



Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time

**BOOST GRANTS PROGRAM
YEAR 3 – EVALUATION BRIEF**



G·san

GEORGIA STATEWIDE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK

Author's Note

High-quality afterschool and summer learning programs can accelerate learning, enhance academic achievement, improve school attendance, teach new skills, and support behavioral and mental health. Furthermore, these programs prepare youth for their futures by fostering necessary workforce skills such as communication and problem-solving while inspiring interest in STEM or other in-demand careers. Summer enrichment programs are particularly valuable in preventing the “summer slide” by keeping children’s minds engaged when school is not in session. Afterschool and summer learning programs also offer significant benefits for working families by providing safe environments for youth during traditionally unsupervised times.

In Georgia, more than 600,000 children would enroll in an afterschool program if one were available to them.¹ Compounding the issue, Georgia has the largest economic disparity in access to out-of-school time programs nationwide and leads the country in unmet demand for both afterschool and tutoring programs.²

The Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST) grants program, funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund was a significant investment made by Georgia in 2021 in increased access to and quality of afterschool and summer learning programs across Georgia. This document provides a brief overview of how BOOST grantees proved themselves to be critical community partners in supporting youth, families, and communities. Unfortunately, this funding expired on September 30, 2024, leaving families and providers without these critical resources.

¹ Afterschool Alliance. America After 3PM. 2020. Retrieved from <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM>

² 50CAN and Edge Research. The State of Educational Opportunity in Georgia. A Survey of Georgia Parents. October 2024. <https://gacan.org/research-showcase/the-state-of-educational-opportunity-in-georgia/>

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
1. Introduction	4
Georgia's BOOST Grants Program	4
2. Methods	5
Evaluation Design	5
Participatory Approach	5
3. Implementation Study	6
BOOST Reach	6
Targeted Grantees	7
Youth Served	8
Program Purposes	10
Program Activities	12
Implementation Successes	14
Program Quality, Innovations, and Best Practices	15
Grantee Challenges	16
4. Outcomes Study	17
Grantee Outcomes by Service Area	17
Youth Satisfaction	23
5. Systems Study	24
BOOST Grants Program Design	24
BOOST Public-Private Structure	25
Grant Administration	26
Grantee Training & Technical Assistance	27
Successes and Challenges	28
Sustainability	29
6. Next Steps & Recommendations	30
7. Appendix	32



Executive Summary

In 2021, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) partnered with the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) to develop the Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST) grants program, funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund. **BOOST was developed to distribute approximately \$85 million to Georgia's communities over three years to expand access to and bolster the quality of summer enrichment opportunities and comprehensive afterschool programming for K-12 youth statewide.**

Key Findings: Outreach and Impact

BOOST funding supported programming in **87 counties** in its first year and expanded across **115 of Georgia's 159 counties** in its third and final year via 92 community organizations and four statewide grantees operating:

- **1,429 afterschool sites serving 86,386 youth** during the 2023-2024 academic year
- **669 summer program sites serving 82,827 youth** during the 2024 summer

BOOST grantees used a whole-child approach and focused on at least one of three program purposes:

1. **Expanding the number of youth served**
2. **Reducing barriers to participation**
3. **Strengthening program quality**

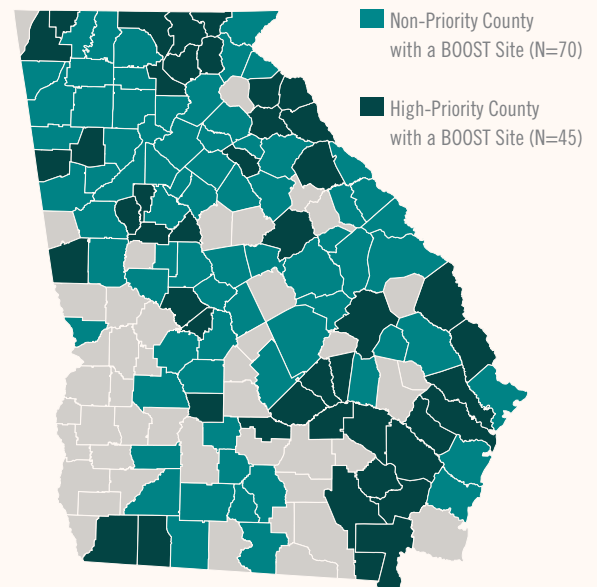
As reported by grantees, specific implementation successes included:

- Developed youth behavioral health skills and strong youth-staff relationships
- Exposed youth to new content and programs and developed youth life skills
- Improved student program attendance, grade promotion, and academic learning
- Increased staff training and hired additional and more qualified teachers

Key Findings: Youth Outcomes

BOOST grantees were required to develop three outcomes for youth participants: one for learning acceleration and two others in any of the four BOOST service areas: learning acceleration,

YEAR 3 BOOST REACH



"Our Learning Acceleration saw our greatest outcome based on diagnostic data from the I-Ready platform in reading and math. The average reading level increased from 499 to 526, and the average math level increased from 403 to 425 for our elementary and middle school students. Our high school students saw a 92% success rate on recovering credits not earned during the school year.

– Augusta Richmond County Juvenile Court

enrichment, healthy eating and physical activity, and well-being and connectedness. The Year 3 BOOST evaluation showed that nearly all grantees met or exceeded at least one of their academic year outcomes (95%) or summer outcomes (93%). Within BOOST-specific service areas, most grantees also met or exceeded their grantee-proposed outcomes, including:

- **Learning acceleration**, a required focus area for all grantees, showed substantial success, with **87% of the academic year and 83% of summer programs meeting or exceeding their targets** and impacting over 84,000 academic year and nearly 59,000 summer participants.
- **Well-being and connectedness** initiatives also proved effective, with **80% of the academic year and 88% of summer programs achieving their goals**, benefiting over 50,000 academic year and 36,000 summer participants.
- **Enrichment** activities demonstrated exceptionally high success rates, with **90% of academic year and 92% of summer programs meeting or exceeding their targets**, impacting nearly 17,000 academic year and 22,000 summer participants.
- **Healthy eating and physical activity** programs showed exceptional results **during the academic year at a 100% success rate and 82% during summer** programming reaching over 35,000 academic year and 48,000 summer participants.

This growth was well-received by youth participants. **89% of academic year youth and 93% of summer participants** reported high satisfaction with their BOOST funded program.

Key Findings: Infrastructure and Sustainability

Stakeholder interviews indicated that BOOST was viewed as a positive force in enhancing the state's broader out-of-school time (OST) programming infrastructure, particularly through sustainable public-private partnerships and cross-sector collaboration. Grantee case studies also highlighted that the BOOST program elevated the quality and depth of Georgia's OST programming with **84% of grantees reporting strengthened capacity and 77% indicating the ability to cover traditionally hard-to-fund costs**. Stakeholders agreed that BOOST (or a comparable form of support) should continue to support OST programs for Georgia's youth.

Recommendations

The Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network recommends the following:

1. **Create and fund Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST) 2.0 grant program, an out-of-school time (OST) grants program modeled after the Building Opportunities for Out-of-School Time (BOOST) grants program, at \$20 million and build off the existing infrastructure and partnerships of BOOST.**
2. **Create and fund an interagency liaison to coordinate afterschool and summer programming between the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, Georgia Division of Family and Children Services, Georgia Department of Education, and University System of Georgia Board of Regents to ensure alignment and coordination of OST services provided to youth and families.**

Introduction

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) set aside 10% of the \$122 billion Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER III) for state education agencies (SEAs), of which \$8.45 billion was directly allocated to support learning recovery in three ways: 1% (\$1.2 billion) for comprehensive afterschool; 1% (\$1.2 billion) for summer enrichment; and 5% (\$6.1 billion) for learning recovery, which can include afterschool, summer, or extended school year programming.³

Georgia's BOOST Grants Program

In July 2021, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) partnered with the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) a public-private collaborative that has worked alongside and supported Georgia's afterschool and summer learning field for two decades, to establish the **Building Opportunities for Out-of-School Time (BOOST) Grants Program**. GSAN administered this three-year competitive grant (2021 – 2024) to distribute approximately \$85 million to Georgia communities on behalf of GaDOE and expand access to and strengthen the quality of summer enrichment opportunities and comprehensive afterschool programming for K-12 youth statewide.⁴ Through BOOST grant awards, GSAN required all applicants to focus on at least one of the three program priorities:



Expand Access



Reduce Barriers



**Strengthen
Program Quality**



LIFT Youth Center



Odyssey

³ H.R.1319 - American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

⁴ Georgia ARP-ESSER State Plan. July, 2021. <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/07/Georgia-ARP-ESSER-State-Plan.pdf>



Methods

Evaluation Design

Metis Associates (Metis), the BOOST evaluation partner, designed the cross-site evaluation to include three components:

- The **Implementation Study** documented BOOST implementation, such as service delivery, youth satisfaction, challenges, success stories, and lessons learned.
- The **Outcomes Study** assessed youth's learning acceleration, connectedness, and well-being outcomes.
- The **Systems Study** focused on the quality and effectiveness of BOOST oversight, administration, and sustainability.

Participatory Approach

Metis facilitated the BOOST Evaluation Advisory Group (EAG), a subcommittee of the BOOST Advisory Council with 12 members, including GSAN staff and grantee representatives. The EAG provided invaluable feedback on the end-of-year grant reporting, data management tools, case study protocols, and implementation report findings, which were incorporated discerningly into the evaluation. Metis also convened and led a Youth Evaluation Advisory Group (YEAG) in the spring of 2023. The YEAG trained middle and high school students in evaluation methods and allowed youth to share their experiences with their BOOST program while contributing to a participatory evaluation process.

DATA SOURCES

End-of-Year Grantee Reports



In all years, the grantee reports asked questions about services provided, successes and challenges experienced, and characteristics of youth served, as well as data on youth satisfaction, and progress toward meeting outcomes.



Key Stakeholder Interviews

To learn about BOOST's creation, implementation, and sustainability, one-on-one interviews were done with 14 individuals in Year 2. They represented 12 state and national organizations with education, after-school, and grantmaking expertise.



Grantee Case Studies

In addition to the eight Year 2 case studies, Metis completed five additional case studies with BOOST grantees in Year 3. Interviews and focus groups were held with grantee leadership, program staff, students, and parents, as available.



Literature Review

In years 1 and 2, Metis completed a two-phase literature review to identify states that used an ESSER III fund distribution model similar to Georgia and to learn about similar evaluations of those efforts that might be underway.



BOOST Grantee Survey

In Year 3, Metis worked with GSAN leadership to develop a BOOST Grantee Survey. Administered to all BOOST-funded organizations, the survey collected data on the impact of funding and organizations' experiences as grantees.



Document Review

The Metis team reviewed different types of program documentation to inform the development of and updates to the evaluation plan, understand GSAN administrative activities in support of BOOST, and develop data collection tools.

Implementation Study

BOOST Reach

A total of 96 BOOST grantees (including 92 community organizations and four statewide organizations) implemented programming in Year 3. The majority (76%) of grantees were year-round programs (i.e, operating both during the academic year and the summer months), and the remainder were academic year-only programs (9%) or summer-only programs (15%). The statewide and community grantees, which are also funded via other public and private funding, operated **1,429 academic year sites serving 82,386 youth and 669 summer program sites serving 82,827 youth.**

BOOST At-a-Glance



\$82,918,714

TOTAL FUNDS AWARDED

YEAR 1

\$27,028,098

FUNDS AWARDED

100

TOTAL GRANTEES

87

GEORGIA COUNTIES

1,640

ACADEMIC YEAR SITES

642

SUMMER SITES



72,551 Academic Year

78,831 Summer

YOUTH SERVED

YEAR 2

\$26,549,724

FUNDS AWARDED

97

TOTAL GRANTEES

112

GEORGIA COUNTIES

1,146

ACADEMIC YEAR SITES

639

SUMMER SITES



79,911 Academic Year

86,924 Summer

YOUTH SERVED

YEAR 3

\$29,340,892

FUNDS AWARDED

96

TOTAL GRANTEES

115

GEORGIA COUNTIES

1,429

ACADEMIC YEAR SITES

669

SUMMER SITES



86,386 Academic Year

82,827 Summer

YOUTH SERVED

The BOOST-funded academic year and summer program sites served youth in **115 of Georgia’s 159 counties in year 3** (Figure 2), an increase from 87 counties in the first year (Figure 1). Of these, 45 were high-priority counties, which are those that received no state funding through the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program⁵ or the Out-of-School Services Program.⁶

FIGURE 1. Boost Year 1 Reach

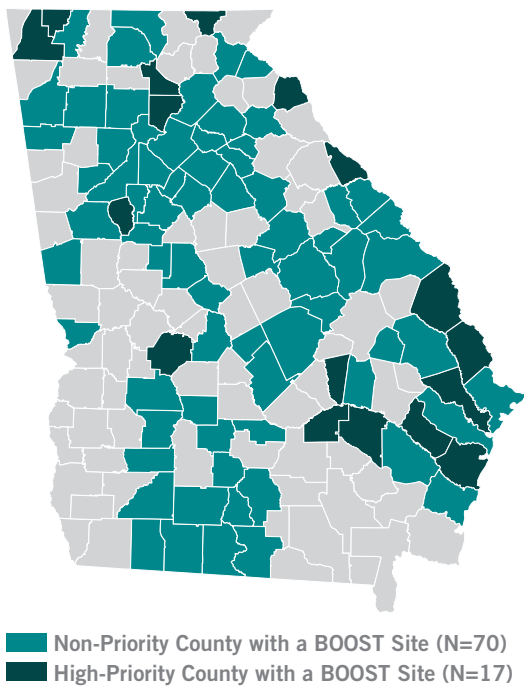
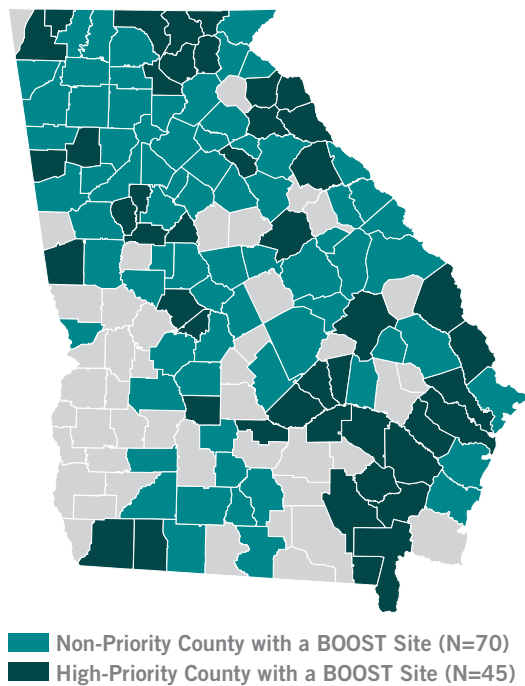


FIGURE 2. Boost Year 3 Reach



Targeted Grantees

In addition, in Years 2 and 3, BOOST targeted grants were available for **organizations serving youth experiencing foster care, serving justice impacted youth, or operating in rural counties**. In Year 2, targeted grants ranged from \$23,500 to \$60,000 for a total of \$321,500 awarded to 7 grantees. In Year 3, GSAN received 22 targeted grant applications. The Year 3 targeted grants ranged from \$23,500 to \$300,000 for a total of \$1,485,792 awarded to 17 organizations selected for funding.

TARGETED
GRANTEES

\$1,807,292
FUNDS AWARDED

17
TOTAL GRANTEES

13
GEORGIA COUNTIES

10
ACADEMIC YEAR SITES

7
SUMMER SITES

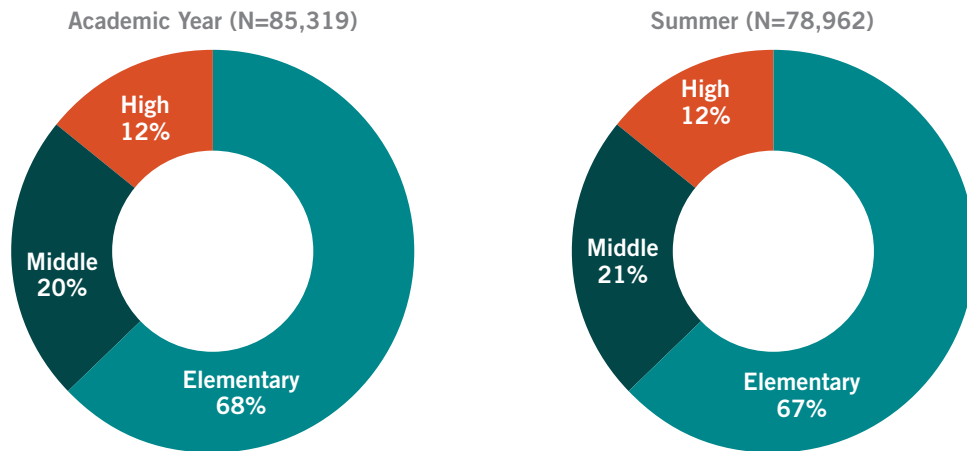
⁵ Georgia Department of Education. 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Sites. Open Records Request (October 2024). Processed by GSAN.

⁶ Georgia Division of Family & Children Services. Out of School Services Program Sites. Professional Communication (November 2024). Processed by GSAN.

Youth Served

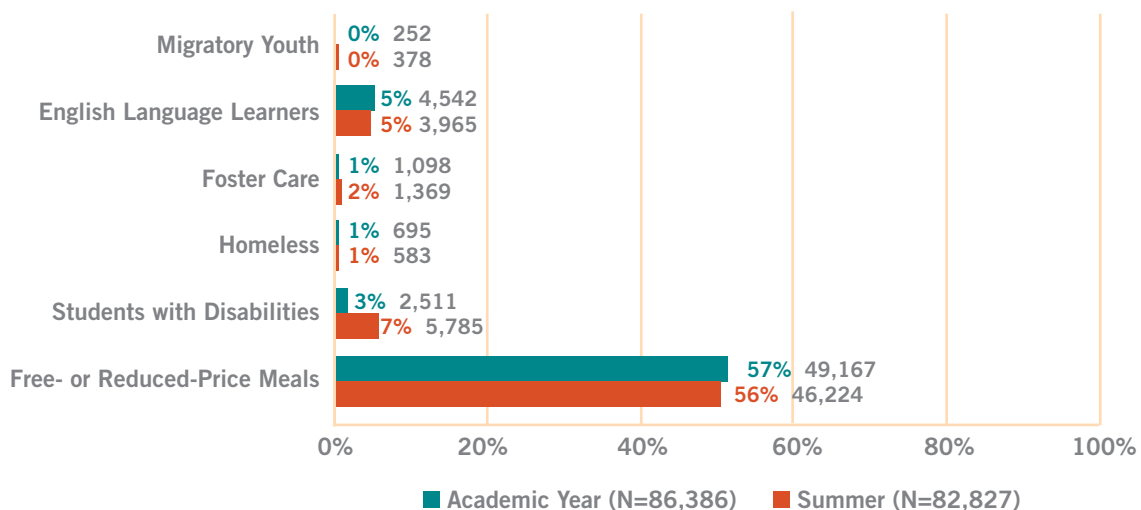
Most youth served by BOOST-funded sites were in elementary grades K through 5, followed by middle school youth, and then high school youth (Figure 3). These proportions stayed relatively similar during both the academic year and the summer and across the three years of the grant program.

FIGURE 3. Grade Levels of Youth Served, Year 3



Year 3 BOOST grantees successfully targeted the priority youth populations outlined in the ARPA (Figure 4)*. The majority of youth served during the academic year and summer were eligible for free- or reduced-price meals. Additional target populations served by grantees included English language learners, students with disabilities, foster care youth, homeless youth and migratory youth. These trends have been relatively consistent over the three years of the grant period, with the exception of a significant increase in foster care youth served in years 2 and 3.

FIGURE 4. BOOST Priority Youth Served, Year 3



*All grantees do not collect data on each of the populations listed in Figure 4.



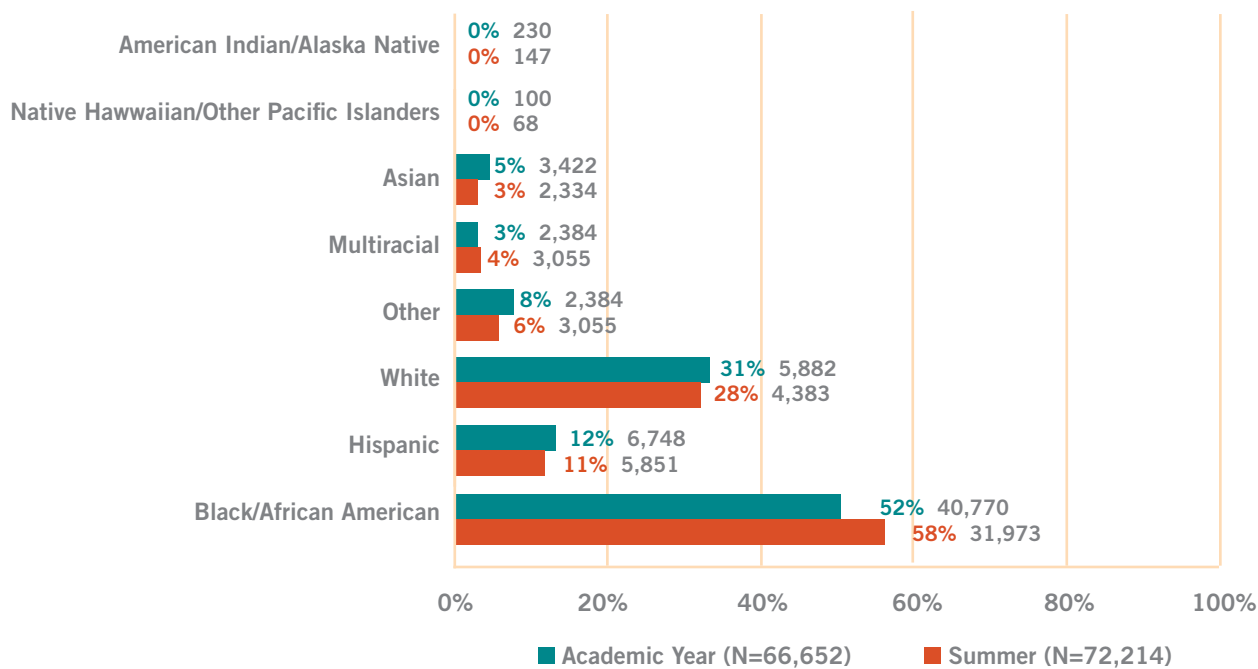
East Atlanta Kids Club



C5 Georgia

Over half of the youth served in the academic year and summer were Black and nearly one-third were white (Figure 5). Other races and ethnicities were represented relatively similarly in the academic year and the summer, including Hispanic, multiracial, Asian, and Other. Youth identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders accounted for less than 1% of the overall population served during both periods.

FIGURE 5. Racial/Ethnic Background of Youth Served, Year 3



Program Purposes: Top Strategies Utilized

As described earlier in this report, BOOST grantees were to focus on at least one of the three program purposes: expand the number of youths served, reduce barriers to youth participation, and strengthen program quality.



Expand Access

Served more youth (70% for the academic year; 60% for the summer) **or new youth populations** (44% for the academic year; 40% for the summer).

Conducted outreach and recruitment focused on families (57% for the academic year; 30% for the summer) **or based on communities** (51% for the academic year; 45% for the summer).

Expanded daily program hours and/or days (39% for the academic year; 36% for the summer) **or opened new sites or locations** (35% for the academic year; 30% for the summer).



Reduce Barriers

Continued to offer free programming (88% for the academic year; 75% for summer) **or waived program fees** (39% for the academic year; 48% for summer).

Provided transportation services (66% for the academic year; 55% for summer) **or offered more accessible program locations** within walking distance or at more convenient locations for families (37% for the academic year; 25% for the summer).

Provided English language support for youth (24% in the academic year; 13% in the summer).



Strengthen Program Quality

Expanded existing program services and activities (60% for the academic year; 60% for the summer) **or enhanced existing curricula**, such as math, ELA, and STEAM (59% for the academic year; 54% for the summer).

Provided youth with healthy meals or snacks on site (60% for the academic year; 57% for the summer).

Providing staff training on leadership, trauma-informed service delivery, art therapy, phonics instruction, and ASYD quality standards (52% for the academic year; 45% for the summer).

For a more detailed overview of strategies implemented for each program purpose over the course of the three-year grant, see Appendix A.



Africa's Children's Fund

The BOOST Grants Program lifted many burdens our families carry, such as financial, transportation, and food, to ensure their child has high-quality OST. We allocated BOOST resources to ensure that all children of Wilkes County had equal opportunity to flourish in our program."

– BOOST Grantee

"BOOST funding was used to hire a full-time program director to expand programming for our middle and high school youth. As the program grew, BOOST funded additional program coordinators for the OST program. The middle/high school program grew from 15 to 93 youth in Year 3 of the grant."

– BOOST Grantee



Extra Special People



Atlanta Music Project



Spectrum Autism Support Group

Program Activities

All grantees were to offer at least three of the following four service areas as part of their BOOST-supported programs.

Accelerated learning (required) activities were reported by 100% of academic year grantees and 98% of summer grantees.* Literacy instruction and STEM/STEAM/STREAM (science, technology, reading, engineering, arts, and math) were offered most often among both academic year and summer grantees (82% and 68%, respectively; and 70% and 75%, respectively). Most academic year grantees also offered homework help (72%) and tutoring (68%).



Grantee Spotlights

Southside Recreation Center (Lowndes County) used BOOST funds to hire a math tutor to provide small group and individualized tutoring for all program participants and deliver targeted support for students at risk of failing math. Volunteer teachers also offered additional reading support and resources to help students prepare for the Georgia Milestone test. As a result, students gained confidence in their schoolwork, benefiting from the increased alignment with the school day.

Next Generation Focus (Gwinnett County) created a comprehensive learning environment specializing in literacy and mathematics. The curriculum implemented strategies to help students apply reading and writing skills beyond the traditional classroom, catering to at-risk students with personalized support. The project-based, hands-on learning assignments enhanced essential reading and math skills, linking learning to real-world experiences.

Well-being and connectedness was the most cited service area after learning acceleration, with 90% of academic year grantees and 91% of summer grantees offering these services. Most grantees offered well-being and connectedness activities (82% for academic year and 89% for summer), followed by problem-solving activities (65% for academic year and 68% for summer). At least half of the academic year and summer grantees offered team-building activities and mental health services.



Grantee Spotlights

Crisp County Community Council (Crisp County) CREATE, Cultivating Resilience in Education through Art Therapy and Enrichment, is an afterschool program designed to combat learning loss and address students' well-being, connectedness, and mental health needs. The program employed Art Therapy and Dialectical Behavior Therapy to support at-risk students struggling with academics and overall well-being and connectedness.

Bread of Life Development Ministries Inc. (Rockdale County) offered a summer program focused on access for at-risk youth. The program provided youth various engaging activities, from field trips to enrichment activities, and featured behavioral health group sessions. In these sessions, youth shared their feelings, personal or familial problems, and general life experiences. This group provided a safe space for youth to ask questions and learn how to understand and process their emotions.

*While learning acceleration was a required component, 2 summer grantees (2%) did not report learning acceleration activities on their final grant report.

Enrichment was provided by 82% of the academic year and 91% of summer grantees. Crafts and visual and performing arts were the most offered activities among BOOST grantees (61% and 69%, respectively; and 54% and 52%, respectively). Summer grantees were more likely to offer career exploration, field trips, and job/career readiness than academic-year grantees.



Grantee Spotlights

Together Friends (Clayton County) helped students increase their interest and awareness of STEAM career opportunities and the high school and college requirements to enter those fields. Guest speakers and field trips allowed students to actively participate in a comprehensive program that engaged and inspired students through various enriching activities and learning experiences. Reviewing students' journals provided valuable insights into the program's effectiveness in fostering a passion for STEAM disciplines and guiding students toward future career paths.

Jessye Norman School of the Arts (Richmond County) provided a free summer arts program that immersed students in specialized disciplines through daily instruction. Students developed their talents in dance, drama, music, visual arts, or digital arts, depending on their interests. In digital arts, students mastered video production using DSLR cameras and editing software. Drama and music students brought *The Phantom Tollbooth* to life while exploring color theory, geometry, and probability. Visual arts students created works integrating these same STEAM concepts. With individualized instructor guidance, every student's artistic journey culminated in end-of-camp performances and gallery showcases, achieving 100% participation.

Healthy eating and physical activity were provided by a majority of academic year (78%) and summer grantees (87%). Many grantees reported providing youth healthy meals and snacks during the academic year (59%) and summer programming (69%). Most academic year and summer grantees also offered sports and other recreational activities (63% and 76%, respectively).



Grantee Spotlights

At **Thomasville Community Resource Center** (Thomas County), students learned to assess, monitor, and track their water intake daily, completing daily tracking. Using the age-appropriate Skillastics Curriculum, students were also instructed in healthy meals and physical activities, making learning fun and engaging.

Savannah Country Day School Inc. — Horizons (Chatham County) promoted healthy eating and physical activity through comprehensive recreation and nutrition programs. Students received daily balanced meals including breakfast, lunch, and a healthy snack. The program incorporated diverse physical activities, including swimming lessons three times weekly, where 136 students achieved basic swimming proficiency. Additional recreation activities included tennis, yoga, flag football, and disc golf. Through their healthy living club, students engaged in activities promoting overall well-being and active lifestyles.

Implementation Success

Grantees reported a number of implementation successes in Year 3. **Behavioral health skill development was cited most often among the academic year and summer grantees, followed by strong youth-staff relationships, new content exposure (e.g., STEAM), and student behavior improvements.** Summer grantees were much more likely to cite free tuition as an implementation success than the academic year grantees. The same was true for life skill development. In contrast, academic year grantees were more likely to cite student grade promotion as an implementation success than the summer grantees.

TABLE 1. Year 3 BOOST Implementation Successes

	Academic Year (N=82)	Summer (N=87)
Developed youth behavioral health skills (e.g., relationships, well-being, connectedness, resilience)	79%	70%
Developed strong youth-staff relationships	67%	68%
Exposed students to new content (e.g., public speaking courses, STEAM introduction, and robotics curriculum)	65%	80%
Improved student behavior	61%	54%
Provided staff training/improved staff skills or content knowledge	59%	55%
Has students promoted to the next grade	57%	31%
Adapted well to overcome/address COVID-related challenges (e.g., rebuilding in-person programming, absorbing post-pandemic costs)	56%	52%
Offered free tuition/no-cost services	55%	70%
Developed youth life skills (e.g., leadership, public speaking, teamwork, financial literacy)	55%	68%
Improved program student attendance	52%	45%
Increased parent/family or community interest in the program (using strategies such as neighborhood canvassing)	50%	51%
Offered new programs, services, or activities (e.g., field trips, sports instruction, workforce development, financial literacy, camping trips, SAT/ACT prep, and residential summer programs)	50%	59%
Had a high family engagement	48%	41%
Maintained low staff-youth ratio	48%	53%
Improved student grades, test scores, or reading abilities	46%	41%
Had high program student attendance	43%	43%
Had high student enrollment	39%	45%
Had success with recruitment efforts	37%	28%
Had students graduate from high school	34%	17%
Prepared students for college/workforce	33%	33%
Provided youth volunteer opportunities, (e.g., Days of Service, community service projects)	30%	32%

Program Quality, Innovations, and Best Practices

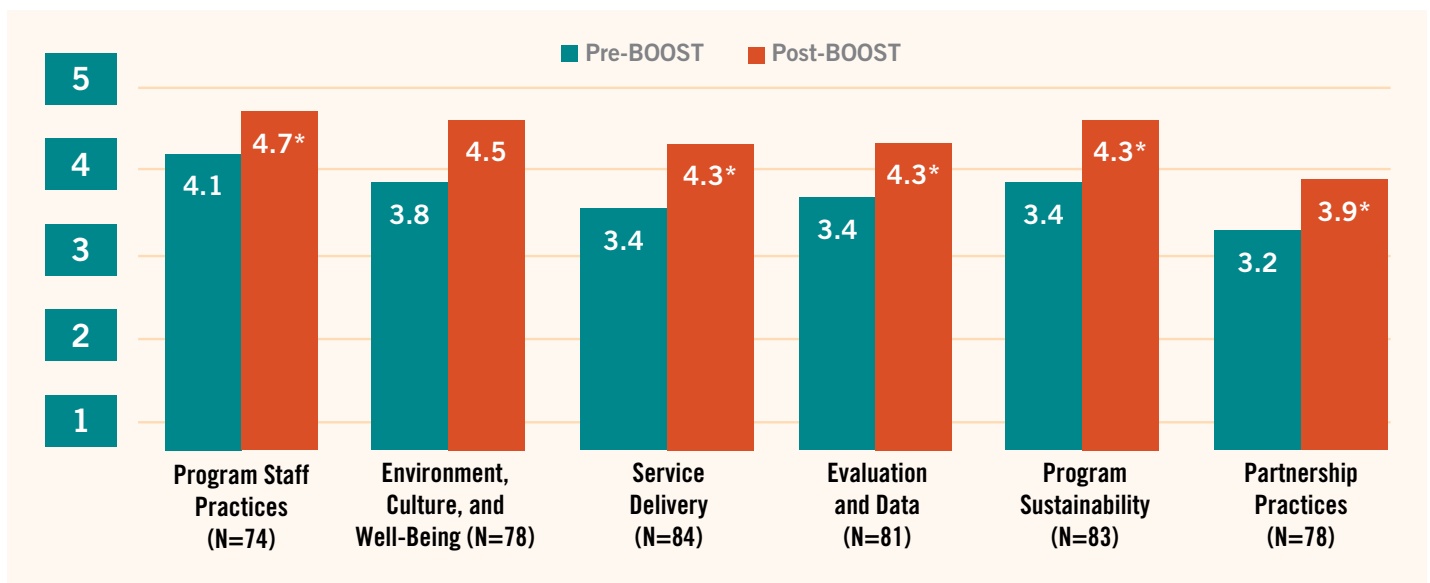
In Year 3, grantees were asked to assess the quality of their implementation practices against best practice standards outlined in [Georgia's Afterschool & Youth Development \(ASYD\) Quality Standards](#). The specific practices assessed fell within six implementation areas: service delivery, environment, culture and well-being, program staff, partnerships, evaluation and data, and program sustainability.

Grantees were asked to rate the implementation level of specific practices within each area both before BOOST ("pre") and currently ("post") using this five-point scale:

5	Practice is entirely in place and considered a program strength
4	Practice is entirely in place with opportunities for improvement and growth.
3	Practice is partially in place.
2	Practice is in the planning phase.
1	Practice still needs to be planned and put in place.

Pre- and post-mean ratings were calculated for each specific practice and each implementation area overall. Paired samples t-tests were applied to determine whether changes from pre to post were statistically significant (i.e., "real" and not due to chance). On average, grantees reported substantial gains using best practices in all six implementation areas (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6. Changes in Implementation Practices Pre- and Post-BOOST by Implementation Area



*Denotes statistical significance ($p < 0.001$) based on a paired samples t-test.

Gains were most significant in service delivery, program sustainability, and evaluation and data. **When asked about the most important lesson they learned while participating in BOOST, grantees often cited understanding the importance of data collection or using data to measure student growth and improve program quality.**

"We learned to use data weekly throughout our summer programming to inform decisions and focus student supports. This lesson has impacted the way we now operate year-round."

– BOOST Grantee

Indicators Across Implementation Areas Where Grantees Experienced Significant Gains

Service Delivery:

Use remediation strategies to help youth struggling academically. (3.0 to 4.0)

Program Staff Practices:

Staff have access to meaningful professional development and career advancement. (3.7 to 4.5)

Partnership Practices:

Regular communication with partner schools about the academic curriculum or student needs. (3.4 to 4.1)

Program Sustainability Practices:

Comfort/readiness for applying for government grants. (3.3 to 4.3)

Evaluation and Data Practices:

Assessment of program quality using a specific tool or process. (3.3 to 4.3)

Grantee Challenges

Below is a summary of implementation challenges and unexpected difficulties experienced by grantees during the BOOST program's third and final year.

TABLE 2. Year 3 BOOST Grantee Challenges

	Academic Year (N=82)	Summer (N=87)
Youth with mental health or behavioral issues	52%	44%
Youth with severe academic needs/learning loss	45%	23%
Data collection and analysis	33%	38%
Staff retention	33%	15%
Program recruitment or enrollment challenges (particularly with high school students)	29%	24%
Lack of or difficulties with transportation	26%	24%
Funding or program delays	24%	16%
Site expansion	22%	24%
Scheduling challenges	21%	17%
Low student retention	16%	18%
Low or poor family engagement	16%	3%
Low student attendance	12%	14%
Covid-related challenges	10%	3%

Outcomes Study

Grantee Outcomes by Service Area

BOOST grantees were required to develop three outcomes for youth participants: one for learning acceleration and two others in any of the four BOOST service areas: learning acceleration, enrichment, healthy eating and physical activity, and well-being and connectedness. Year-round grantees were required to submit outcomes for academic year and summer programming periods.

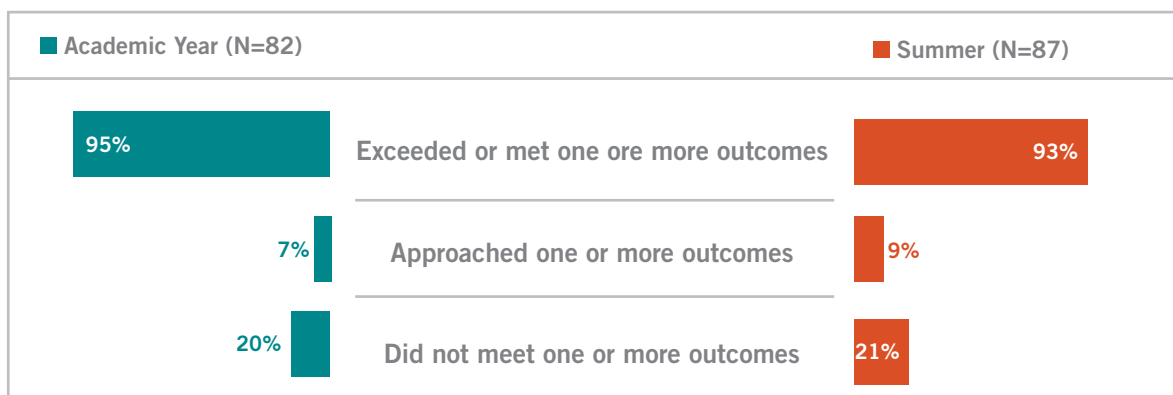
Overall, there were 246 academic year outcomes (three for each of the 82 academic year grantees) and 261 summer outcomes (three for each of the 87 summer grantees). Nearly all grantee outcomes were measured for the academic year (96%) and the summer (95%)*. Most measurable outcome goals were exceeded or met in the academic year (87%) and summer (86%), and some were approached (3% and 4%, respectively). Few outcomes were not met in either period (10% for both academic year and summer).

Outcomes Attainment Levels:

- **Exceeded:** Greater than five percentage points above the target
- **Met:** Within five percentage points above or below the target
- **Approached:** Between six and ten percentage points below the target
- **Not met:** Greater than ten percentage points below the target

Moreover, the great majority of grantees met or exceeded at least one of their outcomes during the academic year (95%) or the summer (93%) (Figure 7).

FIGURE 7.
Percent of Grantees with Measured Outcomes by Attainment Level**



**Because grantees had multiple outcomes, it is feasible that a grantee could meet, exceed, approach, or not meet one or more outcomes. Therefore, the percentages do not add up to 100%.

*In all other cases, Year 3 outcome data were unavailable at the time of the report (4% in the academic year and 5% in the summer).

Learning Acceleration

As required, 100% of the academic year and summer BOOST grantees proposed at least one learning acceleration outcome – with many proposing more than one, resulting in 143 learning acceleration outcomes in the academic year and 112 during the summer. Below is a summary of the types of learning acceleration outcomes proposed by grantees and how they were assessed.

- **Academic gains** in literacy, math, or other core subjects were the focus of most learning acceleration outcomes (29% of the academic year learning acceleration outcomes and 42% of the summer learning acceleration outcomes). Tools used to measure academic gains primarily included report card grades, GPA, and assessments, including Georgia Milestones assessments and diagnostic tests such as the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and iReady assessments.
- **Increased access to accelerated learning activities**, including increasing the number of students served and establishing program attendance and service delivery targets. Tools used to measure increased access primarily consisted of program attendance records.
- **Improved college and career readiness**, including the numbers of students graduating/on track to graduate high school on time, who enrolled in a post-secondary program, and/or reported increased awareness of college and career opportunities. Tools to measure these gains included staff observations and youth, staff, and/or family member surveys, interviews, or anecdotes.
- **Gains in knowledge, confidence, and/or interest** in STEM/STEAM, water safety, music, financial literacy, and life skills. Tools to measure these gains included staff observations and youth, staff, and/or family member surveys, interviews, or anecdotes.

“Our Learning Acceleration saw our greatest outcome based on diagnostic data from the I-Ready platform in reading and math. The average reading level increased from 499 to 526, and the average math level increased from 403 to 425 for our elementary and middle school students. Our high school students saw a 92% success rate on recovering credits not earned during the school year.”

– Augusta Richmond County Juvenile Court

“CCA staff utilized assessment tools to measure growth in English literacy, reading, and oral speaking for all students. CCA also used school data, such as progress reports, report cards, and teacher feedback, to assess students’ progress in their classes. We are pleased to report that all students have improved, and 100% have advanced to the next grade.”

– Catholic Charities Atlanta (CCA)

Data were available for 97% of the proposed outcomes for the academic year and 96% for the summer. Overall, most grantees met or exceeded their learning acceleration outcomes during the academic year (87%) or the summer (83%) (Figure 8). **As a result, learning acceleration outcomes were achieved for approximately 84,215 youth during the academic year and 59,169 youth during the summer.**

FIGURE 8. Status of Learning Acceleration Outcomes



Boy Scouts of NE Georgia

Well-Being and Connectedness

More than half of the academic year (55%) and summer grantees (61%) proposed at least one well-being and connectedness outcome. Specific outcomes included:

- **Growth in personal well-being**, including self-confidence, self-esteem, social skills, leadership skills, and sense of belonging.
- **Increased access to mental health supports and to activities to promote well-being and connectedness** (e.g., team building, mentoring, community service, family engagement activities).
- **Improved well-being and academic behaviors**.
- **Positive perceptions of program quality**, including the extent to which the program environment was safe and supportive and provided opportunities for youth to establish positive relationships with adults and/or peers.

“86% of the Girls Inc. participants increased their mental and physical health knowledge as measured by pre- and post-test results. Girls Inc. provided well-being and connectedness programming throughout the school year utilizing an Overcoming Obstacles curriculum. The curricula were provided once a week to students K-8. The data showed that students developed coping skills, a positive outlook, and fundamental concepts like respect, integrity, empathy, and perseverance. Students also learned to communicate effectively, make informed decisions, set and achieve goals, resolve conflicts, and solve problems.”

– Girls Incorporated of Greater Atlanta

Data were available for 95% of well-being and connectedness outcomes proposed by BOOST grantees. Overall, most outcomes in this area were met or exceeded during the academic year (80%) and the summer (88%) (Figure 9). As a result, **well-being and connectedness outcomes were achieved for 50,872 youth during the academic year and 36,473 during the summer.**

FIGURE 9. Status of the Well-Being and Connectedness Outcomes



Enrichment

One-third of academic year grantees (33%) and nearly half of summer grantees (49%) proposed at least one enrichment outcome. Specific outcomes included:

- **Increased student exposure to new experiences or topics**, such as entrepreneurship, arts programming and performances, and STEM enrichment activities.
- **Enhanced college and career readiness**, including increased interest in and awareness of careers (particularly in STEM fields) and their educational requirements.
- **Growth in social skills**, including improvements in social skills, leadership skills, self-expression, and sense of belonging.

“For the EYES Summer Enrichment program, 92% of program participants gained confidence and abilities/skills to self-advocate for career goals. For example, program participants presented their elevator speech in front of an audience of their peers, parents, and instructors after the summer program. Specific measurements showed that students learned how to communicate and discuss their identified career goals and expressed increased confidence to discuss their desired job, related skills, and career goals.”

– Nobis Works, Inc.

Data were available for nearly all the proposed enrichment outcomes during the academic year (97%) and summer (91%). Tools used to measure these outcomes included program participation data, youth surveys, informal conversations with youth, staff, and/or family members, and staff observations. As shown in Figure 10, most grantees met or exceeded their enrichment outcomes during the academic year (90%) and/or the summer (92%). **Overall, enrichment outcomes were achieved for 16,850 youth during the academic year and 22,398 youth during the summer.**

FIGURE 10. Status of Enrichment Outcomes



Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

Finally, 22% of the academic year and 34% of summer grantees proposed at least one outcome in healthy eating and physical activity. Specific outcomes achieved included:

- **Increased knowledge of healthy living and nutrition**, leading to healthier choices and improved self-confidence and well-being.
- **Increased time spent engaging in physical activity**, including daily exercise and structured activities such as sports and related activities.
- **Increased access and exposure to healthy foods**, including nutritious snacks and meals provided by grantees during programming.

“We increased our organized sports activity program by 90%, which ensured students were more physically active. We used students’ semi-annual report card results to examine grades, school attendance, and cognitive performance. Our goal was that at least 50% of participating students would be more physically active, resulting in improved health and school attendance rates, as measured by the number of absences on report cards.”

– Teach O’Rea Preparatory

“In 2024, Horizons Atlanta remained committed to providing for their scholar’s basic needs, including offering breakfast, lunch, and a snack daily. In the summer of 2024, we served 77,228 meals and provided 38,614 healthy snacks.”

– Horizons Atlanta

Data were available for all the proposed healthy eating and physical activity outcomes during the academic year and summer. Tools used to measure these outcomes included program participation data, youth surveys, informal conversations with youth, staff, and/or family members, and staff observations. Figure 11 shows that most healthy eating and physical activity outcomes were met or exceeded during the academic year (100%) and the summer (82%). **Healthy eating and physical activity outcomes were achieved for 35,822 youth during the academic year and 48,414 during the summer.**

FIGURE 11. Status of the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Outcomes

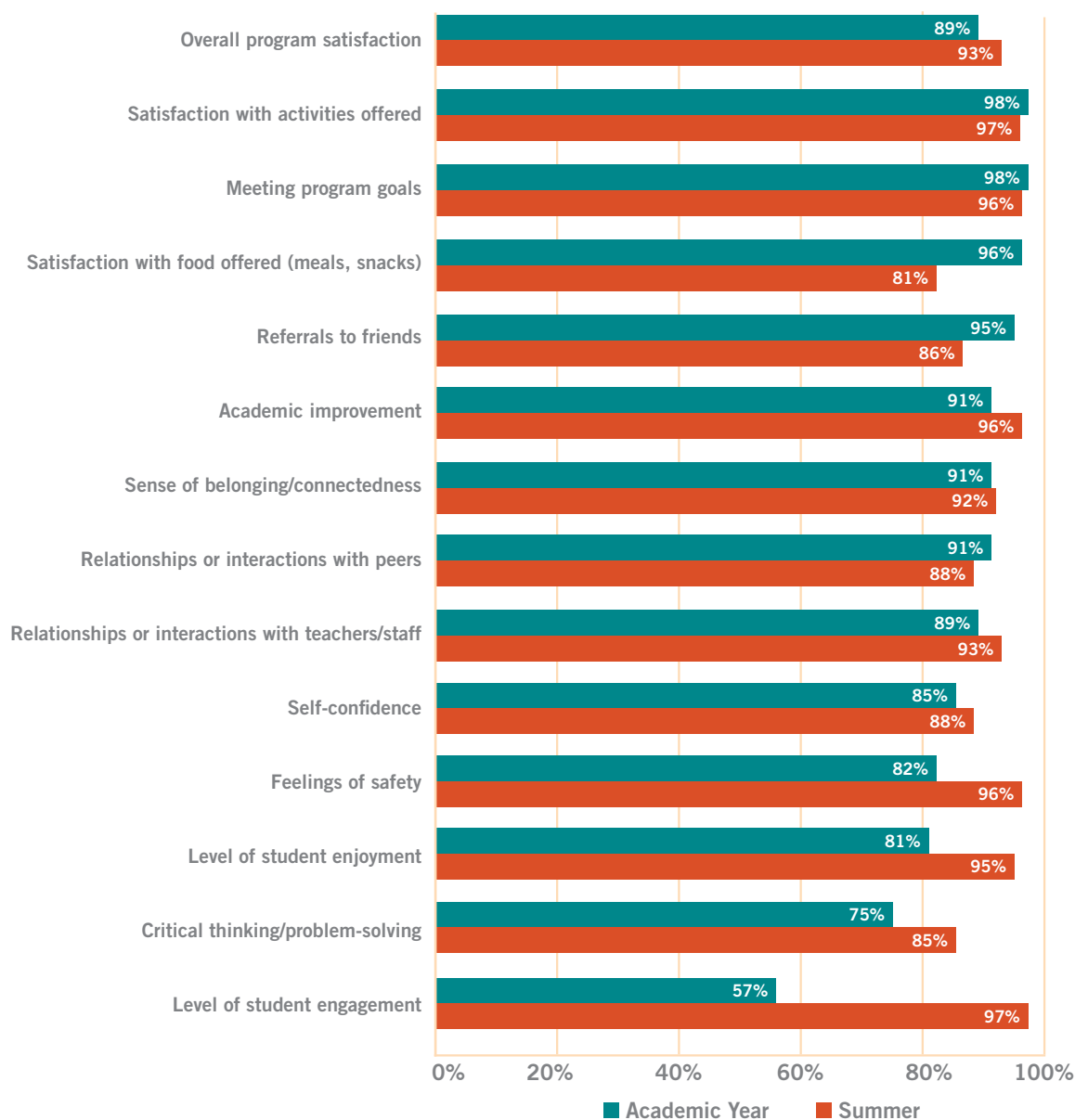


Youth Satisfaction

All academic year and summer grantees measured youth satisfaction with BOOST-funded programs in Year 3. Data on youth satisfaction were available for 28,415 of the 86,386 academic year youth participants (33%) and 35,065 of the 82,827 summer youth participants (42%). In addition to measuring youth satisfaction with the overall program experience, many grantees also assessed additional constructs, such as sense of belonging/connectedness, relationships with teachers/staff or peers, youth enjoyment, and feelings of safety.

Overall, **youth satisfaction with BOOST programming was high at 89% for the academic year youth and 93% for the summer participants**. Additionally, most academic year and summer participants (81% to 97%) expressed satisfaction with specific program components such as activities and food offered, relationships with teachers/staff, feelings of belonging and connectedness, and peer relationships.

FIGURE 12. Youth Satisfaction Results, Year 3



Systems Study

The Systems Study focused on the quality and effectiveness of BOOST oversight, administration efforts, and sustainability. Findings for this component were derived from key stakeholder interviews (conducted in Year 2) and Grantee Survey data (collected in Year 3).

BOOST Grants Program Design

Several stakeholders served as advisors or information providers in the collaborative process that led GaDOE and GSAN to create two RFPs—one for statewide and one for local agencies—that would reach underserved youth throughout the state. They described the mission of the BOOST grants program most commonly in the following order:

- Diminishing learning loss and meeting the educational needs of all students;
- Expand access to out-of-school time (OST) learning to promote student success; and
- Strengthening OST quality, building the capacity of OST providers, and meeting the mental health or well-being needs of students whom COVID has impacted.

“A competitive grant process ensured that only high-quality programs would receive funding—guaranteeing that “taxpayer dollars are being used wisely for the kids.”

– Key Stakeholder Informant

According to nine stakeholders, the decision to disperse ESSER III funding in Georgia through a competitive grants program was primarily a means of ensuring the fair distribution of funds. Several stakeholders mentioned that GSAN was uniquely positioned in the state to help reach a broad range of organizations, given its longstanding and productive relationships with the OST community. In describing the RFP development process, several stakeholders described reaching new organizations as a key motivator. Being flexible with funding was also an important consideration while developing the RFP. It allowed organizations to focus on their specific needs and request support for transportation and capital costs not typically covered by other grants. **While the ability to manage a BOOST grant was part of the funding criteria, GSAN and partners also sought to build local capacity so that smaller organizations would be encouraged to apply.**



LIFT Youth Center



HYPE

A competitive grant process ensured that only high-quality programs would receive funding—guaranteeing that “taxpayer dollars are being used wisely for the kids.” Still, two stakeholders expressed their interest in bringing greater attention to racial disparities in the fund distribution process. Another interviewee recognized that ensuring a good mix of urban and rural applicants was challenging, though they did not find the RFP process at fault as there are fewer youth-serving organizations in remote areas, resulting in fewer rural applicants.

When asked about GSAN’s greatest successes overseeing BOOST, all who responded were positive overall and about various aspects of their work. This includes highlighted strengths including:

- Communicating with grantees and answering their questions;
- Helping grantees navigate legal and budget questions;
- Offering training and certificate programs from the Georgia Center from Nonprofits; and
- Getting the “money out the door and getting access for kids.”

“There are not enough slots for kids to have programming. Why is that? In some cases, it’s because there aren’t enough organizations, but for the most part, it’s because those organizations don’t have enough money.”

– Key Stakeholder Informant

BOOST Public-Private Structure

All stakeholders lauded GaDOE’s decision to partner with GSAN to manage, administer, and provide support for BOOST, with some calling it a model that should be replicated. Stakeholders described many benefits to using a public-private structure, with half referencing how a private organization like GSAN’s distinct qualities enhanced the BOOST process. Almost all (12) stakeholders described GSAN as an obvious choice of partner because of its knowledge of OST best practices. Four interviewees also described that community-based organizations (CBOs) already know and trust GSAN, so they are more comfortable working with them than with a less familiar government entity. Combined with their expertise in grant administration, these interviewees felt that GSAN brought unique knowledge, skills, relationships, and experience to the table.

“I think the value added of [having GSAN involved] is it shows that—through a combination of a partnership with the state education agency and a statewide intermediary, or an entity like GSAN—you can use [public] funds... to run a competition and have a positive impact.”

– Key Stakeholder Informant

As a content expert in the OST field, GSAN provided grantees with professional learning opportunities that supported their work while further building strong relationships. Further, two stakeholders explained that having GSAN as a partner allowed for greater speed and support than would have been possible if GaDOE had been running the BOOST competition alone. The collaboration created a “fantastic opportunity.”

Grant Administration

GSAN performed key functions as the administrator of the BOOST grants program, including making funding recommendations, supporting grantee organizations on grant compliance tasks and implementation improvement efforts, and overseeing an independent, third-party program evaluation. Examples of other grant administration responsibilities included:

- Conducting grantee site visits to support the GaDOE overall monitoring plan.
- Convening grantee representatives (e.g., the BOOST Advisory Council and the four statewide grantees) to help inform BOOST implementation and oversight.
- Updating grantee reporting templates in collaboration with the United Way of Greater Atlanta and Metis.
- Facilitating a BOOST grantee reception and a BOOST data and evaluation workshop at the statewide Afterschool Youth Development Conference.

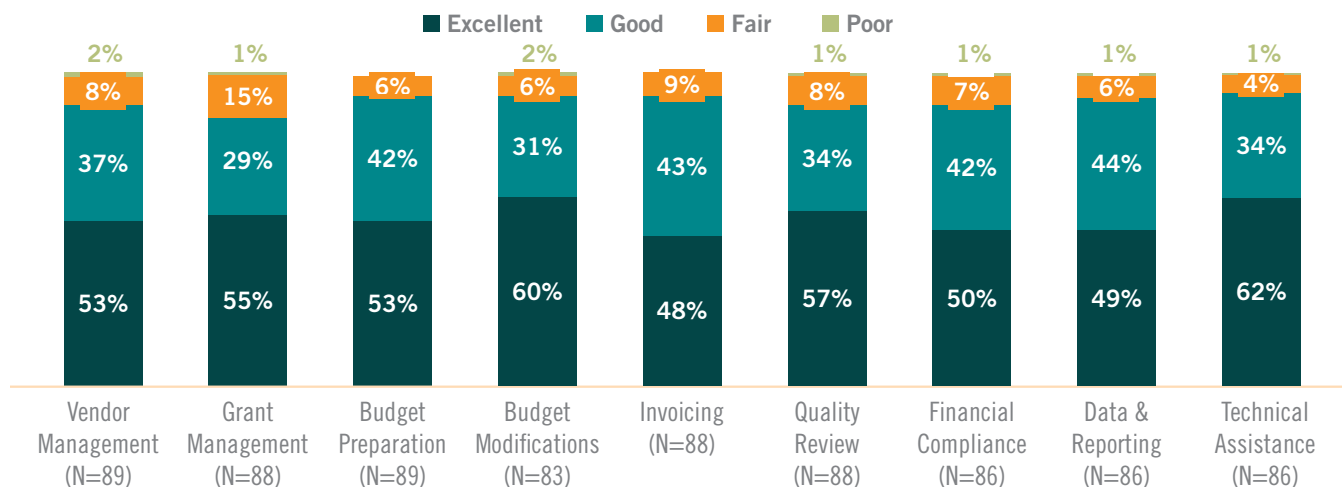
GSAN also showcased the BOOST grants program locally and nationally. This work included:

- Delivering a presentation on BOOST at the US Department of Education's Engage Every Student Summit in Washington, D.C.
- Presenting on the BOOST grants program model and successes at various state and national events, including those hosted by the national Campaign for Grade Level Reading, Learning Policy Institute, the Council of State Governments Southern Office, and the GA Partnership for Excellence in Education's Critical Issues Forum.
- Invited panelist on the National Academies Committee on Promoting Learning and Development in K-12 Out of School Time Settings for Low Income and Marginalized Children and Youth.

Across all three years, GSAN also provided extensive support to grantees on a wide array of administrative topics, including vendor management (e.g., state accounting set-up, MyGaDOE portal access), grant management and accounting, budget preparation, budget modifications or amendments, invoicing; program quality review (site visits, town halls, project modification forms); financial compliance and monitoring; outcomes, data, and reporting; and general technical assistance.

On the Year 3 BOOST Grantee survey, grantees rated the quality and effectiveness of the grants program's administrative support provided. As shown in Figure 13, most respondents rated the quality of BOOST administrative support and technical assistance as good or excellent.

FIGURE 13. Quality of BOOST Administrative Support and Technical Assistance



Grantee Training & Technical Assistance

Throughout the implementation of the BOOST Grants program, GSAN used a multi-tiered approach to deliver comprehensive training and technical assistance (TTA) to grantees. The TTA aimed to meet organizational needs, enhance youth development service quality, and strengthen grantee capacity. GSAN provided online and in-person training, coaching, and technical support to build capacity and ensure sustainability. Grantees were invited to professional development sessions through the annual Training & Quality Supports Catalogue and Event Calendar, as well as a bi-weekly newsletter.

During the three-year grant program, over 1,300 participants attended 115 BOOST training sessions. In Years 2 and 3, feedback from participant surveys helped align TTA offerings with grantee priorities, focusing mainly on interactive training, grantee coaching, and individualized assessment. The multi-tiered TTA model included:

- **On-Demand Resources.** The OST Resource Library, a searchable web-based platform with content on various OST- and nonprofit-related topics was available to grantees at all times.
- **Interactive Training.** Examples of training offered to grantees includes:
 - Professional development workshops and certificate series hosted by the Georgia Center for Nonprofits (GCN) to bolster organizational capacity and sustainability, including Nonprofit Accounting Essentials, Supervision and Management, and Fundraising Essentials.
 - Scholarships to attend the National Afterschool Association's annual Convention (49 scholarships were awarded in Year 3).
 - Participation at the Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development Conference, with 70% of participants finding it highly effective.
- **Grantee Coaching.** In Year 2 and 3, GSAN partnered with HTI Catalysts and Transformative Research and Evaluation (TRE) to offer BOOST grantees small-group coaching and peer learning communities. In Year 3, three cohorts of small-group coaching were offered, with approximately 59 grantees participating across all cohorts.
- **Individualized Assessment & Coaching:** In Year 3, two cohorts of grantees participated in Weikart's Youth Methods train the trainer (TOT) and Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) certifications. The Methods TOT certified 15 individuals to train other youth development professionals on Weikart's 10-pronged youth program quality methods. In addition, 6 individuals were certified to visit BOOST grantee organizations and assess programmatic quality and provide related coaching using Weikart's program quality assessment.



"The training sessions provided by BOOST were very helpful and gave us the resources we needed to achieve our goals. This support truly made a difference in our work"

– BOOST Grantee

GSAN also offered extensive one-on-one support through email, videoconference, and phone, including 742 technical assistance sessions and over 21,000 inquiries from grantees throughout the implementation of the three-year grants program. In addition, BOOST team members conducted 95 in-person site visits to grantee organizations.

Successes and Challenges

Interviewees defined success for BOOST in many ways, though there was the greatest agreement (six people) that the initiative should build local capacity for program staffing, operations, and fundraising. Relatedly, the ability to sustain programming post-BOOST will be an important measure of success. Respondents described success as:

- Expanding access,
- Strengthening program quality,
- Providing students with academics, enrichment, and well-being, and
- Creating sustainable public-private partnerships and cross-sector collaboration.

More broadly, some spoke about BOOST's potential to support the OST field: "[BOOST] has raised the caliber of what people think about OST," contributing to stronger support from state actors and funders, thus advancing program longevity.

"Capacity building is a measure of success. What happens to those programs in 2025 and 2026? How many of those can get additional funds and keep their programs going?... And for the network itself, what do they look like post this huge endeavor that shifted the organization itself?"

– Key Stakeholder Informant

Stakeholders were largely satisfied with BOOST's ability to meet these metrics for success, with six describing how organizations have grown capacity due to BOOST. This growth includes adopting best practices, building internal teams and partnerships, enhancing the capacity to apply for new funding, and investing in new curricula and enrichment.

Five interviewees also referenced successes on the ground when describing program impact. Specifically, three stakeholders explained how BOOST has expanded the reach of funding geographically to rural areas and to smaller "mom and pop" organizations, which "expanded availability of services for kids." Two also spoke about BOOST's impact on children and families as a key success, giving kids a safe place to go and building their confidence. While generally positive about BOOST, stakeholders also discussed challenges to grant implementation. Half of the respondents mentioned issues related to grantee funding and financials, including late determination of final award amounts, the need for GaDOE vendor approval, having to split afterschool and summer funding evenly, delays in securing first-year grantee funding, and the lag in second-year budget approvals.

Notable challenges included:

- Understanding and interpreting GaDOE and ESSER relief fund regulations and allowable costs,
- Tight grant schedules left grantees with limited time to hire and orient staff, purchase equipment and supplies, and implement planned services, and
- Finding program staff to meet demand.

To address these challenges, some stakeholders suggested improved communications between grantees and partners, including faster response times from GaDOE. Interviewees also encouraged further examination into the best cadence of communications with grantees—balancing their need for information and support with the desire not to overwhelm them. Some stakeholders also wanted to see more discussions about how to best facilitate GSAN and GaDOE processes for vendor approval/eligible expenses and budgets.

Sustainability

The final section of the Grantee Survey asked about grantees' intentions to sustain BOOST after the grant ends. **Nearly all respondents indicated their organization was very committed to continuing BOOST activities (92%) and using data to improve program quality (97%) after the BOOST grant ends.** In addition, most respondents (91%) reported that their organization was moderately or very likely to continue BOOST-funded programs, services, or activities once the grant was over. Some grantees provided examples of leveraging the BOOST grant to support sustainability. Other grantees described being optimistic about the future because of their BOOST experience.

"We have nearly doubled enrollment and quadrupled dosage. At the same time, our funding (based on inflation) has only increased by 140%. As [BOOST] funding falls away, we are leveraging our growth and impact to secure grants that would have only been aspirational three years ago and even unattainable."

– BOOST Grantee

Another grantee described how, because of BOOST, **"We are now better positioned to serve our community, more adept at securing and managing resources,** and part of a vibrant network of like-minded organizations. As we look to the future, we're excited to build on the foundation that BOOST has helped us establish."

Stakeholders who discussed sustainability were all adamant that BOOST (or a comparable form of support) should continue to support OST programs for Georgia youth. Though it was conceived as a

"Three years [of BOOST funding] is the beginning. You're now finding out what we need or how we need it to correct and readdress. It's investing. The state needs to be willing to make a long-term investment for every child."

– Key Stakeholder Informant

response to the impact of COVID, the need for interventions that continue to address learning loss and mental health challenges is as strong as ever. One interviewee described how researchers have found "that the pandemic may be over and the funding may be over soon, but the impacts on young people and the need for additional supports isn't going to be over anytime soon...Even before the pandemic, we had 25 million students who wanted to be in an afterschool program nationally and who didn't have access to a program or couldn't afford available ones. And so, I think sustaining the programs that started and the programs that expanded is critical." **Those interviewed also noted that programs simply cannot continue with the same scope and reach if staffing funds disappear.**

While agreeing that such offerings are worthwhile, there needed to be more consensus on where future funding should come from. Five stakeholders argued that the federal government has a role in sustaining OST funding—though they should not be the sole source of dollars. Others saw the state as the starting point for future support before going to the federal government, with one noting, **"We've had the opportunity through these federal dollars to test this out. We've learned some things. Maybe we do a few things differently. But here's the evaluation, the success, the stories...We need to continue this, and the state needs to invest in this to do so."** Another similarly stressed the state's role in advancing OST efforts: "I hope to see more state investment in out-of-school time and not just as a stop-gap to bridge learning loss, but looking at the wide array of what kind of services these programs offer and think of it being a whole child, whole community approach to how we are supporting young people."

Five stakeholders argued that braided funding that combines a mix of federal, state, local, foundation, corporate, and private philanthropic funds would be necessary to sustain the accessibility and levels of service made possible by BOOST. One stakeholder noted that GSAN and GaDOE could guide how to blend and braid funding to support CBOs, as Alabama's Department of Education has done in partnership with their afterschool network.

Six stakeholders articulated the need to keep “storytelling...ongoing and often” about the impact BOOST has had on families, communities, and state-level partnerships to ensure that policymakers understand the benefits—with some arguing that this kind of widespread sharing has not been done enough. This includes not just promoting the impact of OST programming on youth but also the well-being of their families; as one explained, “It would be nice to be able to speak to how important afterschool is in terms of families recovering [from COVID] and people going back to work.”

Stakeholders agreed that a combination of qualitative stories and quantitative data is essential to making the case for future funding support; as one noted, “I think the data side is key. And then, the story side is just as key.”

Next Steps & Recommendations

The Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network recommends the following:

Create and fund Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST) 2.0 grant program, an out-of-school time (OST) grants program modeled after the BOOST grants program, at \$20 million, building off the existing infrastructure and partnerships of BOOST.

Supporting Evidence:

- 91% of grantees reported being moderately or very likely to continue programming
- 59% of grantees leveraged BOOST funds to secure additional grant money
- Programs demonstrated ability to meet or exceed outcomes (93-95% success rate)

Create and fund an interagency liaison to coordinate afterschool and summer programming between the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, Georgia Division of Family and Children Services, Georgia Department of Education, and University System of Georgia Board of Regents to ensure alignment and coordination of OST services provided to youth and families.

Continue Comprehensive Technical Assistance and Quality Support by using existing BOOST infrastructure to provide training and technical assistance to OST providers.

Supporting Evidence:

- 76% of grantees rated virtual and in-person meetings as “very effective”
- Grantees reported statistically significant gains in implementing best practices across all implementation areas
- 97% of grantees committed to using data for program quality improvement after grant completion

Prioritize Varied Geographic Distribution via targeted funding strategies with a special emphasis on smaller organizations, rural communities, counties lacking state-funded OST program, and areas with limited youth-serving organizations. Lower barriers of access to government funding by providing flexible funding to allow programs to meet evolving needs, allowing funds to be used for hard to cover expenses, such as capital expenses, partial or fully upfront funding rather than reimbursement-based funding, and investments in organizational capacity building.

Supporting Evidence:

- BOOST reached 115 of Georgia's 159 counties and grantees served youth residing in 141 counties
- 13 counties achieved over 10% youth participation
- Targeted grants successfully increased rural program participation

Maintain Focus on High-Need Student Populations by prioritization of funding support to OST programs that serve vulnerable youth, such as those who are economically disadvantaged, have a disability, experience foster care or homelessness, justice-involved youth, and English language learners.

Supporting Evidence:

- Program successfully served priority populations, including economically disadvantaged youth, youth with disabilities, youth experiencing homelessness or foster care, and English language learners

Address Critical Implementation Challenges by allocating specific funding and support for mental health services and staff training, transportation assistance, competitive staff compensation, and professional development and retention strategies.

Supporting Evidence: Key challenges identified included:

- Mental and behavioral health issues (52% academic year, 44% summer)
- Severe academic needs (45% academic year, 23% summer)
- Staff retention and recruitment (33% academic year, 15% summer)
- Transportation difficulties (26% academic year, 24% summer)

Develop partnerships between school districts and youth development organizations that lead to data sharing agreements to optimize resources, align services, and provide targeted academic and non-academic supports to youth.

Maintain the Public-Private Partnership Structure with GSAN continuing to serve as the primary program administrator while GaDOE would maintain oversight of future funding distribution and financial monitoring.

Supporting Evidence:

- Stakeholders praised GaDOE and GSAN's partnership as a model that should be replicated
- The structure allowed for faster deployment of funds and more comprehensive support
- 92% of grantee organizations reported being "very committed" to continuing BOOST activities

Appendix A:

Strategies Implemented for Program Purposes Over Time

Purpose: Expand Access

TABLE 1. Grantee Approaches to Expanding Youth Access

	YEAR 1		YEAR 2		YEAR 3	
	Academic Year (N=83)	Summer (N=89)	Academic Year (N=82)	Summer (N=90)	Academic Year (N=82)	Summer (N=87)
Served more youth	46%	51%	69%	32%	70%	60%
Served new youth populations	25%	34%	44%	23%	44%	40%
Conducted family-focused outreach and recruitment*	17%	10%	40%	3%	57%	30%
Conducted community-based outreach and recruitment*					51%	45%
Expanded program hours and/or days	∞	∞	33%	7%	39%	36%
Opened new sites/locations	29%	29%	35%	12%	35%	30%
Developed partnerships with schools or districts to recruit students	26%	15%	46%	13%	32%	39%

* Family-focused outreach and recruitment and community-based outreach and recruitment were collectively reported in years 1 and 2.

∞ Data not collected.

Purpose: Reduce Barriers

TABLE 2. Grantee Approaches to Reducing Barriers to Youth Participation

	YEAR 1		YEAR 2		YEAR 3	
	Academic Year (N=83)	Summer (N=89)	Academic Year (N=82)	Summer (N=90)	Academic Year (N=82)	Summer (N=87)
Continued to offer free programs/ services	45%	38%	66%	46%	88%	75%
Provided transportation services	64%	64%	55%	48%	66%	55%
Waived program fees/cost	28%	26%	41%	10%	39%	48%
Offered more accessible program locations	22%	14%	28%	0%	37%	25%
Provided English language support for youth	∞	∞	15%	2%	24%	13%

∞ Data not collected.

Purpose: Strengthen Program Quality

TABLE 3. Grantee Approaches to Strengthening Programmatic Quality

	YEAR 1		YEAR 2		YEAR 3	
	Academic Year (N=83)	Summer (N=89)	Academic Year (N=82)	Summer (N=90)	Academic Year (N=82)	Summer (N=87)
Expanded existing programs, services, or activities	49%	57%	51%	35%	60%	60%
Provided youth with healthy meals or snacks	∞	∞	61%	19%	60%	57%
Revised/enhanced existing curricula*	28%	13%	44%	6%	59%	54%
Implemented new curricula*			26%	18%	34%	26%
Provided staff training	19%	12%	45%	12%	52%	45%
Hired additional or more qualified (e.g., certified) teachers	22%	19%	41%	33%	39%	43%

∞ Data not collected.

* Revised/enhanced existing curricula and implemented new curricula were collectively reported in year 1.



BOOST Reports Page



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