# **21st Century Community Learning Center**

# **Site Evaluations - Narrative**

# **2016-2017 School Year**



# **NESC**

****Northeast Education Services Cooperative****

****Devils Lake, ND****

****Conducted September 13-14 and September 21, 2017****

**Prepared by:**

**Westwood Research & Statistical Services**

**Bismarck North Dakota**

# **Introduction**

As part of the 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) evaluation process, a standardized set of quality indicators is used to assess, plan, design, and implement strategies for ongoing quality improvement. This process provides CCLC grantee staff and stakeholders a uniform means for identifying challenges, strengths, and opportunities for improvement.

The standardized set of quality indicators used for North Dakota’s CCLC program evaluation process is the Colorado Department of Education’s Monitoring and Quality Improvement Tool (MQIT). The instrument is specifically designed to:

1. Serve as a self-assessment tool to improve the quality of CCLC programs; and
2. Serve as a monitoring tool for the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.

The MQIT is organized into eight categories:

1. Grant Management and Sustainability
2. Program Management
3. Staffing and Professional Development
4. Partnerships
5. Center Operations
6. Programming/Activities
7. Health and Safety
8. Evaluation/Measuring Outcomes

Section A: Addresses the grantees’ performance level with regard to individual grant requirements (accountability). This section includes examples of evidence and performance ratings for each grant expectation.

Sections B – H**:** Addresses program quality in a broader sense. These sections include examples of evidence, performance ratings, and timeframes for improvement for each quality indicator.

During the grantee-specific site visits each of the MQIT’s standardized set of quality indicators is examined by the State CCLC Program Evaluator and the grantee (two to four hours). In addition, visits are made to a minimum of three randomly selected schools to further assess the CCLC’s out-of-school day programs/activities and interactions between student and teacher/staff (approximately one hour).

Subsequently, the State CCLC Program Evaluator, as evidenced by documentation provided by the grantee and school-specific site visits, arrives at a rating (score) for each of the standardized set of quality indicators and an overall rating (score). In addition, the State CCLC Program Evaluator identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement and if appropriate recommends plans of action and timeframes for completion of “lower” rated quality indicators. Any questions regarding the results of the evaluation are addressed by the State CCLC Program Evaluator and grantee.

This report summarizes: visit details; MQIT results (narrative); program strengths; and opportunities for improvement and associated timeframes for action. Detailed MQIT results (tabular) are available by contacting the Project Director.

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Visit Details

MQIT Visit Date, Location and Program Staff Involved

* September 14, 2017 – Devils Lake ND
1. Julie Schuler, 21st Century Project Director NESC

**Site Visit Dates, Locations and Program Staff Involved**

* September 13, 2017 – Minnewaukan Elementary (Minnewaukan ND)
1. Debbie Dyste. Site Coordinator
* September 14, 2017 – Sweetwater Elementary (Devils Lake ND)
1. Dr. Deb Follman, Elementary School Principal
2. Stacy Bitz, Site Coordinator
* September 21, 2017 – Warwick Elementary (Warwick ND)
1. Sandy Barber, Site Coordinator

MQIT Results (Narrative)

Grant Management and Sustainability

NESC identifies and serves eligible students/families consistent with their grant application. Students and families benefit from an experienced and dedicated staff, community involvement, and agency partners. As in past years, staff and programs are committed to bring the afterschool program and community together to shape a learning environment which encourages students to reach their full potential and live a quality life.

Regarding outreach to eligible participants, each site is provided a “Family Handbook” which describes: the program mission, program vision, program goals/objectives, program site information, program cost, CCLC staff, holidays/storm day policies, release of students, visitor information, field trips, snacks, accident/illness, medications, volunteers, responsible behavior, dismissal procedures, nondiscrimination/sexual harassment statements, access to student records, technology/computer/network facilities, staff/family partnership agreements, and field trip permission forms. The handbook is updated annually.

Schools also conduct outreach via: individual school newsletters, principal’s school newsletters, program brochures, school hallway posters, family night flyers, periodic structured parent/family meetings (with agendas), press releases to newspaper/radio, Facebook, and the NESC and school-specific websites. Many sites have begun to publish their own school-specific CCLC newsletters. For example, Tata Topa Tribal School’s newsletter offers sections such as “What’s Happening This Month”, “Number of Students with Perfect Attendance for the Month”, and a “Schedule of Activities” for each day of the week for each month.

NESC continues to house programs in safe and accessible facilities/environments. In past years various concerns related to individual(s) potentially entering schools “unrecorded/ unchecked” by any day school or afterschool staff, making it relatively easy for this/these individual(s) to potentially cause turmoil at the site. Further details can be found in the “Health and Safety” section of this evaluation.

During the 2016-17 school year, all the grantees’ sites averaged the required seven hours or more per week.

Each site continues to offer a snack/socializing, math, reading, spelling, homework/tutoring, enrichment programming, recess/recreation, and computers/games. In addition, schools continue to incorporate STEM into daily programming. Furthermore, some sites offer Reader’s Theatre, drama, art, cooking to enhance math and reading skills, keyboarding, and additional computer skill activities.

As in past years, NESC’s program continues to provide numerous opportunities for parent/family activities including: annual parent meetings and family fun nights (book fairs, suppers, carnivals, book walk, math/math bingo, smart board activities, Legos/robotics presentations, etc.). Family nights are conducted periodically.

By and large all afterschool participants are transported, except Rolette.

1. NESC’s sites continue to meet their goals of increased numbers of students, number of regular attendees, increased partnerships, and are working toward an innovative curriculum to entice students and family involvement. The continuation of an innovative curriculum includes WeDo Robotics, Reader’s Theater, and STEM camps, for example.
2. The grantee makes available a written sustainability plan, one which addresses issues should federal funding be discontinued or should school buildings no longer be eligible to receive funding. Specifically, a minimum of a 25 percent local donation from each site; additional resources including the national School Lunch program, transportation, and the North Dakota State University Extension Program; increased assistance from partnerships and the business community, including additional monetary contributions/materials and volunteers; and meeting and activity space.

1. NESC continues to maintain appropriate documentation for employees as evidenced by timesheets, background checks, etc. Background checks are conducted for all CCLC staff.

 Program Management

1. The grantee’s organizational structure remains clearly defined and provides site coordinators to supervise staff and oversee daily programming.
2. NESC staff is provided a comprehensive “Employee Handbook” which includes: program mission and vision, program goals and objectives, program information, dress code, cell phone use, active involvement, curriculum, communication, evening check-out, accident/illness policies, behavioral guidelines, staff development/evaluation, sexual harassment/non-discrimination statements, warnings/dismissal policies, and job descriptions/performance responsibilities. The handbook is updated annually.
3. Student/staff ratios for NESC schools continue to be appropriate for all program activities and meet student needs.
4. The grantee holds quarterly meetings with site coordinators and school principals. Scheduled meetings are published on the NESC website. Furthermore, individual sites hold monthly staff meetings and more frequently if necessary. Detailed agendas are provided for the meetings. Additional time is also allotted at the meetings for ad-hoc questions/discussions.

1. NESC remains committed to promote programs through numerous means including: school newsletters, daily school program/activity schedules, parent/family nights, newspaper articles, “Family Handbook”, “Employee handbook”, and NESC and school-specific websites.
2. The grantee has one established advisory board for each of the schools in the region; the boards meet regularly. In previous years the grantee acknowledged that some boards needed more parents to act as members, this, however, has not been the case during the last three school years, demonstrating the parent’s interest in the program.

1. The NESC continues to provide a monitoring document which is reviewed during annual fall meetings of site coordinators and principals. Typically, site coordinators submit monitoring documentation to the Project Director for review; the Project Director then visits each site using the monitoring document as the focus for discussion; followed by site-specific reports completed by the Project Director. The reports include specific requirements and recommendations for compliance.
2. The grantee maintains ongoing documentation of contributions by partners as evidenced by YouthServices.

Staffing and Professional Development

1. The grantee’s Project Director and program staff are highly qualified and competent as demonstrated by their job descriptions/requirements. All new employees are provided an orientation through a site visit. Orientation typically includes: explanation of the program, program requirements, registration, program hours, care of materials, managing homework and specific skills, YouthServices.net training, and transportation. Through quarterly meetings with site coordinators and principals all aspects of the program are reviewed to assure compliance with the grant requirements.
2. As discussed earlier, all employees must pass appropriate background checks.

1. Generally, staff evaluations are conducted periodically by principals to provide them with clear feedback for continuous performance improvement. Annually the NESC Project Director conducts program site visits/evaluations, examining such areas as program attendance, staffing, leadership, fiscal management, and program planning/implementation, for example. Each written evaluation also includes staff/program commendations and recommendations for improvement.
2. In addition to the above, in previous years, the NESC 21st Century Project Director was also evaluated on an annual basis. The written evaluation, based on a series of Likert scale ratings and areas for additional comments, were completed by individual site coordinators, school principals, and the NESC Executive Director. Program areas examined included: general leadership, staff relations, cooperative procedures, student programs, public relations, and project direction/fiscal management. Although no Project Director evaluation was conducted during the 2016-17 school-year, plans are to re-introduce the practice for the 2017-18 school-year.
3. During site visits staff were observed to be particularly sensitive to culture and language disparities. The grantee provides ongoing training relating to sensitivity of culture and language disparities.
4. NESC staff is provided handbooks and policies/procedures (“Employee Handbook”) and is aware and can explain the relationship between program goals and the activities carried out to reach the goals. NESC assesses staff training needs quarterly and provides appropriate professional development based on the results of the assessments. Professional development, for example, included STEM training and updates for YouthServices. In addition, during the 2016-17 school year, 20-plus staff, including teachers, attended/participated in the annual August CCLC statewide conference.

Partnerships

1. NESC recruits and retains partners to address unmet needs. Partners include a variety of public, private, and governmental sector agencies. The grantee currently enjoys numerous partners including the following:

Altru Clinic, ATA Martial Arts, Benson County Extension Office, Benson County Farmer’s Press, Boys Scouts of America, Candeska Cikana Community College, Citizen’s Community Bank, Devils Lake Fire Department, Devils Lake Daily Journal, Devils Lake Middle School Orchestra, Devils Lake Park Board, Devils Lake Police Department, Good Samaritan Society, Head Start, Heartland Care Center, Kiwanis Club, Lake Region Special Education, Lake Region State College, Lakota Community Center, Leever’s Foods, National Archery in Schools Program, NDSU Extension Office, NESC, North Dakota Highway Patrol, Prairie Public Broadcasting, Ramsey County Extension, Relay for Life, Rhythm Riders, Rolette County Extension, Safe Alternatives for Abused Families, Salvation Army, Spirit Lake 4 H, Spirit Lake Casino, Spirit Lake Indian Health, Sully’s Hill Game Preserve, Tate Topa Parent Involvement Committee, The Julia Group/7 Generations Foundation, The Old Post Office Museum, Title 1 Federal Program, Tribal Health, University of North Dakota - Engineering Department, View Finder Project, WW Gymnastics, Warwick Church WELCA, Warwick Lutheran Church, Warwick School FACS, Warwick School FICS, Warwick School PEP, Wiconi Ohitaka Project, and You Can do the Rubrics Cube.

1. NESC partners are aware of the afterschool goals and objectives. The grantee collaborates/communicates regularly with partners and seeks input from them. NESC acknowledges partners via school-specific letters and newsletters informing/updating them on programs/activities and thanking them for their continued support.
2. During the 2016-17 school year the grantee did not subcontract with any individuals/organizations.

Center Operations

1. NESC application forms, program hours, schedules, locations, activities, services, etc. continue to be available and promoted through various methods, including: school-specific activity schedules, school newsletters, open houses for students/families, student/family nights, the grantee’s website, Facebook, and school-specific websites.
2. Standards of behavior for participants are communicated clearly and encourage parental involvement. These standards are provided in the “Family Handbook.” Departures from these standards are documented and reported to the site coordinator and parent/guardian. A letter sent to the parent/guardian describes the behavior in question and asks them to discuss and correct the behavior exhibited by the participant. In addition, the Devils Lake Public Schools publishes and distributes a brochure titled “Respect for All”, a respect and protect violence prevention and intervention program detailing choices, consequences, and processes for violence intervention. Generally, all after-school policies and procedures mirror those put into practice for the regular school-day.
3. NESC continues to promote parental involvement in decision making regarding program operations and provides activities for student families as evidenced by annual parent meetings, membership on advisory boards, and family fun nights (book fairs, suppers, carnivals, book walk, math/math bingo, smart board activities, Legos/robotics presentations, etc.).

Programming/Activities

1. The grantee provides a variety of evidence-based academic and enrichment programs/activities. Students participate in an array of programs/activities including math, reading, science, homework help/tutoring, technology units, arts, music, character education, and numerous recreational activities. All grades place emphasis on reading, language arts, and math. Programs are targeted and based on student need. One site continues to target students using a rather unique approach by employing a combination of MAP test scores, grades during day school, and teacher observation.
2. All programs/activities have an excellent schedule, flow, and duration, and are based on student needs and interests. Generally, schools within the NESC begin the afterschool program at approximately 3:30pm when a snack is provided; followed by 20 minutes of physical activity; then approximately one hour or slightly more of time dedicated to math, reading, spelling homework, and enrichment activities; followed by approximately one-half hour of hands-on computer time and games. However, each school decides on daily schedules based on student and family situations. Nine of the ten sites currently in operation met the mandated objective requiring that more than 65.0% of daily programming offered at each site be of high quality in the core academic areas of reading/literacy, math, science, technology/computer, and art/music. For the site that did not meet the requirement, discussions with the Project Director focused on whether data entered into YouthServices.net was in fact correct. Seemingly some of the subject category data may have been incorrectly entered into areas other than the core academic areas, specifically, into “health/nutrition.” Based on program schedules, lesson plans, and site visits to the region’s schools, it is likely that the requirement was met.
3. NESC day school and afterschool teachers continue to collaborate/communicate verbally and via written documentation at least weekly regarding specific assistance that individual afterschool students need. The specific assistance is typically academic tutoring and/or social skill development.
4. NESC began using WeDo LEGO Education programming in 2013-14 and further developed the program in subsequent years, specifically by training staff for more effective program use. The WeDo concept helps teach in what manner technology plays an active role in the students' everyday life. The programming is best fit for teaching various topics/subjects at primary levels including literacy, science, math, technology, and engineering. For example, science related l**earning processes include:** working with simple machines, gears, levers, pulleys and exploring various other science topics. Targets are also provided for math, literacy, engineering, technology, and computing. Besides WeDo LEGO, the grantee is currently using MindWorks at all sites (required for summer programming) and MANGO Math. MindWorks (an afterschool curriculum which includes teacher guides complete with objectives based on the common core standards; pre-and post-tests; comprehensive project based learning (PBL) components; and materials kits for hands on learning). Typically, students participate in a different subject each week such as: Math Matters (math), Around the World (social studies), Art in Action (art), Exploration (science), Bring on the Books (reading), and Spreading the Word (language). MANGO Math is a lesson-based curriculum which help students learn and practice essential skills needed to succeed in math and teaches critical thinking skills that allows students to become life-long learners by teaching them how to think analytically and conceptually.
5. Many of the grantee sites employ the “Skillastics” program, an effective and simple means to execute a series of standard-based fitness and sport specific activities that encourage students, regardless of age or ability, to have a positive experience about being physically active. The program complements other afterschool activities by building pro-social competencies (collaboration, problem solving and decision making) and “readies” the brain for tutoring/academics.

1. The grantee continues of offer numerous other “hands-on” activities for students, such as: critical thinking, problem solving, “Art after School”; Relay for Life (service learning) and participation with the “Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign” (service learning); among others.

1. As in past years, the program continues to accommodate students with special needs as supported by registration/attendance records.

Health and Safety

1. NESC area school essential health and safety issues are largely attended to as required; for example: safe spaces/areas for program activities, daily nutritional snacks, addressing unique health issues (such as allergies), clearly defined procedures for participant pick-ups, emergency contact information and readiness plans, and internet access (firewall, etc.). The grantee acknowledges that all appropriate staff is/will trained in first aid/CPR “sometime” during the school year. At least one afterschool staff trained in first aid and CPR is always present at each NESC site.
2. Fire/safety drills are conducted at all CCLC program sites during program times.
3. NESC houses programs in safe and accessible facilities/environments (schools). Past concerns related to individual(s) entering a school “unrecorded/ unchecked” by any day school or afterschool staff. Currently, family members/visitors of the afterschool program have access to the school by only a single entrance, one which is typically staffed by an individual who “checks-in” persons entering the school or has a controlled access feature where family members/visitors are “buzzed-in.”
4. NESC continues to update their emergency readiness plan and has provided the plan to staff/students/families. The instant alert system includes telephone calls, text messaging, e-mail, and radio broadcasts, among others, should any emergencies arise.

Evaluation/Measuring Outcomes

1. NESC has adopted an evaluation processes collecting both qualitative and quantitative information, via the YouthServices-based teacher surveys; SurveyMonkey-based partner, parent, student, and teacher survey process; and school advisory board feedback.
2. The grantee plans to provide feedback from completed surveys to staff during their November 2017 staff meeting. NESC should also consider providing similar feedback to other stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, and partners. Providing feedback to these stakeholders offers them useful information to be used in delivering fundamental CCLC programs and services. These stakeholders have an investment in programs and services and greatly influence what can and will be accomplished, consequently their input and providing feedback to them is critical in achieving successful outcomes. Effective feedback also encourages stakeholders to buy-into the program while lack or ineffective methods of feedback most often lead to program indifference.
3. At the time of this evaluation, a vast majority of schools have completed or are in the process of entering Math and Reading State Assessment proficiencies; however, many are now using Smarter Balanced as an alternative.

1. NESC continues to collect and share site-specific stories and photos about the afterschool program’s impact on the students/families, generally in newsletters or newspaper articles. In addition to these stories/pictures, the grantee’s schools share and request promising practices internally and among the remaining regions in the state.

# **Strengths**

1. As in past years, NESC staff and programs are committed to bring the afterschool program and community together to shape a learning environment which encourages students to reach their full potential and live a quality life. Their organizational structure is clearly defined and provides site coordinators to supervise staff and oversee daily programming. Furthermore, the Project Director and program staff are highly qualified as demonstrated by their job descriptions/requirements. All new staff participates in staff orientation through a site visit.
2. The grantee holds quarterly meetings with site coordinators and school principals. Scheduled meetings are published on the NESC website. Furthermore, individual sites hold monthly staff meetings and more frequently if necessary. Detailed agendas are provided for the meetings. Additional time is also allotted at the meetings for ad-hoc questions/discussions.
3. Generally, staff evaluations are conducted periodically by principals to provide them with clear feedback for continuous performance improvement. Annually the NESC Project Director conducts program site visits/evaluations, examining such areas as program attendance, staffing, leadership, fiscal management, and program planning/implementation, for example.
4. The grantee provides a variety of evidence-based academic and enrichment programs/activities. Students participate in an array of programs/activities including math, reading, science, homework help/tutoring, technology units, arts, music, character education, and numerous recreational activities. All grades place emphasis on reading, language arts, and math. Programs are targeted and based on student need. Examples of complementary educational programming include: WeDo LEGO, MindWorks, and MANGO Math. Many of the grantee sites also employ the Skillastics program, a means to execute a series of standard-based fitness and sport specific activities that encourage students, regardless of age or ability, to have a positive experience about being physically active.
5. All programs/activities have an excellent schedule, flow, and duration, and are based on student needs and interests. The program also provides numerous opportunities for parent/family activities including annual parent meetings and family fun nights. Family nights are held periodically.
6. As in past years, NESC day school and afterschool teachers continue to collaborate/communicate verbally and via written documentation at least weekly regarding specific assistance that individual afterschool students need. The specific assistance is typically academic tutoring and/or social skill development.
7. The grantee has one established advisory board for each of the schools in the region; the boards meet regularly. In previous years the grantee acknowledged that some boards needed more parents to act as members, this, however, has not been the case during the last three school years, demonstrating the parent’s interest in the program.
8. NCEC houses programs in safe and accessible facilities/environments (in schools). Past concerns related to individual(s) entering a school “unrecorded/ unchecked” by any day school or afterschool staff. Family members/visitors of the afterschool program have access to the school by only a single entrance, one which is typically staffed by an individual who “checks-in” persons entering the school or has a controlled access feature where family members/visitors are “buzzed-in.”
9. NESC has greatly improved their evaluation processes including collecting and feeding-back qualitative and quantitative information to selected stakeholders. The information includes YouthServices-based teacher surveys; SurveyMonkey-based partner, parent, student, and teacher surveys; State Assessment Proficiencies, and school advisory board feedback. For example, the grantee plans to provide feedback from completed surveys, etc., to staff during their November 2017 staff meeting.

Opportunities for Improvement and Timeframes for Action

The following recommendations are based on the information/observations/discussions provided/made during the MQIT completion and site visit phases of the NESC visit. A majority of these recommendations are based on 21st CCLC grant award requirements. The following should be addressed and completed during the 2017-18 school year.

1. Although the grantee plans to provide feedback from completed YouthServices and SurveyMonkey-based surveys to staff during their November 2017 staff meeting. NESC should also consider providing similar feedback to other stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, and partners. Providing feedback to these stakeholders offers them useful information to be used in delivering fundamental CCLC programs and services. These stakeholders have an investment in programs and services and greatly influence what can and will be accomplished; consequently, their input and providing feedback to them is critical in achieving successful outcomes. Effective feedback also encourages stakeholders to buy-into the program while lack or ineffective methods of feedback most often lead to program indifference.