



**Program and Parent Handbook  
21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning  
Centers Program**

**Alcorn School District**

**2018-2019**

Welcome to our after-school educational programs. We are looking forward to a great year with you and your child at our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program. We hope that you will become fully involved in your child's education and recognize how our programs will benefit your child, you, and your entire family. The following information will help you to understand the operations of our sites, the responsibilities of our site staff and your role in helping provide a quality experience for your child. Should you have any concerns regarding the program at any time, please feel free to call.

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## **Mission Statement**

The Alcorn District 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program is dedicated to enriching the educational, social and cultural opportunities of students and families in the communities served by the District.

## **Goal of the Program**

The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program is held at Alcorn Central Elementary, Biggersville Elementary, and Kossuth Elementary schools, four days per week during August through early May.

The program hours are immediately after school until the students are released for pickup at approximately 5:15 p.m. each day of operation. All program activities are funded by a 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC competitive grant funded by the MS Department of Education through the U.S. Department of Education. Therefore, all program services are provided to your child free of charge. The goal of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Program is to provide the students and parents of the Alcorn School District and the surrounding community with an organized, educational, and recreationally oriented after-school program for students in grades 1-6. It is the intent of the program to ensure that the students are cared for in such a way it will be beneficial for both the parents and child.

## **Admission of Students**

Students will be admitted using the following considerations and procedures:

### **Afterschool Educational Program**

1. Student must reside within the Alcorn School District attendance area and/or have teacher and principal recommendation that meet grant requirements.
2. Students scoring level one or two on the state MAAP assessment, students who are academically at-risk as determined by reading and math screening, and students determined to need specific help according to teachers and administration will receive first invitations for admission to the program. All other available program admission slots are on a “first come – first serve” basis.
3. All required registration and admission paperwork is received by the program site. Any change to this information must be communicated to the office immediately so that current information is always on file. This is for the safety of your child.

4. Space availability.
5. Consideration of sibling participation.
6. Student's ability to cooperate and work in small group settings, display appropriate behavior, and adhere to staff expectations.

### **Summer Enrichment Program**

1. Student must reside within the School District attendance area and/or have teacher and principal recommendation that meet grant requirements.
2. Students academically at-risk as determined by report card grades, classroom performance, and teacher referral will receive priority consideration. All other available program admission slots are on a "first come – first serve" basis.
3. All required registration and admission paperwork is received by the program site. Any change to this information must be communicated to the office immediately so that current information is always on file. This is for the safety of your child.
4. Space availability.
5. Consideration of sibling participation.
6. Student's ability to cooperate and work in small group settings, display appropriate behavior, and adhere to staff expectations.

### **Hours and Days of Operation**

After-school program hours are 3:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. four days per week from August through early May. Students are escorted from their individual classrooms to the program by school staff. The program does not operate on school vacation days, on days of early release for inclement weather or days of school cancellation for inclement weather.

Summer enrichment program hours are 7:30 am to 11:30 am Monday thru Thursday during June.

### **Enrollment Forms**

A complete set of enrollment forms must be on file before your child may stay for the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program. These forms include, but are not limited to, the enrollment form and the signature page of the Alcorn School District Student Handbook. No child will be allowed to stay for any reason unless the forms are signed and dated. It is the parents' responsibility to notify staff of any changes. These changes would include change of address, change of contact numbers, change in those persons authorized for pick-up, and changes in family arrangements.

## **Orientation**

Upon completion of required paperwork, a staff member will sit down with the parent and/or student to review paperwork, go through the Program handbook, provide an overview of the program, and give a tour of the facility if desired.

## **Attendance Policy**

If your child is enrolled in the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program, he/she is expected to attend each program day. If a child is absent, we will make every attempt to determine why the child is not present. It is for your child's safety and your peace of mind that we do this. **If your child is going to be absent, please call the school office and ask that the Lead Teacher/Site Coordinator be notified.**

\*\*\*In order for students to benefit from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century After School Program, regular and consistent attendance is required. Regular and consistent attendance is defined as attending, on average, three of the four scheduled days every week, unless ill or other unavoidable conflict. Once a child is enrolled, attendance will be monitored and inconsistent or sporadic attendance will be documented and could result in the student being dismissed from the program.

The program sites are able to serve a limited number of students. Usually there is a waiting list for students who qualify for the program. If a student is not going to attend regularly, that "spot" needs to be made available to the students on the waiting list.

Research done on 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs indicate that students who attend regularly experience much more academic and behavioral benefits than those whose attendance is irregular. Likewise national 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC evaluation data collected on the Alcorn School District program, indicate that students who attend regularly, experience greater benefits, both academically, socially, and behaviorally. Program participants are expected to attend for a minimum of one (1) hour each program day, unless there are unavoidable scheduling conflicts or emergencies.

## **Scheduling**

Students who participate in the after-school program are provided with 30 to 60 minutes per day for homework assistance and/or tutoring. Enrichment classes will be offered weekly at each site. All tutoring sessions are conducted by certified teachers, or other program staff directly supervised by certified teachers. All Volunteers not regularly employed by a governmental agency or non-profit community organization are subject to background checks and screenings.

## **Dismissal/Release of Students**

1. Pick up may ONLY be made by authorized parties. Permission MUST be in writing and signed by the legal parent or guardian on the Registration Form that is completed on the first day of program attendance, or previously.
2. At pick up time, the parent, guardian, or authorized person MUST come into the School building to personally pick up the student, or the student will be accompanied to the vehicle by a program staff member.
3. If an emergency should arise and you should need to take your child from school before the close of day, we would appreciate if you would notify office staff that your child attends the after-school or summer program.
4. In the event of illness, or other absences, please notify the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program staff if at all possible.
5. Staff will not release children to anyone, including parents, who appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Emergency contacts will be called to transport the child home.

The after-school program ends exactly at 5:15 pm and pickup should occur no later than 5:30 p.m.

Please be on time! Parents should arrange for an authorized back-up person to pick up their child in the event of lateness. Chronically late pick-ups create hardships on the program staff and could result in our inability to continue serving your child. Parents are **strongly encouraged not to pick up their child before 4:30 pm as 5:15 is recommended.** This will allow sufficient time for full participation in the program. We have in place a more secure method of checking out your child. Each campus has a staff member dedicated to the check-out procedure. They will contact the classroom staff to notify your child to come to office while you wait. This procedure will provide a more secure tutoring environment.

## **Supervision Policy**

All children served in the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program will be supervised at all times by appropriate staff.

**After School Program:** Appropriate staff members will meet children in designated area at 3:00 p.m. to begin the daily schedule.

**Supervision:** Children may run errands inside the building or use the restroom alone or in groups of no more than six children without adult supervision as long as the following conditions are met: children are within hearing distance of a staff member, the staff checks on the children at least every 5 minutes until they return and the restroom is for exclusive use of the program.

**Custody Agreements:** If there are custody issues involving your child, you must provide the center with court papers at the time of registration indicating who has permission to pick up the child. The center may not deny a parent access to their child without proper documentation. If custody changes, the parent is required to notify the center and provide a copy of the changes.

**Child Abuse Reporting:** All staff members are trained and mandated reporters of child abuse. If staff members have suspicions that a child is being abused or neglected, they **MUST** make a report to the local children's services agency. The safety of the children is always our first concern.

## **Fieldtrips/Transportation of Children:**

The center will **not** transport a child in emergency situations. If a child requires transportation, the parent or the emergency room will be contacted.

Parents will receive written notification and will be required to sign authorization forms prior to any field trips requiring transportation or to an additional walking destination.

Trained staff members will be assigned a group of children to supervise. Before departing the center, each staff member will take a count of all the children in their group on a separate attendance sheet, specifically created for the trip. Upon arrival at the destination, the staff member will take another count to assure that all of the children have safely arrived. This process will be repeated upon

leaving the destination and returning to the center. During the course of fieldtrip, each staff member will have specific children that they are responsible for supervising. Before any child participates in a fieldtrip, the center will obtain written permission from the parents. Phone calls and handwritten notes are not acceptable.

## **Guidance Policy**

The goal of the child guidance and management policy at each site is for children to learn self-discipline so they may function independently in a socially acceptable manner. Self-control and social skills are developed by guiding the children through everyday activities and interactions with others. Rules and limits are set for three main reasons: to prevent possible harm to self or others; to prevent infringement on the rights of others; and to prevent damage to property. To provide a safe and secure environment for everyone, the following rules have been developed which will be in effect at all times.

Students will be expected to:

- Follow the directions of staff the first time they are given.
- Show respect and speak kindly to others. (no swearing, put-downs, name-calling, threats, etc.)
- Keep hands and feet to yourself. (no hitting, kicking, pinching, etc.)
- Ask permission to leave an area.
- Use equipment and materials properly, carefully, and with respect.
- Clean up after themselves.
- Refrain from chewing gum.

These guidelines are also required of all staff members at each site.

Children will be taught to be responsible for their own actions; they make the choice to follow the rules and enjoy the rewards or to disregard the rules and accept the consequences. Appropriate behavior will be encouraged by verbal praise, rewards, and positive communications with parents. Whenever possible, natural and logical consequences will be provided for inappropriate behavior. Students must understand that undesirable behavior cannot, and will not, be tolerated. Parents will be informed of their child's behavior and may be called upon to participate in a partnership to resolve special situations. If at any time, the staff determines that a child is unable to benefit from the program

or poses a danger to other children, staff, himself/herself, or the program, a parent conference will be scheduled. If the behavior continues, the child may be dismissed from the program.

### **Snacks**

A nutritional snack will be provided each day. Please include any food allergies on your child's enrollment form. Medically prescribed diets for a child enrolled in the program shall be provided as ordered by a physician. Such diets shall be on file and adhered to in preparation and service.

### **Accidents/Emergencies:**

Each school has devised several procedures to follow in the event that an emergency would occur while a child is in the care of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC staff. In the event of a fire or tornado, staff will follow the written instructions posted in the school. The instructions describe emergency evacuation routes and the procedures to be followed to assure that children have arrived at the designated spot. In order to prepare children for the unlikely need to evacuate, the school does conduct periodic fire drills and tornado drills. Should we need to evacuate due to fire or weather conditions, or the loss of power, heat, or water to the school, children will be evacuated to designated emergency locations. A sign will be posted in the front door of the school indicating that we have been evacuated and the location where you can pick up your child. Parents will also be contacted as soon as possible to come to pick up your child. If a parent cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contacts as listed on your child's enrollment information. In the unlikely event there would be an environmental threat or a threat of violence, the staff will: secure the children in the safest location possible; contact and follow the directions given by the proper authorities; and contact the parents as soon as the situation allows. An incident report would also be provided to the parents.

In the case of a minor accident/injury, staff will administer basic first aid. If the injury/illness is more serious, first aid will be administered and the parents will be contacted immediately to assist in deciding an appropriate course of action. If any injury/illness is life threatening, the EMS will be

contacted, parents will be notified, and a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital with all available center health records. Staff will not transport children in staff owned vehicles. Only parents or EMS will transport.

An incident/injury report will be completed and given to the person picking up the child on the day of the incident/injury, if any of the following occur: the child has an illness, accident, or injury which requires first aid; the child receives a bump or blow to the head; the child has to be transported by emergency vehicle; or an unusual or unexpected event occurs which jeopardizes the safety of the child. All District policies and procedures regarding injury shall be followed, with appropriate reporting.

### **Management of Illness:**

The 21st CCLC sites provide children with a clean and healthy environment. A child with any of the following symptoms will be isolated and parent or emergency contact notified:

- Temperature of 100+ degrees F – in combination with other signs of illness
- Persistent Diarrhea
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Redness on the eye, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching
- Untreated skin patches, unusual spots or rashes
- Unusually dark urine or grey/white stools
- Stiff neck with an elevated temperature
- Vomiting more than once or when accompanied by any other sign of illness
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing

Any child demonstrating signs of illness not listed above will be carefully observed for symptoms. The parent will be notified. If a child does not feel well enough to participate in center activities, the parent will be called to pick up the child. Anytime a child is isolated, they will be kept within sight and hearing of a staff member.

**Medications:** The center will administer medications to a child only with written parental request. Medications will be stored in a designated area inaccessible to the children. Medications may NOT be stored in a child's backpack. The only exception to this requirement is for children who require the

immediate use of an inhaler for a medical condition. Parents must sign a release stating that they are permitting their child to have access at all times to the inhaler. The child must keep the inhaler in his/her backpack and the backpack must be kept in the office.

**Prescription medications** must be in their original container and administered in accordance with instructions on the label. Over-the-counter medications must also be administered in accordance with label instructions. If parents request any different dosages or uses, a physician must provide written instructions. Over-the-counter medications will not be administered for more than three consecutive days without instructions from a physician.

## **Outdoor Play**

Research has shown that children stay healthier when they have daily outdoor play. Based on this information and state requirements, outdoor play will be included in our program on a daily basis. We will limit the amount of time outside when the temperatures are very warm or very cold. If the situation requires, we will adjust outdoor time due to rain, threatening weather, ozone warning, etc. On days that outdoor play is not provided due to these conditions, we will include a time for indoor gross motor activities. Please send your children with the proper clothing so they may be comfortable and safe whenever we are outside. This includes hats, mittens, and boots in the winter time.

## **Parent Participation**

Parents are encouraged to participate whenever possible in the activities at the center. Parents have unlimited access to all areas of the building used for activities during hours of operation. However, due to staff responsibilities and schedules, parents are asked to make appointments with staff when it is necessary to engage in any lengthy conversations. Scheduled appointments allow the staff to focus on you and your child. If you have any concerns or questions at any time, please feel free to bring them to the appropriate staff member when they occur. Often problems can be addressed when they are little,

before they grow into bigger issues. We want the relationship between you and the center to be positive. Parents are also encouraged to:

- Participate in all appropriate activities & programs that support the education of their child.
- Become involved with the Parent Advisory Committee and help make program decisions.
- Make contact with other parents to encourage participation.
- Attend site-sponsored parent trainings and workshops.
- Help plan and participate in healthy activities as appropriate.

**Parent Conferences:** Parent conferences are scheduled by your child's regular classroom teachers. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC staff provide input to your child's classroom teacher on a continuous basis regarding academic and behavioral performance measures. All parents/guardians are encouraged to take advantage of meeting with the academic staff of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC center often.

### **Additional Policies:**

**Dangerous Weapons – Zero Tolerance:** Students shall not carry, conceal, possess, display, or use deadly weapons or look-alike weapons at school or the center. Offenders will be subject to disciplinary action and dismissal. Under no circumstances are concealed weapons permitted at any center.

**Zero Tolerance:** The School District has a Zero-Tolerance policy for incidents involving threats, weapons, harassment, and drugs, etc. Students will be disciplined according to the District Serious Misconduct Code, which could include suspension and expulsion from school and dismissal from the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program.

You may refer to the Student Handbook that was provided to you on the first day of the current school year for additional behavior consequences, dress code, and other pertinent procedures and regulations. If you do not have a copy of the District Student Handbook, please contact 662-286-3202 or 662-286-5991 and an additional copy will be provided to you at no cost.

**Smoking and Tobacco Use:** All school buildings and school grounds within the Alcorn School District are designated as smoke-free environments. All employees, students, parents, and visitors are

required by Mississippi law to refrain from smoking and/or using tobacco products anywhere on district and school property.

**Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment is a form of misconduct that undermines the integrity of our programming. Sexual harassment refers to behavior which is not welcome, which is personally offensive, which debilitates morale, and which therefore interferes with the working or learning effectiveness of its victims and their peers. Individuals who experience sexual harassment should make it clear that such behavior is offensive to them and should promptly process a complaint with the site director.

**Telephones:** The telephone in the center office is used for business purposes and is available to students for **EMERGENCIES ONLY**. Students are not called to the phone for messages or personal calls during program periods; however, messages can be given to students by staff members. Staff members will return calls to parents at their earliest opportunity. Please refer to Alcorn School District Student Handbook for regulations regarding cell phone use by students.

**Safe School:** Help keep our schools and learning centers safe! When you spot any activity that could hurt students or our center, please call 662-286-3202 or 662-286-5591 M-F 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m to report the activity/situation. If you wish, you do not have to identify yourself when you call.

**Title IX – Discrimination:** In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Personal Property:** Personal property, such as balls, toys, games, etc., should be left at home. We cannot assume responsibility for such items. Children should not wear expensive watches or jewelry items. All electronic devices, including but not limited to pagers, laser pointers, CD players, cell

phones, etc., are prohibited. Please refer to the Alcorn School District Student Handbook for details regarding personal property regulations and requirements.

**Homework/Internet Use:** Students will be assisted with homework as time allows. Unless special programming is taking place, students will have time to work on homework each day. Homework **may or may not** be completed when the student leaves the center. It is the responsibility of the parent to check homework and assist with completion.

Students will have access to the Internet at the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC. Each student of the Alcorn School District reads and signs an Acceptable Use Policy statement regarding Internet use. Inappropriate usage of the Internet will result in loss of privileges.

**Confidential Information:** All information about children and their families including all records will be handled as confidential information. Access to child and family records will be restricted to appropriate administrative and instructional personnel. A parent/guardian may request to view their child's records at any time. All volunteers will abide by the confidentiality policy. Breach of confidentiality by an employee may result in immediate dismissal.

**Playground Safety Rules:** The school playground will be used for recreational and physical activities and games. The same behavior rules and regulations to which students must adhere during regular school hours will be observed during the time the child is enrolled in the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC learning program.

**Publicity and Program Information:** The Alcorn School District has a website with links for parents: [www.alcornschools.org](http://www.alcornschools.org). Additionally, each school within the district has a link with school news and events posted regularly.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Student responsibilities include:**

1. taking care of equipment
2. cleaning up after activities
3. sharing equipment with each other
4. keeping hands and feet to themselves
5. using appropriate language
6. treating staff with respect
7. finish what they start
8. being responsible for all personal belongings
9. leaving all toy weapons and personal toys at home

### **Parent responsibilities include:**

1. being on time to pick children up
2. treating staff with respect
3. bringing concerns to staff
4. keeping up with policy changes
5. notifying staff of changes in enrollment information
6. informing staff of contagious illness
7. keeping child's records up to date
8. cooperating with staff on discipline matters
9. completing program surveys and questionnaires

### **Staff responsibilities include:**

1. treating children and parents with respect due them
2. motivating the children
3. providing a safe, comfortable, and enriching environment
4. introducing students to new and innovative hands-on activities not available during the regular school day

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grant:  
Evaluation of Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me**

*Alcorn County School District — Fiscal Agent*

**Annual Evaluation Report — 2017-2018**

*Prepared by:*

High Road Learning, Inc. — External Evaluation Team

**Project Overview: Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me**

The purpose of this evaluation is to report major outcomes for *Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me*, the implementation of their 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grant. Due to the funding cycle, the program was conducted during the second semester of the 2017-2018 school year and during the first month of summer holiday. The primary focus of the initiative was to improve student's grade-level preparedness and college and career readiness by providing needed academic interventions, remediation services, and enrichment activities. Alcorn and Lee County School districts provided services after school as well as summer programs. Students also participated in STEM activities during the school year. Summer sessions included activities designed to enhance the academic and physical well-being of students.

**Overview of Participating Schools in Alcorn and Lee County School Districts**

Alcorn and Lee County are rural communities that report high poverty rates which results in a high percentage of students eligible for the school district free and reduced lunch program. Alcorn County School District, with eight schools participating in *Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me*, reports approximately 63% of the students are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program. Lee County School District, with two middle schools participating in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program, reported an average 75% of early adolescents who eligible for the free and reduced lunch program. Each county reported that approximately 3-5% of students enrolled in the participating schools are English Language Learners. Importantly, the school districts report that the number and percentage of students and parents in need of English language learning services continues to increase year-over-year.

Alcorn County School District did not have either a priority or focus school. However, the school district reported that, for participating schools, 44% of students met proficiency in both English/Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics in the elementary schools. In middle schools, the school district reported that less than 40% of students met proficiency in ELA and 46% proficiency in math in the middle schools. Approximately, 56% of the students enrolled in high school were proficient in ELA and approximately 42% of the students were proficient in Mathematics. Lee County School District selected Plantersville Middle School, a priority school, and Shannon Middle School, a focus school, to participate in the *Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me* initiative.

*Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me* will provide summer services to pre-kindergarten students in Alcorn County with an emphasis on enriching foundational literacy (e.g., phonemic awareness, phonics). School-based services were provided after school to students enrolled in kindergarten through fourth grade at two elementary schools and through sixth grade at a second elementary school. In both Lee County and Alcorn County, the program will provide during-school services to fifth through eighth grade students by utilizing certified tutors to intervene in areas of low academic content. In Alcorn County Schools, the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program served ninth through twelfth grade students who attended two high schools and seventh through twelfth students enrolled at another high

school. Lee County served fifth through eighth grade students. Our data shows the need for an emphasis on attendance as well as ELA and Math proficiency.

### **Program Implementation**

**Activities.** *Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me* conducted a range of programs during the Spring and Summer of 2018. Sessions were conducted 3-4 days per week for 3-4 hours per session. Students participated in the following activities across the two school districts: (1) STEM, (2) Literacy (e.g., development of reading and writing skills), (3) Homework Help (e.g., assignments made during the school day, makeup homework), (4) Support for English Language Learners (e.g., conversational and academic language), (5) Arts and Music Appreciation, (6) Physical Activity / Fitness, and (7) Mentoring or Coaching. All activities were offered 2-4 days per week (out of a possible three-four days) except for the Mentoring/Coaching activity which was offered one day out of three per week. Each activity lasted approximately 60-120 minutes session per day. The difference in the amount of time was primarily due to the nature of the needs for individual and sub-groups of students. For example, a student who needed intensive tutoring in both ELA and Mathematics might receive less time in ELA instruction compared to a student who only needed intensive assistance solely in ELA. Nutritious snacks were provided by the school to each child. *Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me* provided a range of quality of activities that could meet the needs of students who participated in the program.

**Staffing.** Project staff leads received a handbook and an educational session that focused on the requirements for meeting the needs of participating students. The project leads provided direct reports with an overview of the project and requirements for meeting the needs of each site. Each site participating in the *Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me* had (1) one paid administrator or teacher who coordinated the day-to-day operations of the program, (2) certified school teachers and certified substitutes who provided the direct instruction and tutoring as need by students, and (3) bus drivers who provided transportation for students whose parents or caregivers could not provide transportation on any given day. Members of the community also volunteered their services to select sites. *Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me* provided evidence that their program was staffed in such a way that children could receive a range of services provided by quality personnel.

### **Results**

In general, the teachers of students who attended 30 or more days in the *Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me* program reported that their academic achievement improved, or at least was maintained, over the course of the Spring semester. These findings suggest that *Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me* has the potential to significantly improve outcomes for students who participate in the program. Unfortunately, the potential positive impact of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program on students during the 2017-2018 school year was severely limited by the fact that funding of the project did not allow for implementation until January 2018. This resulted in significantly fewer *opportunity days* needed by students most at-risk for not making at least one year's growth for one year of schooling.

In Alcorn County, most of the students participating in the *Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me* program were White, received free or reduced-price lunch, were not receiving special education services, and were not limited in their English proficiency. There was an even split between males and females (see Table 1). In Lee County, most of the students were African American, all receiving free or reduced-price lunch, with no students exhibiting limited English proficiency, and few students receiving special education services. The sample was evenly split between males and females (see Table 2).

Unfortunately, attendance was a challenge for many students in Alcorn County participating in the *Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me* program (see Table 3). In Kindergarten, Grade 5, Grade 7, and Grade 8, at least 20% of the students participating were marked as *Absent* for at least 18 instructional days over the course of the academic year. Federal guidelines classify these students as chronically absent which

makes them at-risk for lower grades and performance on summative assessments. Data related to the reasons for absence (e.g., illness, familial factors) was not available. By providing bus service, Alcorn County attempted to minimize absences related to lack of transportation.

*Table 1: Alcorn County Demographic Information (n = 216)*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>n</b>
Race	African American	21
	Hispanic	7
	White	180
	Two or more	8
Gender	Female	108
	Male	108
Lunch Status	Free/Reduced	166
	Not Free/Reduced	50
SPED	Yes	48
	No	167
Limited English Proficient	Yes	3
	No	213

*Table 2: Lee County Demographic Information (n = 119)*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>n</b>
Race	African American	94
	Biracial	1
	Hispanic	2
	White	22
Gender	Female	59
	Male	60
Lunch Status	Free/Reduced	199
	Not Free/Reduced	0
SPED	Yes	27
	No	92
Limited English Proficient	Yes	0
	No	119

*Table 3: Alcorn County Attendance by Grade*

	Total Students	Percent with 18 or more absences
Kindergarten	12	25%
Grade 1	39	13%
Grade 2	21	0%
Grade 3	66	12%
Grade 4	54	11%
Grade 5	9	22%
Grade 6	8	0%
Grade 7	4	25%
Grade 8	5	20%

Participating students that had a Fall and Spring grade for Math and ELA were grouped based on grade and number of days spent in 21<sup>st</sup> Century activities. Student change Fall-to-Spring was computed, and the number of students deemed to meet or exceed expected growth (i.e., gained 5 or more points) was tracked. In both Alcorn (see Tables 4 and 5) and Lee County (see Tables 6 and 7), for grades with sufficient sample size, students that attended 30 or more 21<sup>st</sup> Century “days” largely exceeded growth more frequently than students that attended fewer than 30 days. This trend holds for both Math and ELA. In general, Alcorn and Lee for a better met or approached meeting goals related to improved performance on independent measures of ELA and Mathematics.

*Table 4: Alcorn County Math Achievement Data<sup>1</sup> Grouped by Days Attended*

	Attendance	n	Fall	Spring	Delta	Exceeded Expected Growth <sup>2</sup>
Kinder.	< 30 Days	3	65	83	+18	100%
	>= 30 Days	9	69	82	+13	78%
Grade 1	< 30 Days	15	85	87	+2	33%
	>= 30 Days	24	76	83	+7	58%
Grade 2	< 30 Days	19	81	87	+6	63%
	>= 30 Days	2	71	89	+18	100%
Grade 3	< 30 Days	46	80	83	+3	30%
	>= 30 Days	20	78	81	+3	45%
Grade 4	< 30 Days	45	74	79	+5	56%
	>= 30 Days	9	77	77	0	33%
Grade 5	< 30 Days	6	70	77	+7	67%
	>= 30 Days	3	74	78	+4	33%
Grade 6	< 30 Days	3	73	83	+10	100%
	>= 30 Days	5	79	83	+4	40%
Grade 7	< 30 Days	0				
	>= 30 Days	4	79	82	+3	25%
Grade 8	< 30 Days	0				
	>= 30 Days	5	69	73	+4	20%

<sup>1</sup> Grades K-8, percent-based grade

<sup>2</sup> Increase of 5 points or more from Fall to Spring

*Table 5: Alcorn County ELA Achievement Data<sup>1</sup> Grouped by Days Attended*

	Attendance	N	Fall	Spring	Delta	Exceeded Expected Growth <sup>2</sup>
Kinder.	< 30 Days	3	76	91	+15	100%
	>= 30 Days	9	77	85	+8	56%
Grade 1	< 30 Days	15	84	87	+3	53%
	>= 30 Days	24	81	86	+5	58%
Grade 2	< 30 Days	19	83	84	+1	37%
	>= 30 Days	2	78	74	-4	0%
Grade 3	< 30 Days	46	79	85	+6	57%
	>= 30 Days	20	79	84	+5	40%
Grade 4	< 30 Days	45	77	83	+6	60%
	>= 30 Days	9	76	83	+7	56%
Grade 5	< 30 Days	6	77	81	+4	50%
	>= 30 Days	3	79	84	+5	67%
Grade 6	< 30 Days	3	86	78	-8	100%
	>= 30 Days	5	86	85	-1	0%
Grade 7	< 30 Days	0				
	>= 30 Days	4	76	80	+4	25%
Grade 8	< 30 Days	0				
	>= 30 Days	5	74	71	-3	0%

<sup>1</sup> Grades K-8, percent-based grade

<sup>2</sup> Increase of 5 points or more from Fall to Spring

*Table 6: Lee County Math Achievement Data<sup>1</sup> Grouped by Days Attended*

	Attendance	n	Fall	Spring	Delta	Exceeded Expected Growth <sup>2</sup>
Grade 5	< 30 Days	13	81	81	0	31%
	>= 30 Days	6	81	77	-4	0%
Grade 6	< 30 Days	20	76	77	+1	20%
	>= 30 Days	11	79	75	-4	0%
Grade 7	< 30 Days	38	78	78	0	32%
	>= 30 Days	11	76	83	+7	55%
Grade 8	< 30 Days	14	79	83	+4	50%
	>= 30 Days	6	69	84	+15	67%

<sup>1</sup> Grades 5-8: percent-based grade

<sup>2</sup> Increase of 5 points or more from Fall to Spring

*Table 7: Lee County ELA Achievement Data<sup>1</sup> Grouped by Days Attended*

	Attendance	n	Fall	Spring	Delta	Exceeded Expected Growth <sup>2</sup>
Grade 5	< 30 Days	13	75	84	+9	69%
	>= 30 Days	6	74	84	+10	100%
Grade 6	< 30 Days	20	79	78	-1	20%
	>= 30 Days	11	83	77	-6	9%
Grade 7	< 30 Days	38	79	86	+7	55%
	>= 30 Days	11	83	92	+9	91%
Grade 8	< 30 Days	14	71	68	-3	14%
	>= 30 Days	6	68	70	+2	33%

<sup>1</sup> Grades 5-8: percent-based grade

<sup>2</sup> Increase of 5 points or more from Fall to Spring

## Recommendations

These patterns of positive results suggest that implementation of *Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me* over the course of 2018-2019 school year will result in significantly improved outcomes for students who take advantage of the range of activities designed to meet their academic, behavioral, and physical needs. Surveys and outcomes suggest several areas that project staff may choose to focus on during the 2018-2019 school year. Given the pattern of outcomes, project staff should consider the following recommendations to enhance *Alcorn-Lee for a Better Me*.

**Professional Development of Staff.** The academic, behavioral, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds of students and their parents may require that project staff receive professional development to address the diversity of needs presented by children who are targeted by the project. Of special interest to educators and other project staff could be effective strategies for improving English language proficiency among children and parents/caregivers who are learning English as a second language. Research suggests that direct instruction in basic English skills (e.g., phonological awareness, phonics, comprehension) may provide a lasting impact on those who are learning English. A family-based approach has the potential to increase parental engagement in their child's education as well as enhance the economic well-being of the family. Other areas for professional development may include but are not limited to: (1) Using technology to enhance literacy and numeracy skills and (2) Hands-on STEM activities. Together, parental outreach, technology, and hands-on STEM activities have the potential to increase the number of students who participate in the program for the maximum number of days.

**Personnel.** The project may benefit from seeking a credentialed person or community-based person who is bilingual in Spanish and other languages spoken at home. It may be possible to allocate 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds to provide to a person who could provide the intensive language services to students and families learning English. Should funds not be available, it might be possible to find one or more high school students who is bilingual to provide the necessary services.

**Attendance.** The project provided a wide-range of activities to a large percentage of students most in need. Unfortunately, students did not take full advantage of the total number of days/sessions available to them. Taking full advantage of the opportunities afforded by the project is key to improving student outcomes, especially with the opportunity for implementation during a full school year. The project may want to make sure that parents know that transportation is provided to interested students (with outreach in Spanish, as well). Project staff may also want to incentive attendance by setting attainable goals for individuals and/or sub-groups of students. For example, each site could establish an "Attendance Wall" that provides positive reinforcement to students (i.e., individuals, sub-groups or teams). Project staff might recognize those who attain their goals by providing certificates, Cool-cash, tokens, notes to teachers and parents / caregivers. These types of incentives have been shown to improve daily attendance during the school day.

**Personalization.** The unique profiles of strengths, areas in need of improvement, and affinities provide project staff with opportunities to personalize each child's daily activities. To achieve such personalization, project staff may work on ways of communicating the results of formative assessments that classroom teachers can provide with a child who attend the program. Project staff may also survey or interview students about their profile of strengths, areas in need of improvement, and affinities for learning. Project staff may set up cross-age / cross-grade working groups to better meet the literacy and numeracy needs of students. Providing students with access to technology can be an effective tool for personalizing instruction for each child. Data might also be easily shared between project staff, parents/caregivers, and classroom teachers.