



KATHLEEN KROLL
EDUCATION CONSULTING

Kathleen Kroll, PhD

www.kathleenkrolltc.com



<https://www.truenorthservices.org/out-of-school-programs/>

Out-of-School Time Programs

TrueNorth's Out-of-School Time programs partner with local West Michigan school districts serving youth Kindergarten through 8th grade. The programs enhance resiliency and strengthen young people through creative, community-based, and diverse educational experiences during non-school hours. Building life-shaping character, fostering healthy relationships, and nurturing socially responsible civic behavior is what TrueNorth's Out-of-School Time Programs strive for. Programs provide individualized academic support to students while engaging participants in enrichment activities and field trips.

Project FOCUS & Project FOCUS Rural Grit

TrueNorth operates Project FOCUS (For Our Children's Ultimate Success) at Baldwin, Hart, Holton, Muskegon Heights, and Walkerville schools through a grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Education in collaboration with the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential, and the United States Department of Education.

TrueNorth operates Project FOCUS (For Our Children's Ultimate Success) Rural Grit at Hesperia and White Cloud schools through the federally-funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program in partnership with the Michigan Department of Education.

Goals..... 5

Evaluation Plan..... 6

Attendance Over Time..... 8

Attendance Levels..... 9

Number of Program Days Attended..... 10

Impact of Attendance..... 11

Enrollment..... 13

Survey Data..... 16

 Overall Impressions..... 17

 Perception of Key Areas of Impact..... 18

 Perceptions of Participants..... 20

 Perception of Attendance..... 21

 Perception of Academic Behaviors..... 21

 Perception of Behaviors..... 23

 Perception of Grades..... 24

 Perception of Career Awareness..... 25

 Perception of Safety/Security..... 26

Participant Reporting Summary..... 27

Site Snapshots..... 32

Site Observations..... 46

Recommendations..... 57

Final Notes from the Evaluator..... 59

Section One: Introduction

Goals

How well did Project FOCUS do in achieving their stated goals in the 2024-25 term?

Project FOCUS has 10 goals, each of which has potential to drive programming to meet the needs of the students and the community they serve. These ten goals are abbreviated below:

1. Well established and maintained connection to the school
2. Academic enrichment and personalized instruction
3. Address the needs of the targeted population
4. Formal structures for school day teacher input
5. Diverse array of evidenced-based programs
6. Integration of STEAM activities
7. Involvement of students in planning and other decisions
8. Involvement of families in planning and other decisions
9. Opportunities for literacy and related development for families
10. Snacks and meals for students

Evaluation Plan

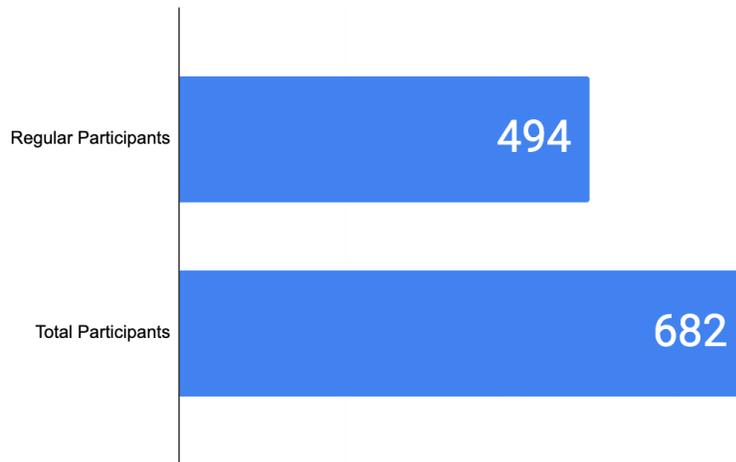
To determine the effectiveness of an Out-of-School Time (OST) program, we must also examine broader measures. Last year, the evaluation team looked at three pillars of success:

- 1) How does participation in Project FOCUS after-school programming influence academic and social outcomes?
- 2) What conditions are necessary for Project FOCUS to achieve positive results?
- 3) What does Project FOCUS do well to serve students, and what can it do to improve?

For the 2024-25 school year, this report will serve to reexamine these goals, as well as provide as much specific data regarding attendance, grades, and demographics as is accessible. We will also provide an analysis of the perceptions of students participating in the programs. Based on this data and on targeted observations, recommendations will be offered.

Section Two: Overall Impact

Youth Served:



Enjoyment, caring adults, and field trips were noted by participants as highlights of the program.

Evidence of:



engagement,
academic support,
and social emotional
learning

Project FOCUS impacted student grades, feelings of safety, attendance, behavior, and career awareness

Section Three: Attendance

Attendance Over Time

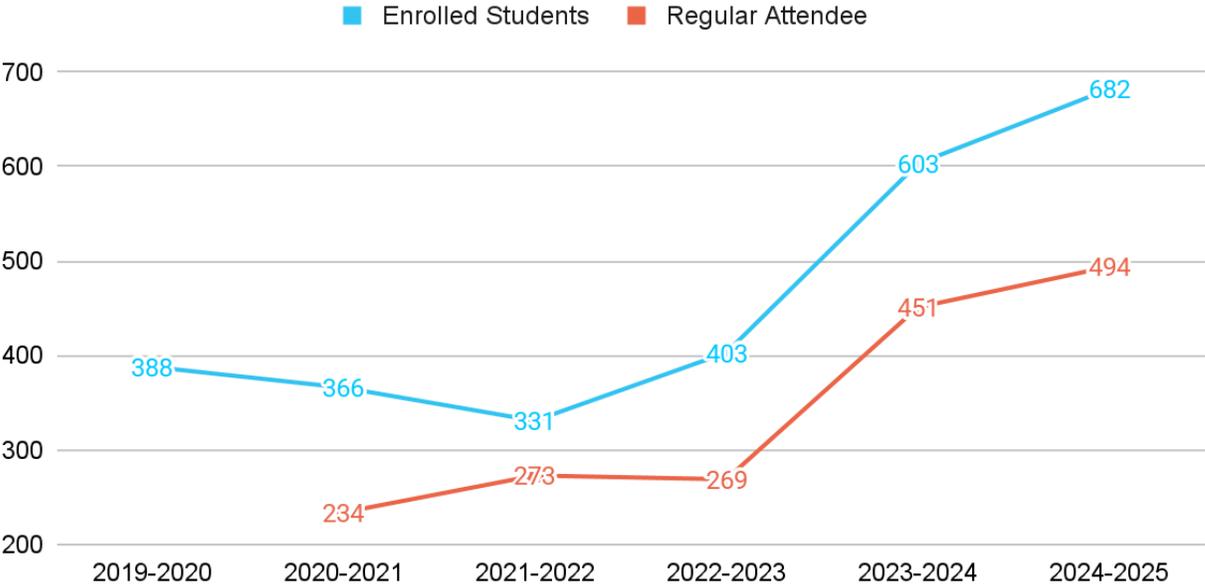
Total Participants in 2024-2025 School Year: **682**

Total Participants in 2023-2024 School Year: **603**

Continued Growth!

Attendance

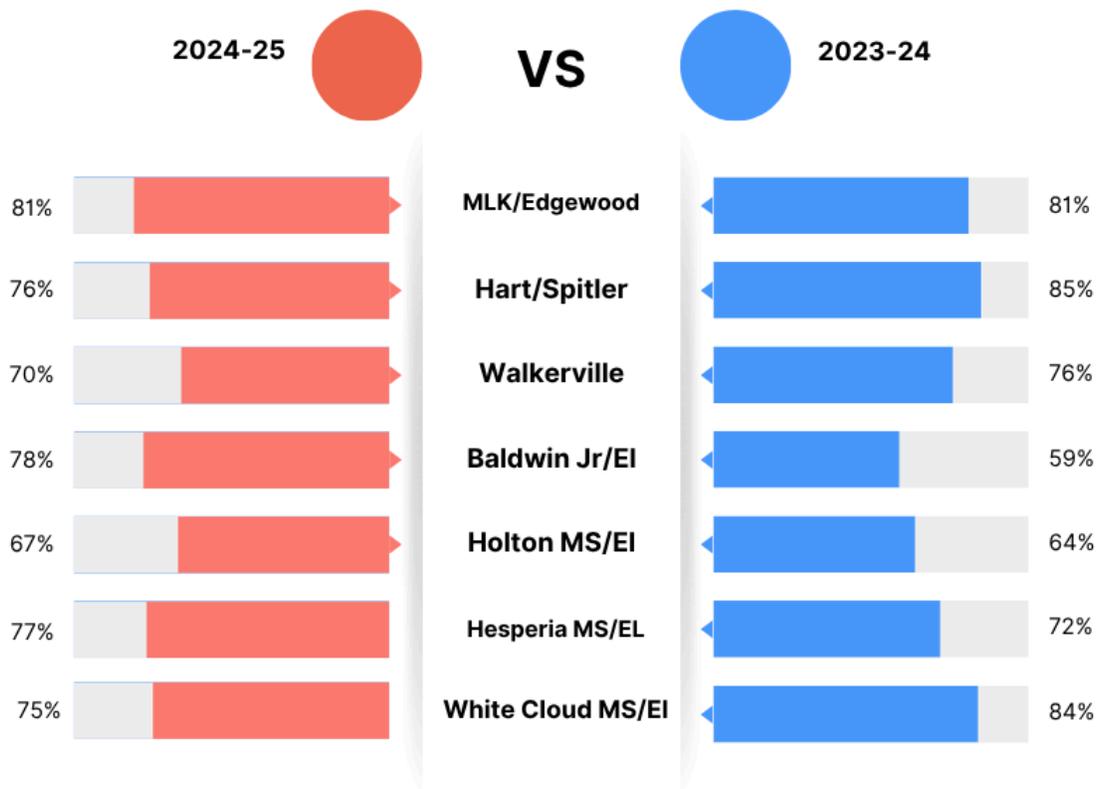
*4 sites added in 2023-24



Attendance Levels

Research in the field of Out-of-School Time programs indicates promising evidence for “regular” attendance. The Wallace Foundation (2017) suggests that thirty days is the threshold for the consideration of regular attendance. This criteria will be used in this section as a threshold for programmatic impact. The Baldwin sites, Holton sites, and Hesperia sites saw a rise in the number of students attending more than 30 days.

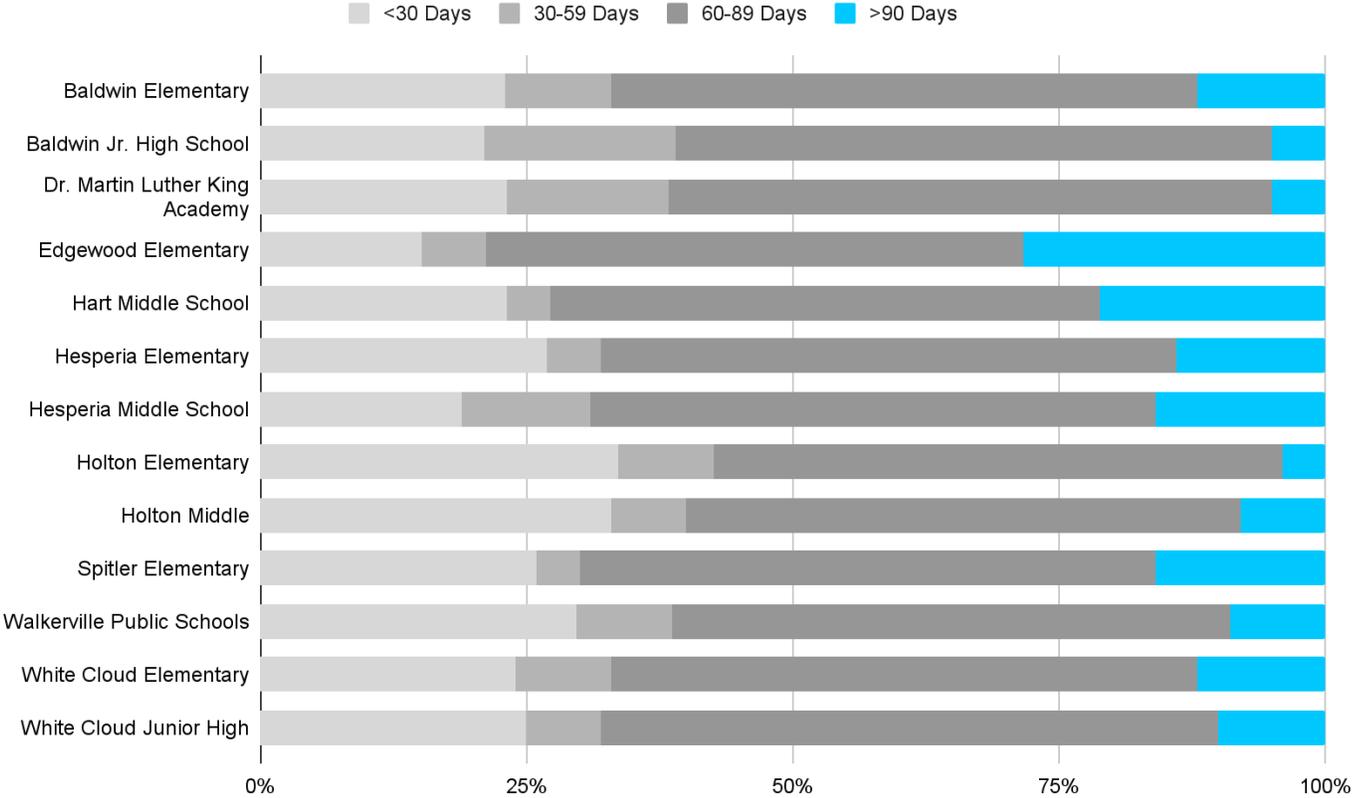
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ATTENDING MORE THAN 30 PROGRAM DAYS



McCombs, J., Whitaker, A., & Yoo, P. (2017). The Value of Out-of-School Time Programs. *RAND Corporation*.
<https://wallacefoundation.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/The-Value-of-Out-of-School-Time-Programs.pdf>

Number of Program Days Attended

The chart below illustrates program attendance for participants. Recognizing that it is recommended that students attend 30 days or more to see effects of after-school programs, the chart illustrates the other categories of 30-59 days, 60-89 days, and >90 days. Using these categories in the future when more data can be collected (such as discipline records, test scores, and school attendance) could lead to a better understanding of the threshold of program attendance that makes a difference for a participant's academic and social needs.



Impact of Attendance

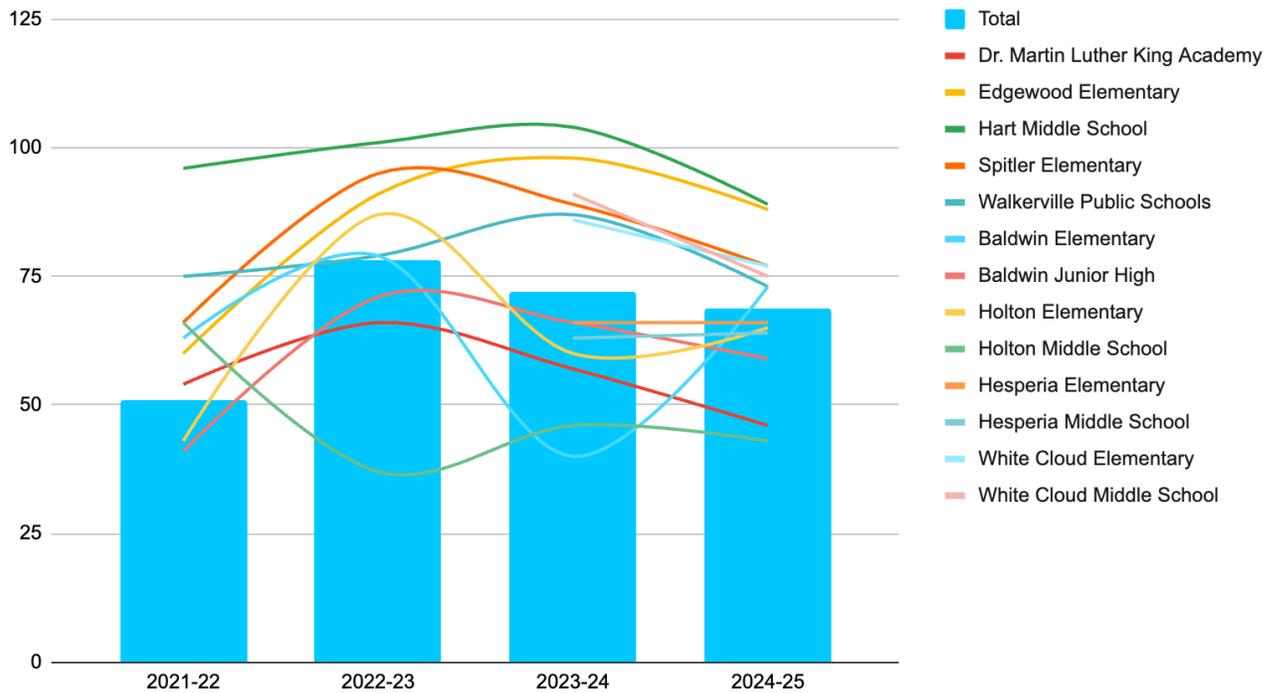
Is Project FOCUS attendance associated with better in-school attendance? This question is worth pursuing, as anecdotal reports from site coordinators and research in OST programs in general would indicate that improved attendance is a positive and likely outcome. State data (below) indicates that in general, on-track attendance is improving for students at the targeted schools. With the lack of whole school data available to the evaluation team, it is impossible to determine whether or not Project FOCUS is impacting these numbers.

State Data		
	2022-23(%)	2023-24(%)
Dr. Martin Luther King Academy	80%	81%
Edgewood Elementary	77%	85%
Hart Middle School	92%	92%
Walkerville Public Schools	88%	90%
Baldwin Elementary	88%	91%
Baldwin Junior High	89%	91%
Holton Elementary	93%	93%
Holton Middle School	92%	90%
White Cloud Elementary	92%	91%
White Cloud Jr.	91%	91%
Hesperia Elementary	91%	92%
Hesperia Middle School	90%	90%
Spitler Elementary	92%	93%

On track attendance is indicated below by the percent of students missing less than 10% of available school days. This should not be viewed as a direct and equal comparison. This publicly available data was found using www.mischooldata.org, and is used to give a broad sense of how in-program attendance might look next to general public school attendance.

The table below illustrates the average number of program days attended by participants during the four consecutive school years. This data indicates an increase in the number of days attended between the 2021-22 school year and the 2022-23 school year, and a slight decrease each consecutive school year in total. The exception was Baldwin Elementary, which dramatically increased the average number of days attended after a dip last year. Continuing to increase the number of days students attend available programming is a goal of Project FOCUS.

Average Program Attendance, in Days



Section Four: Enrollment

Enrollment

The following table displays the number of students who were listed as enrolled in Project FOCUS programs, then dropped. This data should be viewed with caution, as dropped students were reported by site coordinators, and there are inconsistencies related to how this work is completed.

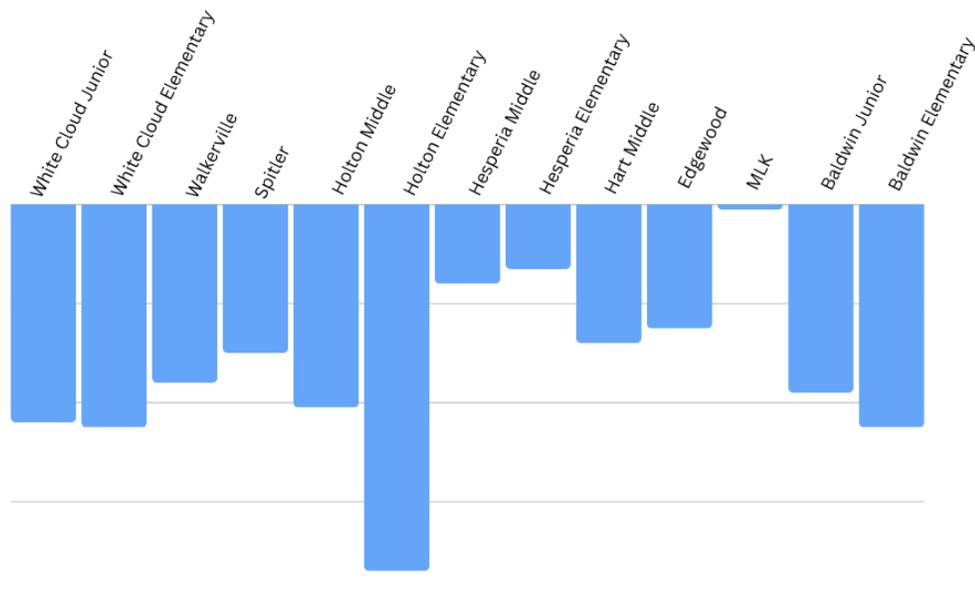
	Number of Students Who Remained Active	Number of Dropped Students	% Drop
Baldwin Elementary	37	30	45%
Baldwin Jr. High School	34	21	38%
Dr. Martin Luther King Academy	97	1	1%
Edgewood Elementary	41	14	25%
Hart Middle School	52	20	28%
Hesperia Elementary	71	11	13%
Hesperia Middle School	36	7	16%
Holton Elementary	25	70	74%
Holton Middle	38	26	41%
Spitler Elementary	57	25	30%
Walkerville Public Schools	56	31	36%
White Cloud Elementary	58	18	45%
White Cloud Junior High	33	26	44%

Fewer students enrolled, then were dropped, at all sites.

	2023-24 % drop	2024-25 % drop	
Dr. Martin Luther King Academy	31%	1%	↓
Edgewood Elementary	53%	25%	↓
Hart Middle School	70%	28%	↓
Spitler Elementary	91%	30%	↓
Walkerville Public Schools	130%	36%	↓
Baldwin Elementary	73%	45%	↓
Baldwin Junior High	43%	38%	↓
Holton Elementary	133%	74%	↓
Holton Middle School	94%	41%	↓
Hesperia Elementary	53%	13%	↓
Hesperia Middle School	54%	16%	↓
White Cloud Elementary	55%	45%	↓
White Cloud Jr.	57%	44%	↓

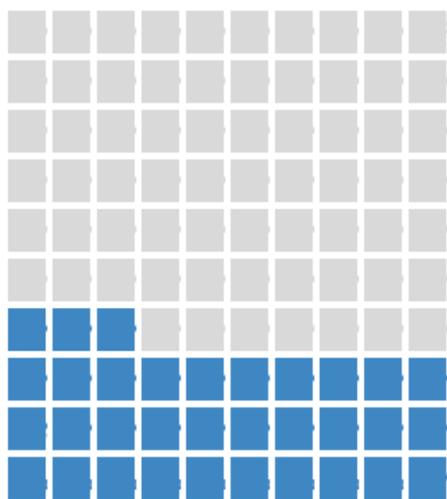
More students enrolled, then dropped, in Holton Elementary than any other site. This is consistent with the previous year (see 2023-24 report). Walkerville, Holton Middle School, and Spitler Elementary were previously sites with a large number of dropped students; this has decreased this year.

DROPPED STUDENTS

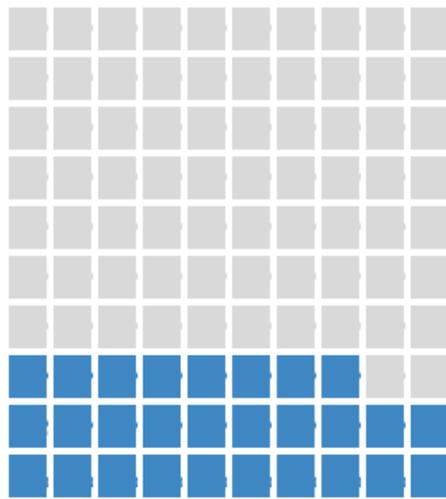


Reasons listed for student drop out varied, but the primary response indicated was “parent/student choice” (33%). Many times the rationale was left blank by the site coordinator (coded as “left blank”), although this was **decreased from 56% last year to 28% this year**. Other rationale included “moved” (13%), “bus too late” (10%), “behavior” (7%), and “attendance” (7%).

Parent/Student Choice 33%



Left Blank 28%



Section Five: Surveys

Survey Data

For this report, the evaluator did not seek survey data from school staff and parents. This decision was made based on the premise that state survey data would be obtained and analyzed. Replication of surveys, or “oversurveying” parents and staff has been consistently noted as negative by site coordinators. Therefore the local evaluation team opted to eliminate ours, and use the required surveys from the state evaluation team. Unfortunately, this data will not be accessible until at least September. An addendum will be attached when this data is made available to the local evaluator.

Perception of Key Areas of Impact

What is the perceived impact of Project FOCUS? Do students feel that this program is making a difference in their lives?

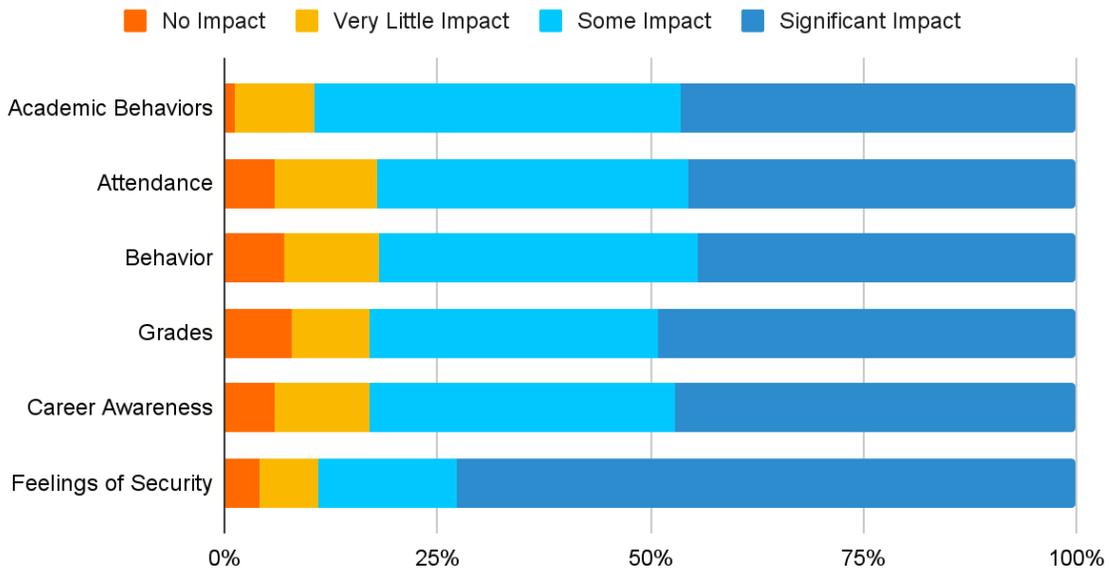
Participants answered questions related to their perception of the impact of several categories: feelings of security, career awareness, grades, behavior, attendance, and academic behaviors. Specific survey questions related to this topic were a Likert-like rating scale that included:

- 1) My attendance is better
- 2) I have better learner behaviors (e.g., bringing materials to class, attention to instruction, etc.)
- 3) My behavior is better (e.g., empathy, less behavior referrals, etc.)
- 4) My grades are better
- 5) My understanding of the jobs people have is better
- 6) I feel safer

The charts that follow display participant responses.

Students perceived the overall impact of the program positively in all areas. Feeling of security rated as the highest impact.

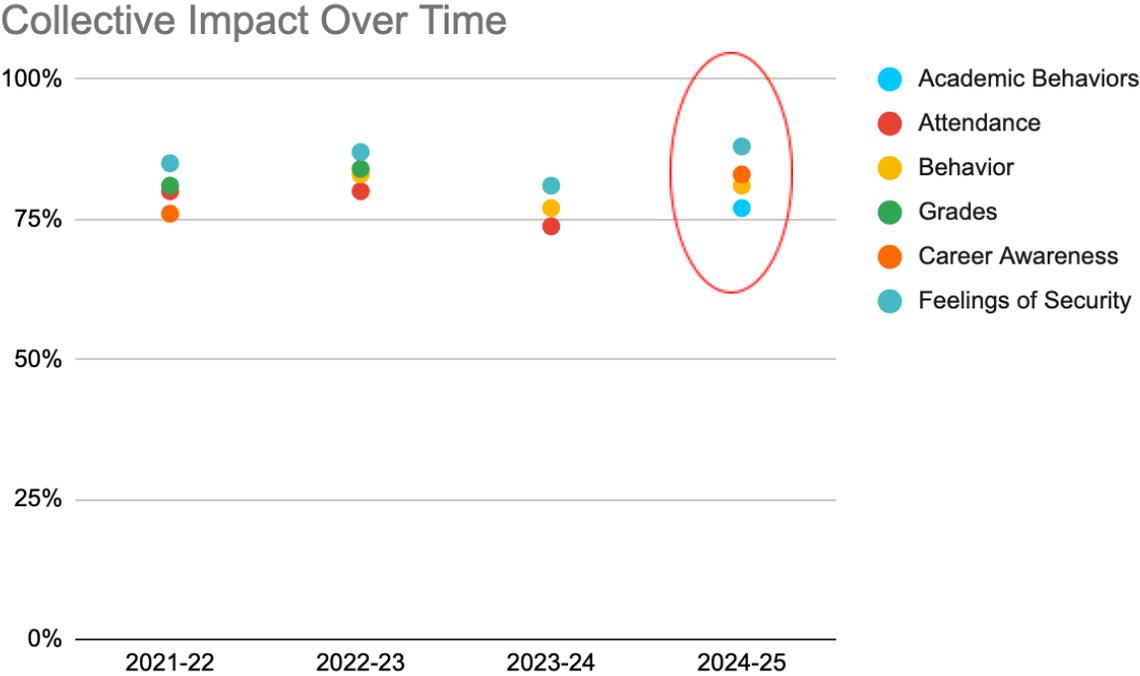
Participant-Reported Impact



	No Impact	Very Little Impact	Some Impact	Significant Impact
Academic Behaviors	1%	8%	37%	40%
Attendance	6%	12%	37%	46%
Behavior	7%	11%	37%	44%
Grades	8%	9%	34%	49%
Career Awareness	6%	11%	36%	47%
Feelings of Security	4%	7%	16%	72%

In a review of previous data from 2021 to present, the collective impact (accounting for participants, students, and school staff) of Project FOCUS has remained relatively stable over time.

When extracting just the student participants this year, there is a slightly wider spread of the data, with academic behaviors trailing behind and feelings of security with the most impact.

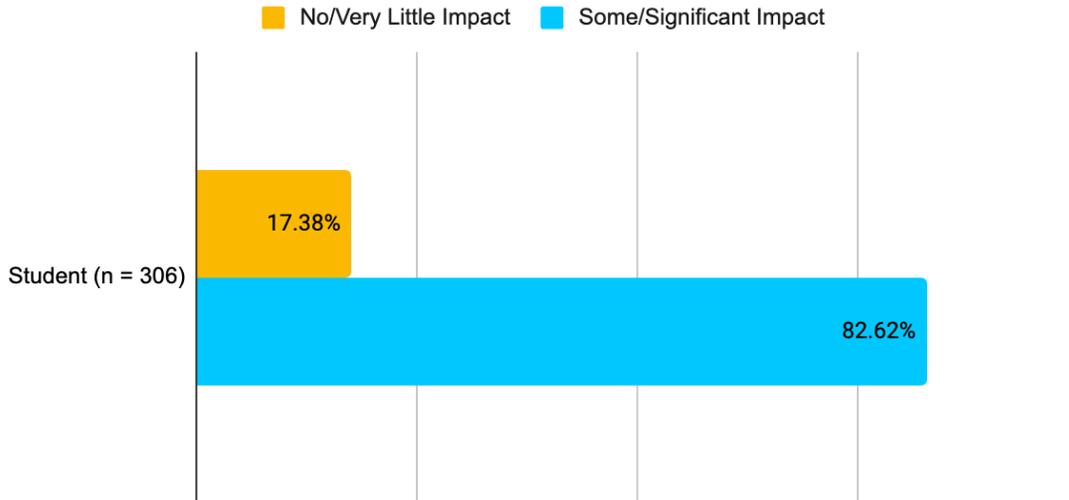


Perceptions of Participants by Site

Perception of Attendance

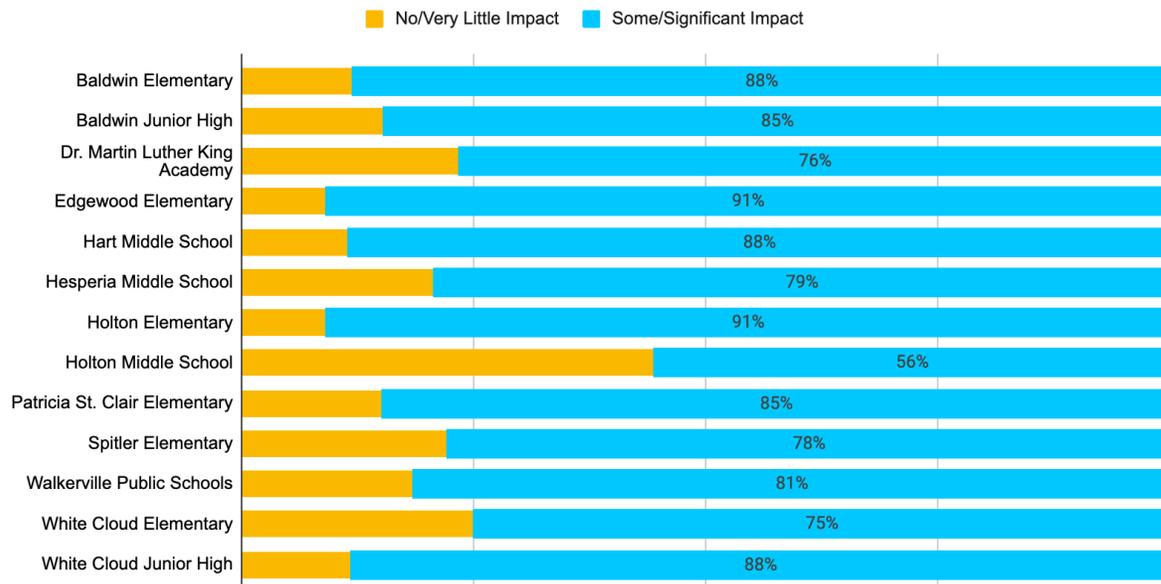
Perception of Impact

Attendance (School Day)



Perception of Impact by Site

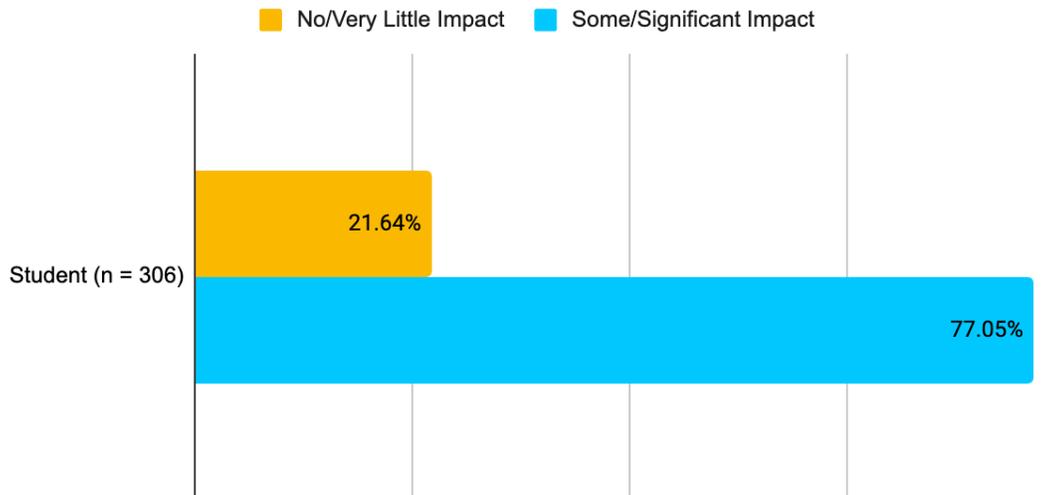
Attendance



Perception of Academic Behaviors

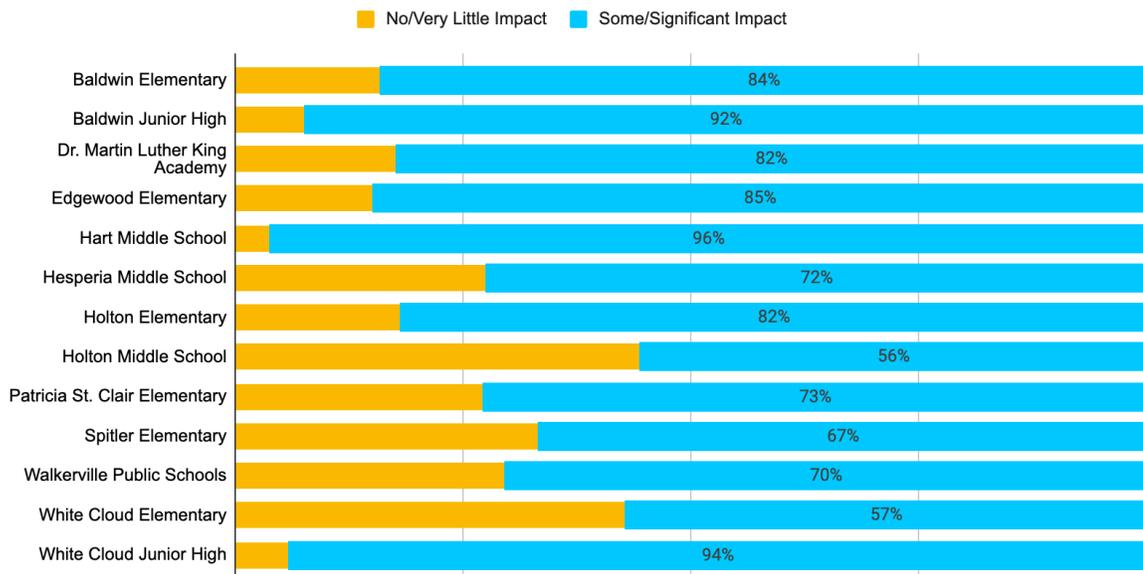
Perception of Impact by Respondent

Academic Behaviors



Perception of Impact by Site

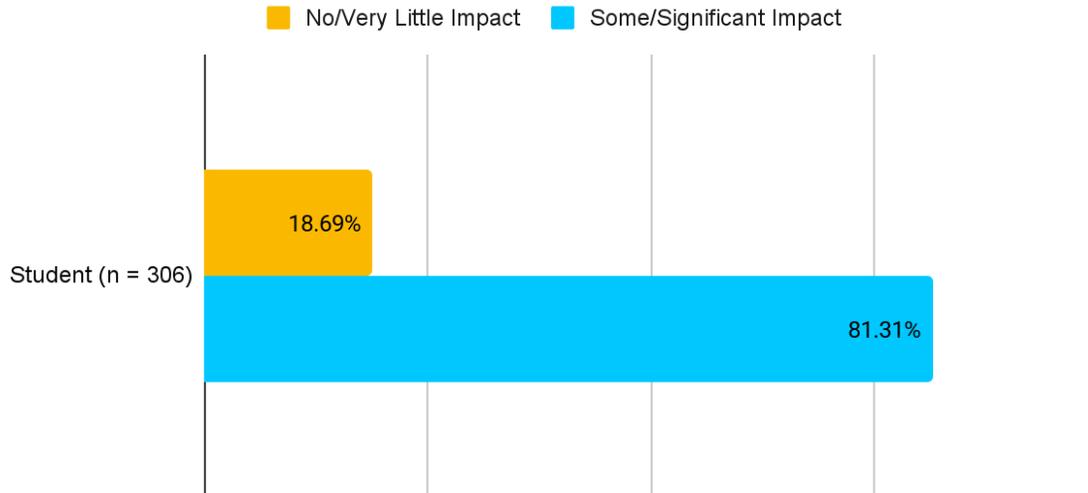
Academic Behaviors



Perception of Behaviors

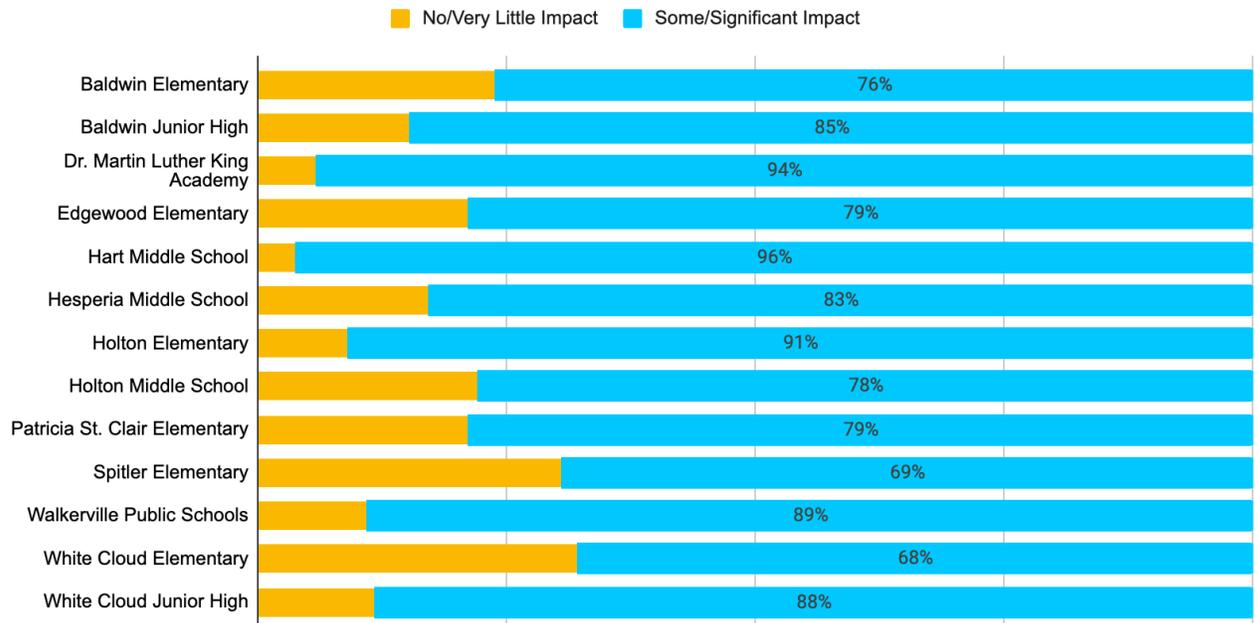
Perception of Impact by Respondent

Behaviors



Perception of Impact by Site

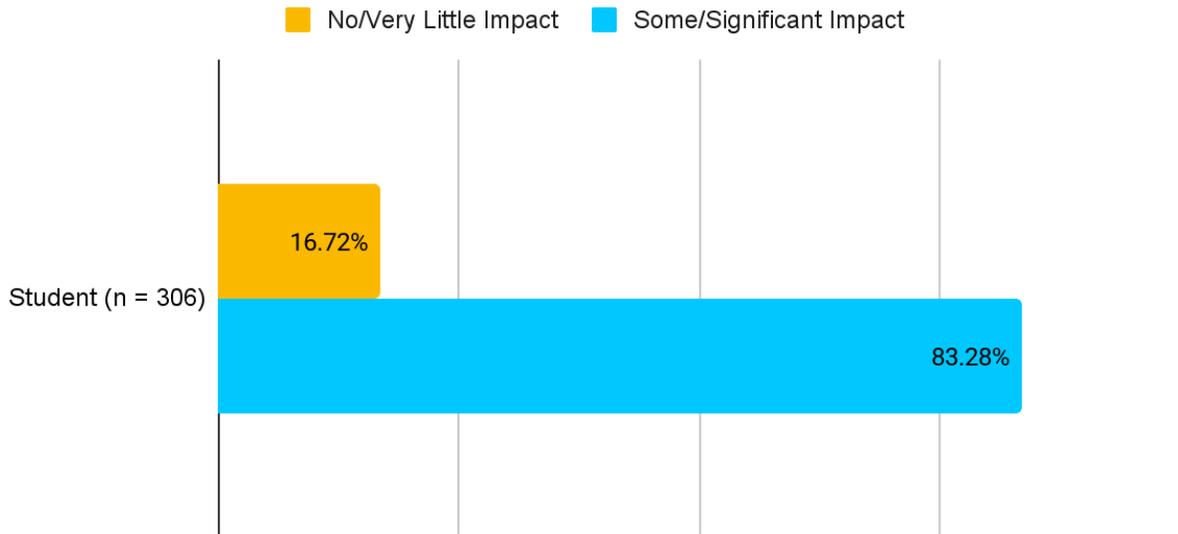
Behaviors



Perception of Grades

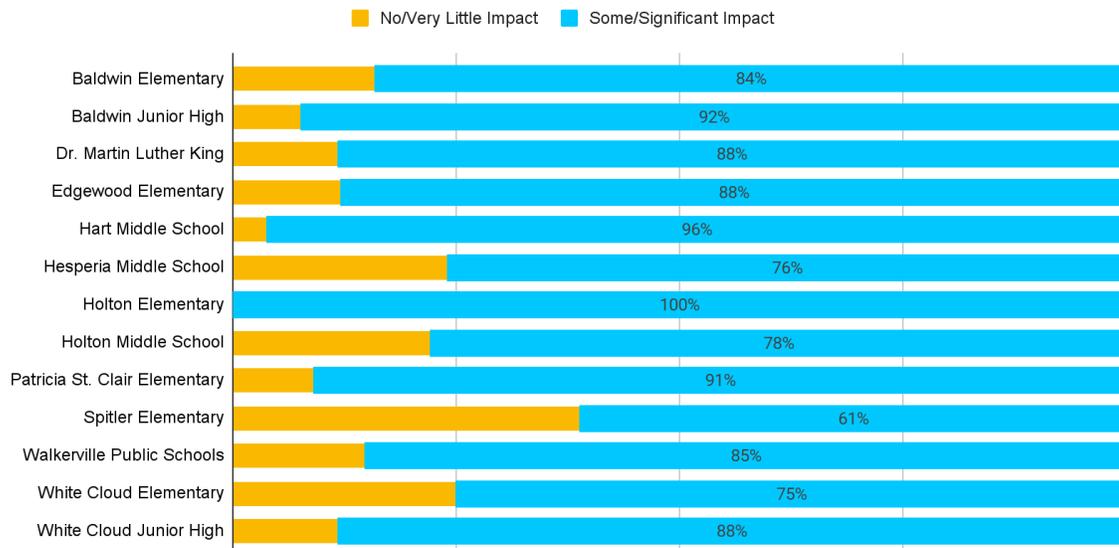
Perception of Impact by Respondent

Grades



Perception of Impact by Site

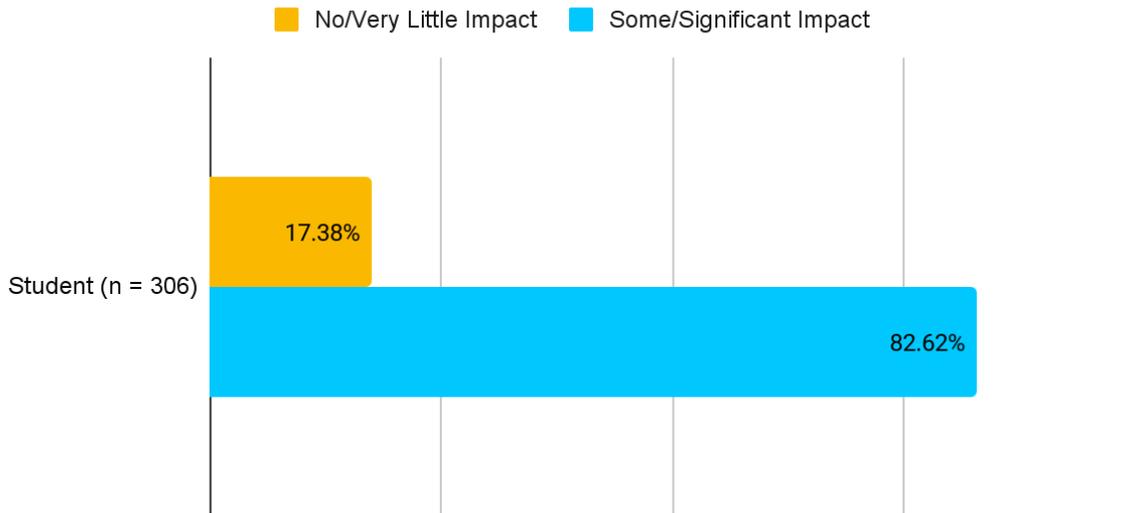
Grades



Perception of Career Awareness

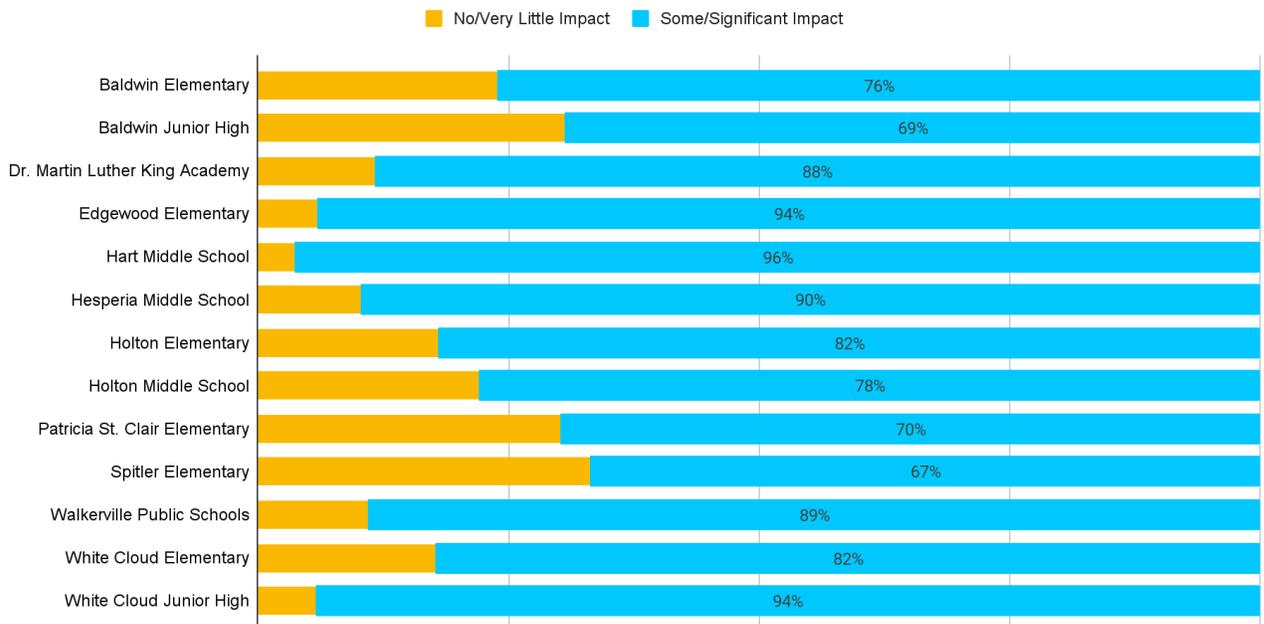
Perception of Impact by Respondent

Career Awareness



Perception of Impact by Site

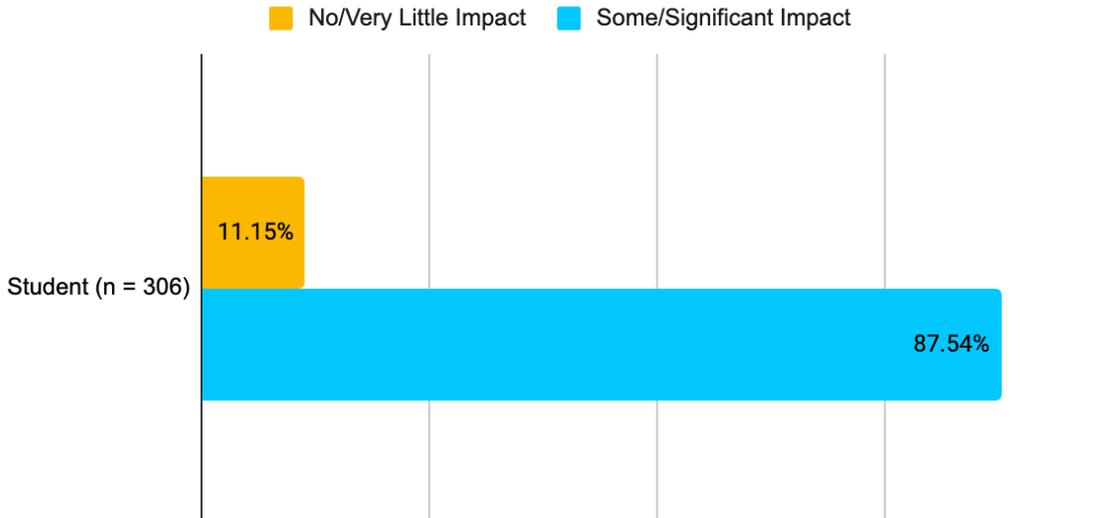
Career Awareness



Perception of Safety/Security

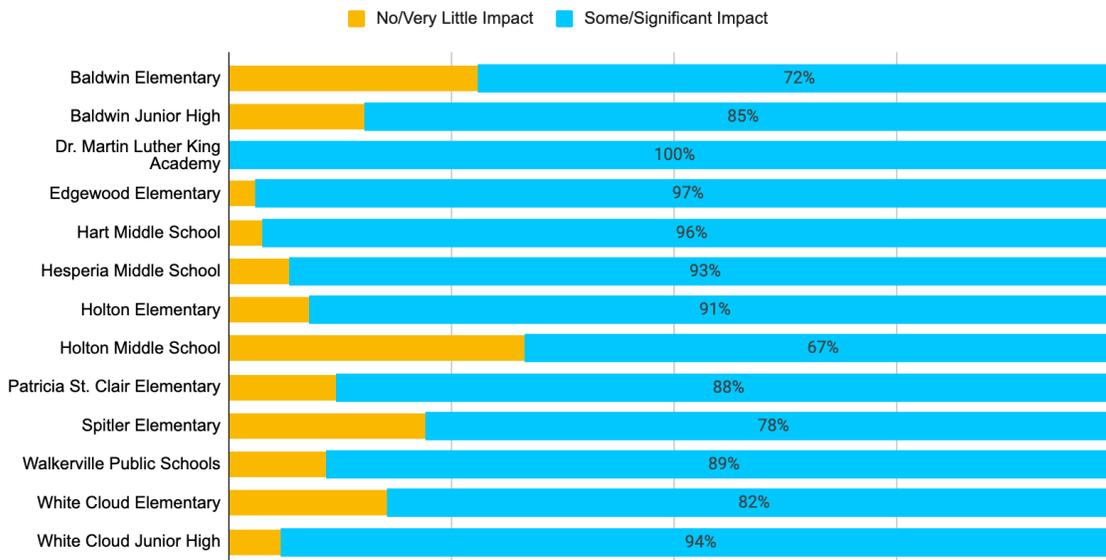
Perception of Impact by Respondent

Safety/Security



Perception of Impact by Site

Safety/Security



Section Six: Qualitative Analysis

Survey Analysis

Information gathered from surveys of parents, students, and school staff gives valuable insight into how Project FOCUS is perceived, and the impact it has on families. As indicated previously, parent and school staff survey data was not collected. In this section, survey data from students was analyzed to understand a variety of topics.

Use caution when reviewing the sites individually, as each site had varying numbers of respondents. The table below indicates the number of responses per site, which generally is proportional to the number of students enrolled in each program.

Site	Number of Respondents
Baldwin Elementary	25
Baldwin Junior High	13
Dr. Martin Luther King Academy	17
Edgewood Elementary	33
Hart Middle School	27
Hesperia Middle School	29
Holton Elementary	11
Holton Middle School	10
Patricia St. Clair Elementary	33
Spitler Elementary	36
Walkerville Public Schools	27
White Cloud Elementary	28
White Cloud Junior High	17

Student Reporting

WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT PROJECT FOCUS:

Highlights of Positives

- ❖ They treat everyone the same and there is so much to do here.
- ❖ How the teachers help me out on homework and how I can talk to them about anything.
- ❖ You get to do homework while spending time with friends.
- ❖ It makes me do better in school.
- ❖ That we get to play outside and do good activities.

Highlights of Growth Opportunities

- ❖ I would go on more field trips and give people more work time.
- ❖ Play more games.
- ❖ Have kids come up with more things to do.
- ❖ Help everyone be kind.
- ❖ Have it in high school.

Participant Reporting Summary

WHAT ARE THE STUDENTS SAYING ABOUT PROJECT FOCUS?

To begin coding and analyzing the survey data, first the words, phrases, and sentences were reviewed from the open-ended questions.

Initial codes were used to identify patterns in the data and then establish categories. For example, the response, “it helps me with learning,” was coded as “academic support.” The response, “being with my friends,” was coded as “enjoyment/fun/friendships.” Any response indicating the establishment of a relationship with adults other than their parents was coded as “caring adults.”

Categories for each question are as follows:

The best thing about Project FOCUS is...

- Food
- Safe place
- Academic support
- Caring adults
- Enjoyment/fun/friendships
- Experience/field trips

To make Project FOCUS better I would...

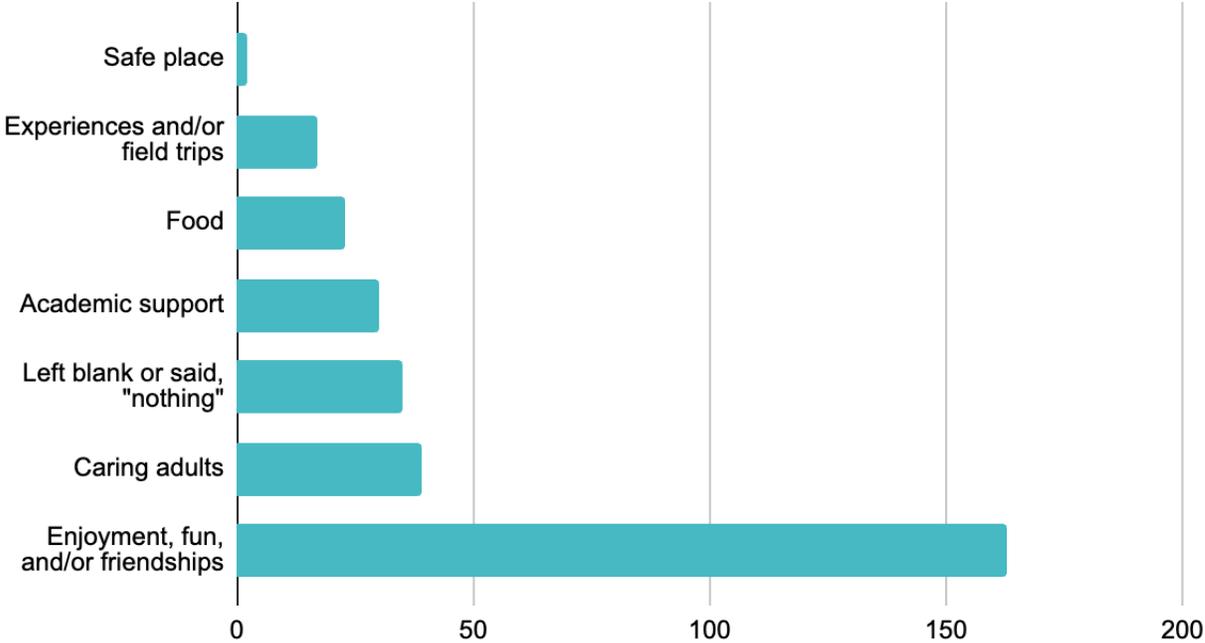
- Better food selection
- Raise (for staff)
- Less programming time
- More programming time
- Transportation
- Communication
- Structure/classroom management
- Increase the number of students served
- Increase/expand activities
- More academics

These categories are held consistently over the time. Not all categories will be used for the 2024-25 school year if data collected does not indicate its use.

Question: The best thing about Project FOCUS is...

Survey respondents collectively noted some areas more frequently than others. Respondents (53%) noted they appreciated the enjoyment, fun, and friendships that Project FOCUS programming provides. Academic support (10%) and caring adults (13%) were also frequently noted. A significant number of participants either left the question blank or wrote “nothing” (11%).

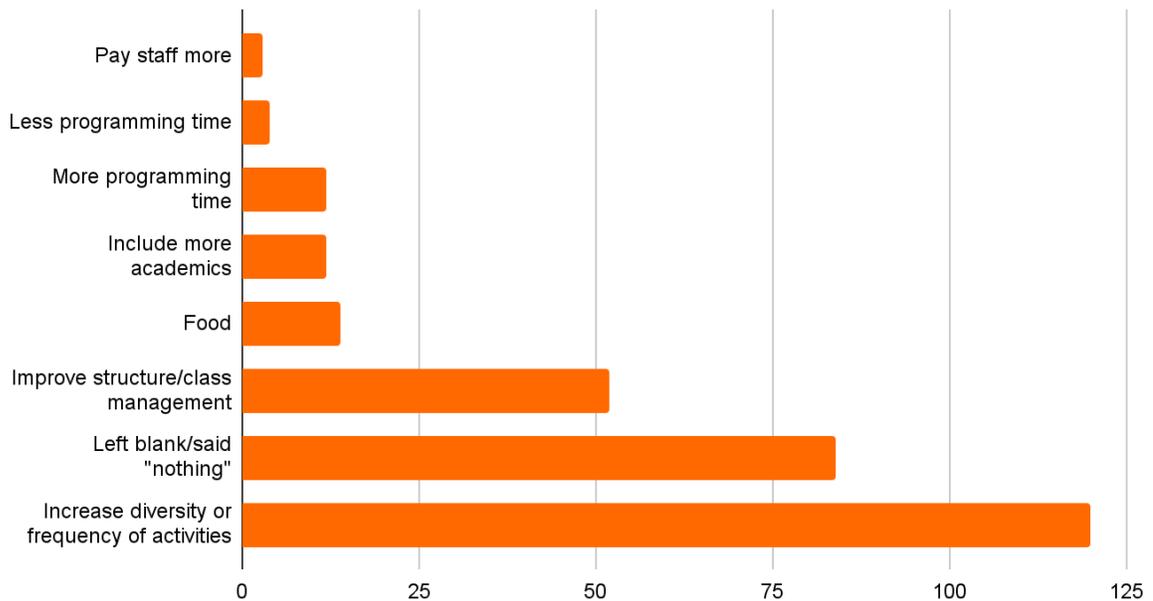
The best thing about Project FOCUS is..



Question: To make Project FOCUS better I would...

There was a wide variety of responses for the question regarding improvements to the programs. Survey respondents did indicate a desire for an increase and expansion of activities provided (39%). Many also noted that improvements in the structure, routine, and classroom management of programs could be improved (17%). This is a decrease from 20% in 2023-24.

To make Project FOCUS better I would...



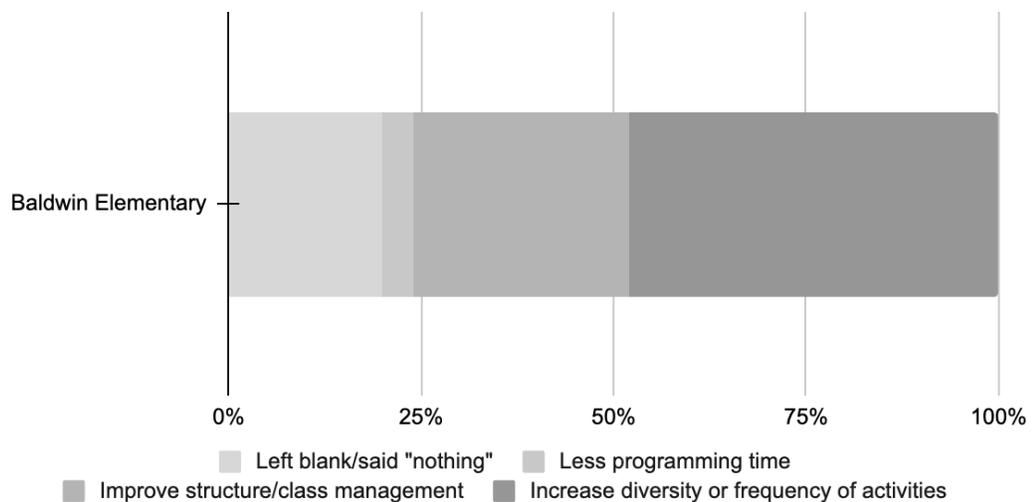
Site Snapshots

Baldwin Elementary

Just like all sites, the most common response for what participants liked best about programming was **enjoyment, fun, and friendships**. Students also liked the field trips and the caring adults around them.

Participants also had some suggestions. The majority are summarized by the graph below, but site-specific comments can be made available upon request (kathleenkrolltc@gmail.com).

Participants suggested the following improvements for Baldwin Elementary:



“[The people] at Project FOCUS are the best people I know.”

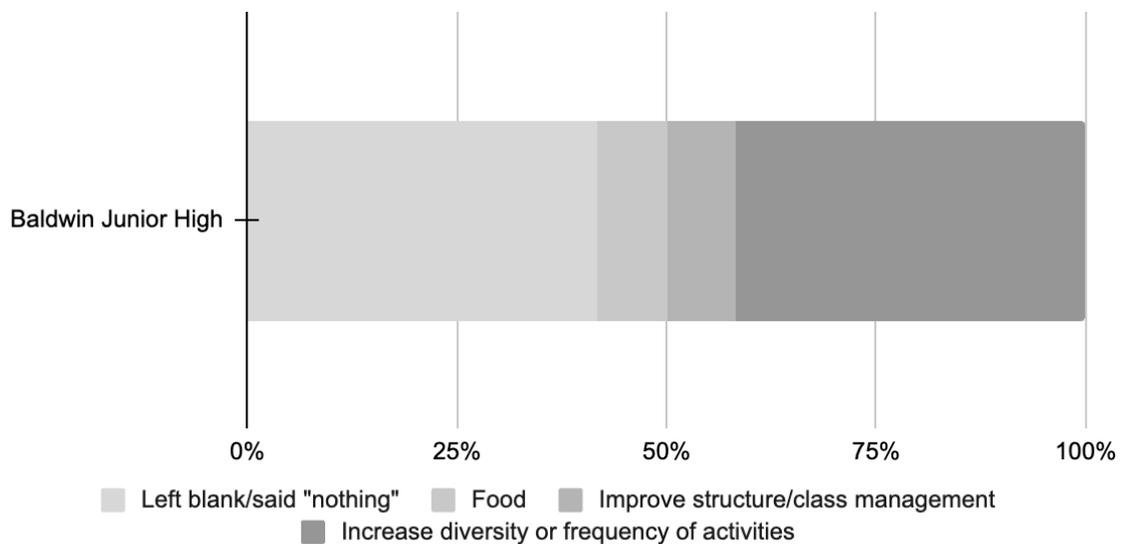
-2nd grader

Baldwin Junior High

Just like all sites, the most common response for what participants liked best about programming was **enjoyment, fun, and friendships**. Students also liked the field trips and the caring adults around them.

Participants also had some suggestions. The majority are summarized by the graph below, but site-specific comments can be made available upon request (kathleenkrolltc@gmail.com).

Participants suggested the following improvements for Baldwin Junior High:



“

“We can do student-led projects, and it is really fun to teach the class whatever we want.”

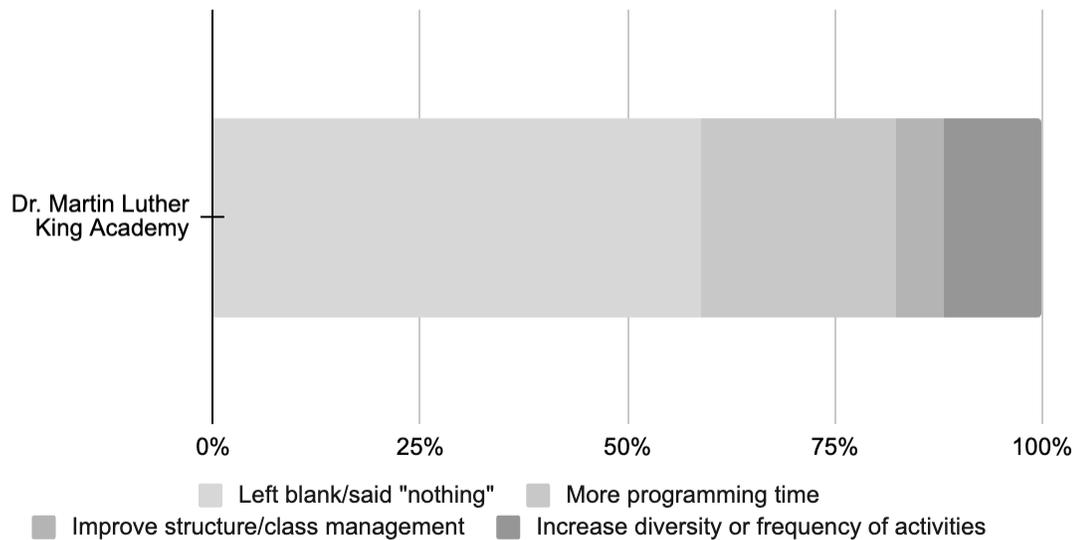
–6th grader

MLK

Just like all sites, the most common response for what participants liked best about programming was **enjoyment, fun,** and **friendships**. Students also liked the field trips and the caring adults around them.

Participants also had some suggestions. The majority are summarized by the graph below, but site-specific comments can be made available upon request (kathleenkrolltc@gmail.com).

Participants suggested the following improvements for Dr. Martin Luther King Academy



"[I like] the crafts and the staff."

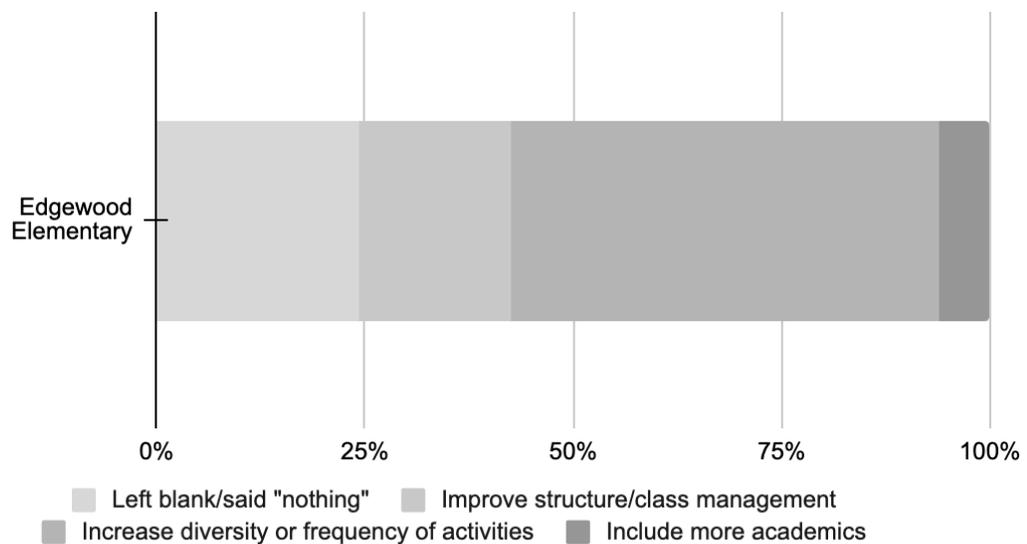
-5th grader

Edgewood Elementary

Just like all sites, the most common response for what participants liked best about programming was **enjoyment, fun, and friendships**. Students also liked the field trips and the caring adults around them.

Participants also had some suggestions. The majority are summarized by the graph below, but site-specific comments can be made available upon request (kathleenkrolltc@gmail.com).

Participants suggested the following improvements for Edgewood Elementary:



“We get to go [to] fun places and see fun people!”

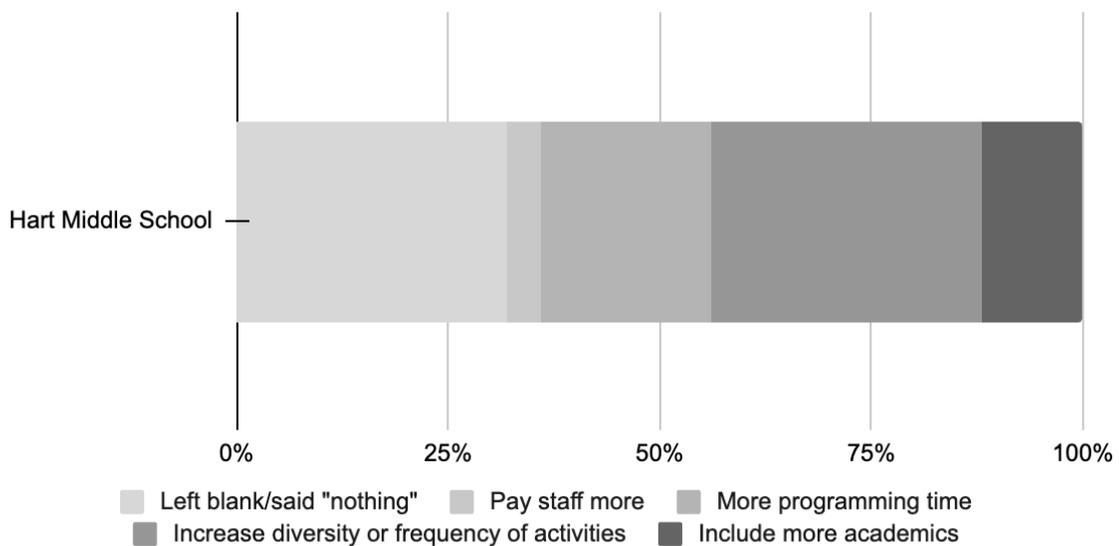
– 2nd grader

Hart Middle School

Just like all sites, the most common response for what participants liked best about programming was **enjoyment, fun, and friendships**. Students also liked the field trips and the caring adults around them.

Participants also had some suggestions. The majority are summarized by the graph below, but site-specific comments can be made available upon request (kathleenkrolltc@gmail.com).

Participants suggested the following improvements for Hart Middle School:



“The teachers treat me like one of their best friends!”

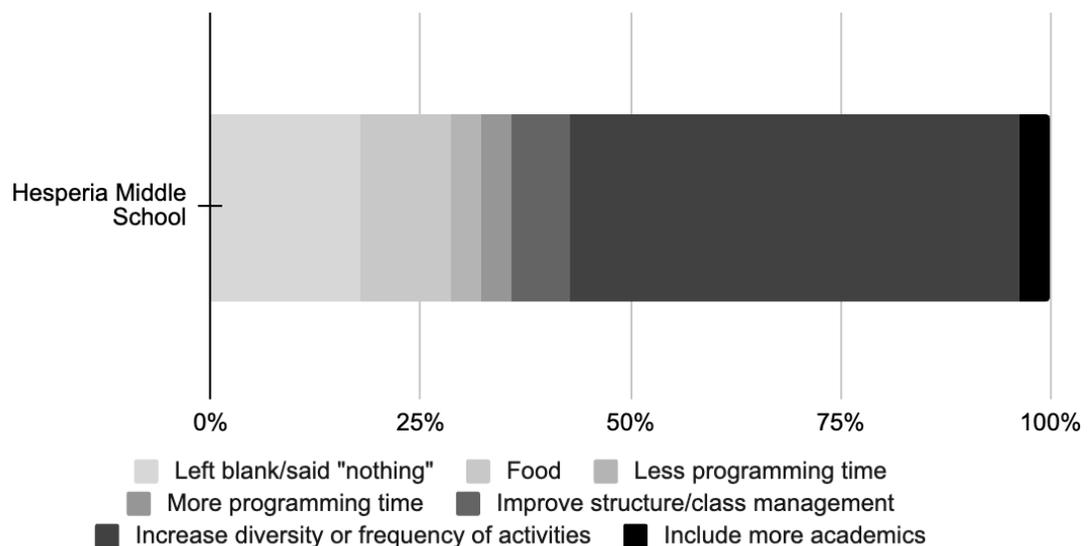
– 5th grader

Hesperia Middle School

Just like all sites, the most common response for what participants liked best about programming was **enjoyment, fun, and friendships**. Students also liked the field trips and the caring adults around them.

Participants also had some suggestions. The majority are summarized by the graph below, but site-specific comments can be made available upon request (kathleenkrolltc@gmail.com).

Participants suggested the following improvements for Hesperia Middle School



“I get to have fun after school instead of laying in my bed at home.”

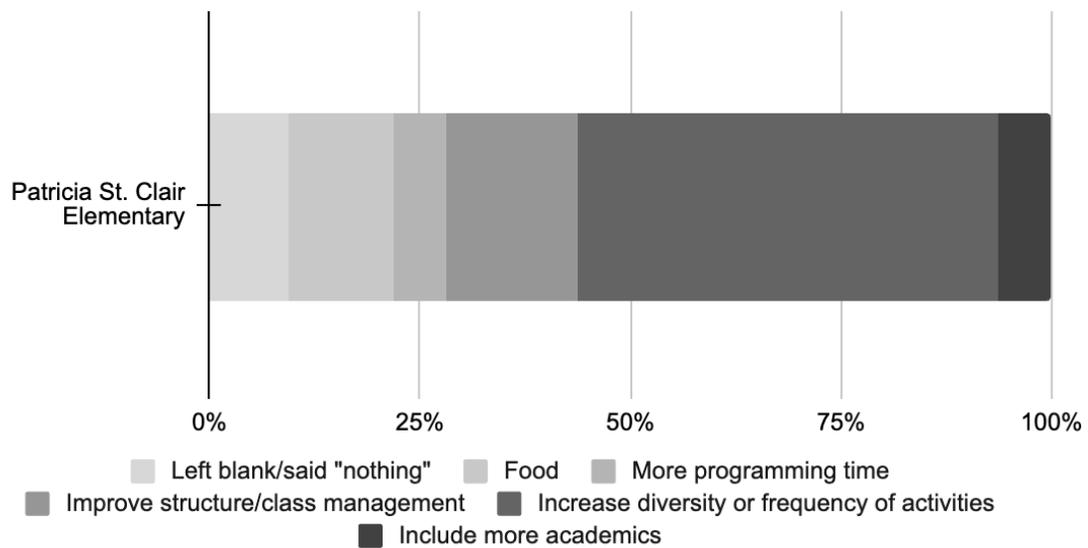
– 7th grader

Hesperia Elementary (Patricia St. Clair Elementary)

Just like all sites, the most common response for what participants liked best about programming was **enjoyment, fun, and friendships**. Students also liked the field trips and the caring adults around them.

Participants also had some suggestions. The majority are summarized by the graph below, but site-specific comments can be made available upon request (kathleenkrolltc@gmail.com).

Participants suggested the following improvements for Patricia St. Clair Elementary (Hesperia)



"It lets my brain keep going and stay on track."

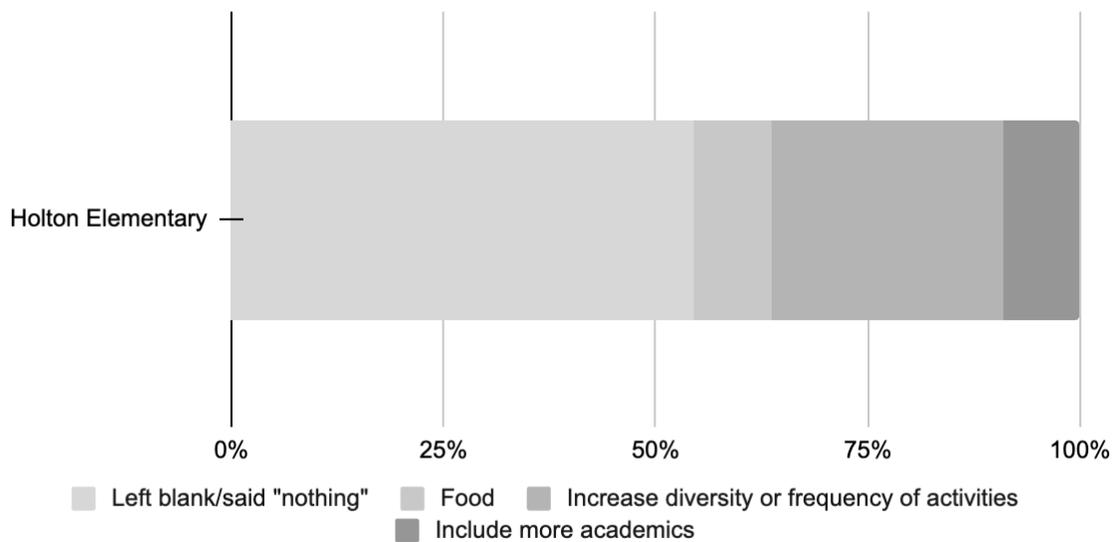
– 2nd grader

Holton Elementary

Just like all sites, the most common response for what participants liked best about programming was **enjoyment, fun, and friendships**. Students also liked the field trips and the caring adults around them.

Participants also had some suggestions. The majority are summarized by the graph below, but site-specific comments can be made available upon request (kathleenkrolltc@gmail.com).

Participants suggested the following improvements for Holton Elementary School



“ [I] get to have fun, spend time with friends, and get to read more. Also, make new friends!”

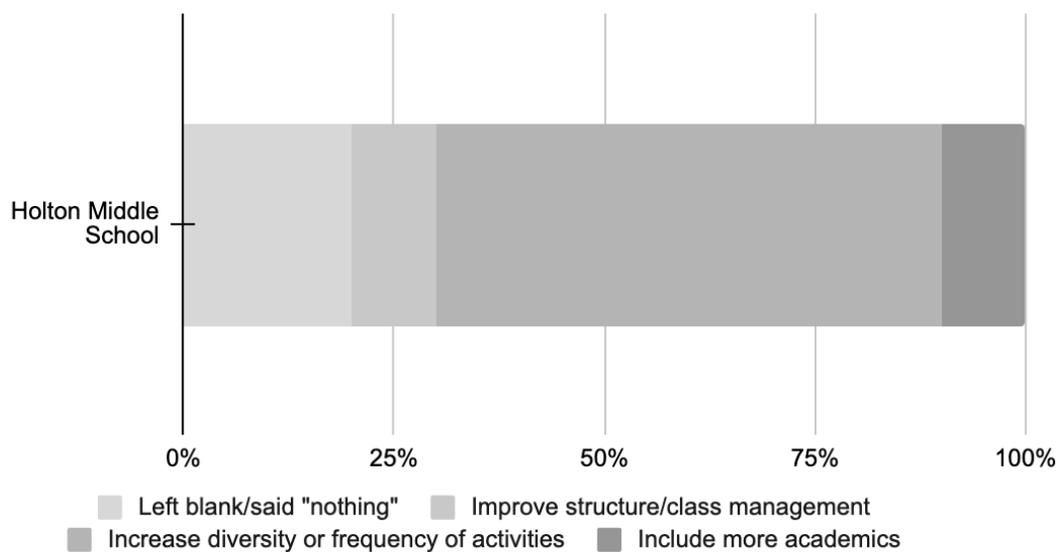
-2nd grader

Holton Middle School

Just like all sites, the most common response for what participants liked best about programming was **enjoyment, fun, and friendships**. Students also liked the field trips and the caring adults around them.

Participants also had some suggestions. The majority are summarized by the graph below, but site-specific comments can be made available upon request (kathleenkrolltc@gmail.com).

Participants suggested the following improvements for Holton Middle School



"[I like] the fun projects and STEAM day."

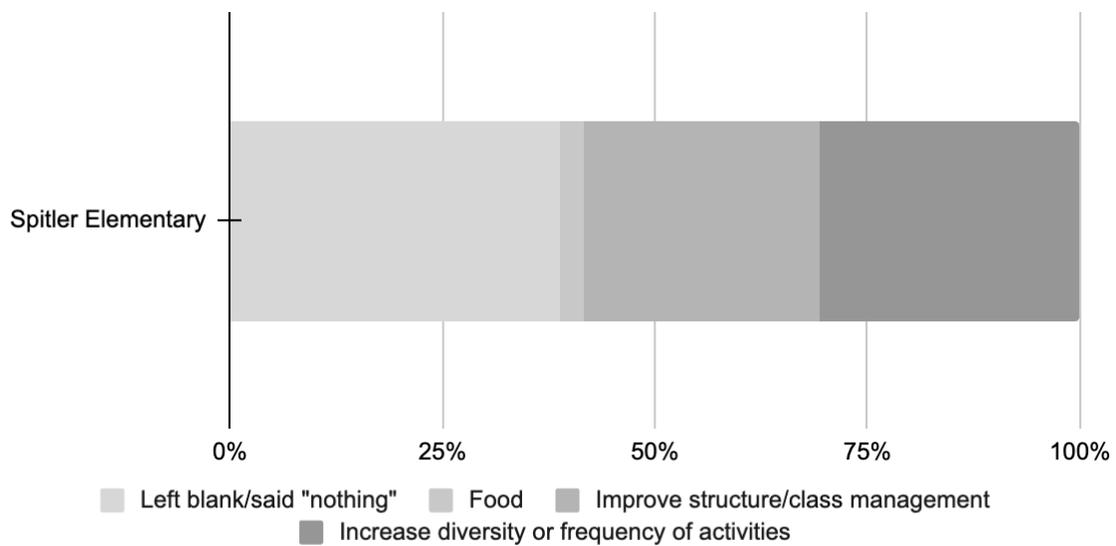
-7th grader

Spitler Elementary

Just like all sites, the most common response for what participants liked best about programming was **enjoyment, fun, and friendships**. Students also liked the field trips and the caring adults around them.

Participants also had some suggestions. The majority are summarized by the graph below, but site-specific comments can be made available upon request (kathleenkrolltc@gmail.com).

Participants suggested the following improvements for Spitler Elementary:



“The best thing about Project FOCUS is we get to make slime.”

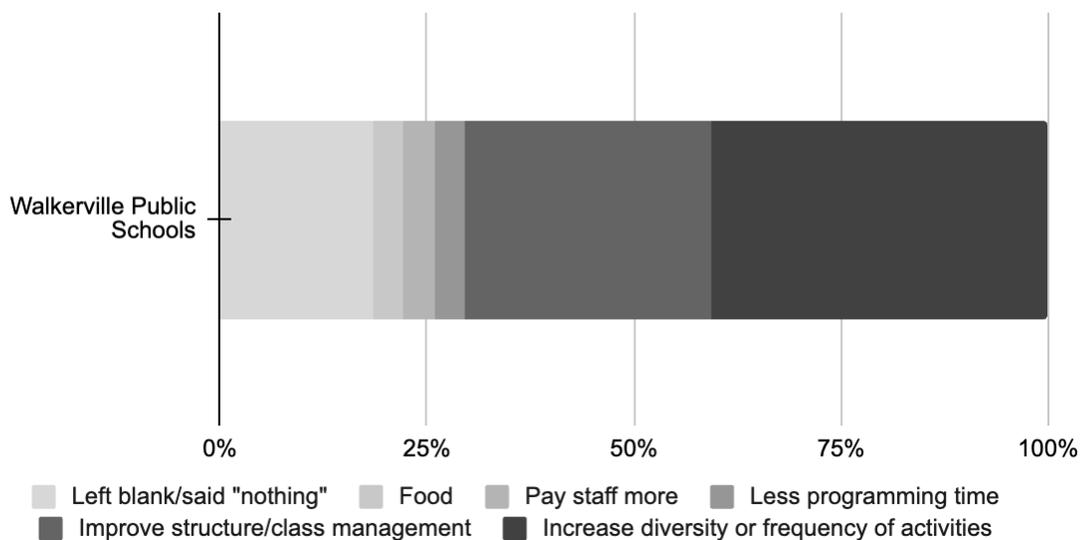
–4th grader

Walkerville Public School

Just like all sites, the most common response for what participants liked best about programming was **enjoyment, fun, and friendships**. Students also liked the field trips and the caring adults around them.

Participants also had some suggestions. The majority are summarized by the graph below, but site-specific comments can be made available upon request (kathleenkrolltc@gmail.com).

Participants suggested the following improvements for Walkerville Public Schools:



***“[I like] that we see friends, go on field trips,
we cook, and we do math facts.”***

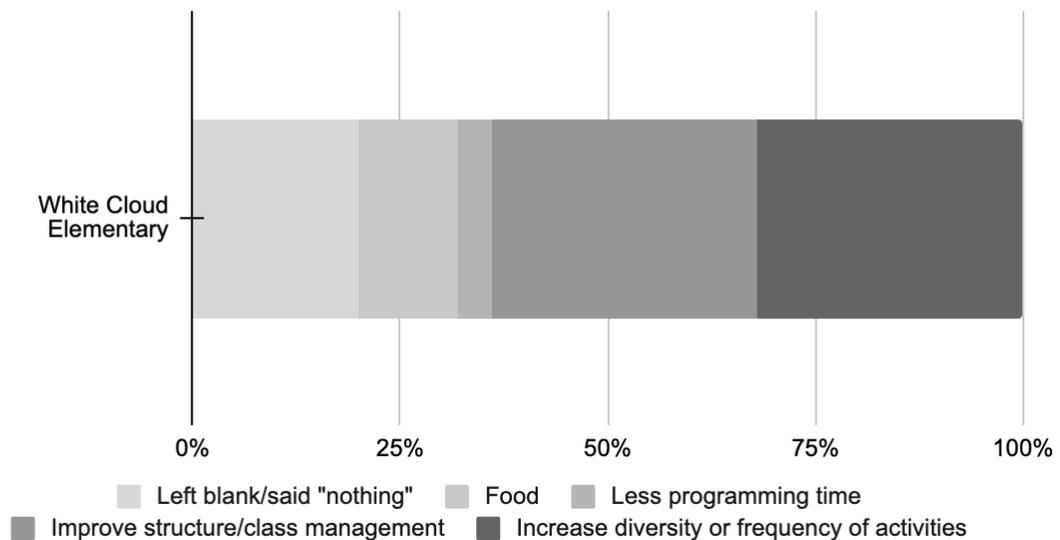
-5th grader

White Cloud Elementary

Just like all sites, the most common response for what participants liked best about programming was **enjoyment, fun, and friendships**. Students also liked the field trips and the caring adults around them.

Participants also had some suggestions. The majority are summarized by the graph below, but site-specific comments can be made available upon request (kathleenkrolltc@gmail.com).

Participants suggested the following improvements for White Cloud Elementary:



"The people care for us and our safety."

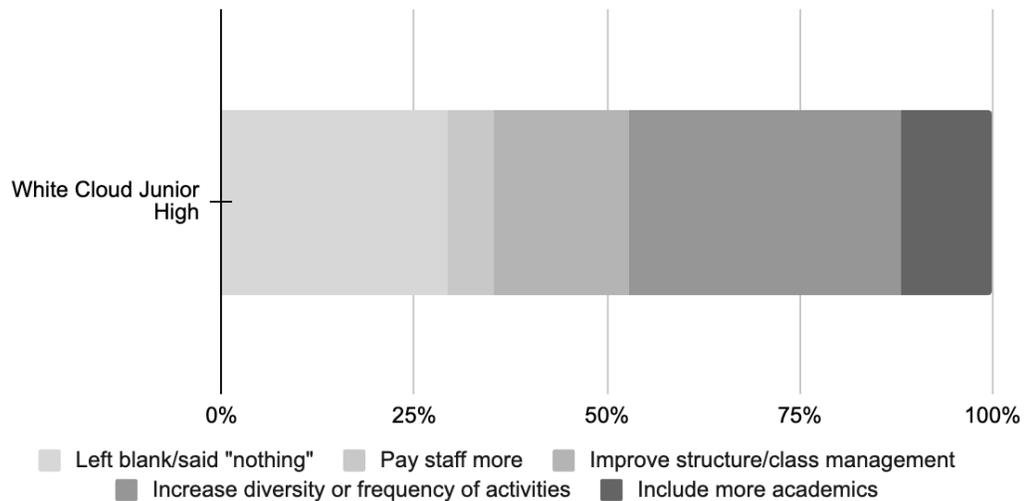
-4th grader

White Cloud Junior High

Just like all sites, the most common response for what participants liked best about programming was **enjoyment, fun, and friendships**. Students also liked the field trips and the caring adults around them.

Participants also had some suggestions. The majority are summarized by the graph below, but site-specific comments can be made available upon request (kathleenrolltc@gmail.com).

Participants suggested the following improvements for White Cloud Junior High:



"I like the program so much! It helped me make more friends and made me more confident."

-7th grader

Section Seven: Site Observations

The areas of observations intentionally remained the same to thoughtfully review changes in each category. These categories also align with Project FOCUS goals and with student, parent, and school staff recommendations for growth from previous survey data.

EVIDENCE OF ACADEMICS, SCHOOLWORK COMPLETION, AND SKILL-BUILDING

By providing additional support and resources, Project FOCUS creates a structured environment where students can receive personalized help with classwork. Enrichment activities develop critical skills, including problem-solving and collaboration.

SITE-SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS

Hesperia Elementary

This site follows daily themes to improve engagement. Movement Monday, Tech Tuesday, Wacky Wednesday, and Thrifty (craft) Thursday. Activities reinforce academics, such as reading clues for bingo to practice reading skills and playing math card games to work on math facts.



Baldwin Elementary

Games and activities, such as the spelling bee relay race and alphabet scavenger hunt, aim to develop reading and writing skills. Students write poetry and keep journals. They learn about careers in STEM and interview a NASA employee to gain a deeper understanding of science careers.



Holton Elementary

During academic time, students complete class assignments, read, or visit educational websites. Staff supply printed activities, providing students with a wide range of choices. Numerous hands-on activities are utilized, and students are encouraged to express themselves creatively.



Edgewood

Edgewood focuses on literacy, and students participate in a variety of reading activities. They read the Orange Frog picture book and answer trivia questions about it, including why and inferring questions.

A guest speaker presented information about Hawaii, incorporating hands-on components that helped students learn about the world and broaden their perspectives.



Holton Middle School

The staff consistently prioritizes a balanced program and considers students' interests when designing lessons. A wide variety of activities engages students, maximizes their strengths, and helps them discover new interests. Students create blackout poems, practice nature journaling, and observe objects with microscopes.



EVIDENCE OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Out-of-school time programs contribute to children's social-emotional learning by offering a safe and supportive environment. Children can express themselves, build relationships, and navigate challenges and conflicts with guidance. Mindfulness and reflection practices promote self-awareness, emotional regulation, and resilience. Connections with peers and mentors nurture a sense of belonging and equip students with the interpersonal skills needed to thrive.

SITE-SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS

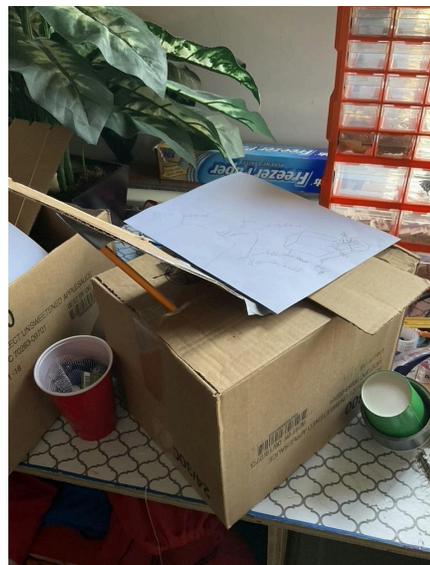
Baldwin Middle School

Students strive to maintain a growth mindset. They identify fixed-mindset statements and use games and discussions to begin viewing challenges and setbacks as opportunities for learning and growth.



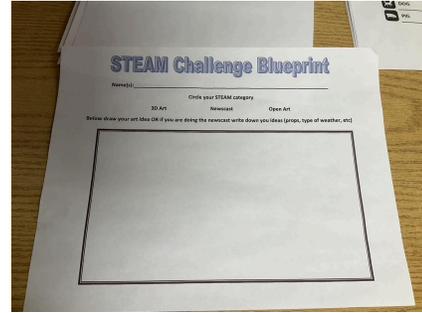
White Cloud Jr High

Students use teamwork to navigate challenging assignments. They build relationships through project planning and collaboration.



Hesperia Middle School

Staff connect with students and recognize their strengths, creating a safe and collaborative atmosphere. They prioritize opportunities for students of all backgrounds to become leaders.



Walkerville

Students are encouraged to share about themselves, fostering a supportive environment that focuses on student success. Staff members play a crucial role in promoting teamwork and cooperation. They believe in the power of student mentors to enhance learning experiences, pairing older students with younger ones to provide academic support and encouragement. They have partnered with community members during WOW Tuesdays to offer students real-world learning opportunities and enrichment.



Hart Middle School

During the Hero Walk-a-Thon, students had the opportunity to interact with local heroes and community members. The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) worked in the concession stand, helping to distribute Project FOCUS brochures to prospective students.



EVIDENCE OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS

Positive behavior supports encourage student growth by reinforcing desirable behaviors. By setting clear expectations and recognizing appropriate choices, programs can help students develop self-discipline and accountability. This approach not only helps reduce challenging behaviors but also empowers students to take control of their learning.

SITE-SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS

Hesperia MS

Students earn positivity points and spend the points in a class store. Student points are tallied regularly, and students can save, spend, or donate them.



MLK

The program has clear behavior expectations, and adults encourage and reinforce desired behaviors.



Baldwin Elementary

Students earn Spark bucks by demonstrating this character's qualities. The story of Spark the Orange Frog illustrates the concept that happiness can lead to success and positive outcomes, meaning that being happy can lead to greater productivity, creativity, and overall success.



EVIDENCE OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND CHOICE

When students are engaged, they actively participate in class discussions and seek help when needed, fostering a more dynamic learning environment. This involvement can enhance motivation, leading to improved grades and overall academic performance, illustrating the importance of interactive and stimulating learning experiences.

SITE-SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS

Hesperia Middle School

The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) nominees plan campaigns and deliver election speeches. They address student concerns before students cast their ballots in a voting booth.



Hesperia Elementary

Students created paper mosaics with NCCA-Artsplace, whose goal is to promote the arts and enhance the cultural climate in Newaygo County.



Baldwin Elementary

Students are encouraged to be creative and innovative. They consider different perspectives, think outside the box, and work together toward common goals and outcomes.



White Cloud Elementary

Students are active and participate in activities that combine movement, science, and art. They find and paint acorns, gather leaves, discuss the science behind color change, and create leaf prints.



Spitler Elementary School

The students develop a wide range of valuable abilities as they enhance their fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Activities like sewing build patience and focus as students complete detailed tasks. Students design and personalize their projects, fostering creativity and self-expression.



EVIDENCE OF RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITH SCHOOL STAFF, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITY

Fostering strong relationships in after-school programs can help staff members identify and address students' individual needs. This reinforces a supportive school culture that promotes overall student well-being. When students feel comfortable and supported by staff beyond the traditional classroom environment, they are more likely to engage in their learning.

SITE-SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS

<p>Hart Middle School</p> <p>The students participated in homecoming activities by making team posters to carry in the parade and displaying them at the game. Students passed out glow sticks to spectators, supporting their community and showing school spirit.</p>	
<p>White Cloud Elementary</p> <p>This site partners with other organizations to participate in extracurricular events.</p>	
<p>Edgewood</p> <p>Students colored Valentine pictures for the residents of a local nursing home.</p>	

Hesperia Elementary

The students learn about military veterans and everyday heroes. They discuss ways to show gratitude for the heroes in their lives and make crafts to share with local senior veterans as a token of appreciation.



MLK

FOCUS students cultivate a supportive school culture by cheering on the recent graduates and making decorations for the event.



OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY

After-school programs enhance students' health and safety by providing a structured environment where they can engage in productive activities, including physical exercise, nutrition education, and mental health support. They serve as a vital extension of the school day, promoting the holistic health and safety of students.

SITE-SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS

<p>Baldwin Middle School</p> <p>Students use Skillstastic resources to stay active. They also walk to the Forest Service office for an outdoor community service project involving harvesting native seeds.</p>	 A photograph showing four students walking away from the camera on a paved path. They are wearing bright orange t-shirts and various pants. The path is surrounded by trees with autumn foliage. The students appear to be engaged in an outdoor activity or walk.
<p>Spitler Elementary</p> <p>Students use sports to build strength and coordination. Strong body awareness helps children navigate their environment with greater confidence, leading to increased participation in physical activities and a lifelong love for movement.</p>	 A photograph of a gymnasium where several students are playing basketball. The court is wooden with white lines. A basketball hoop and backboard are visible in the background. The students are wearing various colored athletic wear, and the scene is brightly lit by overhead lights.

Edgewood Elementary

The students at this site enjoy showcasing their creativity. Creative expression can help children develop their imaginations, better understand and manage their emotions, and potentially be more intrinsically motivated to learn.



Baldwin Elementary

Students enjoy the fresh air and playing together. Spending time outdoors helps enhance focus and develop a deeper appreciation for nature.



MLK

Students learn to interact safely while taking turns at stations. Stations allow for differentiation since students can often work at their own pace and complete stations in a different order. Stations provide choice and promote responsible peer-to-peer connections.



Section Eight

Recommendations

It is important to note that while the observations reported here give a glimpse into the day-to-day of Project FOCUS programs, it is not a full picture.

We were able to understand programming through observations, coordinator-provided data, state reporting, and staff reports. The lead evaluator met an average of twice monthly with the Out-of-School Time Director. Our team was regular recipients of the site newsletters.

The recommendations given below are a repetition of the year prior. Although growth was noted in academic support time and relationships with school administration and staff, the remainder of the items noted continue to be areas where change is encouraged.

Given the information gathered, the following recommendations are respectfully presented:

Daily Programming:

- Offer other academic support during “academic” time, so that all students remain on the same schedule (to prevent some students rushing through academic work to achieve “choice time”)
- Increased incorporation of community circles
- Include “I can” or “I will” statements into lesson planning
- Ensure each session has a complete lesson plan, including anticipatory set, closure, and materials list

Lesson Planning:

- Use consistent and specific language and activities regarding resilience and growth mindset
- Lean on other site coordinators for ideas, methods, and activity planning

- Ensure the lessons have extended activities for those students who finish early or need structure to maintain positive behaviors

Systemic Change:

- Provide professional development to staff directly related to practical, immediately applicable classroom management techniques
- Require regular collection of student data (test scores, survey of parent, teacher, and student, discipline records), including pre-entry data for newly-enrolled students
- Carefully track drop-out reasons; do not allow “blanks” in EZ Reports
- Meet and develop relationships with local school administration to foster increased willingness to share school-wide data of enrolled students

Section Nine: Final Notes

FINAL NOTES FROM THE EVALUATOR:

In our tenure as evaluator for Project FOCUS, our key recommendations have been, and continue to be:

- Clear and regular communication with key stakeholders (e.g., school staff, Project FOCUS staff, parents, evaluators)
- Update student grade information weekly/bi-weekly in order to
 - Understand student growth patterns
 - Maintain connections with regular day school staff
- Provide professional development to Project staff directly related to practical, immediately applicable classroom management techniques.
- Require regularly collected student data (test scores, survey of parent, teacher, and student, discipline records), including pre-entry data for newly enrolled students.

Additionally, we would encourage Project FOCUS leadership to:

- Encourage and incentivize attendance in programming for enrolled students.
- Work toward understanding how attendance in programming relates to attendance rates in school.
- Create a system of data collection for site coordinators that is standardized and clear with limited editing privileges (to protect the standardization of the form).

We continue to be impressed by Project FOCUS coordinators, leadership, sites, and students. It is a pleasure to work alongside this organization putting forth tremendous effort to do what is best for students.