**Annual Evaluation Report** (AER)

Revised

**MARCH 2024**

**TEMPLATE**

*for NYS 21CCLC Local Evaluators*

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

**Section I**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Program | The Business Training Institute Inc. (BTI) 21st CCLC Program at Utica City School District (UCSD) |
| Project # | 0187-24- | 8115 | **🖜** *Insert last four digits* |
| Lead Agency | The Business Training Institute Inc.  |
| Program Director | **Dr. Patricia Laino**, Executive Director |
| # | Name of Participating Site(s) @ Locality (town or city name) | Grade level(s) served at each site |
| 1 | Donovan Middle School / Utica  | Grades 7–8 |
| 2 | Kennedy Middle School / Utica | Grades 7–8 |
| 3 | Proctor High School / Utica | Grades 9–12 |
| Program-wide **Target** Student Enrollment | 475 | **Actual** Enrollment at/above **15 hours** | 658 |
| Evaluator | **Tracy Herman**, Lead Evaluator **Cynthia O’Connor**, Principal | Apter & O’Connor Associates, Inc. |
| Contact Info | (585) 645-3461 (Tracy) (315) 427-5747 (Cynthia)  | tracy@apteroconnor.com cynthia@apteroconnor.com |

**Site Visit Findings**

**Section II**

**1a. First Site Visit |** Procedure

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date(s)** | **Site#** (use p.3 list) | **Program activities observed** | **Methods Used** across all sites |
| 1/31/2024 | 1 and 3 | After-school academics and enrichment (detailed list provided in 1b). | [x]  | Observation using protocol**\*** |
| 2/1/2024 | 2 | After-school academics and enrichment (detailed list provided in 1b). | [x]  | Interview(s) using protocol**\***  |
|  |  |  | [x]  | Document review using protocol**\***  |
|  |  |  | [ ]  | Insert description of Other Method |
|  |  |  | [ ]  | Insert description of Other Method |
| ***\**** *Please submit a blank copy of each data collection instrument (see Required Supporting Documents, p.10)* |

**1b. First Site Visit |** Summary of Findings

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Two members of the A&O evaluation team observed a variety of after-school classes spanning multiple grade levels. The evaluation team documented ten classes across three buildings using a modified out-of-school time (OST) observation instrument developed by Policy Studies Associates, Inc.[[1]](#footnote-2) The largest group sizes were theater (Proctor with 40 and Donovan with 19 students present) and character education / service learning / cybersecurity (the cadet group), with 18 students in attendance. Each of the four classes observed at Kennedy had between 2 and 5 students present. The two art classes and science tutoring at Proctor each had 6 students in attendance. **Table 1. BTI at UCSD Winter 2024 Observations**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Building | Activity | Grade level | Type of class |
| Donovan | Theater & performing arts | 7–8 | Enrichment |
| Kennedy | Tutoring – Math | 7–8 | Academic |
| Kennedy | Tutoring – Science | 7–8 | Academic |
| Kennedy | Money Smart | 7–8 | Enrichment |
| Kennedy | Please Stand Up! (violence prevention) | 7–8 | Enrichment |
| Proctor | Tutoring – Science | 9–12 | Academic |
| Proctor | Art 1 | 9–12 | Enrichment |
| Proctor | Character education / service learning / cybersecurity (cadets) | 9–12 | Enrichment |
| Proctor | Digital art | 9–12 | Enrichment |
| Proctor | Theater & performing arts | 9–12 | Enrichment |

***Implementation Fidelity / Successes*** The evaluators noted elements of grant implementation with fidelity to the original, NYSED-approved plan:* The evaluation team noted strong ratings on the observation tool in all classes (5 or greater on a seven-point scale) in four key areas:

student relationship-building, student participation, staff relationship-building, and staff instruction.[[2]](#footnote-3) * The classes were consistently organized, incorporated skill practice or progression, and appropriately challenged the students for their age. Many activities required analytical thinking or completing multi-step tasks (e.g., academic tutoring, theater, stock market simulation, color guard).

***Challenges / Recommendations***The classroom observations as designed are brief and are understood to be just a snapshot. The following might be considered areas for improvement, with the caveat that longer observations of classroom time might reveal that these methods are already in practice: * Fall observations were delayed due to changes in the district administration. The program was on pause until the new superintendent better understood the program and the documented agreement between BTI and UCSD during the grant proposal stage.

 * Class attendance was relatively low (6 or fewer students) in seven of the observed classes. Additional emphasis on tutoring attendance is needed to meet academic performance measures.

*Recommendations:* * Small class sizes may need further monitoring to increase attendance.
* Combine small groups into larger classes led by one teacher to reduce expenditures.
* Consider changing the program options to better align with student interests.
* Inconsistent after-school bussing (i.e., the number of buses available and arrival times) reduces program time for classes that need to abruptly end earlier than scheduled when only one bus arrives instead of multiple buses at staggered times. Erratic dismissal times result in unpredictability for parents in terms of when their children will be home from school.

*Recommendation:** Increase accountability for bussing so that classes can end on schedule. This has particularly been problematic at Kennedy.[[3]](#footnote-4)
* Most of Donovan’s program activities are before school, and these sessions are shorter than the after-school clubs.

*Recommendations:* * Reduce or eliminate the before-school program at Donovan; it runs for about half an hour each day with sporadic student arrivals.
* Provide more after-school program options at Donovan based on teacher and student interest.
* Offer at least one STEM and two college and career readiness programs as stated in an implementation performance indicator.
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**1c. First Site Visit |** Delivery & Receipt of Report

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| Delivery: * The evaluator, the program coordinator (BTI), and the district liaison (e.g., building administrator) debriefed while the evaluator was on site at each school.
* The evaluator prepared a written presentation of site visit findings in the evaluation mid-year report and delivered it to the BTI program director and program coordinator, inviting feedback and seeking approval.
* The evaluator provided a verbal and written presentation of the site visit findings at a subsequent advisory board meeting.

Receipt: * The BTI program director and program coordinator reviewed and approved the written site visit findings.
* The advisory board committee celebrated the program strengths and considered recommendations for improvement.
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**2a. Second Site Visit |** Procedure

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| **Date(s)** | **Site#** (use p.3 list) | **Program activities observed** | **Methods Used** across all sites |
| 4/30/2024 | 1 | Before-school academics and enrichment (detailed list provided in 2b). | [x]  | Observation using protocol**\*** |
| 4/30/2024 | 3 | After-school academics and enrichment (detailed list provided in 2b). | [x]  | Interview(s) using protocol**\*** |
| 5/1/2024 | 2 | After-school academics and enrichment (detailed list provided in 2b). | [x]  | Document review using protocol**\*** |
|  |  |  | [ ]  | Insert description of Other Method |
|  |  |  | [ ]  | Insert description of Other Method |
| ***\**** *Please submit a blank copy of each data collection instrument (see Required Supporting Documents, p.10)* |

**2b. Second Site Visit |** Summary of Findings

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| A member of the A&O evaluation team observed a variety of before- and after-school classes at each building, utilizing a modified out-of-school time (OST) observation instrument developed by Policy Studies Associates, Inc. The observed classes are described below.**Donovan Middle School: Before School[[4]](#footnote-5)*** The staff person leading entrepreneur club (school store) was observed in the cafeteria during breakfast; however, no students enrolled in the club participated.
* Art: Eight students participated in a tie dye activity or another craft, or socialized with their peers.
* Photography with ELA: Typically students use cameras, then photographs are accompanied with writing and computer-based software practice. Word games are also integrated. The class was nearly over upon evaluator arrival. There were approximately fifteen students in the classroom.
* The evaluator was not able to observe the health/wellness/fitness class, as the group was not in the room specified on the calendar.

**Proctor High School: After School*** Academic tutoring: This class is listed on the schedule as available to athletes, but any student in need of academic support may attend. Twenty-five students worked independently or with three teachers to complete class work and receive additional instruction as needed.
* Foreign language: Ten students participated in Spanish language reinforcement activities and prepared a recipe for cultural awareness.
* Restorative justice / fitness: Three students independently used weight machines. The restorative justice lesson was on hold, pending increased student attendance.
* Science tutoring: Two teachers with different science content knowledge expertise provided tutoring to four students in separate areas of the classroom.
* Restorative justice: A school counselor checked on three students in two classrooms while they were completing homework. Services to students returning from suspension include mental health counseling, coordinating student services, and ensuring homework completion.

**Kennedy Middle School: After School*** STEM/3D Design/Entrepreneurship: Six students had free choice to create a 3D keychain or use VCarve software for 3D design and wood carving. The lesson plan for this project was utilized for several weeks.
* Math tutoring: Four students participated in a small group to review eighth-grade math functions.

***Implementation Fidelity / Successes*** * Teachers consistently developed high-quality lesson plans using the NYS 21st CCLC template.
* Teachers were organized and effective 21st CCLC program instructors. They demonstrated a genuine interest is supporting the students.
* Students were engaged and on task.
* The classes had a peaceful and relaxed environment.
* Activities appropriately challenged the students for their age.
* Instances of small-group tutoring were observed in two buildings; the students were very focused on their academic work. These classes exhibit exemplary linkage between the program and the school day.
* The inclusion of a guidance counselor for after-school programming to support students reentering after suspension is an innovative program offering. The shift in her program availability from one day per week to three days per week was strategic for improved student access to counseling services.

***Challenges / Recommendations***Based on the snapshot of the program taken during the site visit, the evaluator noted the following challenges and potential recommendations. Additional discussion and collaboration between BTI and UCSD program staff is necessary to determine appropriate action items.* Define clear 21st CCLC program roles and responsibilities for the building administrators, site coordinators, lead teachers, and clerical support staff. For consideration, the evaluator provided BTI with a sample of a very detailed list (supplied by another grantee) showing responsibilities distributed among key 21st CCLC program staff.
* Assign a BTI or school-based site coordinator to each building (someone other than a building administrator) in order to sufficiently monitor and support program implementation on a daily basis for the before- and after-school programs.
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**2c. Second Site Visit |** Delivery & Receipt of Report

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| Delivery: * The evaluator, BTI program coordinator, BTI program director, district liaison (e.g., building administrator), and/or lead teacher debriefed while the evaluator was on site at each school.
* The evaluator also met with the BTI program coordinator and program director at the BTI office while in Utica to review strengths, challenges, and recommendations for the next grant year.
* The evaluator provided a verbal and written presentation of the site visit findings at a subsequent advisory board meeting.

Receipt: * The BTI program director and program coordinator reviewed and approved the written site visit findings. They indicated a desire to make substantive changes to the program oversight for the next year.
* The advisory board members celebrated the program strengths and reflected on the recommendations for program planning and improvement in the next grant year.
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**Conclusions** & **Recommendations**

**Section III**

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| Based on an analysis and synthesis of all data sources (i.e., site visits, surveys, interviews, focus groups, document review, advisory board meetings, and program attendance and outcome data), we offer the following conclusions and recommendations. **SUCCESSES:****High-Quality Program Offerings** * High-quality academic and enrichment program options were consistent with the grant proposal. There were many opportunities for students to discover new hobbies, skills, and interests.
* The availability of academic-specific programming had improved from the prior grant year, as evident in the program schedules and observations. Some of these classes were very focused on tutoring and homework help, while others included enrichment activities⎯for example, as photography class with ELA concepts and a foreign language club with cultural awareness activities and vocabulary practice.
* The 21st CCLC program offers numerous extended-hour options outside of the school day (required grant sub-objective 1.5), including before school, after school, on weekends, and during the summer, with variation from building to building.
* The evaluator rated the majority of the classes observed with 5 or greater on each of the four key elements of the OST (student relationship-building, student participation, staff relationship-building, and instructional strategies).
* The utilization of UCSD teachers for all 21st CCLC programming was beneficial, as district employees receive ongoing professional development for lesson planning, classroom management, and social-emotional learning (SEL). Sample lesson plans indicated utilization of the daily lesson template provided by NYSED.[[5]](#footnote-6) School-day teachers are likely to be more familiar with the students’ personalities and academic needs than outside consultants. They reinforce the school-day expectations and policies after school and may have better access to and understanding of the school-day curriculum to support and expand upon lessons after school.
* The program improved its reach to families and communities in Year 2 with a family financial literacy event sponsored by First Source Federal Credit Union offered in April 2024 at downtown hotel. There were 68 student, parent, and teacher attendees. Most attendees completed a survey (*n* = 57); 91% felt the workshop met their expectations, and 95% rated it as *excellent*. Most learned new financial skills (88%) and learned more about what the credit union offers to the community (95%).
* Survey findings were positive from the student, parent, and staff perspectives. The majority of each respondent group rated the 21st CCLC program as high quality:
* The majority of student survey respondents (94%) rated the program as *excellent* or *good*. Similarly, 95% of the student survey respondents rated their after-school teachers as *excellent* or *good*.
* Most parents who completed the survey (94%) felt the program met their child’s needs, would sign up their child again for the program (86%), and would recommend the program (82%).
* Staff who completed the survey gave high ratings for academic class quality, school-day alignment, interesting class options, and support for high-quality lesson plans. A very high percentage of staff felt the program facilitated positive student growth in academics, behavior, leadership, social-emotional skills, and college/career readiness.

**Strong Engagement and Relationship-Building by Staff and Students** * There was strong student engagement and interest in the program (noted in observations and in the staff focus group).
* A number of data sources indicated the program settings were positive, respectful, and safe.
* The greatest percentage of students reported on the annual student survey that the program helped them with SEL (e.g., *making new friends* 72%, *feeling better about myself* 57%, *feeling more confident* 56%).
* Nearly all staff who completed the survey indicated the program supported growth and development in students’ SEL (98%). Staff-identified program strengths included high student engagement, socialization, and collaboration related to smaller group sizes after school compared to during the school day.

**Positive Results*** The BTI 21st CCLC program at UCSD far surpassed their target of 475 participants, with 658 students attending fifteen or more program hours.
* A majority of implementation performance indicators were met.[[6]](#footnote-7) Examples include QSA participation twice per year, the availability of STEM classes, professional development for program staff (who are all district staff), and family liaison outreach to 194 parents, with a total of 321 documented contact points.
* Staff described program successes, such as the clubs that are offered, the positive environment, small group sizes (compared to school-day classes), relationship-building / collaboration, and student learning.
* Most students (88%) who completed the survey would recommend the program to their friends. Similarly, 82% of parents who completed the survey would recommend the program to other parents. The majority of parents (75%) agreed their child is happy to have participated in the program.

**STRUGGLES / LESSONS LEARNED:*** Kennedy fell **short on the summer 2023 programming hours**,compared to the target of 75 hours. In the future, additional teachers should be recruited to provide programming aside from the single STEM / 3D Design class offered for 60 hours.
* **Administrative and program staff changes**.
* With an interim superintendent in the 2023−2024 school year and interim district liaison (i.e., principal) at Proctor High School for most of the year, program implementation was temporarily delayed at all buildings, and program oversight was less rigorous for part of the school year at Proctor. However, the program still met all targets for the number of program days and students served. It would be helpful to shift some of the program responsibilities from the building administrators to program coordinators who can further focus on the program.
* Unexpected teacher and clerical staff changes also contributed to delays in the start-up of school-year programming.
* The evaluator had **difficultly assessing the weekly program hours at each building** because individual teachers had the flexibility to establish their program times. It would be easier, from a program management standpoint, if all classes ended at the same time. As an example, at Proctor, after-school classes began and ended at different times and ranged in length from fifty-five minutes to three hours per day. Kennedy classes began at 2:20 or 2:25 p.m. and ran for one to two hours. The before-school program time on the Donovan schedule reflected staff arrival times, which could differ from student arrival times, potentially inflating daily program availability. Similarly, while some classes end as late as 5:30 or 6:00 p.m. at Proctor, there are likely days that students do not stay the full duration shown on the calendar. It will be important to ensure attendance hours reflect student participation hours and not staff hours.
* According to evaluator interviews, building administrators have been **resistant to having any on-site family programing**, with safety concerns cited as the primary factor. It would be beneficial to regularly schedule more off-site and/or remote activities for students and families to increase their engagement with community agencies, given the circumstances.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:*** **Hire and train site coordinators** who are not building administrators or teachers leading a 21st CCLC class in order toactively coordinate and monitor program implementation on a daily basis.[[7]](#footnote-8)
* **Increase consistency and accuracy in the program calendar and the schedules at each participating building.** This was a recommendation provided in the last annual evaluation report.In addition to the daily timing variations described above, in some buildings, each class has its own end date for the grant year**.** Additionally, up-to-date schedules for the three buildings should be accessible to the BTI project coordinator at any time via a shared drive.
* Gain the support of the superintendent or other district staff to **ensure timely availability of student outcome data for the AER.**
* **Consider holding parent- and student-specific advisory board meetings** with agendas customized for the parent and student audiences in order to increase their meaningful participation. For reference, in Year 2, two parents attended one advisory board meeting. A group of students attended the beginning of each quarterly meeting; the program could further involve students in program planning by having student-only advisory board meetings, including students from all buildings. The new site coordinators would be in an ideal position to schedule and lead these meetings.
* Consider follow-up on **staff-provided recommendations**, including improving bussing consistency, increasing consistency in snack distribution, and revising class titles to accurately reflect each class’s focus.
* Explore **student recommendations**, including providing more snacks and drinks, offering additional club options (e.g., making music, music/choir, book club, board and video games, cooking), offering field trips, providing rewards for academic improvement, improving bussing reliability, reminding students to be respectful, increasing the program frequency for certain clubs, and visiting other 21st CCLC sites in Utica with the same after-school clubs.
* Discuss and consider **parent recommendations**, including greater emphasis on student participation in tutoring / homework help, more class options, and increased snack availability. The parents’ concern about academic program participation is aligned with the 253 students who completed the survey and indicated less than half improved in ELA, math, social studies, science, and foreign language grades during the grant year.
* **Attend to implementation performance indicators (i.e., Objective 1) that were partially met or not met:**
* Donovan needs to offer college and career readiness programs and increase weekly program hours.
* The percentage of parents indicating satisfaction with 21st CCLC programming on the spring survey was slightly less than the 95% target. A program modification to reduce the percentage to 85% or 90% would be more realistic.
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***Required Supporting Documents***

* **Data Collection Instruments**. Please attach a blank copy of a survey, observation tool, and interview protocol utilized this past year – only if you did not previously submit the instruments in the Year 1 AER.

**Collaboration** & **Utilization**

**Section IV**

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| The evaluator and grantee worked together to maintain a positive and collaborative working relationship with clear communication throughout the grant year. Specific examples include:* A&O utilized a participatory approach for the revisions and discussion of the evaluation plan and logic model reflecting approved program modifications.
* BTI program leaders reviewed and approved each evaluation instrument and deliverable (e.g., site visit summaries, focus group summary, mid-year and annual evaluation reports, data collection instruments). The evaluator spent additional time in Year 2 conducting observation debriefs while on site.
* The evaluator prepared a written evaluation update to present at each scheduled advisory board meeting and promoted utilization of evaluation findings.
* A&O provided regular reminders for upcoming evaluation activities and needed documentation and facilitated the program’s required data collection with templates to complete. A&O facilitated a year-end call with the BTI program coordinator to review the data availability for every performance indicator.

Possibilities for improvement in utilization of findings would be to:* Conduct separate advisory board meetings for parents and for student representatives in order to dedicate a meeting specifically to each group’s ideas and suggestions.
* Formally track instances of dissemination of evaluation findings (e.g., when, to whom, what format) and instances of evaluation recommendations being implemented.[[8]](#footnote-9)
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***Optional Supporting Documents (please attach)*** **Please see the survey summary attachments.**

* **Sample Communication Artifact** featuring formative, data-based recommendations. Please share a memo, brief, correspondence, abridged record from a meeting, etc., in which you provided your client with applicable, improvement-focused recommendations this past year.

**Logic Model (LM)** *and/or***Theory of Change Model (ToC)**

**Section V**

**INSERT HERE** or **ATTACH SEPARATELY**

**Please see the attachment.**

1. Pechman, E.M., Mielke, M.B., Russell, C.A., White, R.N., & Cooc, N. (2008, February). Out-of-school time (OST) observation instrument: Report of the validation study. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates, Inc. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. In the OST rating scale, 1 represents *not evident*, 5 represents *evident*, and 7 represents *highly evident and consistent*. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. As a result of ongoing bussing issues, BTI made changes to the student transportation contract for grant year three to increase accountability for transporting 21st CCLC participants to their homes. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Donovan MS installed new metal detectors one day before the visit and school security was learning the new system on the day of the site visit; this hindered some students getting to their respective activities in a timely manner. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. https://www.nys21cclc.org/site-monitoring-visit [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Note, the UCSD data specialist has not yet provided any student outcomes data for the Year 2 annual evaluation report. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. BTI found value in this suggestion and has since hired a site coordinator for each building. The coordinators’ responsibilities include distributing after-school snacks, actively visiting all classrooms on a daily basis to support implementation fidelity, completing the required PAIR observations twice per year, ensuring security coverage and timely bus transportation, overseeing adherence to designated program times, and communicating with program stakeholders. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. The BTI program leads indicated evaluation reports are posted on their website and survey summaries are distributed to community members, including local legislators. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)