



PENNSYLVANIA 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

2017 - 2018 EVALUATION REPORT Cohort 8
INTERMEDIATE UNIT #1

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October, 2018



CHARLEROI

AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT



Official Website of the Uniontown Area School District

Welcome to Raider Nation

Students in afterschool programs attend school more often, do better in school, gain skills for success, and are more likely to graduate.

Brown, W.O. & others. (2002).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To: Jo Beth McKee and Rob Baier
From: Furman Educational Resources
Date: October, 2018
Subject: Program gains and student achievement

This executive summary is based on information extracted from the detailed data charts included in the comprehensive evaluation report for Pennsylvania 21st Century Community Learning Centers 2017-2018 Evaluation Report. This report is based on data collected from consultation with 21st Century staff, parent and student surveys, sending school district records, PSSA results, 21st century community learning center site records/reports and site visits. The intended purpose of this summary is to provide interested individuals with a quick overview of the program accomplishments. Anyone needing a more detailed look at the program's accomplishments should review the comprehensive report.

Program goal: Engage students in learning through innovative projects

Through a partnership with Challenger Space Center, students were actively engaged in learning activities that require acquisition and application of 21st Century skills. The program curriculum was implemented at all sites during summer 2017 and school year 2017-2018. Following the 2017-2018 school year, about 75% of Charleroi students, 71% of Uniontown students, and 33% of Brownsville students indicated that they now have a greater interest in science as a result of the program.

Program goal: Improve literacy, math and science skills

Report Card Achievement: Overall, when considering report card evaluations at all three centers, 43% of the students indicated an increase in reading and 46% of the participating students revealed an increase in math.

PSSA Scores: PSSA results across all three sites show increases in both reading and mathematics. In reading, 15.94% of the students participating in the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program experienced an increase and 11.42% of participants experienced mathematics growth. Even though these percentages do not appear to be significant, it must be considered that each student represented by these percentages is a student experiencing positive growth.

Program goal: Improve school day attendance

Overall, when considering school attendance at all three centers, approximately 40% of the participating students improved and 43% declined. Attendance continues to be an area of need.

Program goal: Improve positive behaviors in academic and social settings

To the credit of the students at all three sites, approximately 90% of the total population was reported as having no need to improve behavior. Of the 10% of the students indicating a need to improve, there was very little improvement noted (2%). Disruptive behavior continues to be an area of need.

INTRODUCTION

Results and findings presented in this report represent the data collected during and after the program year indicated, unless otherwise noted. While evaluators put forth great efforts to ensure data quality, Furman Educational Resources relies on external and original data sources (school districts, programs, participants, survey respondents, etc.) to provide a majority of data. Analysis assumes that, once checked for validity, data are accurate at the time of collection. Additionally, while data collection efforts strive for 100% data submission, complete and usable data are not always available for each participant or student.

Program Overview

Furman Education Resources has been engaged to study the success of the After School 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program in meeting its goals for the third year of its Cohort 8 2017 - 2018 program. In this capacity, documentation has been gathered to substantiate both the needs of the students in their respective communities and the successful programming that has been established by Intermediate Unit #1 at each specific learning site.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program provides federal funding for the establishment of community learning centers that provide academic, artistic, and cultural enrichment opportunities for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools, to meet state and local standards in core academic subjects, offer students a broad array of activities that can complement their regular academic programs, and offer other educational services to the families of participating children.

Pennsylvania's primary goal for its 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) is to assist youth to meet state standards for core academic subjects by providing students with academic enrichment opportunities. In addition to academics, centers are encouraged to offer participants a broad array of other services and programs, such as art, music, recreation activities, character education, behavior management, career and technical training, drug and violence prevention programming, and technology education.

The IU Project began implementation in April of 2016. Program directors and support staff have continued to work tenaciously to overcome obstacles. During the Pennsylvania Department of Education Monitoring Visitation for Cohort 8 2016 – 2017, the program received an Exemplary rating: Grantee efforts exceed the expectation for practice defined by the 21st CCLC grantee requirement. Grantee efforts are considered “best practice” by the field.

Dr. Hershberger, our monitor, noted that: “students engage in enjoyable hands-on activities and projects that promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The staff members work to meet the academic and social needs of the students and help prepare them for life beyond their public school education. Program activities are varied, innovative, and STEM-based and designed to incorporate literacy and math skills that support student learning.”

The structure and curriculum of the Cohort 8 Program has remained the same or in some cases improved. It would therefore be expected that this high level of excellence would continue in the 2017 – 2018 program year.

One challenge that has remained constant when developing the after school program is that of transportation. The large geographical footprint in this rural environment has demanded 25% of the funding to be spent on transporting the students. Without this commitment to students, families would not be able to access extended day and after school programs.

This evaluator has had the opportunity to attend the orientation and professional development sessions provided by Donna Whoric and Jo Beth McKee for all teachers and support personnel prior to program implementation in fall and spring. Together Donna and Jo Beth have worked tirelessly to assemble and train after school teachers, build collaborative relationships with sending schools and engage families in supporting after school attendance of students. This evaluator has also conducted visits to all cohort sites to observe the program in operation and conduct interviews with participants.

Program Design

The Intermediate Unit 1 in collaboration with the Charleroi Area Elementary Center, Uniontown School District, and the Brownsville Area School District, has developed and created 21st Century Community Learning Centers to meet the needs of academically at-risk students and students of low socio-economic background.

The goals of the 21CCLC program as per the Pennsylvania Request for Application Abstract are:

- To engage students in learning through innovative projects
- To increase career and college readiness
- To improve literacy, math and science skills
- To improve school day attendance
- To improve positive behaviors in academic and social settings

The basic program design of the 2017-2018 21st CCLC emphasizes 21st century skill development including innovation, problem solving, collaboration and creativity. The program proposes to serve students through the use of engaging projects and strategically incorporating STEAM, literacy and social skill development. The design of this program begins with a primary goal to help families gain access to an exciting learning program, the Challenger Space Center, which would not be within the realm of possibility for them to provide for their children.

This uniquely designed program not only supports development of mathematics and reading skills, it is planned to provide concrete motivation for school success. It addresses the basic challenge of making school an experience that is positive because many children come from families who have not had positive school experiences, themselves. The after-school program has a homework component in addition to the enrichment activities. This component has been highly successful in helping students return to school prepared to begin their day.

The 21st CCLC Program also supports students in gaining social skills and positive attitudes toward school and authority. This program supports social and emotional learning, career readiness and positive interaction with others through the adoption of the TEAMology curriculum.

Through the inspired vision and careful planning of Program Director Jo Beth McKee and Program Coordinator, Donna Whoric, this program is addressing the unique needs of the students in this rural and urban environment.

OPERATIONS

21st Century Community Learning Centers

Intermediate Unit 1 operated three centers during the summer of 2017 and extended operations to three centers during the 2017 – 2018 school year at the following locations:

- Brownsville Elementary and Middle School in the Brownsville School District
- Charleroi Area Elementary Center in the Charleroi School District
- Lafayette Elementary and Middle School, and Ben Franklin Elementary School in the Uniontown School District located at the East End United Community Center

The programs began the fall session on September 10th and ran until December 20th. The spring session ran from January 7th until May 23rd.

These schools were selected based on their respective labels of being economically disadvantaged as well as the fact that these are schools in need of academic support. According to the United States Census Bureau as of 2015, State and County Quick Facts, Intermediate Unit 1 services an area that is 14.53% below the poverty line. Charleroi School District is a part of Washington County where 39.2% of the total population lives below the poverty line. Approximately 55% of all students in the Charleroi Area School District receive free or reduced lunch. Both Brownsville and Uniontown School Districts are housed in Fayette County. Fayette County holds the distinction of being one of the poorest counties in Pennsylvania. Thirty six percent of the population is living under the poverty level with 64% of the Uniontown student population receiving free or reduced lunch. Sixty-seven percent of the students at Brownsville Middle school also qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Each of the sites operated on a schedule accommodating the needs of its students during the school year for at least three hours/day, four days/week (there was an intermittent part of the fall session that was decreased to two days/week due to budgetary circumstances): Charleroi (3:15 – 6:15) Brownsville Middle School (2:35 – 6:05) Brownsville Elementary School (3:05 – 6:05) East End United Community Center for Uniontown Schools (2:45 – 5:45).

An example of an after-school schedule is as follows:

- 5 minutes Review and daily expectations
- 15 minutes Snack
- 20 minutes Homework help
- 40 minutes STEM Activities (Challenger Learning Center, Trade Books, Health Rocks)
- 15 minutes Physical activity/Health and Wellness education
- 30 minutes Literacy Activities
- 20 minutes TEAMology
- 30 minutes Art/Music/Character Education
- 5 minutes Dismissal

Although this schedule is flexible in nature, it does provide a framework for the best use of time. Students were often divided into small groups based on grade levels. Those individuals in charge worked to create a nonthreatening environment to foster a creative spirit and a workable schedule to meet the needs of those participating students at each site. This evaluator was fortunate to observe what he would consider masterful teaching at each site. Teachers were positively reinforcing students, which resulted in a sense of student accomplishment. Teachers were able to correlate mission themes with art and music as they integrated literacy, science and the arts. This evaluator also witnessed excellent behavior. He would attribute this to teachers who are prepared to teach and willing to creatively work with each unique population of student, as well as the curriculum itself being of a motivational nature.

The Brownsville and Charleroi programs were held in the school building on the school campus under the direction of Frank Berdar and Steve Shields respectively. The Uniontown program incorporating the Ben Franklin Elementary School and the Lafayette Elementary and Middle Schools was held at the Uniontown East End United Community Center under the supervision of the Center's Director, Matthew Crutchman. Mr. Crutchman unfortunately left the Directorship at the East End Community Center during the spring term, and was replaced by his assistant, Terri Burden in the spring term.

The IU Program served 164 total participants. It is commendable that these children were able to take advantage of the opportunity to grow and enrich their learning experiences through these after school programs.

Recruitment was considered a priority both at the IU and at the program centers. Recruitment was particularly difficult during and after the PSSA testing dates. Students entered the program by way of teacher, parent, principal, and/or guidance counselor referral. Information retrieved from data driven sources such as PSSA results, report cards, and other hard data were used to identify those students who would benefit most from this program. Fliers were sent home with all students advertising the program and posters were posted in the schools. The very best advertising seems to be "word of mouth". The 21st CCLC program enjoys a great degree of positive feedback from attending students. Many students share that they want to attend the program because they had heard that it is a fun place to be.

Staffing

All centers are staffed with certified teachers and paraprofessionals. Teachers in the after-school program have been chosen from both the regular education teachers in the sending school districts and other teachers based on availability. Those teachers already a part of the participating school district have a natural rapport with district administration, an in-depth knowledge of curricular goals and standards, and availability to parents of students in the after-school program. Having teachers familiar with the school district curricula offers the advantage of being able to make certain the after school program is supplementing the existing curricula and not duplicating instruction.

Each site maintained one paid administrator. Brownsville's After School Program was staffed by 3 teachers, 1 paraprofessional, while Charleroi's Program also had 3 teachers and 1 paraprofessional. Uniontown's program was staffed by 2 teachers and 3 paraprofessionals. In addition this center had 2 community volunteer members.

All curricula were supported by teacher orientation programs. The Challenger e-mission team were available at all times to aid teachers with questions or problems related to the Challenger curriculum and/or technology. These instructors also provided in-service training for the teachers and observation opportunities for parents.

It should also be noted that a recommendation in prior years of the 21st Century Programs was to provide time for teachers to share interesting, relevant and motivational ideas that complement the 21st Century curricula. Under the able leadership of Joe Beth McKee, Rob Baier and Donna Whoric, teachers were given time to network and share ideas.

When interviewed by this evaluator, teachers shared that the after school program gave them an opportunity to support children that really need that kind of personal relationship. Parents shared that the best part of the program was the obvious care and kindness of the teachers. The parents had a sense that the teachers genuinely had the best interest of the children at heart.

Curriculum and Activities

All the centers offered a like curriculum including reading, math and science instruction, with a special emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) activities, as well as enrichment in art, music, physical education and technology. The program is structured to have 20 minutes of small group homework help, a nutritious snack, project time and motivational special activities including Yoga, Teaching Science Through Trade Books, TEAMology, and Health Rocks.

Most significantly, the program continues to collaborate with the Challenger Learning Center to offer all students a curriculum rich in STEAM education (including additional arts enrichment). The Challenger Center for Space Science Education is a curriculum that embraces hands-on, exploratory opportunities for students while equipping students with knowledge and skills related to STEAM education. Team building and problem solving are key components of the curriculum. Part of the Challenger Learning Center curriculum is an innovative distance learning program called e-Missions. The e-Missions are highly motivational, critical thinking projects that require a high degree of problem-solving. Each e-Mission culminates with a videoconference between the students and "mission control". A few examples of e-Mission themes are: Space Station Alpha, Cyber Surgeons, Target Moon, M.A.R.S.

During the culminating event, the class assembles an emergency response team that works together to solve a problem situation as a scenario unfolds and conditions change. The Challenger Learning Center provides lesson plans and resources to support the program. Extensive professional development was offered to all teachers prior to the start of each quarter. In addition, Laura

Ondeck, Flight Director from the Challenger Learning Center conducted science experiments at each site for parents to observe.

During observations of e-Missions by the evaluators, it became evident that the teachers were attempting to develop a creative environment as well as embracing the problem solving philosophy of the Challenger Learning curriculum. Activities were divided into pre and post mission activities. The students were quick to participate and appeared to be genuinely enjoying the science experiments and class discussions. The students were grouped according to grade levels at all sites. Literacy instruction through the use of Project Kits: Teaching Science through Trade Books was included in the resources available to all learning sites. This is an interdisciplinary opportunity for the students to apply reading, writing, science and math skills to a particular literacy task.

In addition to the Challenger curriculum, students at all sites were engaged in a variety of literacy, character education, career education and Project Team activities. Specifically at the *Brownsville* site, middle school students were involved in a discussion of the Harry Potter series. Teacher would read aloud to the students and prompt meaningful student dialogue. This evaluator attended the Brownsville culmination in May and witnessed a very creative Luau complete with erupting volcanoes, lava oobleck, salt dough and limbo dancing. A Brownsville physical education teacher was contracted to teach tennis to the students one day per week.

Although Charleroi teachers have shared that it was necessary to adapt the Challenger Curriculum to a lesser difficulty level to ensure student success, it was evident that the students were sufficiently challenged and thoroughly engaged. The teachers in this particular program were able to involve the students in many creative activities. The students in the Charleroi program were able to be a part of a Yoga program one day per week. In addition, a local artist was invited to present to the children at this site.

In an effort to accommodate the needs of their students, a special feature of the *East End United Community Center* is to distribute a “Back Pack” of donated food every Thursday to be used over the weekend. The Uniontown School District also hosted a professional development opportunity for 21st CCLC teachers on anger management and personal hygiene. New curricula was piloted at the East End Community Center:

- **TEAMology:** Project Team is a holistic model incorporating character education, social emotional learning including bullying prevention and career education. The mission of “Project Team” is: nurturing interconnected life skills to motivate students to succeed. Project Team creates a culture where students are looking to help meet the needs of all members in the classroom in addition to their own needs.
- **The 4H Curriculum:** Health Rocks was researched and developed by the Youth Development 4-H research center. This program attempts to empower our youth to make positive lifetime decisions. The goal of this program is to help our youth build life skills that lead to healthy choices, including drug and alcohol prevention.

During evaluator’s observations, it was evident that these teachers were highly committed to the program and the students

21st CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER SUMMER SCHOOL (2017)

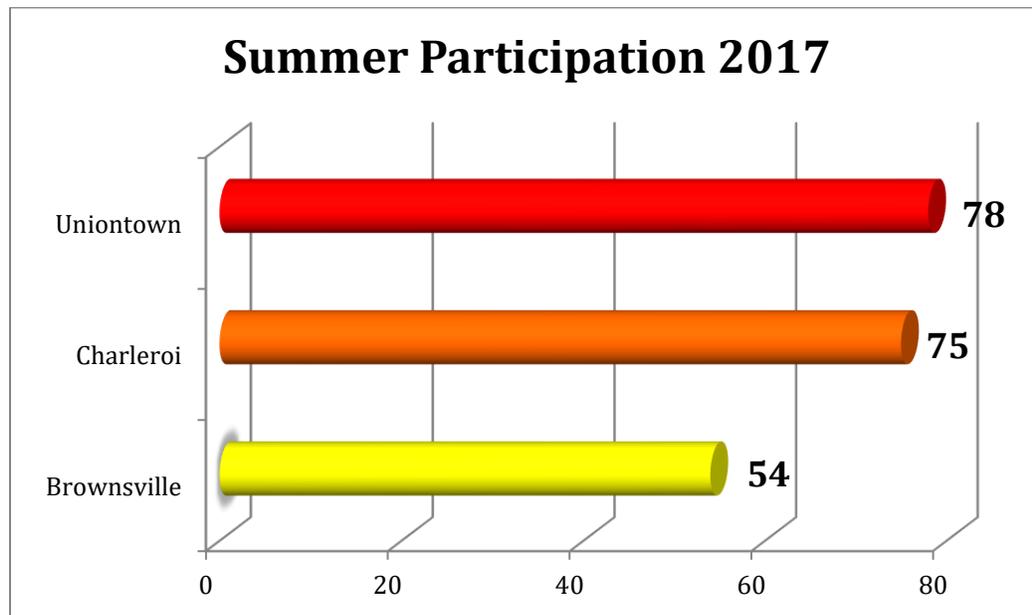


Figure 1: Summer School Student Participation

All three sites hosted a very well-attended, productive and creative summer school program. Brownsville Elementary School hosted 41 students from grades 2 – 5 with Brownsville Middle School’s summer program including 13 students, totaling 54 students. Charleroi Elementary Center provided a summer experience for 75 students, while East End Community Center hosted 78 students from Ben Franklin and LaFayette Elementary Schools in the Uniontown School District. As revealed in Figure 1, a total of 207 students were able to take advantage of the six week summer school program sponsored by the 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

Each school was given flexibility to create a summer school curriculum. It became evident through observations that each site was able to create an enriching environment complete with a culminating activity.

Charleroi continued with Challenger Missions on a smaller scale but with a tremendous amount of creative activities correlating with the mission content. The students were divided into three groups and rotated between learning stations. STEM technology was a part of one station, with Yoga and other physical activity in station two. Station three enjoyed literacy and the arts.

Brownsville directed its students through a research project gleaning information on particular states in the United States. The children also presented their research through a very entertaining manner accompanied by appropriate music. In addition, at the Brownsville site, the students were given tennis lessons. Their accomplishments in this endeavor goes beyond impressive. The students learned more than tennis skills. They learned individual accountability, and leadership skills as well. The students very much enjoyed (based on their survey results) making pottery coffee mugs.

At the Uniontown site, two curriculum programs were piloted, which will be used during the fall and spring sessions. Those programs were TEAMology and Health Rocks. Both programs were a huge success. An exciting part of the summer program at East End was the gardening project. The students participated in a planting project and were able to observe their plant growth related to plant care. Academically, this site has employed a reading/math specialist to work with small groups of struggling students. Pre and post evaluations were given to assess progress.

Some students were introduced to the Fab Lab during the summer session as a pilot. Cohort 8 students will have the opportunity to work with the Fab Lab in the fall. The Intermediate Unit has included this extremely motivational, hands on, project based platform to explore STEM education. This Mobile Fab Lab allows students to engineer projects and develop a deep understanding about machines and the design process. The children design, as they bring their ideas to life, creating a project of personal interest. These projects then become the personal possessions of the students. Some of the available projects include drawstring backpacks, rulers, key chains, etc. The Fab Lab incorporates critical thinking skills that students need to become innovators as they explore a variety of career paths.

PARTICIPATION IN 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING PROGRAM

Student Participation (2017 – 2018 School Year)

The 2017 - 2018 21st Century Community Learning Program served 157 students incorporating three school districts in the Intermediate Unit 1 area. Brownsville School District served 27 elementary and middle school students. Charleroi School District served 81 elementary students. Uniontown School District served 49 elementary and middle school students. Of the 27 participating students at Brownsville, 89% of the participating students attended more than 30 days, with 78% of the students at Uniontown attending for more than 30 days. Charleroi students represent an impressive 92% of students attending for more than 30 days.

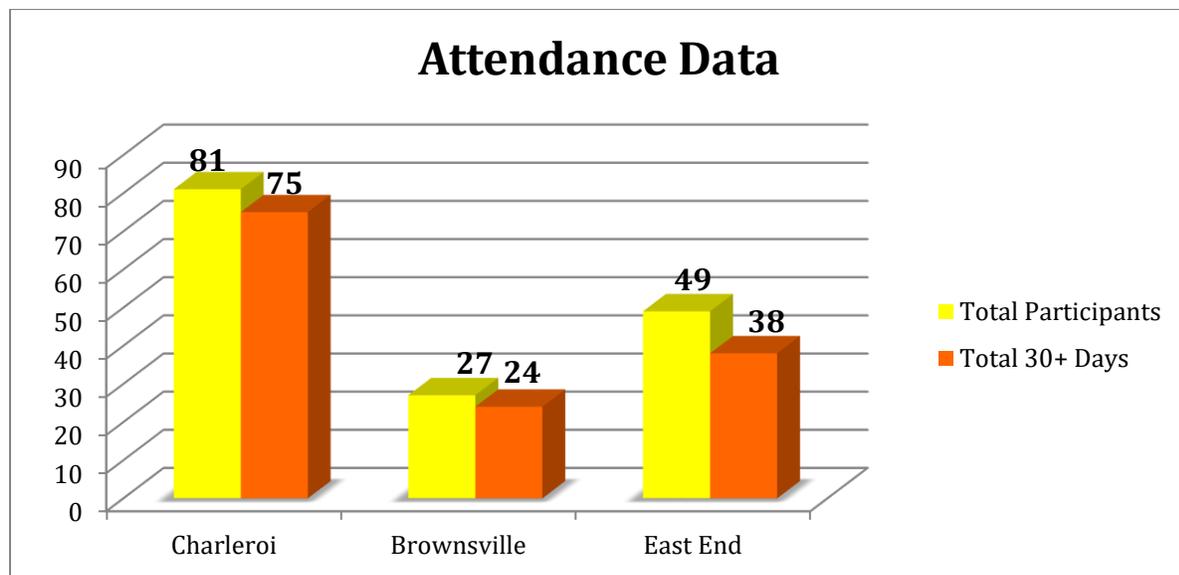


Figure 2: Student Participation per site in the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program

Figure 3 represents those student attending the 21st Century Community Learning Program for 30 days or more. These 137 students equate to 87% of the total 157 student population attendance.

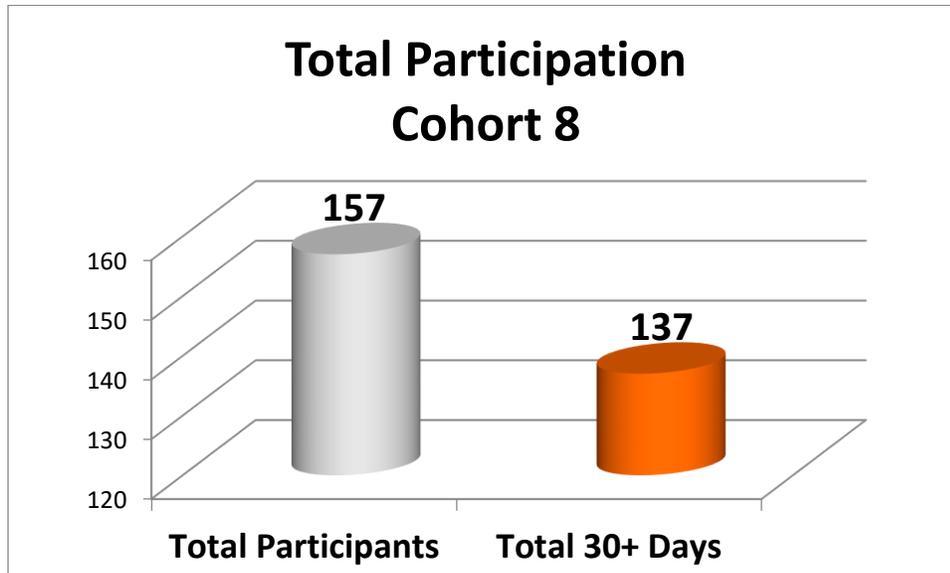


Figure 3: Total Student Participation in the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program

Parental Involvement

The 2017-2018 school year brought with it many parent involvement opportunities during the after-school program. The IU agrees with the premise that it is critical to bring families into the 21CCLC program. Parents can also benefit from the educational practices used to support and enrich their children’s educational programs. All the centers maintain an open-door policy where family members feel welcome and are encouraged to visit. Parents have received an open invitation to that effect.

In addition, parents are invited to attend tutorial/homework time with their child to learn teaching strategies that will enable them to support their children academically.

Parents were invited to Open House, Family Fun Night and Lights On After School. Parents were also invited to participate in a Challenger e-Mission event and several STEM activities. Information events were also available to parents. How-To Math is an attempt to support parents when working with their child in the area of math. Also “Using Social Media Effectively” is a timely and necessary workshop for parents. Approximately 15 to 20 parents were able to take advantage of these various parent involvement activities.

Partnerships



A major partner in the 21st Center Community Learning Program is the Challenger Learning Center located at Wheeling Jesuit University in Wheeling, WV. The Challenger Learning Curriculum is a dynamic, hands-on approach to developing a scientifically literate public designed in a very innovative and inspirational manner, which extends to develop a motivational learning environment for our students. The curriculum is a simulated experience embedding STEM activities into its lessons. The students engage in an e-mission (a distant learning, problem solving experience) once a week with supportive learning occurring throughout the week.



California University, although not considered a Community Learning partner per se, supported the program by having its students volunteer their help.



The Uniontown Public Library and Brownsville Public Library were approached to join as a partner to help build the literacy portion of the program, but due to their limited resources, they declined partnership at this time.



The 4H Curriculum: Health Rocks

The Health Rocks curriculum was researched and developed for usage in the 2017 Summer Program. The goal of this program is to help our youth build life skills that lead to healthy choices, including drug and alcohol prevention.



Project TEAM: Teamology is a curriculum which integrates social/emotional learning, bullying prevention and career readiness. Project Team uses six foundations to arm students with a team mindset and a philosophy of collaboration: Helping Others, Positive Change, Resiliency, Leadership, Anti-bullying, Problem solving and conflict. This curriculum program will provide direction to a more positive environment and social interaction.



The East End Community Center serves the families in the Uniontown area. The center provides a safe haven for children by offering after-school programs to help children improve academically and socially.

FINDINGS

Academic Proficiency Results

The following charts from each school district indicate the percentage of participating students experiencing a change in PSSA results from year 2016-2017 to year 2017-2018. Results provided are for all students who had adequate and appropriate data for analysis. Proportions provided are calculated based on the number of students having data and included in analysis and is not indicative of all students.

All PSSA data were reported in category format (Advanced, Proficient, Basic, Below Basic) and therefore only students moving positively from one level to another in consecutive school years are considered to be making academic gains.

It should be noted that in some cases longitudinal data is not available. For instance if a child were in the third grade during the 2016-2017 school year, there would be no PSSA scores available for his/her second grade year.

Brownsville PSSA Results

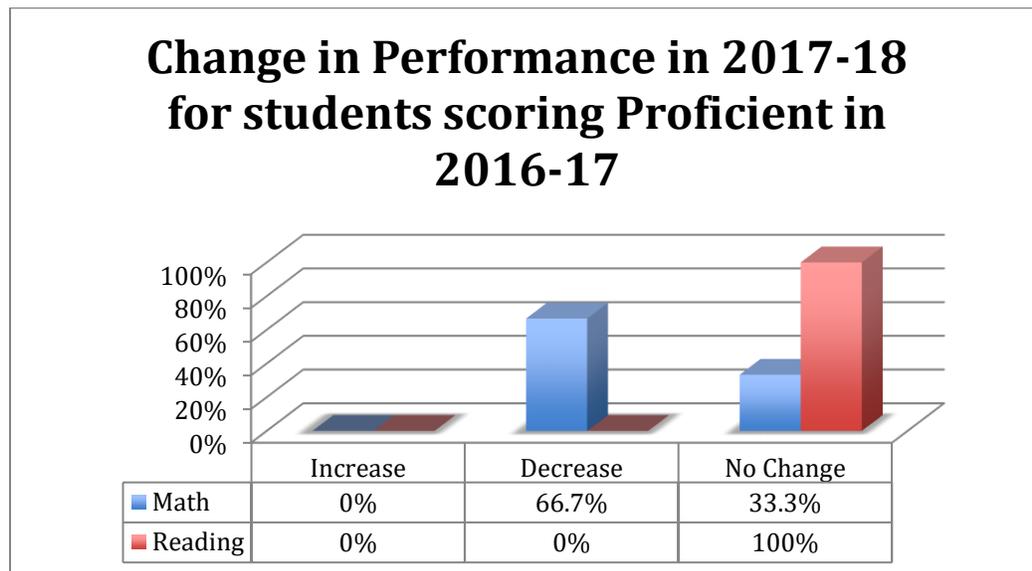


Figure 4: Brownsville PSSA Reading and Math Results: Proficient

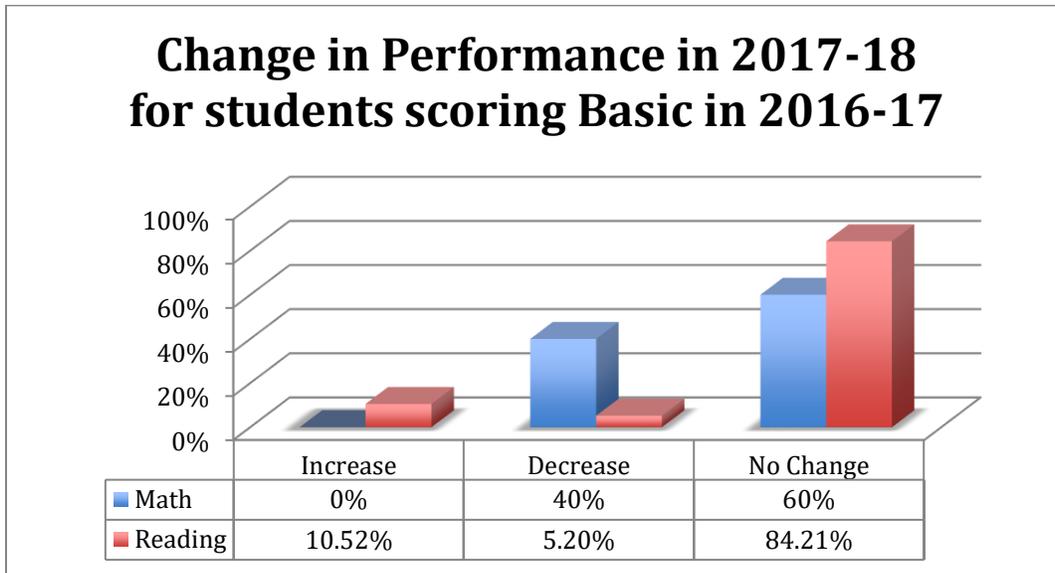


Figure 5: Brownsville PSSA Reading and Math Results: Basic

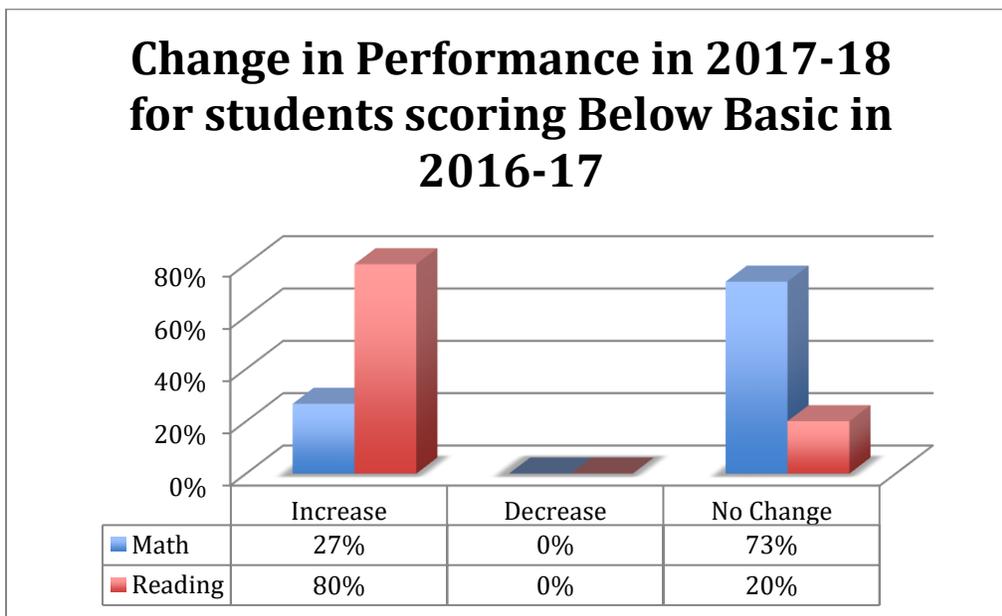


Figure 6: Brownsville PSSA Reading and Math Results: Below Basic

The PSSA available data for the participating students in the Brownsville School District indicate that there were no students scoring in the advanced category for either the 2016-1017 school year or the 2017-2018 school year in either reading or math. In the area of reading, as per Figures 4 and 5, the majority of the students had no change in the categories of proficient and basic. However, when considering the students scoring in the below basic range in the past year, 80% of the participating students improved their scores (Figure 6). This underscores great improvement in reading for those students in the 21st Century Program.

In the area of math, Figure 6 illustrates that the greatest improvements again were at the below basic range. Twenty-seven percent of the participating students increased their math category from below basic to basic. The majority of the students did not indicate a change in their PSSA results.

Charleroi PSSA Results

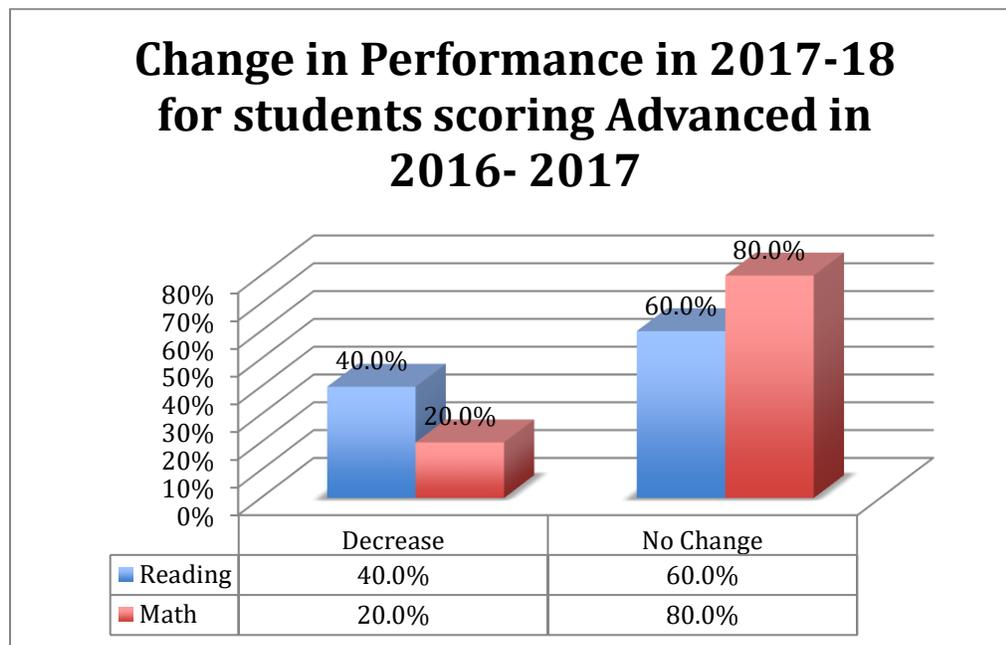


Figure 7: Charleroi PSSA Reading and Math Results: Advanced

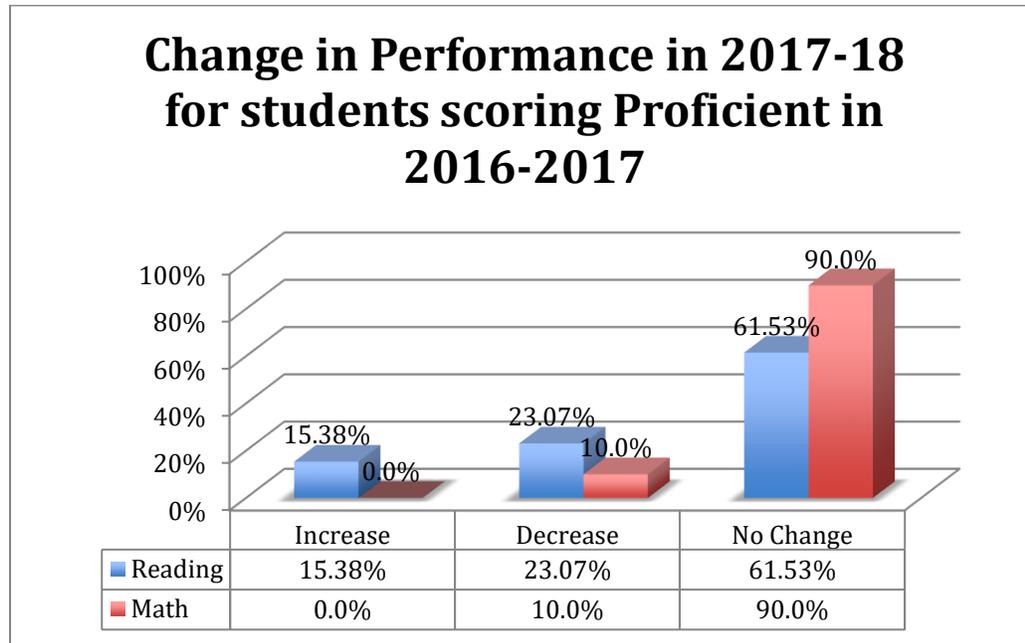


Figure 8: Charleroi PSSA Reading and Math Results: Proficient

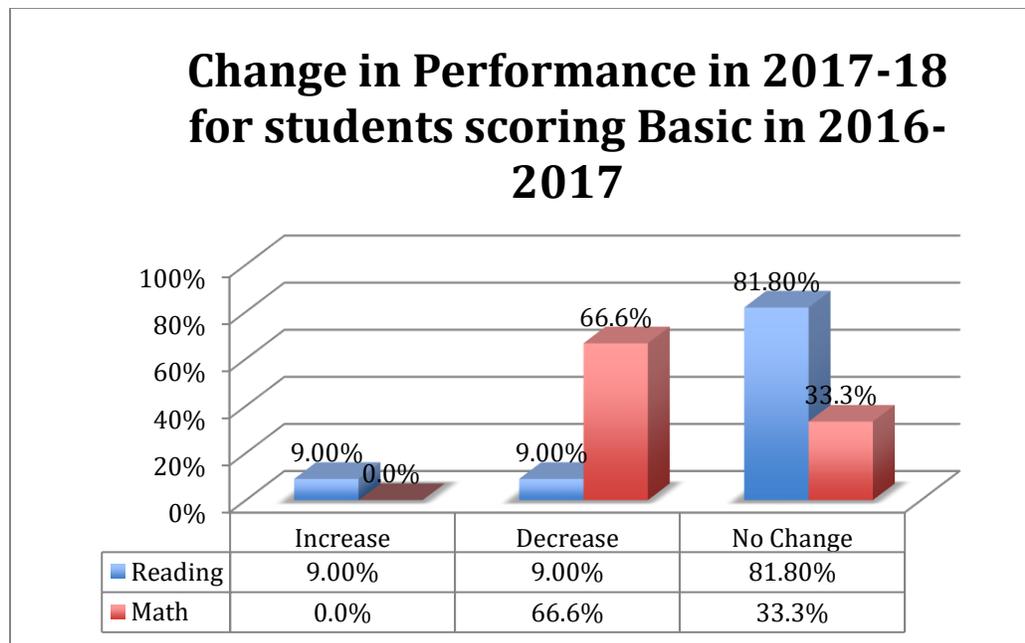


Figure 9: Charleroi PSSA Reading and Math Results: Basic

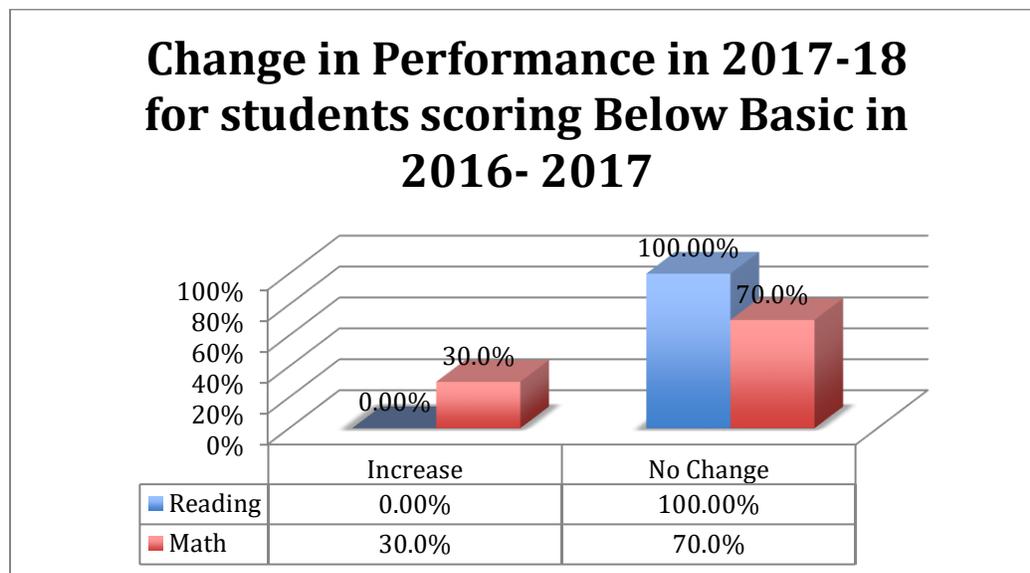


Figure 10: Charleroi PSSA Reading and Math Results: Below Basic

The PSSA available data for the participating students in the Charleroi School District indicates that the majority of the students remained in the same category in the area of reading/language arts, not having experienced any increase or decline. However, there are two data points that involve positive change: Figure 8 reports that 15% of participating students moved from proficient to advanced and Figure 9 indicates a 9% increase in students moving from basic to proficient. There was also significant decline in the area of reading with 40% of the participating students moving from advanced to proficient as affirmed in Figure 7.

In the area of math, Figure 10 informs us that there was significant improvement in the below basic bracket with 30% of the participating students showing an increase from below basic to basic. Again the majority of the students remained in the same category as their prior school year: As revealed in Figure 7, eighty percent of students in the advanced category remained advanced, with 90% remaining proficient (Figure 8). Thirty three percent of students remained the same in the basic category with 70% remaining in the below basic bracket.

Uniontown PSSA Reading and Math Results

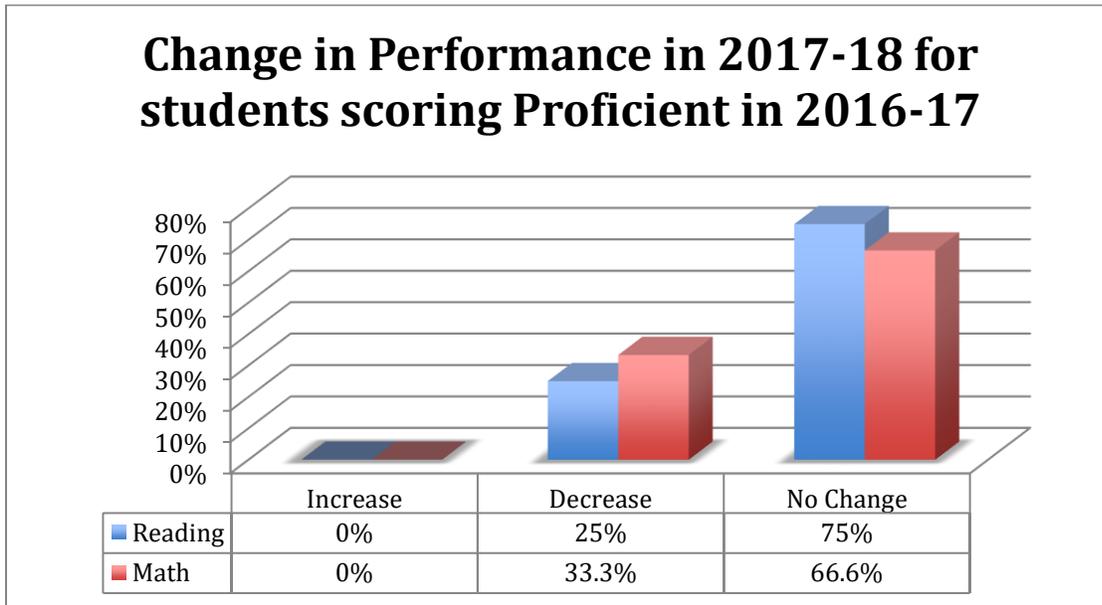


Figure 11: Uniontown PSSA Reading and Math Results: Proficient

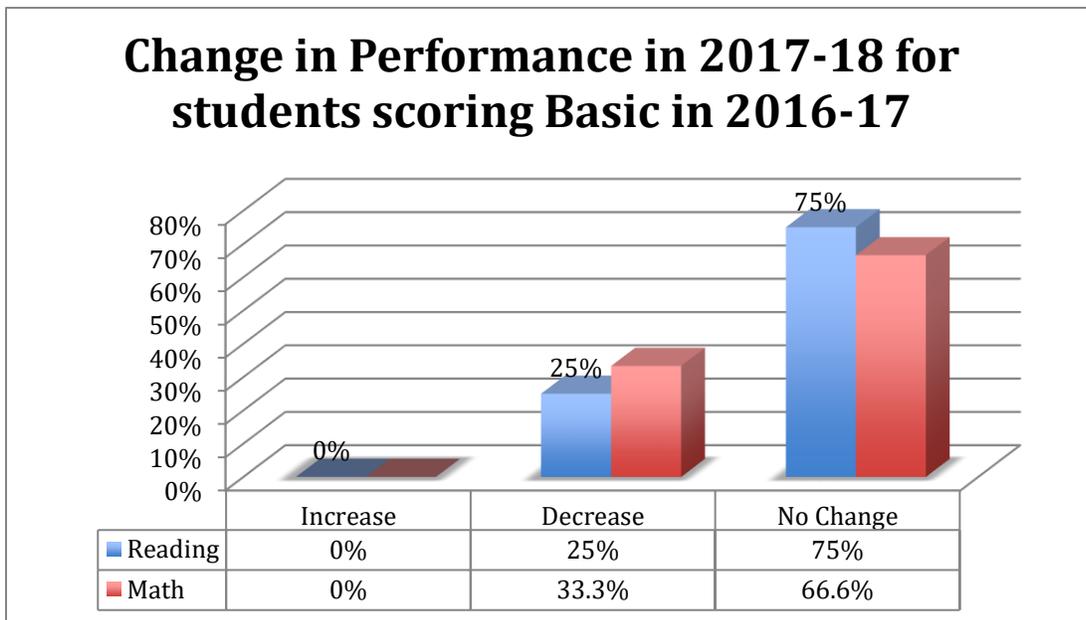


Figure 12: Uniontown PSSA Reading and Math Results: Basic

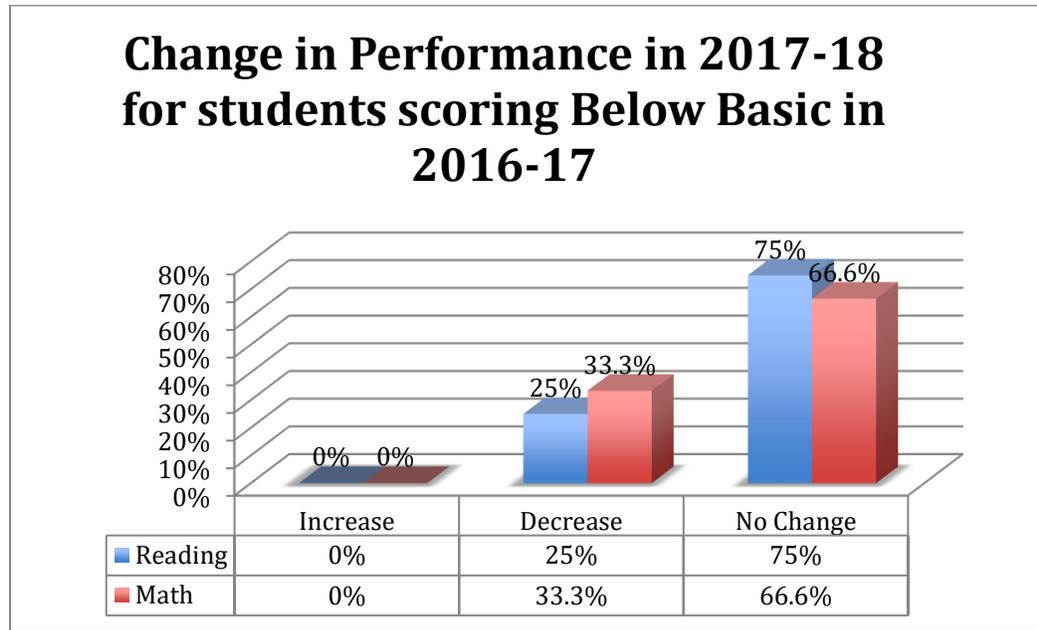


Figure 13: Uniontown PSSA Reading and Math Results: Below Basic

When considering the available data from the Uniontown School District, there were no students scoring in the advanced range. Unfortunately, as communicated in Figures 11, 12 and 13, there were also no students experiencing positive growth in the proficient, basic or below basic categories in both reading and math. The majority of the students did however remain at the same category level from the prior year.

When considering the reading/language arts data, approximately one fourth of the students declined in each category, while in the area of math, approximately one third of the students declined in each category.

Overall, when considering the PSSA results at all three sites, 15.94% of the students participating in the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program, experienced an increase in the area of reading. When considering the math results as they apply to all three sites, 11.42 % of the participating students showed growth.

REPORT CARD DATA

Both reading and math report card grades have been collected from each school district for participating students in the 2017 – 2018 school year. Student academic change (improved, declined or remained the same) was determined based on a comparison of an individual’s fall and spring report card grade for the same school year, in this case, fall 2017 compared to spring 2018.

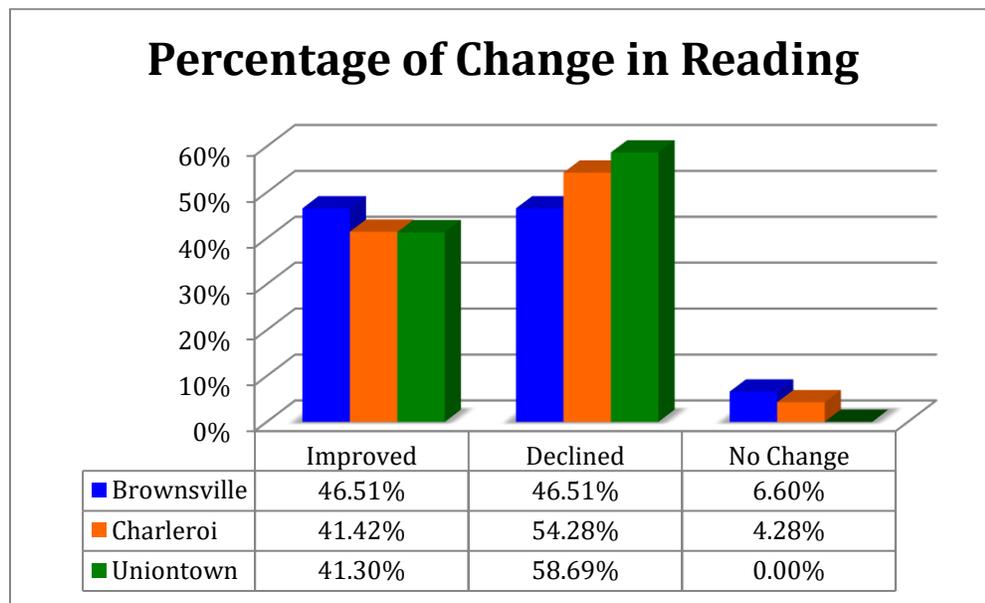


Figure 14: Report Card Changes in Reading

When considering the percentage of change in the area of reading on the school district report card, Figure 14 reveals a substantial amount of progress in the area of reading in the Brownsville School District. The data reveal approximately 47% of the participating students improved in the area of reading, while approximately 41% of the Charleroi and Uniontown students improved. This improvement in the Charleroi and Uniontown school districts indicates a 23% and 13% increase from last year. On the other end of the continuum, unfortunately about 50% to 60% of the students decreased in their reading evaluations.

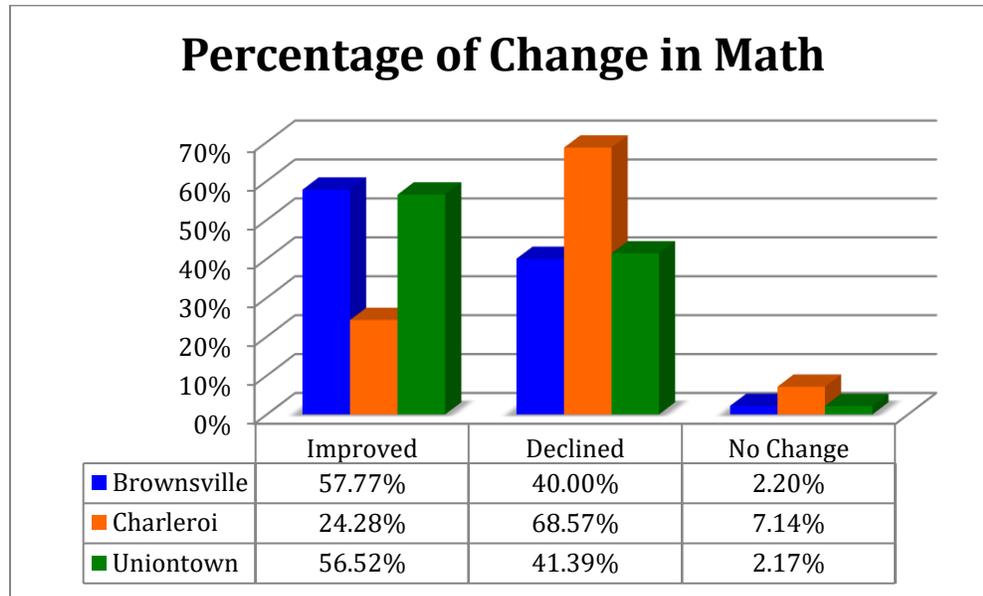


Figure 15: Report Card Changes in Math

When considering the percentage of change in the area of math on the school district report card, Figure 15 affirms that approximately 60% of the participating students at both Brownsville and Uniontown improved in math, with about 40% decreasing in their math evaluations as reported in their school district report cards. In Charleroi, approximately 24% of the students increased with approximately 70% decreasing in their math evaluations.

Overall, when considering the growth of all participating students in the 21st Century Community Learning Program, in reading and math (as it is reported on the school district report cards), we find that 43% of all the students exhibited an increase in the area of reading and 46% of all students exhibited an increase in the area of math.

ATTENDANCE DATA

In addition to academic performance, evaluators also examined related areas, including school and class attendance, as it is well-documented that regular attendance in school positively effects student achievement. The concept of attendance will be examined according to the students' attendance in the first nine week period compared to the students' fourth nine week period.

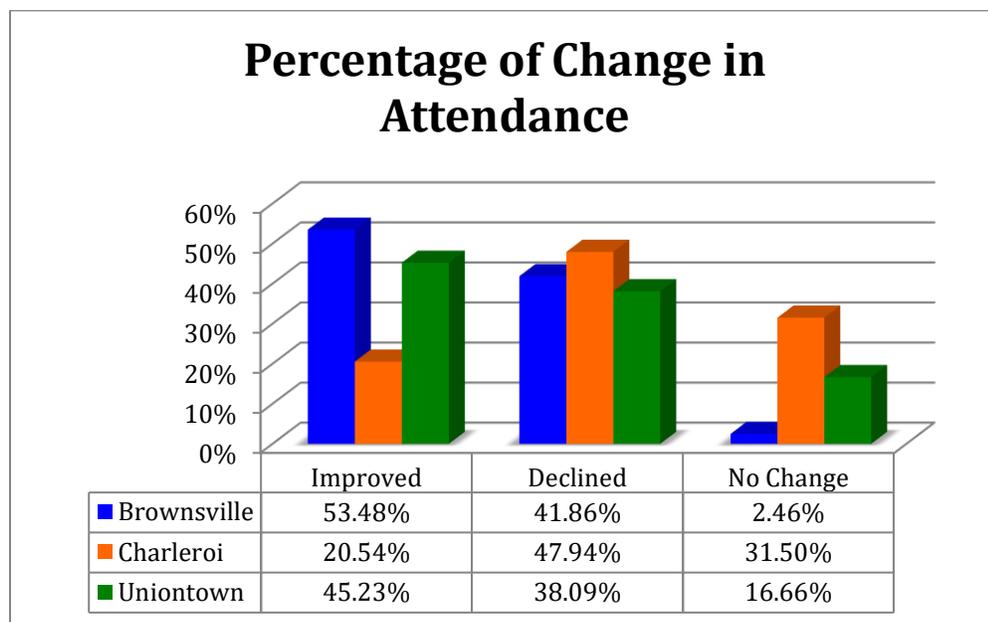


Figure 16: Percentage of Change in School Attendance

Figure 16 indicates that the participating students in the Brownsville School District had the greatest improvement in the area of school attendance. About 50% of the students improved with approximately 40% declining. One quarter of the students had no change. In the Uniontown School District, it is revealed that 45% of the students improved their attendance with 38% declining. About 17% had no change. Charleroi School District had the least amount of improvement, with 21% improving and about half the students declining. One third of the Charleroi students had no change.

Although attendance continues to be an area of concern, however it should be noted that last year Brownsville students were the most at risk group and this year Brownsville students showed the greatest improvement.

BEHAVIOR AND SOCIAL INDICATORS

Evaluators also collected data for students related to the frequency in which they had an in-school or out-of-school suspension. The concept of behavior will be examined from the two perspectives of classroom teacher observation (via the teacher survey) and data collected on specific students from their respective school sites.

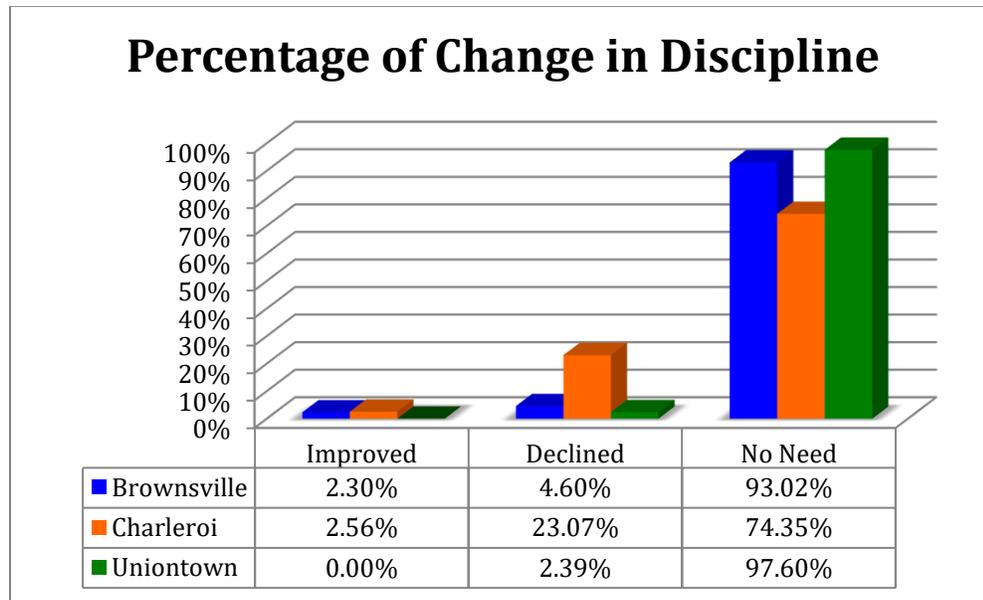


Figure 17: Changes in School Suspensions

It is evident from the data in Figure 17 that the majority of the students at all three sites had little to no behavior issues. Ninety-seven percent of the Uniontown students, 93% of the Brownsville students and 74 percent of the Charleroi students had no need to improve their behavior. When considering the 23% decline in the Charleroi School District, it should be noted that that represents 16 students receiving suspensions out of the 52 participating students. Brownville’s 5% decline in behavior represents one child with 5 days of suspension. Discipline and behavior issues were a priority in both year 1 and 2 of the 21st CCLC program. In year 1, the Olweus Bully Prevention Program was instituted and in year 2 and 3 TEAMology was introduced. It would appear that these programs, developed to support student awareness of good behavior, build character and teach conflict resolution skills are working in both the after-school classes (as observed by this evaluator), and in the regular education classroom (as evidenced by the lack of problem behavior in the schools).

SURVEY DATA

TEACHER SURVEY DATA

Teacher survey data was not available for Cohort 8.

Student Survey Data

Research supports the use of student feedback to allow authorities to make value decisions. In a research summary by Adam Fletcher, he stated, “Engaging student voice may be the most powerful lever available to improve student learning in schools.” It is believed that students actually learn more when they feel empowered as partners in making decisions relating to their education. The 21st CCLC Intermediate Unit 1 has always supported this thinking and have asked for student input about the strengths and weaknesses of the after school and summer programs. Several changes in the program have been made based on the voices of the participating students. The following survey data were gleaned from the students participating in the 2017-2018 programs in each school district.

In addition to the survey questionnaire, there were two open-ended questions put forth: (1) What was your favorite part of the program? (2) What would you change about the summer program?

The student survey began with a prompt to which the students responded strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree or don’t know: **I have been able to....**

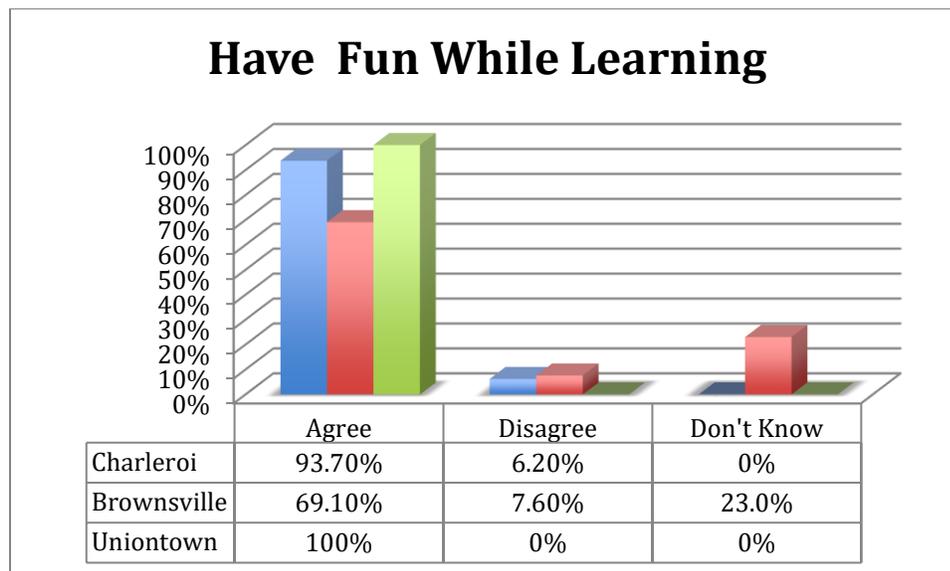


Figure 18: Having Fun While Learning

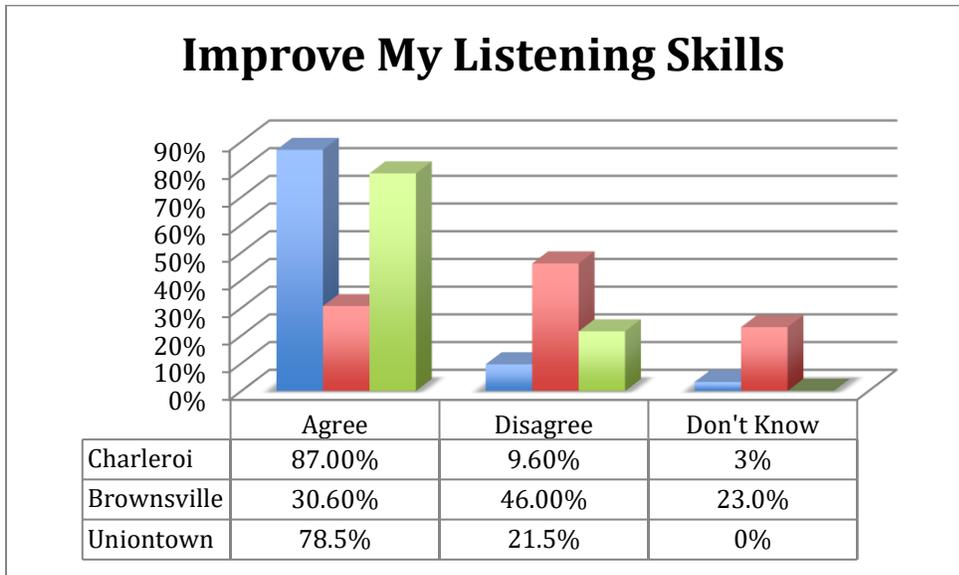


Figure 19: Improving Listening Skills

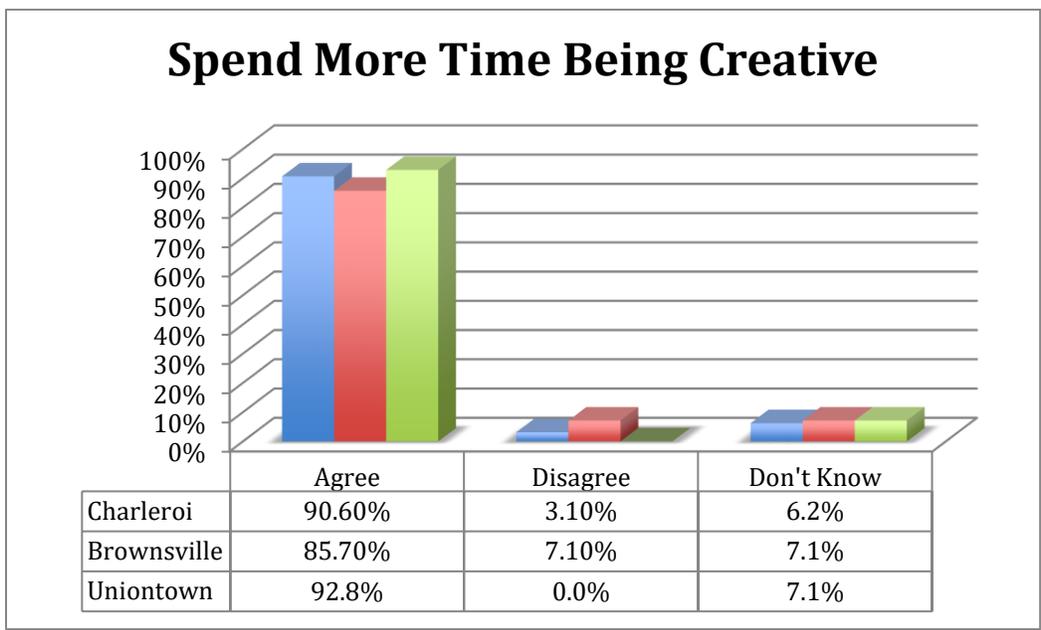


Figure 20: Spending More Time Being Creative

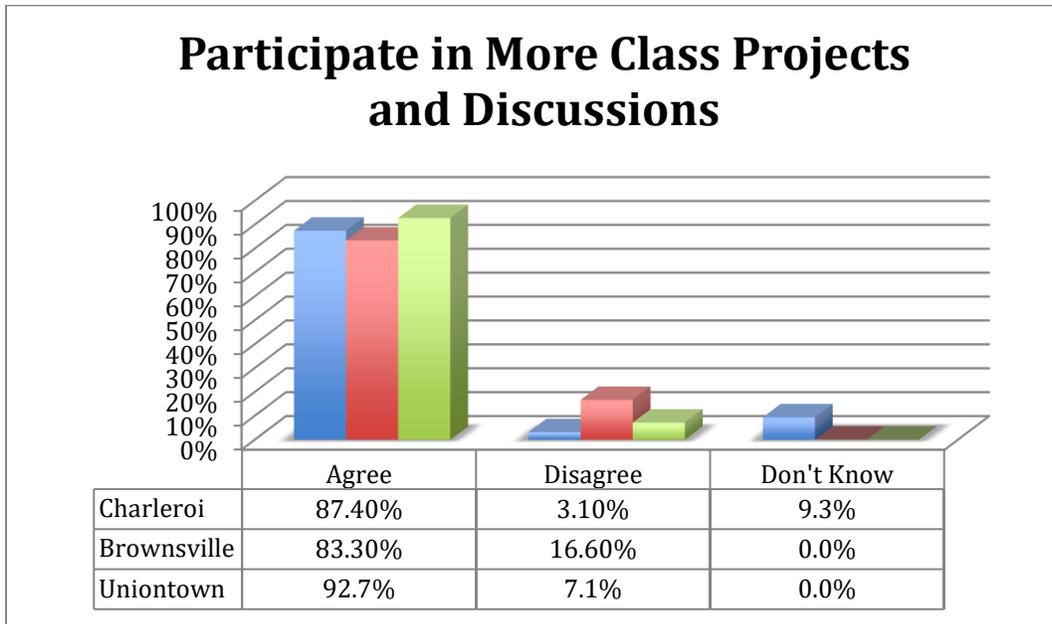


Figure 21: Participating in More Class Projects and Discussions

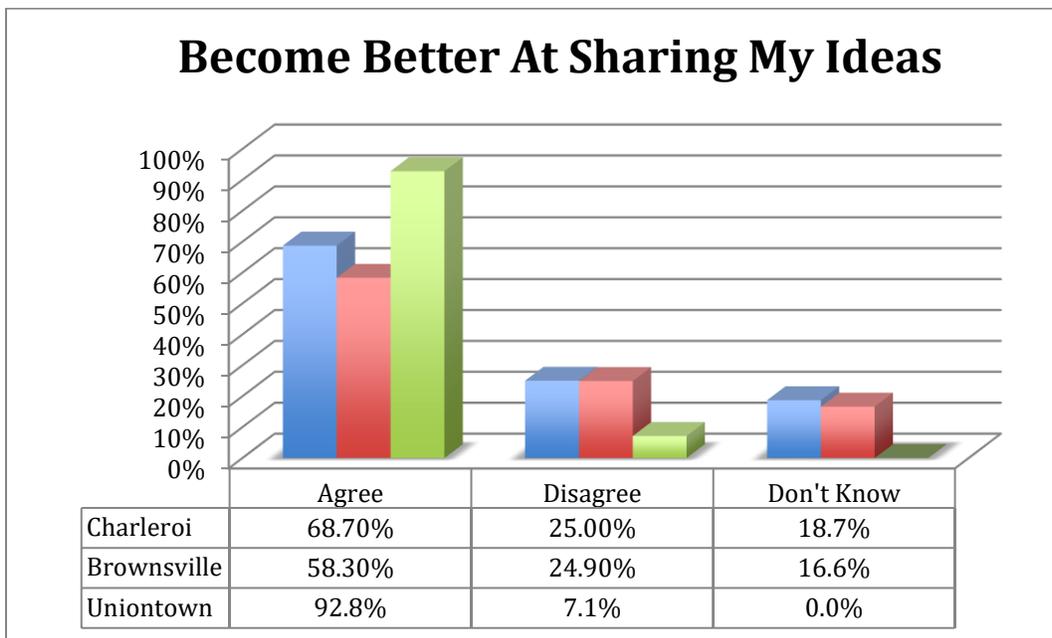


Figure 22: Becoming Better at Sharing Ideas

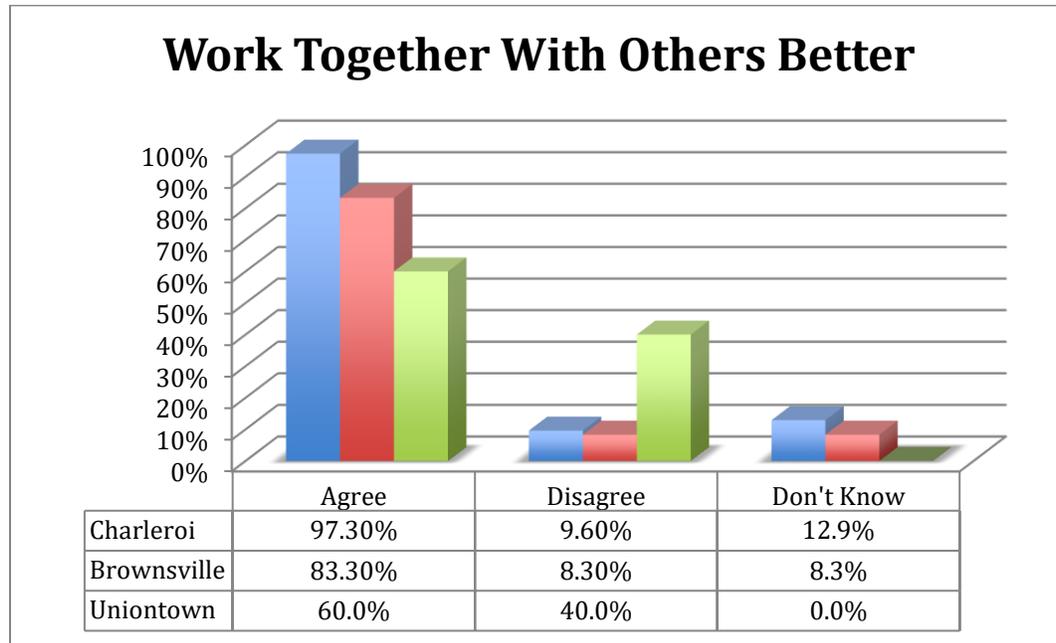


Figure 23: Working Together With Others

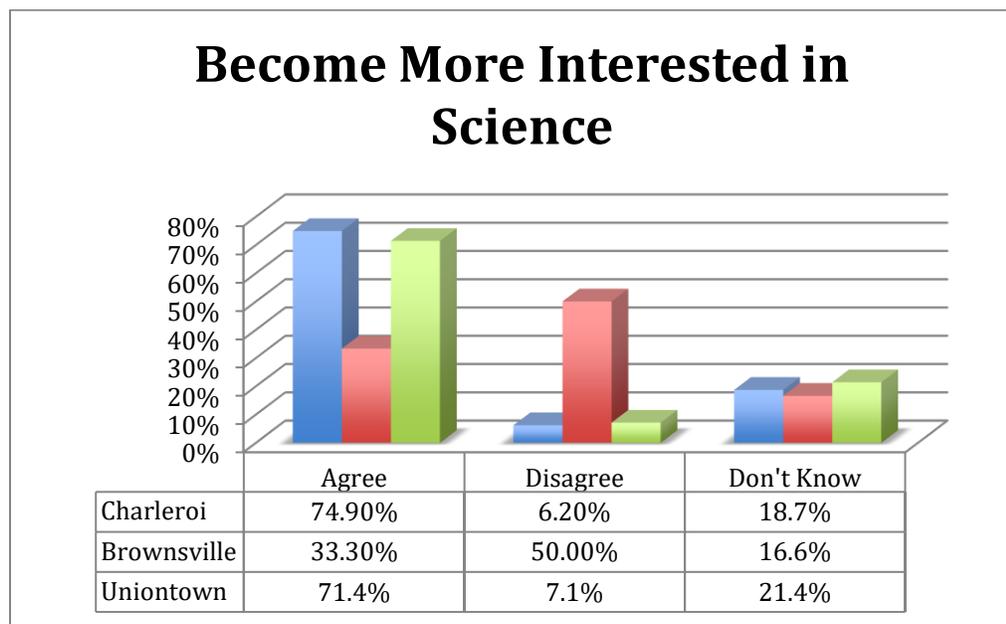


Figure 24: Becoming More Interested in Science

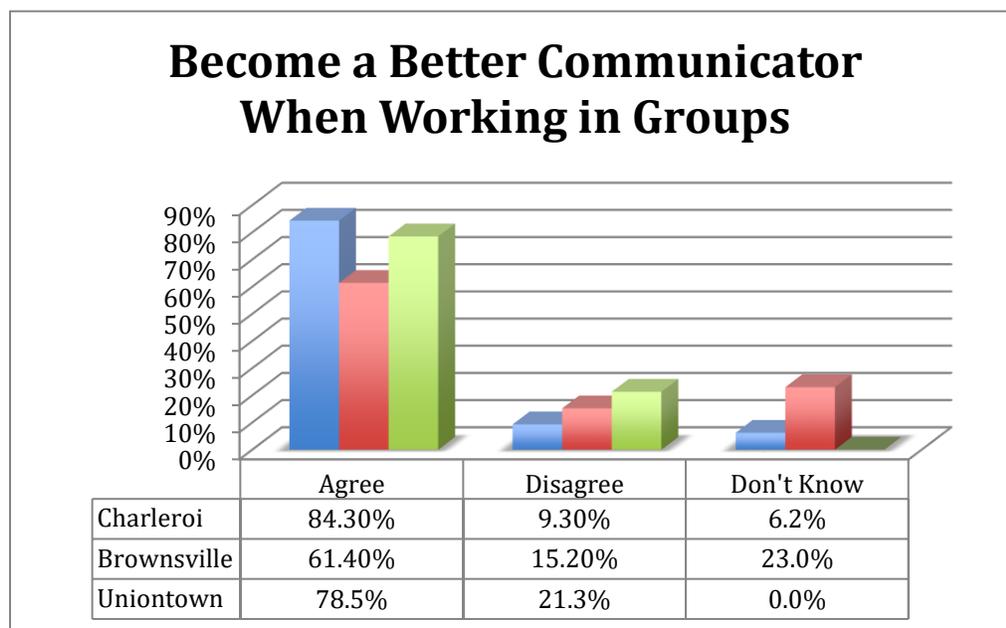


Figure 25: Becoming a Better Communicator When Working in Groups

Looking at these student surveys as a composite, it is evident that students participating at both the Charleroi School District and the Uniontown School District responded more positively in all areas than those students at the Brownsville School District. It should be noted that there was a high degree of agreement in the area of learning more creatively (90%), having fun while learning (88%) and participating in projects and class discussions (88%). The one area of weakness agreed upon by approximately 26% of all participating students was improving listening skills.

It should be noted that when compared to student survey information from last year, there have been some significant differences. Approximately 90% of the students felt they had become better in the area of listening in the 2016-17 school year in the Brownsville School District, while unfortunately only 30% of the students were in agreement in the 2017-2018 school year.

At the Charleroi center, students have improved their perspectives on working with others. These students went from 74% having ability to work with others, to 97% of the students feeling they are better able to work with others today.

While the students in the Uniontown School District had the best overall opinions of the after school program, responding in a very positive manner in almost all areas, there was one area of significant improvement: Students went from 78% enjoying school in 2016-17 to 100% of the

students agreeing that learning is fun. This evaluator would attribute this kind of total consensus on the extreme creativity of the teachers along with their kind, motivating and welcoming spirit.

Student Comments

In addition to the survey questionnaire, there were two open-ended questions put forth: (1) What was your favorite part of the program? (2) What would you change about the summer program?

What was your favorite part of the program?

- I liked making T-shirts.
- I liked doing Yoga.
- I liked being with my friends.
- I liked trying new foods.
- My favorite part was doing projects.
- My favorite part was working in small groups and meeting new people.
- I liked making pottery.
- I like working in centers.
- My favorite part of the program is the teachers.
- My favorite part was the food.
- I liked when the teacher made us be kind to each other.
- Students at the Brownsville site overwhelmingly liked learning to play tennis.

What would you change about the program?

- I would like to have a “Slime Day”.
- I would like to do more science.
- I would like to have birthday parties.
- I would like more time outside.
- I would like to do more cooking.
- I would like to sing more and do the limbo.
- I think we should be able to play soccer.
- I think we should help people make new friends when we first come to the program.
- Many students responded to this prompt with--- I would change nothing.

PARENT SURVEY DATA

In keeping with the philosophy of supporting parents as well as students as part of the 21st Century Community Learning Program, parents were given an opportunity to share their interest in acquiring a variety of skills and knowledge. The following questions were provided for parent response:

- Would you attend a family literacy workshop?
- Would you attend a family cooking workshop with your child?
- Are you interested in online adult education programs?
- Are you interested in learning about how to interview for a job?
- Would you attend a workshop that shares ways you can help your child do better in school?

Based on the survey feedback, parents were invited to meaningful workshops: How-To Math and Using Social Media Effectively. In addition to the parent survey, parents were asked to share their personal comments considering the 21st Century after-school program. The following is a sample of comments from parent input:

- Love the program. Very happy with my son's over-all improvement and willingness to learn new things above and beyond the normal education.
- My daughter loves all the fun activities she gets to do with the other students in the program.
- I this is a great program going the extra mile in further preparing our children for the future.
- It would be great to have a part of this program set up to help the children with where they are struggling through a tutoring program.
- I think it's a great program and my child really enjoys it and doing better in school.
- My daughter loves the program but complains because she is hungry. Could there be something more filling for the children to eat?

LOCAL EVALUATOR SITE VISITS

In addition to quantitative data, this evaluator finds it valuable to interact with students, teachers, and parents when possible. The following represents qualitative data collected during site visits.

Engage students in learning through innovative projects:

- Parents and students were equally impressed and engaged in the Mission Control videoconference distance learning experience. During these events, the students develop a solution to a problem.
- During a unit on Reduce, Recycle, Reuse, the students created art projects made from recycled items.
- As a culmination to a study of Hawaii, the students were engaged in painting salt dough sea stars, erupting volcanoes, doing the limbo and creating oobleck to respond as lava. These activities were relevant, engaging, innovative enrichment projects.
- Students were engaged in yoga activities each week. The progress and skill development was impressive.

Critical and creative thinking: Improve 21st Century skills:

- Each week an activity was created to match the weekly STEM theme. As a part of the weekly journaling, the students were asked to complete the prompt, “I wonder...”.

Collaborating: Improve 21st Century skills:

- During e-missions the students form emergency response teams that collaborate on a solution to a problem as a scenario is developed. Students continue to collaborate as conditions change during the e-mission.
- It is a priority of both students and parents to complete homework. This evaluator observed that the scheduled homework period is more than just allotted time to complete homework. This scheduled time is an opportunity for teachers to bridge the gap between home schools and the after-school program. Teachers use this time to work with individual students needing help or support in any subject. In many cases the after-school teacher is also the classroom teacher at the host school.

Increase College and Career Readiness:

- Although many teachers discussed the need to accommodate the needs of the children by adapting the Challenger Curriculum, the teachers at all sites were able to develop appropriate and varied extension activities in art, music, and literacy. When observed, the students were energized throughout these stimulating activities.

COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Commendations

- The IU1 21st Century Community Learning Center Program was able to serve over 160 students in this school year.
- It is evident that those adults participating in the after-school program were dedicated educators creating a nonthreatening environment for children and a welcoming environment for parents.
- The fact that the majority of the participating teachers in the 21st Century Program were also full time teachers in the host schools, provided them with curriculum knowledge from which to build. These teachers were also available to the students during their regular school operations.
- Teachers in the 21st Century Program were able to adapt the Challenger Missions to accommodate the academic needs of the students being served.
- Teachers in the 21st Century Program embraced the concept of expanding the Challenger Enrichment Learning Program curriculum to include the arts.
- Students participating in the program voiced an overwhelmingly positive response to their feelings of success in all areas due to their involvement in the after-school program.
- The partnership created between IU1 and the Challenger Learning Center proved to be a highly motivational, 21st Century problem solving-based curriculum. Students worked both collaboratively and creatively to solve problems.
- Other partnerships were forged during this program year in support of STEAM goals. The East End United Community Program proved to provide an exemplary after-school program despite a change in leadership.
- The IU and the Challenger Learning Center worked collaboratively to provide all teachers and staff with excellent professional development opportunities.
- The parent involvement opportunities were many and varied and parent comments were solicited and collected through parent surveys.
- The IU under the leadership of Rob Baier created a data collection tool to address measuring outcomes and collect data in a timely manner.
- Teachers were given opportunities to share creative and enriching extension lessons.

Recommendations

- Schedule a meeting with an identified person at each site to develop an understanding of the data collection and his/her role in distributing these data.
- Identify an individual at the sending schools to supervise the completion of the teacher surveys.
- Consider establishing a particular date to distribute and collect parent and student surveys.
- Add attendance data to the data collection tool.
- Establish an Advisory Board to collaborate on critical concerns and focus on program strengths for future use.

- Continue to provide a behavior modification program to ensure proper student behavior. Provide professional development opportunities for teachers and staff.
- Begin a conversation with the school districts to cooperatively design a positive approach to school attendance improvement.
- During observations, external evaluators witnessed many creative and enriching extension lessons. Consider scheduling a meeting with 21st Century after-school teachers and regular classroom teachers to share best practices and create a more seamless educational environment.