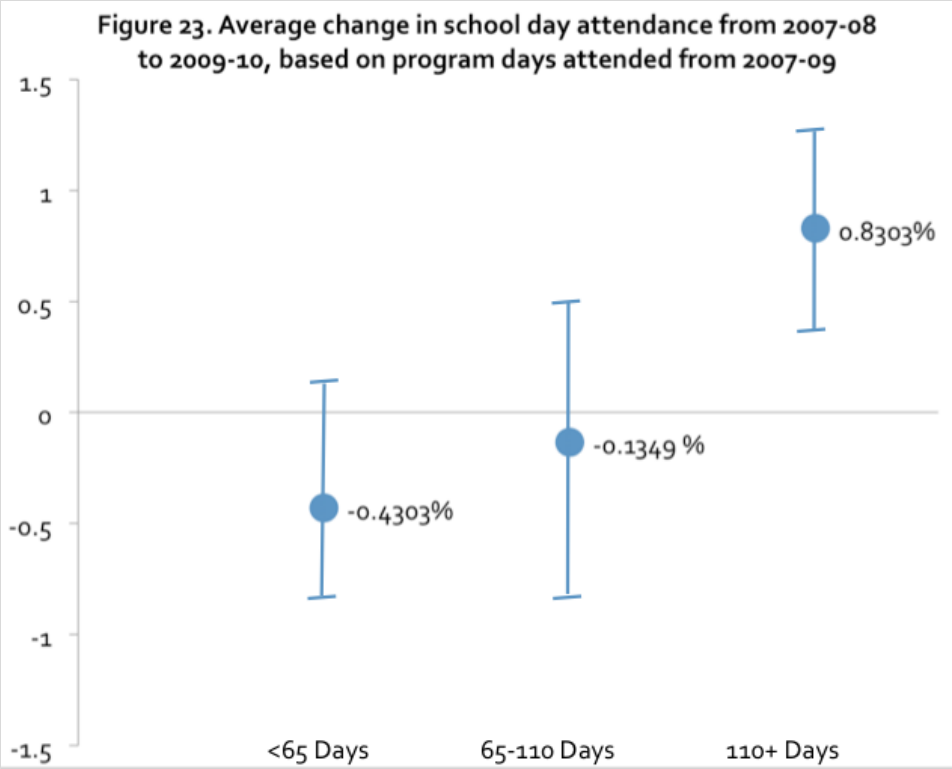
[24] Although these differences in attendance rate were small, they were statistically significant: 2009-2010 (t=4.144, p<0.00001), 2008-2009 (one-sample t-test with test value=95.4, t=3.436, p<0.001), and 2007-2008 (one-sample t-test with test value=95.5, t=2.877, p<0.004).

However, the group averages do not tell the whole story. Some participants did, in fact, increase or decrease their school attendance over time. To determine whether participants' level of ASP attendance during 2007-08 and 2008-2009 was related to change in school attendance rates from 2008-09 to 2009-10, multi-year participants were divided into three groups based on the patterns of ASP attendance:

Those with low program attendance, defined as fewer than 65 days over two years (N=183),
Those with medium program attendance, defined as 65 to 100 days over two years (N=91), and
Those with high program attendance, defined as more than 110 days over two years (N=141)

Participants were grouped in this way based on naturally occurring patterns in their program attendance, which fell into three clusters.

Figure 23 (below) shows the average change in school attendance from 2008-09 to 2009-10, based on participants' ASP attendance in 2007-08 and 2008-09.



As shown in the figure, the average rate of change in school attendance for both low and medium participation groups was small and negative (i.e., their mean attendance rates decreased slightly). The error bars in the figure represent the confidence interval around each mean, and indicate that although these changes are negative, they are not statistically significant from zero. Thus, multi-year participants who showed low and medium ASP participation from 2007-09 did not show any change in school attendance rates from 2008-09 to 2009-10. It is important to note that a finding of "no change" is not always negative; in this case, because ASP repeat participants' school attendance was already quite high, the fact that they were able to maintain this high level of attendance over time is positive.

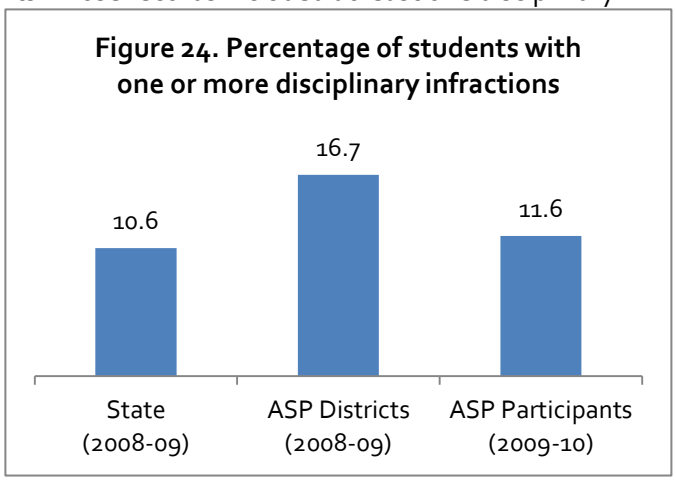
The figure also shows, however, that the average change in school attendance for those in the high ASP participation category was 0.8303, or close to one percent (about one and one-half school days). Because the error bars do not include zero, this mean is significantly different from zero. Collectively, these results suggest that there is an association between program attendance and school day attendance, but only for those students who attend the programs regularly and frequently.

Performance Measure 3: School Day Behavior (Discipline Infractions)

The third performance measure consists of information about the in-school behavior of ASP participants as compared to students in the districts where ASPs are located and the general public school population in Connecticut. The behavior offense data for the ASP participants are from the school year 2009-10. The most current discipline data on a statewide level, however, are from 2008-09; the 2009-10 data are not yet available. *Thus, comparisons given below use 2008-09 figures for the ASP districts and state.*

Percentage of Students with Infractions

Figure 24 (right) shows the percentage of ASP participants whose records included at least one disciplinary incident, as compared to the percentage of students with an infraction in ASP districts and all Connecticut public school students.[25] Infractions are characterized as being either a "policy" infraction or a "serious" infraction. Serious infractions include fighting/battery, personally threatening behavior, physical/verbal confrontation, sexually related behavior, weapons, theft, and property damage. Policy infractions include behavioral referrals, breach of peace/disorderly conduct, bus infractions, public displays of affection, attendance violations, safety code violations, skipping class, and leaving the school campus.[26]



Average Number of Infractions Per Student

During the 2009-10 school year, ASP participants with disciplinary infractions had an average of 2.9 infractions per student. Individual ASP participants with at least one infraction had as few as 1 and as many as 21 total infractions for the 2009-10 school year. Discipline data for the state and for ASP district students in 2009-10 were not available, so data from 2008-09 data were used for comparison purposes. During 2008-09, the average number of infractions for students in ASP districts was 3.1, and for all students in the Connecticut public school system the average was 2.8 incidents. Based on the available data on number of infractions per student, ASP participants' rate of 2.9 infractions does not appear to differ substantially from the rate of students in ASP districts (3.1 infraction per student) or those statewide (2.8 infractions per student).[27]

School Day Behavior: Spotlight on Multi-Year Participants

Accurate discipline data for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years were not available for ASP participants, thus only 2009-10 discipline information was available for the multi-year participants. In 2009-10, 9.4 percent of ASP multi-year participants received a disciplinary infraction. This was an average of 3.1 incidents per student. Both values were similar to those of the general ASP participant group.

[25] Comparing ASP participants with students in ASP districts, there was a statistically significant difference in the proportion of students with a disciplinary infraction (11.6% vs. 16.7%, z=-9.858, p=0.0000).

[26] In this report, it was not possible to examine ASP participants' infractions in terms of policy infractions versus serious infractions because the ASP participants' discipline data were raw (i.e., not coded) and were not comparable to statewide and ASP district data.

[27] Due to the format of the data, it was not possible to use a statistical test to evaluate the difference between ASP participants and the population in ASP districts.

Section 5: Discussion and Recommendations

The results of this evaluation indicate that, during the 2009-10 school year, the operation of Connecticut's state-funded after school programs was consistent with the After School Grant Program's purpose: to provide K-12 students with high-quality out-of-school enrichment opportunities that complement students' school day learning. Collectively, the programs served over 4,700 students, exceeding the target number set in the original grant applications. Data on program implementation indicate that a majority of programs offered a combination of academic, enrichment and recreation/wellness programming, as well as programming for parents and families. Data on program outcomes suggest a number of promising, although tentative, conclusions about positive effects on student performance.

There were especially noteworthy findings for a subset of 2009-10 participants who also had been involved in a state-funded ASP during the 2007-09 funding cycle. The performance of these students—in terms of CMT proficiency, school attendance and disciplinary infractions—was consistently higher than the comparison population (students in the school districts where state-funded after school programs were located). In some cases (e.g., CMT Writing proficiency), these multi-year students performed similarly to the general public school population statewide, despite their residing in districts that performed well below state averages.

The remainder of this report offers a number of observations and recommendations based on the overall results of this evaluation.

Taking a Longer Term Perspective on Evaluation

The noteworthy gains observed among multi-year participants are encouraging. These results also demonstrate the benefits associated with measuring participant performance over time. Particularly when programming starts late in the school year, students have had relatively little exposure to programs before the recording of performance data begins. It is reasonable to expect that program benefits would need some time to take effect. Having data over the course of at least two years will provide a stronger basis for assessing program effects.

Meeting Students' and Families' Needs: Serving the Target Population

Program Capacity and Participation Across Age Groups

Despite the late start to programming, the majority of ASP sites appeared to succeed in serving the number of students they planned to serve and in encouraging their participants to attend regularly. As noted in section 1 of this report, the average ADA across all 60 sites was 107.7 percent, meaning that on average sites were serving a slightly higher number of students than they had originally planned to serve. Collectively, sites operating in 2009-10 improved the ADA compared with programs funded in 2007-09, when the average ADA was 48 percent. Most of the sites (50 of 60, 83%) had an ADA that was 60 percent or more of the target number of students, whereas 10 sites had an average ADA below 60 percent. In terms of the regularity of program attendance, just over 40 percent of programs (N=26) had more than 80 percent of their students attending regularly (defined as being present at least 60% of the time).

Although programs collectively were successful in serving the number of participants they expected to serve, there was variability in the degree to which sites were able to recruit participants (based on their ADA) and encourage regular attendance (based on their percentage of participants attending regularly). Across sites, the ADA ranged from 19 percent to just over 200 percent, and the percentage of participants attending regularly varied from 6 percent to 100 percent.

For both metrics of program capacity, the primary age group served was an important factor in variability across sites. Sites that served primarily elementary students were more likely to have met or exceeded the minimum threshold of 60 percent of their target number of students. Indeed, 23 of the 34 elementary sites (67%) had a

four-month average ADA that was more than 100 percent of their target number. Sites serving primarily middle school or high school students were more likely to have lower average daily attendance values. Likewise, elementary sites were far more likely to have a large percentage of their participants attending regularly. Eighty-two percent of elementary sites had over 60 percent of participants attending regularly, compared to just 60 percent of middle school sites and only 12 percent (1 site) of high school sites. These site level findings indicate there are systematic age-related variations in site recruitment and retention of participants.

In addition to these site level findings, analysis of individual-level program attendance data indicates differences between older students and younger students. There were few older students participating in programs, and older students, on average, attended fewer total days of programming during the 2009-10 grant period.

Taken together, these results suggest a need for state-funded ASPs to examine the programming being offered to older students and consider ways to better recruit and retain older students. Possible strategies might include allowing middle and high school programs to have greater flexibility in how they reach the program dosage requirements for state-funded ASPs, perhaps by creating a separate grant competition for programs that target older students.

Considering the Needs of English Language Learner Students and Families

Data on the demographics of 2009-10 ASP participants indicate that English Language Learners and students speaking a language other than English at home were underrepresented among ASP participants (compared to the population in the districts where programs were located). These findings warrant further consideration of the after school service needs of diverse Connecticut students and families, particularly those students and families whose first language is Spanish or another language besides English. Given the growth of the Latino youth population, the needs of Latino students and families may increase over time.

Diversity in Long-Term Participation in ASPs

As noted earlier in this report (see page 11), the demographic profile of multi-year participants (those who were involved in a state-funded after school program over both grant periods) differed from the profile of students who participated in an ASP during the 2009-10 grant period only. Multi-year participants were more likely to be white (38%) and less likely to be black (23%). The opposite was the case among the full group of 2009-10 participants, who were more likely to be black (33%) and less likely to be white (28%). Also noted earlier was the possibility that the demographic profile of multi-year participants may be an artifact of which programs (and districts) received funding during both grant periods. Alternatively, there may be other unexamined differences among students who maintained long-term involvement in ASPs. In any event, the finding suggests that further study may be warranted to determine which factors may assist Black students to remain engaged in state-funded after school programs over time.

How Do ASP Participants Measure Up on Performance Indicators?

Overall proficiency rates for reading, math, writing, and science show a general tendency for ASP participants to achieve proficiency at similar rates as the general population of students in the districts where the ASPs are located. At this point, it is not possible to draw conclusions about how ASP participation impacts academic performance. In order for such conclusions to be made, evaluation data that include baseline measures, more than one measurement point, and data from a comparison group of similar students are needed. The multi-year participant findings presented in this report (e.g., the gains multi-year participants experienced in academic performance) are very encouraging and provide an example of the value of having multi-year data.

School Attendance as a Performance Indicator

During the previous funding cycle (2007-09) and continuing in 2009-10, ASP participants showed a consistent attendance rate of about 95 percent, which was one to two percentage points higher than rates statewide and in

ASP districts. These averages tend to remain stable over time, but within a single year individuals' school day attendance varies widely. A better performance indicator would be multi-year attendance data that could take into account yearly variations in students' attendance. Additionally, it may be useful to consider factors associated with individual variation in school attendance, for example, students' attitudes about school or family stresses. These factors may play a mediating role in ASPs' impact on participants' school attendance.

Another solution (for future evaluation) might be to operationalize attendance differently. For example, instead of using only the rate of attendance as an indicator, an additional or alternative criterion could be the number of students who miss more than 10 days, or the number of students who miss enough days to lose credit. This would convey more of the practical significance of attendance as a performance indicator.

Appendix: Profile of "ASP Districts"

The state-funded After School Grant Program is designed to provide opportunities for Connecticut K-12 students in high need areas. This appendix provides an overview of the school districts where 2009-10 state-funded after school programs (ASPs) were located. The demographic and academic profiles of these districts provide an initial indication that ASPs were indeed targeting high-need areas. The demographic and academic profiles of these "ASP districts" also are important in that, throughout this report, they served as a point of comparison for assessing the performance of ASP participants. Figure A1 lists the 26 districts where 2009-10 state funded ASPs were located, along with the number of grants, sites, and participants associated with each district.

Figure A1. Number of grantees, sites, and participants by district

District	# of Grants	# of Sites	# of ASP Participants	District	# of Grants	# of Sites	# of ASP Participants
Barkhamsted	1	1	23	Newtown	1	4	156
Bridgeport	2	6	1029	North Haven	1	2	116
Bristol	1	1	53	Norwalk	3	5	356
Brookfield	1	1	30	Plainville	1	2	131
East Hartford	1	1	45	Region 14	1	1	32
Enfield	1	1	66	Stafford	1	1	238
Hamden	1	1	40	Stamford	2	3	180
Hartford	7	7	641	Stratford	2	2	195
Meriden	1	1	20	Thompson	1	1	45
Milford	1	1	76	Torrington	1	2	39
New Britain	2	3	130	Waterbury	3	3	217
New Hartford	1	1	32	Windham	1	1	27
New Haven	3	5	583	**TOTAL**	**40***	**60**	**4717**
New London	2	3	217				

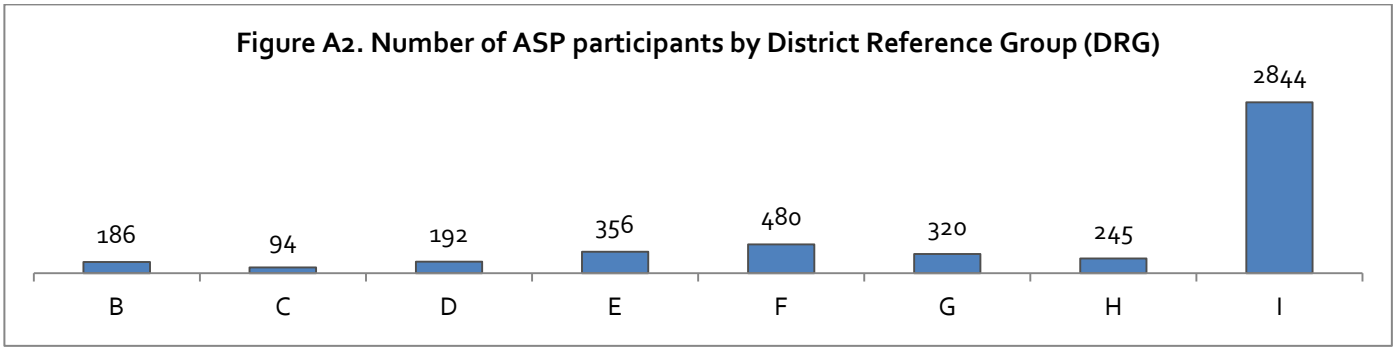
*Note. The number of grants listed in this chart totals to more than 40 because the districts of Barkhamsted, Brookfield, New Hartford, Newton, Region 14, and Torrington all were served together through 1 grant.

ASPs Are Located in the Highest Need District Reference Groups

Since 1996, the CSDE has grouped school districts into educational reference groups based on socioeconomic and other factors. In June 2006, CSDE used socioeconomic factors to group Connecticut's school districts into District Reference Groups (DRGs) A through I, where DRG A includes the highest resourced districts and DRG I includes the highest need districts. Seven data indicators are used to classify districts into a DRG: three indicators of socioeconomic status (median family income, parental education and parental occupation), three indicators of need (percentage of children living in families with a single parent, percentage of public school children eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals, and percentage of children whose families speak a language other than English at home) and enrollment (the number of students attending schools in that district[28].

In 2009-10, state-funded ASPs primarily served students in high need DRGs. Sixty percent of ASP participants were in DRG I, the highest need group of districts. Figure A2 (next page) shows the distribution of ASP participants by DRG.

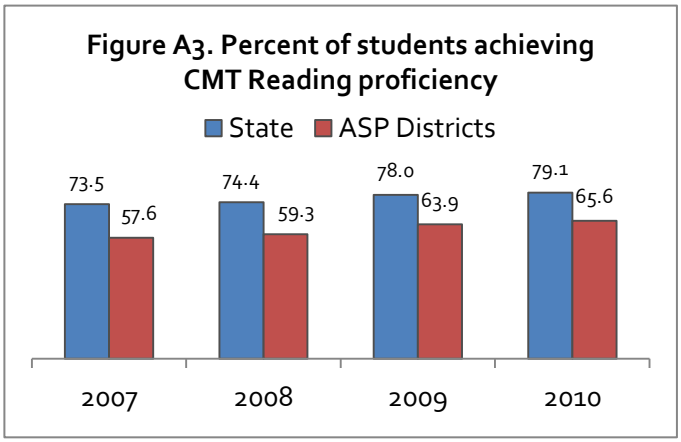
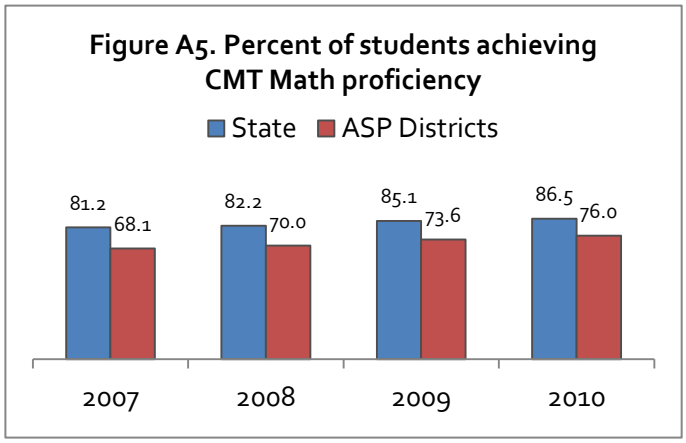
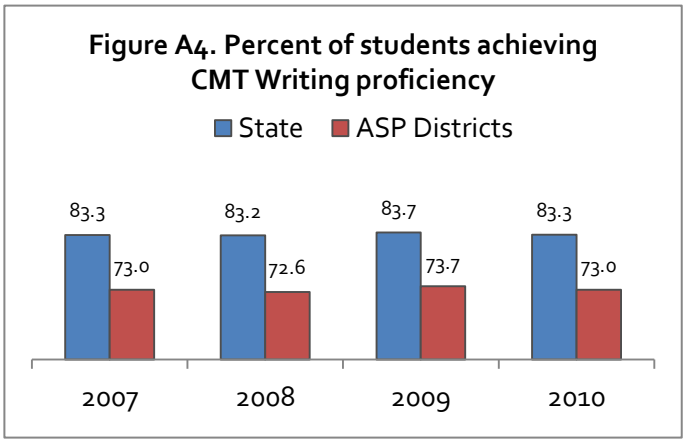
[28] Connecticut Voices for Children. (June 2006). District Reference Groups (DRGs) Formerly Known as Educational Reference Groups (ERGs). Retrieved 12/10/2010 from http://www.ctkidslink.org/publications/ece06drgerg.pdf



Demographics of ASP Districts Compared with the State

The demographic profile of the population located in the 26 ASP districts differs from that of the state as a whole. The school age population in ASP districts has 59.7 percent of students eligible for free or reduced lunch, compared with 29.7 percent statewide. In ASP districts, 24.7 percent of students are black/African American and 33.4 percent are Hispanic/Latino, compared with 13.9 percent and 16.6 percent (respectively) statewide. White students comprise 34.2 percent of students in the ASP districts, compared with 65.2 percent statewide. The proportion of students who are English Language Learners (ELL) and the proportion who speak a language other than English at home are both nearly double the proportions statewide: 10.2 percent ELL in the ASP districts versus 5.3 percent statewide, and 24.2 percent non-English home language versus 13.1 statewide.

Performance of ASP Districts Compared with the State

Across the three performance indicators, the 26 ASP districts tend to perform below statewide averages. Figures A3 (right), and A4 and A5 (below) compare **CMT proficiency rates** for ASP districts and the state for the last four years.

The average **school day attendance rate** in 2007-08 (the most recent year for which data were available) for students in the ASP districts was 94.4 percent, versus 94.8 percent statewide. Of the students in the ASP districts, 16.7 percent had at least one **disciplinary infraction** in 2009-10, compared with 10.6 percent of students statewide.