Community Partnership Schools

An Implementation and Effectiveness Evaluation

Neil Naftzger PhD, Dominique Bradley PhD, Tia Clinton PhD, Briana Garcia, Rachel Blume, and Lauren Stargel PhD

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Section 1. Introduction and Overview of Community Partnership Schools

Introduction

Starting during the 2014–15 school year, the Florida legislature began providing state funding to support the replication and sustainability of the Community Partnership Schools[TM] (CPS) model. The purpose of the CPS model is to provide approximately $400,000 to $500,000 annually in additional funding to participating schools to support the implementation of a comprehensive community schools model. The CPS model is predicated on providing students and their families with access to a wide variety of learning opportunities and health and wellness supports provided through a defined set of key partnerships involving the school district, a lead social service agency, a health care provider, and a university. Leveraging the principles established by the larger community school movement (Blank et al., 2021; Maier et al., 2017), the CPS model seeks to promote student growth and development by removing barriers to learning and providing access to new, integrated learning opportunities oriented toward supporting whole child development. The CPS model—initially developed in 2010 at Evans High School, in Orlando, Florida, and based on the success of that effort[1]—has been replicated in 26 schools across 17 school districts in the state.

The University of Central Florida's (UCF's) Center for Community Schools (the UCF Center) plays a key role in administering the CPS grant program, providing technical assistance (TA) and professional development related to supporting implementation of the model at new CPS sites and managing a certification process for schools enrolled in the Initiative.

In spring 2020, the UCF Center contracted with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct an implementation and effectiveness evaluation of the CPS model. AIR's scope of work involved the following:

- developing a set of key performance indicators for the Initiative (a summary of the indicators is provided in Appendix A)
- conducting an implementation study that included 15 CPS sites that began implementation during the 2019–20 school year or earlier

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[1] Information taken from the University of Central Florida Community Partnership Schools website: https://ccie.ucf.edu/communityschools/schools/

- conducting an effectiveness evaluation of 11 CPS schools that were in at least their second year of implementation as of the 2018–19 school year.

This report details findings specifically from the implementation and effectiveness evaluation conducted by AIR.

As we note throughout the report, we believe it is critical to acknowledge that portions of the CPS implementation period examined in this report overlapped with one of the most challenging periods in our nation's history. This period included the COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice demonstrations that impacted school operations during the span of the past 2 years. These events undoubtedly affected efforts to implement the CPS model, as well as the data used to undertake the analyses described in this report. For example, responses to interviews and focus groups reflect post-pandemic experiences and student outcome metrics, such as participation in programming, are reflective of possible barriers to participation presented by pandemic conditions. As a result, we encourage the reader to be cautious when interpreting the results outlined in this report, which are based on data collected by the evaluation team during the COVID-19 pandemic, since it is likely that evaluation activities oriented at assessing implementation of the CPS model in particular were substantially influenced by these larger events; however, despite this caution, we do urge the CPS community to reflect on the findings described in this report and meaningfully explore the extent to which what was found is consistent with what key stakeholders know and understand about Initiative implementation.

The Community Partnership Schools Model

Like most community school efforts, the CPS model is anchored in four primary pillars associated with community school implementation: (1) a focus on collaborative leadership, (2) the provision of expanded learning opportunities, (3) a focus on providing wellness supports to students and families, and (4) provision of authentic avenues for parent and family engagement. The structures that exist as core components of the CPS model are what make the model unique. More specifically, four key partner organizations are required to be part of model implementation: (1) the school district, (2) a community-based nonprofit, (3) a health care provider, and (4) a university or college. Each partner is responsible for bringing different services and programming to the Initiative with the goal of being able to provide a comprehensive set of supports and opportunities to promote whole child and family well-being. Once a partnership is formed, the key partners agree to work together over a 25-year period to support implementation of the model.

The structures associated with the CPS model also include a series of key positions that should be in place at each school, as well as decision-making and coordinating teams and committees

to support the collaborative leadership goals associated with the model. Each school should have a school director, typically employed by the community-based partner, who has the primary responsibility for coordinating efforts to support implementation of the CPS model at a given school. Each school director should be supported by three coordinators who are responsible for the creation of learning and wellness opportunities and supports and also connecting students and families to these offerings. The coordinators are (1) an expanded learning coordinator, (2) a parent/community outreach coordinator, and (3) a school health programs coordinator.

All CPS schools are also expected to have put in place a Leadership Cabinet, which has a primary oversight role in model implementation and is charged with using information and data relative to implementation to guide decision making on the direction of CPS supports, programming, and services. Also integrated into the formal CPS model are other key teams, including the Operations Team, which has the role of instantiating the decisions made by the cabinet, and teams to focus on data, finance, and communication.

Ultimately, instantiation of the CPS model involves connecting students and their families to key activities, services, and events designed to address barriers to learning and promote positive student growth and development.

- **Service referrals.** Service referrals may be for students or their families and could involve a singular occurrence (e.g., a vision exam for new eyeglasses, an appointment to apply for rental assistance) or ongoing supports to enhance student or family member wellness (e.g., mental health counseling, ongoing care for a substantive medical condition). These referrals include efforts to connect student and their families to services provided by each of the four core partners and also to services provided through other leveraged partnerships developed with other agencies, providers, and community-based organizations.

- **Activities.** Activities have a tendency to be different from service referrals in that they have a tendency both to be ongoing and to involve bringing groups of students or family members together to engage in a learning or enrichment offering. A key facet of the CPS model is providing students with access to expanded learning opportunities, primarily through the provision of afterschool programming.

- **Events.** Events have a tendency to be offerings provided at single time points, either to support learning about a specific topic (e.g., a parent education workshop, a health and wellness fair, a college visit) or to build a sense of belonging or community (e.g., family movie night, a fun fair). Key events can be critical for supporting the initial engagement of students and their family members in CPS activities and services and for providing

opportunities for new relationships to build among student, families, school, and staff from the partnerships agencies involved in supporting the CPS.

One substantive limitation of the evaluation was that data related to service referrals, activities, and events were only available at the school-level, as opposed to the student-level. This was particularly a concern in relation to the effectiveness analyses, in which model effects could only be examined for the whole school population, as opposed to specific students and families who had participated in CPS-supported services and activities directly. The reader should keep this limitation in mind when reviewing both implementation and effectiveness evaluation findings in the sections that follow.

Evaluation Questions and Methods

This report addresses evaluation questions related to both CPS implementation and effectiveness. Questions related to implementation were focused on the way the CPS model was being implemented, what key drivers and challenges were associated with implementation efforts, the way key stakeholders perceived the Initiative was making a difference in the lives of their students and families, and the role played by the UCF Center in supporting implementation efforts.

Implementation Evaluation Questions

- To what extent are CPS schools implementing the model with fidelity?

- How does implementation of the CPS model in schools that have received certification or are seeking certification compare with the level of implementation fidelity in schools that are not certified?

- What strategies and supports for implementation of the CPS model are associated with high-quality implementation in schools?

- To what extent does the TA provided by UCF support the implementation of the CPS model, and what types of services are most useful in supporting implementation with high fidelity?

- What experiences are students having in afterschool and expanded learning programming being provided by CPS-funded schools?

In order to answer most of the implementation-related evaluation questions, the evaluation team conducted interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders associated with CPS model implementation:

- CPS school directors

- Partner agency representatives

- School administrators
- School-based coordinators responsible for implementing components of the CPS model
- UCF Center technical assistants

The evaluation team also conducted a qualitative analysis of extant documents including CPS grant scope of work documents, certification assessments, and quarterly reports provided by schools receiving CPS funding. Additional details about the methods employed to collect and analyze implementation data collected from interviews, focus groups, and extant documents can be found in Section 2, which focuses on implementation of key components of the CPS model, and Section 3 of the report, which details findings related to the provision of CPS programming and services.

In addition, the evaluation team administered an afterschool survey to a sample of CPS-funded schools during the fall and winter of the 2021–22 school year. The goal of the survey was to obtain information about the types of activities students were participating in after school, the experiences they had in programming, and the way they perceived they had benefited from their participation. Findings from the afterschool youth survey are also described in Section 3 of this report.

The effectiveness analysis was designed to answer the following set of evaluation questions:

- What effect did attending a CPS have on student outcomes compared with outcomes of students attending similar schools not implementing the CPS model?
- What effect did attending a more mature CPS have on student outcomes compared with outcomes of students enrolled in similar schools not implementing the CPS model?
- What effect did attending a CPS have on student outcomes among certain subpopulations of students compared with outcomes of students from the same subpopulations attending similar schools not implementing the CPS model?

In order to answer these questions, the evaluation team conducted a comparative interrupted time series analysis, relying on school- and student-level data provided by the Florida Department of Education. In light of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a decision was made by the evaluation team in conjunction with the UCF Center to assess model effectiveness for the model implementation period ranging from the 2015–16 to 2018–19 school years. In this sense, the effectiveness analysis conducted by the evaluation team represents an examination of effects from early implementation of the CPS model at a subset of early adopting schools. Findings from the effectiveness analysis are described in Section 4 of this report.

Section 2. Implementation Evaluation

Overview

Between 2020 and 2022, AIR collected and analyzed extant documents and interview and focus group data to assess implementation of the CPS model at 15 schools receiving CPS grant funding. To assess the implementation of the CPS initiative in our qualitative analysis, we focused on the following questions:

1. To what extent are CPS schools implementing the model with fidelity?

2. How does the level of fidelity of implementation of the CPS model in schools that have received certification or are seeking certification compare to schools that have not been certified?

3. What strategies and supports for implementation of the CPS model are associated with high quality implementation in schools?

To address these research questions, we conducted interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders, including CPS school directors, partner agency representatives, school administrators, school-based coordinators (health, student enrichment, and parent engagement), and UCF Center technical assistants. Our evaluation was conducted in phases. In the first phase, summer and fall of 2020, we conducted a qualitative analysis of extant documents—for example selecting a sample of documents from the scope of work, certification assessments, and quarterly reports. We summarized our findings from this analysis in an Extant Data Review Memo provided to the UCF Center in 2020.

We had anticipated engaging in remaining, implementation-related data collection activities during the academic year of 2020–21. However, the COVID-19 pandemic interfered with our original evaluation plans. In spring of 2021, we reinitiated data collection activities virtually conducting interviews with partner agency leaders for each of the CPS schools (4 partner agency representatives from each non-profit, healthcare, and university). In summer of 2021, we summarized our initial findings from these data collection activities in a Partner Agency Memo provided to the UCF Center in 2021.

Finally, we conducted a series of interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders in CPS schools and the UCF Center for Community Schools. From summer of 2021 through spring of 2022, we conducted interviews with CPS directors, and school administrators, and conducted focus groups with school coordinators to better understand the way the CPS model was being implemented and supported in schools. We found broad alignment in the thematic analysis and

primary findings between the extant data review, partner agency interviews, and interviews and focus groups with CPS directors, school administrators, and school coordinators.

In the following sections, we provide details on our analytic approach and details expanding on key findings in the following areas:

- Vision for implementation

- Communication structures

- Shared decision making

- Needs assessments and progress monitoring

- Role of certification in implementation

- UCF Center supports

We conclude this section by summarizing schools' goals for future CPS expansion, findings on the key implementation drivers, barriers, and potentially promising practices in each of these areas.

Methodological Approach and Research Timeline

As noted previously, the evaluation was conducted in phases. In the first phase, summer and fall of 2020, we began with a review of extant documents. We reviewed data across time from two schools that are currently in post-certification phases, from the initial implementation of the Initiative to current post-certification status. The documents we reviewed included submissions from schools prior to conducting readiness assessments, from the readiness assessment period, and the certification period and beyond. This analysis allowed us to understand the way schools were communicating about implementation to the UCF Center and what challenges they reported experiencing over a period of 5 years.

In spring of 2021, we initiated data collection activities virtually. We conducted interviews with partner agency leaders for each of the CPS schools. AIR researchers conducted twelve 60-minute virtual interviews with partner agency staff and leadership from March through May of 2021 (4 respondents per health, university, and non-profit agency representing CPS schools). All respondents had served on school leadership committees either currently or in the past. The partner agency representatives we interviewed ranged in the roles they played in their organizations, including leadership roles such as agency directors, CEOs, and associate deans. Our goal in this phase was to learn about the partner representatives' goals and experiences working with CPS schools within the CPS model. We summarized our initial findings from these data collection activities in the Partner Agency Memo provided to the UCF Center in 2021.

Throughout summer, fall, and early spring of 2021–22 we completed interviews with all CPS directors, school administrators, and focus groups with school CPS coordinators. The goal of these data collection activities was to better understand the way partner agencies viewed their roles and contributions in the implementation of the initiative, to learn of any challenges and successes, and to identify areas of necessary support from the UCF Center in the future.

In the final phase of our research, during winter and Spring of 2021-2022, AIR researchers conducted interviews with CPS directors, district partner representatives, principals, and partner agencies at 15 CPS schools and 6 focus groups with family and community engagement, expanded learning, and wellness coordinators. We focused our efforts on gaining a deeper understanding of the vision and goals for implementation, decision-making structures and processes, programming offered, the certification process, perceived CPS impact, and challenges to implementation.

School coordinators were typically responsible for operations and programming associated with their titles and reported directly to the school's CPS directors. For example, a wellness coordinator might work with arranging primary health, mental health, dental and vision visits for students and families. Coordinators played key roles in the delivery of services to caregivers and families but not all schools had the financial capacity to employ these positions. We conducted focus groups at the 6 certified schools who had established these positions.

Partnership representatives varied in the roles they played in their respective agencies. For example, district partner representatives were typically superintendents of the district but in some cases were grade-level superintendents or people who held other organizational titles. Health, university, and nonprofit representatives ranges from organizational CEOs, professors, department or division chairs to staff hired for the organization specifically to manage the CPS Initiative at related schools. Nonprofit partners, with few exceptions represented a single CPS school. A single larger nonprofit represents 12 of the 15 schools in this evaluation. Few other university, health and nonprofit schools held agreements than more than one or two schools represented in the evaluation sample.

Interview and focus group recordings were transcribed and coded using qualitative software.

Interviews and focus groups were conducted virtually, over Zoom, and typically ranged from 60 to 120 minutes. Interviews were limited to one respondent, and focus groups ranged from one to three participants depending on how many coordinators were staffed at the school. Interview questions generally covered the initial reasons as to why the initiative was implemented at the school in question, vision and goals for implementation, decision making structures and processes, programming offered, the certification process, perceived CPS

impact, and challenges to implementation. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the number of interviews and focus groups conducted with each type of stakeholder.

Table 1. Interview Participants and CPS Roles

Interviews—CPS role	Number of interviewees
CPS director	15
Principal	14
District partner representative (representing 12 schools)	11
CPS partner agency (nonprofit, university, health, and district)	12
Focus groups–CPS coordinator role	**Number of interviewees**
Family/parent and community engagement (representing 6 schools)	6*
Wellness (representing 5 schools)	5
Expanded learning (representing 6 schools)	6

Note: One interviewee held dual roles as an expanded learning and family and community engagement coordinator.

In analyzing interview and focus group data, we used a blended deductive and inductive approach to developing our coding structure. We used the CPS model, our previous understanding of the key drivers of implementation in a community school, and the analysis of CPS school reports and certification efforts to establish the codebook, but allowed for new themes to arise from coding and analysis. In the following sections, we provide a detailed summary of the key themes that emerged from our analysis of the primary areas related to our research questions.

Vision for Implementing CPS

The CPS framework is designed to support a community-based model that leverages the social and institutional capital of partners to provide for the social, emotional, mental, physical, nutritional, and occasionally financial needs of students so that they are ready to engage in academic opportunities.[2] This model, when fully realized, is intended to provide wraparound supports to students, their caregivers and families, and local communities. Our research team sought to understand how well aligned each school's vision for implementation was to the

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[2] Text drawn from the UCF Center description of the CPS model: https://ccie.ucf.edu/communityschools/partnership-schools/

overarching framework set forth by UCF. We asked each interviewee (Directors, partner agency representatives, school administrators, and school coordinators) to describe their understanding of the vision for implementation of the CPS Initiative in their particular school or the schools they served. We then analyzed the data to identify the key vision themes across stakeholders. The stakeholders we spoke to described their vision for implementation in three primary categories: (1) removing barriers for families and developing the local community (19 respondents), (2) creating a wrap-around model for education (14 respondents), and (3) ensuring equitable outcomes for all students and families (6 respondents) . Respondents frequently noted more than one goal or vision for their school's Initiative. Each of these vision themes appears to align, at least in part, with the framework for the Initiative outlined by the UCF Center. In the sections that follow, we describe these primary visions and the ways in which they differ in more detail.

Removing barriers and building community. Many respondents (respondents from 10 schools) discussed the way the CPS initiative supported services and programming **that removed access-related barriers to needed services and supports for students and families that experience poverty. Respondents from 5 schools described that, by the school becoming a hub for the community, the CPS provided support for sustained change in the school community by addressing access-related problems.** Several respondents shared that their communities were located far from essential services, such as grocery stores and health services, leaving the school's families and the surrounding community in areas that could be considered resource deserts. For example, for schools that were able to offer health services and host food banks respondents shared that they were able to meet the needs of students and the broader community and build engagement and excitement. Several respondents remarked that by offering these resources and services the schools were able to not only invest in the students, but that due to the community benefits the felt that youth would be encouraged to stay in the community and continue to contribute to its development. One CPS director explained this logic:

> " So, I went to [this school], and my parents also went to [this school . . .] so I'm a real local . . . but my vision would be, really . . . that we can take steps towards being comprehensive and offer wholistic education to our students, but really, 10 to 20 years down the road, that we start to see our students coming back to be teachers and to work in a school, and to be staff members, and to work in innovative programs like mine. But that's my vision, is that we cultivate an environment where . . . we produce model citizens and we produce successful people in their careers and students in education. . . . I've always said that I want to put myself out of business. I don't want 25 or 20 years from now for us. . . . Obviously, poverty is poverty, but we shouldn't be addressing the same concerns. The concerns should've changed because truly, there are some things that we can actually solve, especially at a generation of

25 years. There are certain things that we should be able to reassess and say, "Hey, our needs are different, but there are still needs in this community, and we're going to address those needs." So, if it's affordable housing, and that's a need now, but that is a little bit further in the center of the onion. On the exterior of the onion is attendance behavior courses. So, that's what we're focusing on right now. – CPS Director

Whole child approach to education. Primarily CPS directors and school administrators (4 Directors, 7 administrators and 2 coordinators) described the vision for implementation as **providing a whole child approach to education including addressing the health, mental health, resource, and academic needs of students**. The description of a whole child approach differed from an investment in removing barriers and building community because the way in which respondents described this vision was focused solely on supporting the academic growth of students buy providing these types of services and programs. Many respondents shared that their students and families experienced challenges outside of school, such as food insecurity, lack of access to health care, and more extreme stressors such as homelessness. The CPS Initiative was seen as a mechanism to address these additional stressors as well as to support the academic growth of youth in their school. When asked about the primary goals for CPS programming, one district partner agency shared that meeting students' nonacademic needs supports academic growth and opportunities.

"I think I'm more looking at it holistically, right? . . . [Discusses student transiency.] And so I think by providing all of the wraparound services and treating, not just the student, but the family, you're building a connection to the school and the community, but once you have that connection, when you are facing a problem, whether it's a housing problem, whether it's a medical problem, whether it's a food resource problem, you're likely to reach out to that school and work with that school to work through those things. Then have to find another place to rent or find another couch to live on until you can meet those needs. So, if you can meet all of these needs and that community knows that you're there to help them meet those needs, hopefully you see that transient rate go down, you see more engagement with the school, you see parents showing up and students showing up for the afterschool events, for the house parties, for the celebrations. And now it's more about being a part of something than just going to school." – District partner

Striving toward equity for students and families, with a focus on academic outcomes. Several respondents described the vision of CPS implementation as focused on closing achievement gaps and bringing all students up to grade level (3 directors, 2 school administrators, and 1 district representative). Four of these respondents discussed seeing percentage increases in academically related outcomes such as reading test scores or graduation rates. These respondents discussed how the additional services provided by CPS funding could allow the

school staff to focus on academic because initiative allowed for other agencies to the non-academic needs of students and families.

> *"So we implemented the model as a school district with our partners to really try and help even the playing field and to really overall improve the quality of life for our families through better education systems for our kids at school . . . but all of that to say that the vision is really that our community partnership school would obviously increase the academic achievement of our kids and close that learning gap."* – District administrator

How vision impacts shared decision making and implementation. Developing a shared vision between all partners, school administrators, CPS directors and involved staff was noted as very important in the successful implementation of the model by several CPS directors. In schools where a high degree of alignment and intentional efforts to develop a shared vision for implementation among partners existed, both partners and directors frequently **reported a positive environment to foster shared decision making**. One director elaborated on the way a shared vision between the director and principal supported their collaboration:

> *"And the great thing is she shares the vision and understands what our purpose is. . . . She was not the principal when the model was brought to the school, but she was the assistant principal. . . . So the great thing for us is that she has that historical knowledge and has been involved since the beginning. So, she understands what we're trying to do."* – Director

However, successfully establishing a shared vision was not the norm among all schools. Most schools reported that developing a shared vision among partners in a single site was challenging because of different organizational goals and sometimes a lack of communication and commitment to the school's vision for implementation. One director stated **that partner agency representative turnover and an unequal balance in decision making** had contributed to a lack of shared vision and a disengaged Executive Committee. Several partners and directors reported similar circumstances where a lack of investment from specific partners, turn over in partner representatives, and domination of the agenda by one partner to develop and instantiate the vision hindered the process of shared decision making. We describe the outsized influence of nonprofit partners in particular in the section below.

Influence of nonprofit partners on the vision for implementation. The mission and vision of the **nonprofit partner can have an outsized influence** on the mission and vision pursued by a CPS school, and a prioritization of certain types of programming (e.g., counseling or mental health) over other priorities held by other partners, such as providing academic supports. One school principal explained that the role of the nonprofit was to ensure that the nonacademic components of the model were in place (e.g., social services, counseling, and mental health services) so that the school staff could focus on supporting the academic growth of children.

While this model of outsized influence does not support a shared leadership model, it does appear to have benefits for both schools and directors in that one agency assumes the role of addressing non-academic challenges for students, leaving school staff to focus solely on the academic growth of students. However, it does appear to create a model of schooling that separates CPS activities from the core life of the school, which appears to be antithetical to the CPS model. One school principal described how the nonprofit partner drives the agenda and the positives and negatives that accompany this outsized role.

> *"So they're [our nonprofit is] really kind of the hub because those are the individuals who support our coordinators and our director. So a lot of what we do actually comes, or at least it seems to come, through them. And I know that they get their direction from UCF. And so it's kind of this snowball thing until it gets to the actual school building. But [the nonprofit partner] kind of oversees our processes and our procedures.* **They are the implementers.** *They help us do what it is that we're talking about doing. And some of that is by providing the staff in order for us to do that. Because you're supposed to be able to use all of your partners and not just rely on one. So at first, all of the partners or all of our coordinators came through [the nonprofit partner]. So my first initial thought was that, "Okay, [they are] providing us with these people." But it's not just the people.* **It's the vision and the idea and the processes and the procedures and the leadership that come through [the nonprofit partner].** *And I think a lot of that has to do with their onboarding and how they want decisions to be made. And then they are the ones that make sure that we are collecting the data that we need in order to support what we're doing and whether it's working or not working. Is a go or a no go? Just because we try something doesn't mean that we're going to stick with that. And so they help us recognize when something is working and when it's not, and then the process for fixing it." – CPS school principal*

While this type of comment was repeated in interviews with respondents at other schools, some respondents shared that they were looking for more ways for their nonprofit partner to be involved directly with the school. Some examples of the support needed by these schools were providing volunteers and additional staffing for programming and events. In these schools the non-profit partner was disengaged from the process of developing the vision and decision making.

In the following section we discuss how school approach instantiating shared decision-making structures to carry out the vision and goals set by the school. Similar to our discussion of vision setting, ensuring equal voice among partners appears to be vital to ensuring that decisions are shared, and partners are able to engage authentically in the implementation of the initiative.

Decision-Making Structures

Overview

Active participation, long-term commitment, and shared decision-making among partners are essential components of the CPS model. All CPS schools are expected to maintain an active and engaged Leadership Cabinet (also referred to as the Executive Committee by some schools), which oversees the implementation of the initiative and uses data-informed decisions to guide the direction of the Initiative. Schools are also expected to establish several teams and committees focused on the daily operations in implementation. For example, the Operations Team is meant to be the "boots on the ground", implementing the decisions made by the Executive Committee. Establishing teams to focus on data, finance, and communication is also integrated into the formal CPS model. These core committees and teams are intended to ensure distributed leadership while supporting the efforts of four engaged partners and dedicated staff to implement the Initiative. In the next section, we summarize the way these decision-making bodies function in schools, as well as challenges to authentic engagement and some potential best practices in ensuring the functionality of the system.

In our analysis of data from directors and partner agency representatives, most decision-making processes were shared among agencies during formal cabinet, committee, or team meetings. Most partners indicated that they or someone from their agency regularly participated in decision-making committees. However, while the intention of these teams and positions are defined in the UCF Center model as ensuring distributed leadership, it appeared that the inner workings of these implementation teams were just as important to ensuring distributed leadership. In other words, simply having the committees and positions in place does not appear to be enough to ensure distributed leadership. The composition of teams, committees, and counsels, as well as their functions in supporting implementation, appeared to vary among school sites. Some schools reported having secondary procedures in place to ensure shared leadership among teams, such as taking turns leading meetings and developing agendas. Other schools reported significant challenges to keeping leadership shared and not a "one-legged stool" in which one partner drives the agenda and the work of the Initiative. We describe some of these successes and challenges in the sections below.

Decision-Making Bodies' Composition and Roles

Altogether respondents reported more than 20 different types of decision-making bodies at their schools. The most frequently reported decision-making bodies were the following:

- Leadership Cabinet/Executive Committee

- Operations Team

- Community Leadership Council

- Student Leadership Council

- Parent Leadership or Advisory Council

- Data committee

These six teams were described as functioning similarly across most schools' sites. However, schools took different approaches to managing these decision-making bodies, including the types of decisions each body was tasked with managing. For example, in some schools, leadership in the Executive Committee rotated each month, while in others, leadership remained with the director (and associated nonprofit). Further, in some schools the Executive Committee reviewed data, weighed in on budgets, and made decisions about programming and services. At other schools, the Executive Committee served as an advisory board, giving feedback on progress of the initiative but not tasked with making decisions that directly affected implementation. For this analysis, we will not summarize functions of the other 20 types of decision-making bodies described to us. However, these teams and committees often served specialized functions in schools, addressing parent engagement, referrals, mental health, academic supports, and fundraising.

Leadership Cabinet/Executive Committee. Respondents from almost all schools (14 of 15 schools) discussed their Leadership Cabinet, sometimes also referred to as the Executive Committee.[3] Most schools reported holding cabinet meetings monthly (seven schools). More than half the schools (nine schools) reported that their cabinets included representation from all core partners. Additional members included school administrators (12 schools), caregivers or family members (10 schools), and students (seven schools).

Almost all schools indicated that one of the primary functions of the Cabinet was to **establish the vision and goals for the Initiative and to identify progress made toward the goals** (14 schools). Most (11 schools) also reported that discussing the way the implementation of the Initiative aligned with the certification process and standards was often a part of cabinet meetings. Nine schools indicated that the cabinet was also responsible for making decisions about programming and ways to move Initiative implementation forward. Partner representatives stated that the most frequently reported topics for cabinet meetings were school needs, certification, funding and budget, pillars, reviewing data, and strategic planning. Discussing how the cabinet referred to data and the pillars to make programming decisions, one principal shared:

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[3] The school that did not discuss this committee was Sulphur Springs, where we were only able to conduct one interview with a nonprofit staff member who worked with the CPS director, because of the school's research restrictions. We were unable to speak to administration or district partners.

"During our Executive Cabinet meeting, we look at the data points for each of the pillars and identify what is working and what is not working, and whether or not each pillar based on the data collected is meeting expectation. If not, then we determine whether or not we need to continue with it, make an adjustment, or [if] there's a good reason. – Principal

Respondents from two-thirds of schools (10 schools) highlighted the importance of **having strong collaboration among partners** in place for their cabinets to help move implementation of the CPS Initiative forward. One district representative shared the way collaboration within the cabinet supported the implementation of the initiative:

"I think [the cabinet's] huge because it brings everyone together around the table. Otherwise, we'd be working in silos. . . . But I think it gives us an opportunity to see who are the players who make this a success, and then we're able to identify needs and address them with the key players in the room who can help." – District representative

About half of respondents discussed partner engagement and ensuring a truly shared leadership model as challenging to implement. **The evidence of a one-legged stool in the decision-making process and establishing implementation priorities was noted 49 times by 16 separate stakeholders we interviewed.** Some respondents discussed strategies to ensure that no one partner controlled the agenda for meetings and decision making, ensuring shared leadership. One district representative described their process as such:

"So in the cabinet meeting, the cabinet meeting every two years, we vote for a new chair and it's not the same person. They're not the same organization that [they] had been in the past. . . . So, they chair the meeting, they watch the time and then make sure. . . . The community school director makes sure the notes are copied and assists in that, but we didn't wanted to always be the community school director because they work for an agency and we didn't want one agency to have more power or control over what was happening than the other, because it's really equal partnerships." – District representative

While many schools reported having Executive Committees and Leadership Cabinets that engaged fully in the responsibilities of the group, some schools struggled to consistently engage partners in meetings, making the groups less functional in supporting the initiative. One CPS director shared that due to a lack of engagement and collaboration with the Cabinet they were unable to *"get quorum at a Cabinet meeting, because all of [the] partners don't attend."* Some reasons that both partners and directors shared for why partners might not attend were overcommitments by partner representatives, the level of commitment overall to participate fully as a partner, and in some cases lack of communication or regularity of meetings. It is also possible that if one partner dominates the agenda for decision making regularly that other partners might be less likely to meaningfully engage.

Operations Team. Over two thirds of schools (11 schools) indicated that the primary function of the Operations Team was to serve as "boots on the ground" or execute plans related to the provision of activities and services. For example, one director shared, "*So at the Operation[s] level, [we are]…rolling to that goal…[the] Cabinet set[s] sail to like, 'Hey we're going this way.' And then the Operation Team, we roll in the direction that they tell us to go in.*" In some schools the dividing line between the responsibilities of the Executive Committee/Leadership Cabinet sometimes crossed over into the domain of the Operations Team. One of the health partners shared that frequently the Operations Team's responsibilities may also have already been addressed by the Cabinet but at a higher level of detail. The Operations Team then **carried responsibility for supporting the actual implementation**, such as recruiting volunteers and staffing the event even if they were not a part of the decision-making process in the Executive Committee. Among the schools who reported the frequency of their Operations Team meetings, schools most often indicated that they met monthly (six schools). Two-thirds of schools (10 schools) reported that school administrators were part of the Operations Team. Only one third of schools (5 schools) reported that their Operations Team had representation from all partners.

Community Leadership Council. Almost all schools (13 schools) reported that they had a Community Leadership Council. The Community Leadership Council **brings together community members to obtain their input and support the model.** Their focus tends to be more on the ground, like the Operations Team. About half the schools (eight schools) shared that their councils focused on providing resources and supports to the school. Figure 1 displays the most frequently reported members of the council.

Parent Leadership or Advisory Council. Most schools (11 schools) reported having a Parent Leadership Council or School Advisory Council, which provided family and community voice to the school. These councils varied in practice across schools, **where some focused on sharing feedback on ongoing initiatives and ideas for new ones, while others contributed to decision-making or the implementation of events.** In addition to family and community member participation, schools reported that administrators (two schools), coordinators (two schools), and school staff (two schools) participated in the councils. Although some schools described challenges with consistent family engagement with the model, there were also reports of successful engagement during the pandemic.

Figure 1. Frequently Reported Members of Community Leadership Councils
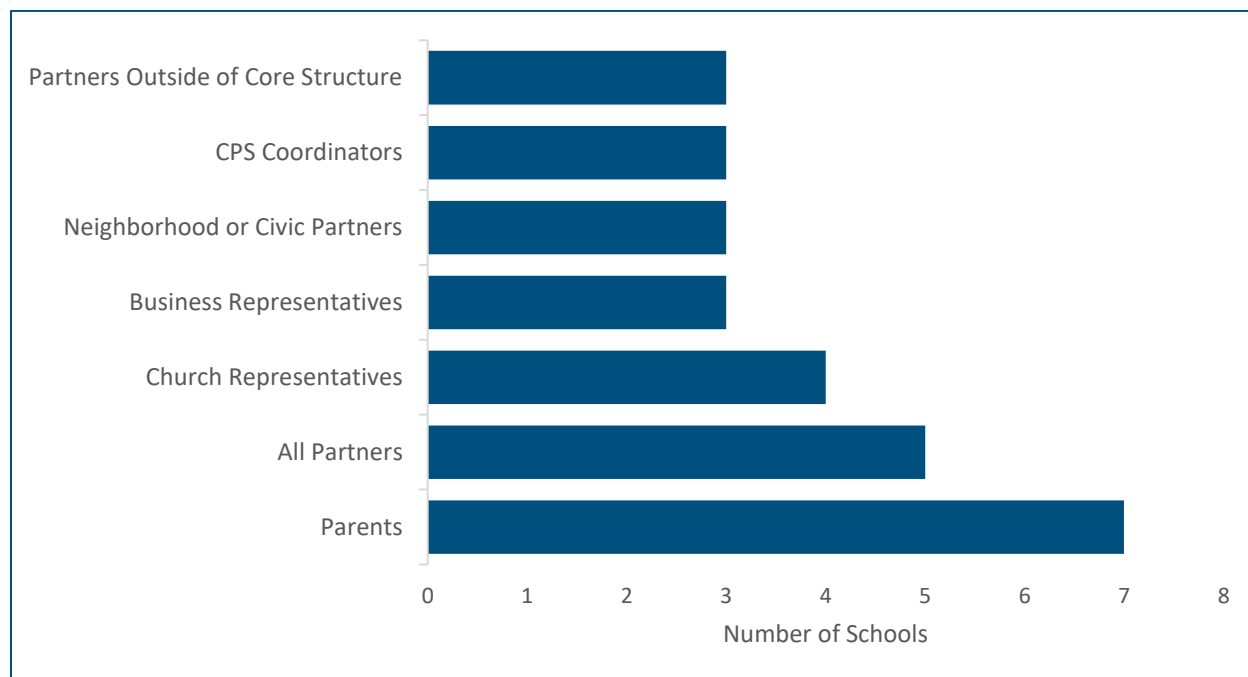
Note. Figure data was drawn from interviews and focus groups with partner agencies, Directors, and school administrators

One Coordinator shared:

> "We have 15 dedicated families that will come every month for the [Parent Advisory Council] meeting that they have over in the hub. And they're excited to do things, they want to help. . . . Last year we had several virtual nights . . . we had a virtual math night, we had a virtual STEM night. We had a virtual reading night because we still want to have those activities to provide the opportunity for the families to still connect." – Coordinator

Student Leadership Council. More than two-thirds of schools (11 schools) reported that they had a Student Leadership Council, and nearly half of those schools shared that **a member of the Student Leadership Council also served on the Leadership Cabinet**. One director stated that the Student Leadership Council served multiple purposes, namely, "to help them become ambassadors for our school and to help teach them leadership skills, but then also to, for them to be directing and giving us the opportunity [to hear from students]." Engaging students in the shared leadership of the initiative aligns with the CPS framework.

Data Committee. Nearly half of the schools reported that that they had a Data Committee. The **role of Data Committees in decision making varied from school to school**. For example, at one school, the director said that their Data Committee focused on evaluation, data quality, and identifying methods for collection, while at other schools, the committee reviewed data to

understand progress toward goals. One director highlighted that their school executed a process in which their Data Committee served as a foundation for other decision-making structures in the model:

> *"I think everything kind of starts [with the Data Committee] and leads out. Our Data Committee comes together, they turn in their weekly and monthly data to me, I review it, I work with . . . our assistant principal to put together an agenda for our data meeting. And then we discuss where we see a need. . . . I take it to the . . . operations committee and then we look there to see how we can strengthen it. . . . The operations and data committees both meet monthly. And then we take all that information, and we take suggestions to the cabinet, and we discuss it there. So, it's not like all the partners haven't already discussed it, and then it's like me taking it there. All the partners, their representatives, have already discussed it, and we take it there with solution-based ideas. And if the cabinet sees an issue with it, then we take it back to the committees." – CPS Director*

Director's Role in Decision Making

By design, CPS directors **play a significant role in organizing and leading the Leadership Cabinet and Operations Team meetings.** The director roles were described as critical in organizing and facilitating operational meetings. Five partners identified their CPS director as the person who shared the meeting times, topics, and decisions made by the Leadership Cabinet. Similarly, four partners reported that their CPS director was the person who shared the meeting time, topics, and decisions for the Operations Team.

Schools primarily described the role of directors as responsible for daily management tasks such as overseeing coordinators and the provision of resources and promoting collaborative leadership to help meet school needs. One district partner shared that directors are *"the hub of the Hub. Their job is tough because they're regularly meeting and discussing with all members across all levels . . . every day [they're] in contact in some way, shape, or form with each of those [partner] agencies . . . it is the most important position in this whole [model]."*

Similarly, schools shared that directors were responsible for communicating with school staff and/or leaders (14 schools) and partner agency (13 schools) staff. directors' communications with schools tended to be with administrators about the current state of implementation of the Initiative. Communication between directors and partner agency staff often included ways to build relationships with students and families, day-to-day management of programming and services, understanding progress toward Initiative goals, and action planning for future programming and supports. **Overall, directors reported that their primary roles in supporting shared decision making facilitated communication across decision-making structures and supported collaboration among the partners.** CPS directors appear to shoulder an outsized

burden in communication, as well as day-to-day responsibilities for ensuring the Initiative is implemented with the level of fidelity expected of schools and partners. Describing their own role, one director stated:

> *"I think you're responsible for partner relationship and health. You are that convening entity to be able to pull everybody together and make sure that we're looking at progress monitoring and data collection and a lot of other factors, but you kind of play that glue that holds people together and allocates resources and definitely drives the outcomes that are happening there on campus and in the community. You'll always go back to the cabinet or the operations or the data and how do we do this, how do we do that, getting feedback from partners and providers and local contributors and even school side and parents. But really that's kind of the director's charge of saying, "Okay, well I've gathered all this, how do we do it?" And putting that out and delegating those outcomes to team members or providers." – CPS Director*

The role of administrative relationships in shared decision making. Schools also identified the role that **a strong relationship between directors and school administrators can play in supporting shared leadership structures and implementation of the model.** The connection and consistent flow of information between the school administration and director appears to be key to navigating challenges, improving principal buy-in, and overall, supporting implementation. Although not present at every school, it appears that **CPS directors who were more intentionally integrated in the culture and operations of the school had better working relationships with principals and viewed CPS as more integrated into the school environment.** In these circumstances, CPS directors reported being invited to diverse types of school staff meetings and were not viewed as separate school staff members by students or families. Instead, these directors often reported being treated similarly to assistant principals and were made aware of the everyday goings-on of the school and held responsibilities similar to other daytime staff. One respondent shared that, for their school, the director is viewed as a member of the administration team:

> *"Our principal is very connected [to the model]. He considers our Community School director to be part of his admin team . . . he sees her as a member of the team, and she has regular communication with him, and he is part of our Advisory Council, as well." – Director*

Most schools (11 schools) indicated that directors and administrators frequently collaborated on decision making and aligning the CPS initiative with new district initiatives. One Principal shared, *"When I have something new, an initiative coming through district . . . I have to go directly to [the director]. We meet together, we talk, we problem-solve…[and identify] how it's going to impact our services here at our school for our students."* This kind of collaboration was important because the CPS initiative is within the domain of the school and may not be

incorporated as a district level initiative. Meaning that to continue to place priority on the CPS Initiative activities, directors and school administrators must navigate how to align and integrate initiatives prioritized by the district in addition to the CPS initiative at their schools.

Partner influence in director's role. With the significance of the director's role in decision making and facilitating partner collaboration, the nonprofit partners overseeing directors are in a unique position to be able to influence the way directors function in their roles and to provide additional supports outside of the UCF Center and other partner agency supports. A few directors reported that their nonprofit partners' mission and vision was separate enough from the CPS school's mission and vision that their work as director felt far removed from the work of the nonprofit. **In schools where directors described being "removed" from the core work of the nonprofit home agency, directors reported feeling unsupported and "adrift" without the additional supports.** The following quote is a director from a smaller nonprofit explaining how they see the difference in supports from their nonprofit versus a larger nonprofit.

> *"That's not contributing, that's just what your expectation was at the beginning. That's bare minimum. What is [the director's nonprofit] bringing to the table as a nonprofit? So we have to have that discussion quite often. [A different nonprofit agency], because they have so many schools, they then have these area Directors and they have Eds and all of these pieces. Well, there's only one of us, so we're shoved in the prevention team for my nonprofit. So I don't have anyone above me that gives any kind of oversight." – CPS Director*

Challenges to Shared Leadership

With the large number of decision-making structures that exist in the CPS model and additional structures within individual schools, keeping stakeholders engaged in meeting schedules and keeping frequent and fluid communication among all partners and key stakeholders present challenges to shared leadership. **The most frequently reported challenges with communication and relationships within the CPS model were challenges with partner collaboration and commitment, partner and/or school administration turnover, and principal buy-in.** Some of these challenges appear to be related to inequity in the balance of power in decision making between stakeholders and partners and imbalance in which one stakeholder or partner sets the vision for implementation of the initiative. **As noted previously, the evidence of the one-legged stool in the decision-making process and implementation priorities was noted 49 times by 16 separate stakeholders whom we interviewed.** These challenges to shared leadership were also frequently undergirded by a lack of understanding of expectations among partners, lack of clarity about responsibilities for each stakeholder in supporting implementation of the model, and broader challenges with buy-in of partners and stakeholders.

Developing buy-in of all stakeholders in the model is key to implementation and requires authentic opportunities to engage in the decision-making process for the way the model is implemented. If one partner is dominating the discussion about implementation or not committed to the model, the shared decision-making structure appears to break down and implementation becomes less cohesive. One school administrator described this as the nonprofit partner's taking care of all the "external stuff" so the school could focus on academics. While this may benefit the school by releasing the burden of meeting health and mental health needs, it does not represent a functional model of shared leadership and investment.

Partner collaboration and uneven pillars. Over half the schools (eight schools) indicated that collaboration with at least one partner was a challenge, which was often connected to limited engagement with implementation of the model, including participation in decision-making bodies. **Approximately half the respondents described something akin to a one-legged stool, a situation in which one partner either had outsized influence over implementation or one or more partners were not engaged.** For example, one district representative said that that they wanted "more of that shared leadership," as the school "could grow faster if each member had more of a leading role rather than a supporting role." It is very possible that the outsized role of some partners' influence in the development of vision and implementation of the model might also discourage other partners from engaging fully in the process to instantiate the model.

Recruitment of other stakeholders. Almost every school reported encountering challenges with parent and student participation in decision-making bodies, with interviewees reporting encountering **the greatest difficulty with getting caregivers involved in decision making**. In half the schools (seven of the 14), interviewees identified having difficulty recruiting caregivers for their school's parent advisory or similar decision-making board, while less struggling to recruit or invite caregivers to resource fairs and food drives. Several CPS directors shared strategies they were using to capture parent voice: for example, several schools reported by surveying caregivers while they waiting in line for resources to capture their perspectives on CPS.

Partner agency commitments and number of committees/teams/counsels. The **time commitment to participate as a partner and sit on all the necessary committees was noted as challenging by several partners**. Some respondents noted that the number of meetings and committees seemed excessive at times and created a challenge in terms of initial recruitment and retention of members in their organization to participate. Several partners stated that greater efficiency in meetings and more coordination among groups would help each of the executive and operational teams function better. **Additionally, the time commitment and coordination efforts to ensure partner-to-partner communication and collaboration was**

noted as a potential barrier to ensuring better communication. Last, absenteeism in meetings and turnover in partner agency positions were also noted as challenges to creating coherence and buy-in. Absenteeism in meetings was not always described as a lack of caring on the part of agency staff; more often, respondents attributed absenteeism to the challenges of having higher level agency staff involved in decision-making and support bodies but not always having the necessary time to commit fully to supporting the position.

Communication Structures

In this section we discuss the ways in which communication occurs between stakeholders who support implementation of the CPS model (e.g., partner agencies, school staff and administrators, directors, and coordinators) with those who benefit, such as students and families at CPS schools. Communication with each of these groups was reported as occurring both formally and informally at schools. **We found that regularly scheduled committee meetings with clear tasks and responsibilities helped facilitate highly functional implementation for those supporting the implementation of the CPS model.** Informal communication, particularly among CPS directors and school administrators, was also identified as a mechanism for developing trust and relationships between these primary stakeholders.

CPS programs reported using a variety of formal mechanisms—such as emails, fliers, texts, and phone calls—to communicate with caregivers, students, and families. More than anything else, CPS directors emphasized wanting to build relationships and trust among CPS staff, caregivers, and families. As a result, a hybrid between formal and informal communication emerged as a potential best practice in relationship development. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, presented particular challenges to informal person-to-person communication of students and families with the stakeholders supporting the implementation of the Initiative. **As a result, many schools reported more creative ways of communicating with families, such as utilizing websites and social media to connect with families and students about programming and resources, and moving formalized meetings and interactions with supporting stakeholders online.**

Additionally, consistent and far-reaching communication about what the CPS model entails, the vision for its implementation, and its potential to contribute to schools and surroundings was a common challenge for schools. **Directors, administration, and partners highlighted the need for additional support in ensuring that messaging was consistent regarding the Initiative's goals and potential contributions.**

Communication Among Decision Makers

Director role in facilitating communication and collaboration. One key driver of success was **CPS directors who were able to facilitate communication and collaboration across the**

partners and school staff. Schools frequently described the role of directors as being responsible for management tasks (*n* = 15), such as overseeing coordinators and the provision of resources, and promoting collaborative leadership to help meet school needs. Similarly, schools shared that directors were responsible for communicating with school staff (*n* = 14) and partner agency (*n* = 13) staff. The burden of coordinating scheduled meetings and facilitating communication among decision-making groups also often fell to the CPS coordinators who work under the direction of the CPS Directors. Overall, directors facilitated communication across decision-making structures and supported collaboration among the partners.

Partner agency communication. Two of the most frequently noted components of an efficient CPS program were **a well-organized cabinet and Operations Team with regular formal communication**. This appeared to rely, in large part, on having a consistent schedule for meetings of core decision-making groups, such as regular meetings, formal agendas, and a mechanism for recording and sharing notes. In formal regularly scheduled meetings, communication was supported through the development of agendas and shared meeting notes to ensure that all contributors were informed of the content of current discussions. In addition to meeting agendas, such communications as emails, calendars, staff and school newsletters, meeting minutes, notes, timelines, task lists, and memos were reported as means of communicating outside the formal meeting space and keeping staff members on the same page.

Communication across partnerships was noted as challenging, in part because each unique agency held its own priorities, mission, and vision. The differences in perspective were seen as challenges to developing a common language and common goals from which to communicate about, plan, and strategize implementation of the Initiative. Additionally, **the time commitment and coordination efforts to ensure partner-to-partner communication and collaboration were noted as a potential barrier** to ensuring better communication. Also, creating a mutual understanding of the goals of the initiative among stakeholders, absenteeism in meetings, and turnover in partner agency positions were also noted as challenging in creating coherence and buy-in. The challenges of communicating across partner agencies seems to be a continuous theme, indicating a potential need for additional supports from the UCF Center for more opportunities to network and share.

Communication between school administration and directors. Informal communication and relationship building outside of standing meetings were described as helping facilitate a more seamless CPS Initiative. Directors and administrators frequently communicated about the model. Most schools (*n* = 12) reported that directors and school administrators consistently communicated with each other about the model, through informal discussions, formal meeting times, and/or emails. Most respondents (12 schools) reported that directors and school

administrators placed a priority on consistently communicating with each other about the model through informal discussions, formal meeting times, and emails. **In schools in which CPS directors and staff reported means to communicate both formally and informally, CPS Directors more frequently described themselves as well integrated into the school.** At one school where this kind of communication flow was evident, the director was reported as functioning as a member of the administration team**. More frequent communication allowed the director to anticipate school academic needs and troubleshoot things at a moment's notice.** Frequent informal communication, such as open-door policies between directors and school administration, was noted as a key to developing strong interpersonal relationships and a shared understanding of the goals for implementation among key stakeholders. More frequent communication allowed the director to anticipate school academic needs and troubleshoot things at a moment's notice. A CPS director provided an anecdote describing her relationship with the school's administrative team and the important role of informal communication:

> *"We see each other on a daily and it's a lot of informal conversations about, oh, let's try this, let's try that. Or what do you think of this? And they'll tell me, "Hey, this is a need. Is it something that you can support us on?" whether it's something from volleyball nets to finding a sponsor for pizza for our athletes on game days." They're constantly engaging me in and trying to figure out how can I help fill those gaps? Is it possible? Is it feasible? And so it's always me and them working to get creative. Let's figure this out. So it's constant communication with each other. . . . His [the school principal] door is always open. His thing is open door policy. If it's open, come in. I have his cell phone number. I can text him. The same thing with the Aps [Assistant Principals]. . . . That relationship building, that was super important." – CPS Director*

Communication With Parents, Students, and Community

CPS staff members reported prioritizing "meeting parents where they're at" by **using multiple modes of communication with caregivers about programming, resources, and opportunities to take leadership roles in the initiative.** Again, the theme of using informal strategies to develop relationships with caregivers, such as face-to-face meetings, word of mouth, and being on site when caregivers performed routine actions, like picking up students, was prominent. However, as we mentioned earlier, the COVID-19 pandemic made this kind of communication challenging. Many schools, however, reported rising to this challenge by diversifying their formal means of communicating with social media, text, and other remote platforms.

> *"We've got a pretty robust way of communicating things out, but the best response that we always see is when we get to have a conversation because of the trust that we have with our*

parents, and answering any questions and making sure they know who they can go to when they have a need." – CPS Director

Formal communication. To keep caregivers informed of program offerings and resources most CPS schools reported **using multiple strategies concurrently** to inform caregivers about the goals of the CPS initiative and to provide updates on progress. Schools reported using weekly email; fliers on school grounds, in classrooms, in the community, and sent home to students; infographics; and weekly newsletters. One school also reported developing CPS program packets detailing program initiatives, schedules, and contact information for family and engagement coordinators to distribute to caregivers. Invitations to PTAs, Community Leadership Councils (CLCs), resource fairs, virtual open houses, and other parent organizations were also sent directly to caregivers via mail or classroom handouts. Phone calls, robocalls, text messages, and text reminder apps were reported as being effective in informing caregivers about CPS events. CPS staff members also reported using social media pages on Twitter and Facebook, and posting regularly to the school's website to inform the community about program offerings. School marquee signs and signs in front of the school were also leveraged to advertise services. One school even reported partnering with a local television network to do a newscast about the neighborhood CPS school programs. Last, partnering with community organizations like churches to advertise was also reported as an effective means for recruitment of families for programs and resources. The most frequent communication means used for engaging parents were social media and flyers, followed by phone calls and texts.

Informal communication and relationship building. CPS directors and coordinators almost unanimously emphasized that their preferred way to reach caregivers was by **engaging in in-person communication and relationship building**. Several CPS directors discussed capitalizing on opportunities when parents came to school campuses. Opportunities to engage included approaching caregivers when they came to drop-off and pick up their children, reaching out when families came to discuss grades and behavioral issues, and initiating discussions during parent–teacher nights and other unrelated meetings. In these interactions, staff members could introduce themselves and/or provide information about CPS. Directors who used this strategy also reported that they were better able to meet student and family needs because they were more aware of the everyday goings-on of students. Many interviewees shared that informally developing relationships with parents was an effective strategy to develop trust in communities that have been traditionally marginalized by education and health institutions and might not have an underlying trust of these institutions.

When asked about what strategies were used to make sure parents and families were aware of CPS resources, a partner agency representative commented:

"Standing outside the school in the morning when parents are dropping off the kids. It's being there at school dismissal and at after school dismissal, but they also go door to door. They knock on the door, they hand you a flyer, they tell you, "Did you get what you need?" They say square mile—it's the most poverty-stricken square mile in our county. And so they're going door to door, for those people that might not be getting to the school. – District Representative

Needs Assessments and Progress Monitoring

Overview

Overall, the processes, goals, and quality of needs assessments and progress-monitoring activities varied among sites from robust and strategic to minimal efforts to collect and use data. However, all sites reported the importance and role of needs assessments in determining which services and programs should be implemented. All schools reported a focus on using data as part of the certification process, even if it was not a part of their day-to-day model of assessing implementation. There was reported **variance among sites in directors' access to data** (student outcome data, health metrics, etc.) and the internal capacity to analyze and interpret data. For example, CHS directors reported having access to an internal organizational unit within the CHS organization that facilitated data-sharing agreements and collected and analyzed data. Even with these additional resources at their disposal, however, both CHS and non-CHS directors emphasized the **importance of access to data and the time and means to interpret data as a key to informed decision making**. Last, partner agency representatives also reported valuing the ability to use data and metrics to make shared decisions, but said that the lack of a single structure to capture data from the different partner agencies made the process of gathering data onerous.

Use of data in decision making. One third of schools also indicated that administrators reviewed and discussed data with directors to support decision making. We describe the types of data collected and used in more detail in the sections below. The support of principals in understanding and interpreting data in collaboration with directors was noted as an important asset for directors, particularly for those directors who did not have a background in education. In one circumstance, a director shared that they had their staff do a "mini needs assessment" while parents were waiting to pick up their children. This strategy proved useful in both gathering feedback, informing families about the happenings at the school, and demonstrating a sense of care for families by school staff. Speaking about how their school used data to inform decision making, one district representative stated:

"[The principal and director] come around the table monthly to look at their data, just as I do with [the principal]. She does that with [the director] so that they can continue to have

that constant pulse of here we are, what's next, who do we need to engage. And I believe that report gets sent to UCF." – District representative

Needs Assessments

Conducting needs assessments. All CPS directors reported that they used needs assessments to shape the selection of programming and services in several areas. However, there **did not seem to be standardization regarding the ways in which sites conducted needs assessments, the data used to inform needs assessments, the focus of those assessments, or the support for directors in enacting decisions based on the needs assessment data.** Some directors shared that COVID-19 interrupted plans for a more comprehensive needs assessment and that more data were necessary for a complete picture of school and community needs. There seemed to be some commonalities in the way sites approached conducting the needs assessment, primarily relying on university or health partners to collect data and conduct analyses.

Interestingly, the output of the needs assessments appears to vary by the type of partner conducting the assessment. University partners in particularly appeared to generally collect universal information about the needs of families and the communities (health, education, food, housing, etc.), while health partners understandably focused on medical services they could provide to communities (eye care, dental care, immunizations, general medical care, etc.). In sites where partners conducted the needs assessments, the focus appeared to be driven largely by the partner and not informed by the school administration or the director. In several cases, the health partner reported conducting a secondary needs assessment focused on gauging health services, beyond an initial needs assessment required as part of the certification process. In determining services and programing, directors frequently differentiated between the role and importance of health-related data and the service and student outcome–related data. This variation aside, it stands to reason that relying on partners to do this important work may remove an additional burden from already busy directors and effectively leverage the expertise of the partners.

> *"Because what we realized is, for the last two years, we've been trying to get dental and vision and those things are important, but that was not what we needed. We needed more things concerning teaching us about how to stay healthy, meal prep programs, how to purchase food and manage your food on a budget, portion control. We needed those type of trainings for families. And so we've been able to kind of really be program based in our place in that area." – CPS director*

Many directors discussed data collected in the needs assessment process as pivotal for planning future services and programming. In particularly, several directors shared that the assessment of the current use and availability of certain services (medical, dental, health, mental health) for

parents and families played a key role in shaping the implementation of services. Some directors stated that COVID-19 interrupted plans for a more comprehensive needs assessment and that more data were needed for a complete picture of school and community needs. One respondent noted the importance of connecting with families to understand their needs.

This presented a challenge if directors did not have ready access to health or student data. One director shared the process of a focused needs assessment for families and students in need. At this particular school, the committee structures (Den, Hub, Health teams) of CPS support a triaged response to students who might be experiencing hardship or trauma.

> *"Well, actually, Coach, the same coach has been there for 30 years, sent a young man to the hub, because he had some bad tennis shoes on at PE class. Once we got to talking with him, it comes to find out they've been living in their car since before the pandemic started, so it's just that, that keen sense of the faculty and staff know that the hub will provide. It's just them referring them, and then once they get out to that hub, we're doing a total assessment. Are you and your family hungry? Do you and your family [have] any healthcare needs? Are you sleeping . . . at night? Do we need to get you a bed? So by just questioning him, it was a family of six living in their car for over a year and a half. We rely heavily on the teacher referral." – Director*

Progress Monitoring

Most respondents reported engaging in progress monitoring using key metrics, such as attendance and satisfaction surveys, to determine how well they were meeting the needs of students and families. In several schools, progress monitoring was the responsibility of the director, school administration, and district representatives. Data sources for progress monitoring were frequent surveys of students and parents, attendance in programming, uptake of resource use of health care and mental health supports, observations, needs biannual needs assessments, and student academic data. Most respondents reported focusing on data to determine how well they were meeting the needs of students and families. Sites that reported using academic data to monitor progress looked for trends in student learning, in terms of grades and frequent assessments, and tracked how well additional academic and enrichment programming was meeting the goals of the school. **The formal monitoring of programming quality varied from minimal investment to frequent review of several different data sources and metrics.** For example, some directors reported only looking at attendance rates on a quarterly basis to track how well programming was being taken up. Other directors reported a more intentional focus in reviewing data, such as monthly or bimonthly assessments of attendance, regular student surveys, and other metrics (e.g., behavioral data, service referrals).

> *"Data is all tracked. Each one of my coordinators has their provider reports for the week. They have their data follow-up with each one of those providers. . . . So our yoga instructor*

has to sit down with that coordinator and come up with goals for four weeks at a time. We also only run our enrichments and our tutoring for eight weeks at a time and then we stop and we assess with our tutors or we stop and we assess [the programming]. And then we either decide which students need to continue . . . with it and it's assisting with their mental health goals or with their academic goals or which students can cycle back out of it and we can bring in new kids that might have been identified." – Director

Two sites reported collecting data aligned with the outcomes related to each of the CPS pillars. Each stated that, because programming was aligned with the pillars (e.g., health outcomes), data associated with each pillar would be collected and analyzed regularly to determine the reach and effectiveness of programming.

"..so my coordinators collect data on their three pillars. So any program we do aligns with one of those three pillars. And they take that data, and on the goal score card, before that, on this Excel spreadsheet, it's called the service delivery metrics, and at the bottom it says weekly, monthly, quarterly, or something of that nature. So weekly, my staff knows that they have to input what went on that week in the weekly, so that's how we keep track on what's going on. And it's so unique that it'll go from weekly to monthly without them having to calculate, it's that kind of calculator, and so that's how we keep track of everything. They record something daily, I just look for weekly, monthly, quarterly for me." – Director

Some directors reported having additional support for program and outcomes monitoring through their nonprofit partner's data analysts and data-sharing agreements between the nonprofit and districts. However, regardless of nonprofit partner direct access to student data from districts, such as grades and test scores, monitoring appears to vary depending on how well integrated the director is into the school system. For example, directors who were not considered to be school district employees often reported not being able to access even basic student academic data through school systems, even if their home agency was able to request and draw data on the directors' behalf.

Challenges to Conducting Needs Assessments and Progress Monitoring

Lacking data-sharing agreements between districts and partners and lacking the infrastructure to share data across partner agencies were the primary challenges to using data in decision making. Additionally, directors reported variation in their capacity to access data and in their training to analyze and use data.

Data sharing with districts. Many directors reported **lacking access to student data because there was no data-sharing agreement in place** with the district and the nonprofit partner agency. This was described as particularly frustrating for directors who otherwise felt

integrated within the school but could not access the appropriate data to see if programming was having an impact on student academic growth or attendance.

Data sharing between partners. Sharing data and metrics among partner agencies appears to be particularly challenging for directors and governing boards that were trying to make data-based decisions when selecting programming and determining services. Specifically, because **partner organizations do not share data systems, pulling data together from each partner** (university, health care, district, and nonprofit) to assess the progress of services and programming in each of the areas partners served was described as cumbersome and, in some cases, impossible. It seems that, in schools where the university is conducting the needs assessment, that information was given to a secondary body or committee to decide on the way to enact changes that support growth in identified areas.

> *"Access to the school without any barriers would be great because we're dealing with so many different institutions, we're dealing with a school, we're dealing with a healthcare organization, we're dealing with another nonprofit. There's three different HR departments, there's three different systems. And so, if I had an easier path of access to [our] county public school systems and all their stuff, that would make things a lot easier. . . . And then the same thing with our health partners, if I could access their systems [much more easily], then that would solve the data problems. I could have them talking easier, as well, but that's what we're working on now is solving those problems so the data can flow freely." –*
> *Coordinator focus group*

The Role of Certification in Implementation

Overview

All CPS schools engage in a process of certification through the UCF Center. Schools are expected to make progress toward certification over a period of 5 years of implementation. The certification process includes four phases that each CPS school is expected to progress through:

1. Early certification phase, typically associated with implementation planning or Years 1 and 2 of CPS implementation

2. Readiness assessment phase, in which schools are assessing their readiness to undergo the certification process

3. Certification phase, in which schools are actively being assessed for certification

4. Post-certification and post-certification assessment phases, in which schools have been certified and may be seeking post-certification assessment in order to keep their certification status

To achieve certification, a CPS must demonstrate that the school aligns with the model's core components and has reached the implementation benchmarks defined by UCF-Certified Community Partnership Schools™ Standards. To demonstrate that a school has reached these implementation benchmarks, it must provide evidence it has met the twelve standards and accompanying indicators, ranging from 7 to 22 indicators per standard. To become a UCF-Certified CPS, a school must score at least 50% proficient in meeting each standard. After an external review, the UCF Center then determines certification status. Schools that do not reach certification status will receive ongoing support and may apply for certification once a year until certification status is reached. Schools that reach certification status must recertify every *5 years* to keep their certification status.[4]

Summary of findings. Across certified and pre-certified sites using the **standards as a roadmap, prioritizing organization and mentorship, and integrating the standards into planning and programming,** were noted as useful strategies for navigating the certification process. The certification process was described frequently as taxing process for schools requiring an investment of time and resources to gather the necessary data, keep all partners aligned in meeting the standards, and providing the necessary documentation for review and certification. Certified schools identified challenges related to rigidity of the certification requirements and lack of partner alignment while navigating the process. Pre-certified sites identified funding, balancing competing demands, and human capital as significant challenges.

Certification Process and Alignment With Implementation

Providi0ng a road map. Schools at various stages of certification often described the certification process as a roadmap to design the core or framework of the Initiative. The certification process was frequently reported as being a challenging and sometimes overwhelming task. However, most respondents reported that the process was a useful experience in supporting implementation of the Initiative.

There was broad agreement from both certified and pre-certified schools that the UCF certification process and the 12 standards were useful in terms of both implementation and planning work. Stakeholders emphasized the necessity of balancing the needs of their individual communities in a way that aligned with the standards.

> *"Who are we trying to help? It's obviously on this certification for a reason. And we just kind of take that breath and step back and say, "Holistically, again, if you're looking at this whole document, what are we trying to accomplish?" And it definitely has pushed us. There are*

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[4] Information about certification taken from the UCF Center website: https://ccie.ucf.edu/communityschools/services/assessment/#certified

definitely things that we probably would've given up on years ago, either because the partner was challenging or the item itself is challenging, or maybe we didn't see at the time why it was important. But now that we're years into this and we're seeing all of these things line up together, I certainly think it pushed us to be better at what we were already doing and inclusive of things that we would've probably never thought to include."
– Nonprofit partner

Integrating the standards. Thirteen respondents (five directors, four district partner representatives, two partner agencies, and two principals) reported efforts to infuse the standards into everything that they did so that it became a cohesive part of implementation. For example, respondents frequently described using the standards as **a blueprint to guide their vision, goals, and strategic plans so that they always operated with the standards in mind**. In these instances, it was key that programming always tied back to identifiable pillars or goals. One CPS director who is in the precertification stage commented about how it informed their work:

"Monthly with our cabinet, there's usually something that I'm talking about with standards or connecting why we're doing something to a standard or our goals and outcomes. Our goals and outcomes are connected to the pillars. And the pillars are connected to the standard. I think it all goes together constantly. So it may be multiple times in a day. And then it may be the next week because we've just covered it so intensely. It might be once or twice that week. But it definitely comes up at just about every meeting or conversation." – CPS director, precertification

Schools that took this approach emphasized that standards dictated their goals and work for the school year. Pre-certified schools tended to describe the standards not just as helpful in terms of goal setting but also as a reminder to remain accountable and measure progress more so than certified schools. For newer initiatives, the standards were often used as a grounding mechanism to keep everyone on the same page.

Successful Strategies for Navigating Certification

Directors and partners reflected on the process of certification and what supports they had either previously used (for certified schools) or are currently relying on to support their progress through the certification process. Five strategies and supports were the most frequently referenced (see Figure 2). We describe these in more detail in the sections below.

Prioritizing organization early. Schools that successfully navigated the certification process noted that careful planning, good organization, and distributing standards equally among stakeholders were particularly helpful for completing the process. Pre-certified schools also noted the importance of good organization and a healthy distribution of tasks in the

certification process. These sites emphasized team efforts and an all-hands-on-deck approach; assigned stakeholders tasks to collect artifacts, evidence, and draft narratives; and centralized a place where all documents should go.

Figure 2. Successful Strategies for Certification

- Organizational strategy
- Technical assistance from UCF Center
- Mentorship from certified schools
- Participation in the peer review process
- Director Resource Library
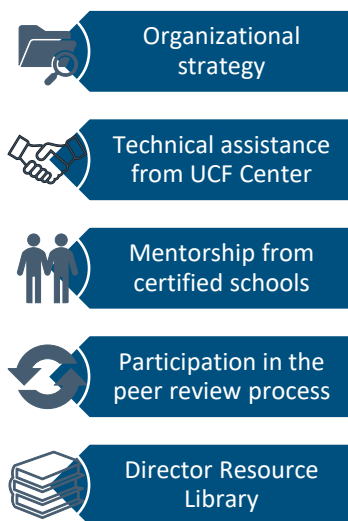
School-to-school mentorship. Both certified and pre-certified schools identified mentorship from certified schools as a strategy used on the road to certification. Certified CPS programs more frequently noted reaching out directly to UCF or staff members at other certified schools for more direct feedback and guidance on the way they previously navigated the process of certification.

Technical assistance. All directors reported that UCF Center staff provided useful and timely one-on-one support as schools navigated the certification process. One-on-one TA from the UCF Center's staff was the most consistently mentioned support for understanding the requirements of the process, identifying artifacts and data, and understanding the way to report findings in alignment with the pillars and standards. Directors at one larger nonprofit agency also reported having additional one-on-one TA support through their own organization. This nonprofit has additional staff dedicated to helping schools reach certification.

Peer review process. Two directors spoke about the experience of participating in the peer review process for certification. They described the process as a meaningful experience that helped them develop a deep understanding of the certification process and allowed for reflection on ways to support their schools in navigating the process. The experience was described as a professional development opportunity that all directors should participate in.

"I think every single one of us will tell you that after we've been in that peer assessment assessor position you walk away feeling like you got a week-long individual training from UCF of really what everything means and picking apart every single piece of the standards. And you have a better understanding once you're done with that, but it's also helpful because you're not able to do it until you get to a certain point in your own program. . . . So it's really done at a nice point in your own program's progression and your progression as a director to truly be in a place where you can assess another program, but you leave there also feeling like you got professional development yourself and have a better understanding." – CPS director

Static resources. Precertified schools often noted using static resources developed and maintained by the UCF Center—for example, the director resource library maintained by the UCF Center and the certification handbook created by the UCF Center.

Certification Challenges

Primary challenges to schools moving through the certification process included managing the paperwork and data collection, in addition to their regular responsibilities; rigidity of the parameters of certification in ways that did not allow for local context to be prioritized; and managing partner activities to meet certification requirements. Both certified and precertified schools reported the common challenges as management of the process and having enough staff to collect data and complete the paperwork process (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Challenges by Certification Status

Certified schools
- Lack of space for local context
- Balancing partner interests

Precertified schools
- Concerns about sustaining funding
- Balancing demands
- Content expertise
- Data collection and process management

Lack of space for local context. Respondents from six schools expressed frustration about the structure of the certification process, viewing it **as too "cookie cutter" or too much of a "checklist**." These schools reported meeting the requirements of the certification process but also shared that some parts of the requirements were too focused on bureaucratic processes and not allowing for contextual modifications. There were instances in which the standards were thought to be unclear or less relevant to the families served. Some directors shared that UCF parent engagement measures didn't take into consideration the reality of the families they served. Parent engagement may look different for low-income households. When asked about the role the certification process has in supporting model implementation one district partner representative noted:

"I think that my frustration towards the end was with that. I felt like so many conversations led to, "Well, we have to do this A, B and C to be certified." And anybody that is left there will tell you, I would always say, "We're not going to sit here and check boxes." Because it started to feel like that's what we were doing, but we had to, you have to, because you have to have that funding. You can't operate without that legislative appropriation. It would be very hard, but that certification process makes every community school requires the exact same things and then you become a process, a program instead of doing what your community needs. And that was always a concern of mine." – District partner representative

Balancing partner interests. Certified stakeholders discussed the difficulty in managing partner interests, conflict in terms of **aligning vision, and keeping all partners focused on the same goals and standards.** CPS directors who encountered this challenge often emphasized the importance of tying programming and goals back to specific standards so they could meet the requirements for certification. This particular challenge could well be related to the suggestions that the certification requirements did not allow for local context to be infused into the certification process.

Funding. Schools that were not yet certified were vocal about the challenges of the financial burden to sustain funding without state aid. This financial concern created tension among partners and required partners to focus more on fund-raising efforts than on implementation efforts. Respondents expressed frustration that **the process of certification might imply that their school models might be viewed as less valid without UCF approval**.

Balancing demands in managing the process. Several respondents reported that **balancing their day-to-day work with the work of data collection, organization of documents, and ensuring that stakeholders had access to certification information** was challenging. In the previous section, we noted that having an organizational strategy for approaching the paperwork was helpful in the process, but schools that did not capitalize on this approach appeared to struggle even more with balancing the demands of certification. Some stakeholders reported that they found it difficult, during the certification process, to balance priorities within the 12 standards and not get lost in the weeds of the entire certification package. These stakeholders discussed difficulty in balancing the day-to-day operations of the school and its partnerships and maintaining the big picture of the standards. One partner agency shared:

> *"With CPS, I think there're so many program components. I think that it could be easy for us to . . . easy to lose your way, because I think regardless, you're serving the community, you're meeting needs. And so I think by having the certification process, though, you can ensure that you're really focusing on the more strategic, higher level pieces that will help sustain change and growth over time, and not just the immediate buyers that are popping up in front of you . . . it can be overwhelming when you're coming in and trying to work with all these different partners and work with what the school wants versus what other folks might need, and so I just appreciate it, even though is a lot, but I think it's great to be able to ensure that we're focused on what we need to be focused on." – CPS Partner Agency (Precertification)*

Content expertise. The job of the CPS director requires wearing many hats, some of which directors may not have the content knowledge or training to adequately address. For example, understanding school improvement plans, and aggregating and disaggregating data were areas

of the certification process directors reported struggling with if they did not have a background in the education field. Additionally, other stakeholders, such as school administrators and coordinators, expressed similar struggles in addressing standards that were not aligned with their training or educational background. **Additional professional development for stakeholders involved in the certification process could be an area of needed support from the UCF Center.**

Implementation Challenges

Interviewees discussed a variety of challenges their programs faced, in addition to those created by the pandemic. Four overarching primary challenges emerged from our analysis of qualitative data: (1) funding, (2) staffing, (3) developing investment, and (4) parent and student engagement. Some of these challenges have been noted as related to the previous section on vision, decision making, and communication. Figure 4 displays challenges most frequently reported by interviewees, by role. Interviewees also reported (less frequently) encountering difficulties clarifying responsibilities and expectations within the CPS model, creating general buy-in, having enough time to perform tasks, and data-sharing with districts and among partners. We describe each of these challenges and their impact on implementation in greater detail in the sections below.

Variance in focus. While school administrators primarily reported being concerned with funding and student and parent engagement, CPS directors reported focusing on establishing relationships and communication with internal and external stakeholders, followed by funding, and then staffing. Coordinators with the most direct role in implementation, reported primarily being concerned with staffing and student and family engagement. We describe each of these challenges in greater detail below.

Figure 4. Primary Challenges Reported by Respondent Role
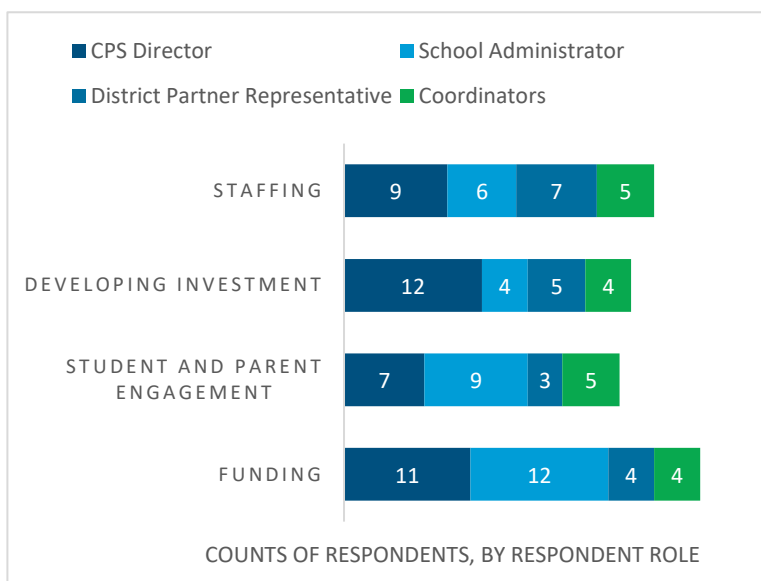
COUNTS OF RESPONDENTS, BY RESPONDENT ROLE

Note: Data used in this chart comes from interviews with school administrators, CPS Directors, partner agency representatives, and school coordinators

Funding

Interviewees in almost every school referenced funding as a major barrier to implementation—in particular, the way to sustain the model when the grant expired, as well as general issues with funding the CPS model. Among the pillars, interviewees identified health care services as the most difficult to fund because of having to negotiate with insurance companies for reduced prices on services. Several interviewees noted specifically the challenge of financing construction of an onsite health facility. Generally, **schools located in rural areas and schools served by the smaller reach nonprofit partners were more likely to report encountering issues with funding and resource accessibility**. One CPS director from a rural school expressed frustration at having to the meet the same expectations for her school as the schools that *"have probably 10 times the resources available in those geographical areas than what we have here."* Another CPS director noted that being the only CPS school in her district made it more difficult for her to access resources to sustain programming. One CPS director noted that rural and urban schools encounter different challenges to the CPS model:

> *"Funding things in rural areas are tough, but that's why we should do it. Because rural communities deserve CPS models just as much as an urban community. And while our poverty and while our need looks different on the surface, it's still just as deep and just as critical to address." - CPS Director*

Staffing

Disruptions from attrition. Nearly every school identified staffing as an implementation challenge—in terms of **recruitment, retention, and attrition**. Approximately half the schools (seven schools) indicated that turnover among partners and/or school staff was a challenge. Turnover on the administration and/or partner agency-level was **disruptive to relationships** between partners and CPS staff, as well as requiring **effort for onboarding and developing buy-in**. Lack of staff and staff turnover have the potential to impact all parts of implementation—decision making, investment, communication, and the practical implications of being able to offer additional programs and services. Respondents, for example, reported the way turnover could produce challenges with communication and caused the need to educate new staff about the model. Speaking about the way principal turnover specifically impacts the work of implementation, one director stated:

> *"One of the hardest change[s] in the model is that changing over of the principal. Sometimes it works out great because sometimes the other principal was beholden to what they wanted and a new principal is like, "Oh, the possibilities." It's hard to shift because principals have to come in and they have a certain way to do things." – CPS Director*

Eleven schools reported experiencing high rates of other CPS staff turnover, which also required efforts to retrain and onboard new staff. One CPS director explained the way staff turnover impacted their program:

"I've had multiple regional executive directors. That impacts my work. We changed from our old principal to the principal we have now. That changed because her style is different from his style to an extent, even though she was there in the beginning of the model being there, she's a different person than him. And if she gets moved, we'll have a different principal. You know, we have a different assistant principal right now. So leadership changes, teacher changes. If the teacher retires, who was a huge supporter of ours and we get all these new teachers in, we've got to acclimate them to the work that we're doing. So there's a number of different barriers that come to mind when I think about the model." – CPS director

Need for additional staffing. In addition to the director position, the CPS model requires additional positions, such as coordinators for parent engagement, student services, and health services, in addition to staff and volunteers to carry out additional programming and to provide health, mental health, and social services to students and families. About half of respondents reported that recruiting and retaining additional staff and volunteers to fill these positions presented a significant barrier to implementing the model. Respondents also stated that turnover could produce challenges with communication, as well as additional effort required to onboard new staff. Coordinators participating in focus groups reported feeling overwhelmed and overtasked, with coordinators from two separate focus groups suggesting that they would benefit from having interns to perform the administrative parts of their job. Five schools reported experiencing difficulties staffing their Operations Team, with three schools currently lacking one of the three key coordinator positions.

Approximately half the schools indicated that turnover among partner staff and school administration was a challenge in developing relationships, establishing communication norms, and garnering buy-in from new stakeholders. Respondents attributed difficulties in hiring to the need for Spanish-speaking staff but limited applicants with this skill set, as well as the low pay for positions. The need for more volunteers was also discussed by five of the six focus groups with coordinators. Volunteers typically staffed both programming and events such as foodbanks and health fairs. Additionally, the pandemic conditions were described as exacerbating the challenges of finding qualified staff and recruiting volunteers.

Finally, partners shared that changes in partners or partnership staff were challenging because these changes interrupted the establishment of relationships and common understanding of goals and direction. **Establishing structures to support staff transitions, promote staff retention, and increase principal buy-in would help the success of CPS Initiatives,** as these were all cited as signification challenges.

Developing Investment

Partner investment. As we discussed in the "Decision Making" section above, more than half of the schools identified partner collaboration and investment as a challenge. Three schools explicitly referred to struggling with one partner's not doing their share of work, reporting that at least one of the core partners was frequently absent from meetings. Challenges with relationship building and investment of partner agencies also impact decision making and overall ability to implement the model as intended. **When one partner does not contribute the implementation of the model becomes a one-legged stool leaving other partners to navigate the way to compensate.**

Principal buy-In. Turnover in the principal position, a lack of understanding of the CPS initiative by the principal, and a focus on achieving academic growth required by a school identified as a turnaround school were all factors described as creating potential barriers to principals' investment **in the Initiative. One-third of schools (five schools) indicated that principal buy-in was a challenge, often referring to the challenges associated with turnover within the model.** Two directors reported that they worked with principals who valued academic improvements more than the other contributions of the model. One director shared that, with administrator turnover, they *"operated in silos,"* and that a new principal *"had no idea that this [school] was [a] community partnership school."* Furthermore, two directors reported that they worked with principals who valued academic improvement more than the other facets of the model, which support health, enrichment programming, and other support services for students and families. The Directors stated that they believed principals were central to communicating a shared vision across stakeholders and providing the needed support for implementation of the initiative. Speaking about this challenge and its relationship to the principal's veto power in deciding on which programs and services are funded, one director elaborated:

> *"And one of the key pieces to the standards is the principal has veto power. . . . And yet we have a plan that's been in place for three years or two years or five years, and somebody else comes in and maybe they don't buy into the whole model, or they don't understand it yet. Or even more challenging, maybe their school is not a performing school, and so they're underperforming and they're in that D or F or a DA turnaround school. And so that also impacts them, because if I'm a principal, my job depends on that grade turning around. So, I can have all the fantastic supports and services, but if the grade does not move, the school grade based on testing, nothing else really matters from a district perspective."* – Director

Similarly, garnering school principal buy-in was expanded on at length by one nonprofit partner as being instrumental to supporting the Initiative and posing both a challenge and an opportunity for the UCF Center to provide additional supports.

Family and Student Engagement

Developing trusting relationships. Over half the schools (eight schools) indicated that they experienced challenges with family and/or community engagement. Respondents from two of these schools reported that COVID-19 had made family engagement more difficult because of the necessary safety protocols. Respondents from two other schools also indicated that having staff who spoke the same language as families was "critical," as these staff members supported the development of trust and relationships between the school and family members. As mentioned above, finding qualified staff who are also Spanish language speakers was reported as challenging for several schools.

Utilization of services. Although schools often reported more challenges with family engagement than with student engagement, many reported difficulty getting their students to utilize health care services. Specifically, low utilization of health care facilities was identified as a challenge in four schools. Part of the challenge appeared to be logistical. For example, for students to access health care services, parents needed to first sign consent forms. Several coordinators identified consent forms as a major barrier to access to health care services. However, low utilization of health services was also attributed to difficulties in generating trust and buy-in from families. As the quote above below illustrates, trust in the health care providers is essential for parents to consider using the health care services.

> *"So you really have to do some relationship building with these families to help them know that one, we're not here to take your child. We're not here to deport you or report you. We are here to provide a service that should strengthen and stabilize your family and help you. So you really have to focus on your relationship building first. Bridge that gap, remove some of those barriers, let them see that you are not the enemy, even if it's just speaking to them a few times outside." – CPS Director*

COVID-19-Related Challenges

The emergence of COVID-19 challenged CPS schools to develop new and creative ways to provide needed services and programming. The most prominent obstacles presented by COVID-19 for CPS programs included meeting student and family needs, shifts in programming focus, adapting programs' frequency and delivery, and maintaining communication among students, families, and partners. Several CPS schools reported being uniquely positioned to meet emerging student and family needs; particularly in areas in which other schools and institutions could not. In many cases, CPS schools reported becoming a one-stop shop for family support services. **Two factors appeared to contribute to the adaptability of CPS schools: (1) the already existing infrastructure created with CPS support and (2) having preexisting structures and relationships to meet a broad array of family needs.** Schools shared that they were able to maintain family social services programming and, in some cases, expanded access to services.

Success in meeting student and family needs. Respondents described that the culture of being a CPS school allowed them to be open and flexible with strategies to meet new and emerging family needs. For example, having already invested the time and effort to create a common vision among partner agencies created a "culture of yes" in which partners were aligned and experienced in working together to solve difficult issues. During the pandemic, many CPS schools reported that they maintained and/or expanded social service components. Priorities for many schools included food pantries and food delivery; offering hot meals to students, families, and community members; securing laptops and free internet accounts/mobile hot spots to ensure equitable access to distance learning; offering free COVID-19 testing; expanding telehealth options for medical care and mental health care; and maintaining spaces where families could get clothing. In order to deliver these services and remain COVID-19 compliant many CPS schools developed creative ways to meet families where they were. Some examples included drive up/drive through options, pop up markets/events and home delivery of resources to meet family needs.

One principal also shared that, while they shifted to remote instruction, the school never fully closed its doors during the pandemic. The principal reported that they were able to keep their food pantry open and share their resources with students and families from other schools. While teachers were instructing students using distance learning, other school staff members remained in the building to keep the food pantry open and to offer food distribution to members of the community. Established connections with community providers allowed their students to have laptops and access to the internet, and provided these services to families of other schools. The principal described the way they addressed the onset of the pandemic:

> *"No administrator could tell you that they were ready for this and every administrator will tell you that we were not ready for this. But it helps that I have an organization that supports just some of the needs and then when we stepped back, it was like, don't focus on the pandemic. Focus on the needs. So what needs are coming from the pandemic? And so that helped me kind of think about, "Okay, so with my Community School model, I have all of these things already." So for me, it was like, "Well, wait a minute. So I can stop hyperventilating because we're already doing the things. . . ." So where there's the schools that have not done the things that we're doing or are not doing [them] because of the pandemic, they have to kind of revamp and rethink about, "Oh, I need to handle things differently." We were already there. So it helped that I had my Community School director kind of help me think that through and my leadership team just to kind of step back and say, "Okay, what do we have in place already?" And again, not really focus necessarily on the pandemic, but the needs [that're] coming from the pandemic and then how do you place yourself and your organization with those needs?" – School Principal*

Success expanding health care services. Several respondents from schools and partners noted that the move to virtual health care services, such as telehealth visits, actually increased the uptake of services because of convenience and the ability to participate in health care visits without entering a clinic or hospital. Virtual communication was most convenient for parents during the pandemic. In particular, the move to telehealth was beneficial in rural communities where traveling to doctor visits was described as more cumbersome because of distance and lack of readily available local transit.

Challenges in communicating with partners. In schools that had not yet established regular meetings with partners or had struggled to engage partners in decision making prepandemic, virtual communication was reported as very challenging. One CPS director noted that, after the onset of the pandemic, communication among members of the Executive Committee fell apart. The director stated that the Operations Team was trying to maintain the current programming until they received updates from the Executive Committee.

> *". . . . The pandemic started March 2020, and it's been very hard to get all partners engaged, I guess, the way they were before the pandemic, because I feel . . . this is just my opinion . . . that they're having to be concerned with their own entities during the pandemic."*
> *– CPS Director*

However, for other schools with a previously strong partner relationship, transitioning to Zoom meetings and other virtual formats allowed more consistent communication between CPS committees. Zoom allowed for stakeholders to avoid traveling for meetings, and thus, many stakeholders reported that meetings were more accessible and well attended.

Key Drivers and Promising Practices in Implementation
Our evaluation of implementation of the CPS Initiative at the 15 schools in our sample revealed several key components of implementation that seemed to drive integration of the model into the school day, ensured that the four pillars of support functioned well, and supported the provision of wraparound services to students and families.

We highlight the following primary drivers of implementation:

- **Vision for implementation** and the goals associated with that vision drive the overall implementation of the model.

- **Partner understanding and commitment** to implementation of the model, within the context of the shared vision, ensure that the four pillars support implementation.

- **Shared decision making** *equally among all partners* creates a functional and efficient implementation effort.

- **The process of certification and attention to the 12 standards provides an implementation road map** and can keep schools from losing their focus over time on the shared vision and goals of the school.

Some of these components and drivers are not surprising, given the structure of the CPS model as intended. For example, the importance of having a strong director to move implementation of the Initiative along is fundamental to the role outlined in the CPS framework. Further, the role that the standards and process of certification play in helping schools develop a robust implementation of the model by the fifth critical year is also a core component of the CPS framework and vision for ideal implementation. Some key drivers appear to be implicit in the model, such as establishing shared decision making. However, the evidence points to the need for additional thought and intention to successfully ensure that such a key component is present. For example, it is not enough to have the six essential committees established to guarantee shared decision making. Rather, to have a functional shared decision-making structures in place where decisions are shared equally among all partners, it may be necessary to have in place additional intentional communication structures, relationships, and procedural structures (e.g., rotating agenda control, voting on decisions). In Table 2, below, we summarize findings in each area of implementation that we presented in the implementation evaluation: the role of each key component in implementation, cautions from the field, and promising practices revealed through data collection activities.

Table 2. Summary of Findings for Key Drivers of Implementation, Cautions, and Promising Practices

Topic area	Cautions	Promising practices
Shared vision: The vision for implementation **shapes the services and opportunities** that are instantiated as part of the initiative. Understanding of the CPS model by all partners is key to ensuring that the vision aligns with the standards and is contextually appropriate for the school and community.	• **The one-legged stool occurs if any one partner dominates the vision for implementation or is not fully committed to the CPS vision.** • Turnover in key stakeholders (e.g., partner representatives, school administration, directors) can disrupt aligning of the vision.	• Implementing additional structures to ensure equal representation in establishing vision, such as partners' taking turns in establishing agendas, can support a shared vision. • Proper onboarding of key partner stakeholders to understand the CPS model and the context and needs of the school and community can help with vision alignment.
Shared decision making: Aligned with developing a shared vision, establishing **regular formal structures for authentic shared decision making** among partners is a key driver of effective implementation. Ensuring shared decision making also requires additional support in communication structures, formal processes **for guaranteeing that the agenda is not dominated by any single partner** and that frequent touch points exist among all key stakeholders.	• When one partner is given the room to dominate the agenda for meetings and decisions, other partners may disinvest in participation in decision-making bodies. • Too many formal meetings and decision-making bodies can cause overburden and confusion from partners. • Clarity around the expectations and roles in the CPS framework are necessary to ensure that partners are aligned in expectation of participation and level of engagement.	• School principal investment in the model and frequent collaboration with the director supports shared decision making. • Additional formal structures to support shared decision making and investment in participation include voting rules for decision making and establishing a cadence for times when each partner leads the agenda and facilitates meetings. • Having a centralized location for meeting notes, agendas, and supporting documents can help facilitate communication of decisions among partners.

Topic area	Cautions	Promising practices
Communication: In schools in which **consistent formal and informal communication takes place between the school administration and director**, respondents reported that the initiative was embedded in the school day. Directors who also **facilitated communication among partners** through formal means reported greater partner cohesion. Finally, **a robust communication plan for caregivers** via formal methods (e.g., social media, fliers, text message) and informally (e.g., conversations at drop-off and pick up) ensured engagement and development of trusting relationships with families.	• Lack of communication or opportunities to share information between directors and school administration appears to lead to a model of separate services in one school rather than a cohesive school initiative. • Lack of means to share information and communicate regularly with partners may lead to disinvestment.	• Meetings between the director and administration occurring both formally and frequently, as well as an open-door policy, build relationships and establishes trust. • Including the director in school administration and staffing meetings regularly (e.g., administrative team, grade-level meetings) may help with integration. • Structured regular communication pathways with key partner agency stakeholders is key to aligning efforts. • Another promising practice is using a combination of social media, text messages, and written announcements to make caregivers aware of programs and services. • Utilizing natural touchpoints (e.g., drop-off and pick up, report card days) helps develop relationships with caregivers.

Topic area	Cautions	Promising practices
Data use in decision making: The use of data to drive decision making is built into the process of certification. All respondents noted that **important data on needs, as well as progress, and program/service quality** were key to ensuring successful implementation of the model.	• A lack of data-sharing agreements between districts and other partners leads to many sites' being unable to access key data points, such as student-related indicators. • Lacking the infrastructure and data-sharing agreements between partners leads to a lack of necessary data for shared decision making. • Directors' are challenged in fulfilling their role if they lack training or background knowledge of the types of data from each partner and lack capacity and knowledge to analyze and understand data.	• With a variety of areas of expertise, partners can make contributions in conducting needs assessments that lead to a robust understanding of needs in the school and surrounding community. • School-day and program staff' having mechanisms to contribute data (e.g., referrals, observational notes, surveys) leads to more robust understanding of needs and progress of implementation and engages a broader group of stakeholders in continuous improvement. • Directors can leverage additional capacity provided by key partners in order to collect and understand related data.
Certification process: The standards and guiding indicators in the certification process served as a roadmap for schools. This **roadmap allowed schools to stay focused on the key components of implementing the CPS model with fidelity**. The standards were also reported in some schools to be key drivers of the vision for CPS implementation.	• The process can be onerous because of the number of standards, specific aligned indicators, and associated paperwork and evidence to meet certification. Additional supports for managing the process may be necessary. • If partners are not aligned in vision or investment in the model, the certification process can be both challenging and less meaningful in driving implementation (e.g., "just a check box"). • The lack of variation to account for local context and needs creates some level of disinvestment from partners in the certification process as a meaningful tool for implementation.	• Mentorship from schools that had been through certification was reported as very helpful in navigating the process. • One-on-one support from the UCF Center staff was noted many times as beneficial for navigating the process. • Some agencies have additional internal capacity to provide directors with one-on-one supports and documents to assist with planning for certification. • Directors who participated in the peer review process reported developing a deeper understanding of the certification requirements.

Schools' Goals for Future CPS Expansion

Nearly half the schools (*n* = 7), recognizing the supports that the model's collaboration produces, shared they would like to see the model expand into more communities, including those within their districts. One principal stated:

> *"I think [the CPS model] can relieve a school . . . so that the people who are experts in teaching and in working with kids can focus on what they're good at, rather than trying to fill all these other holes . . . in the long run, that would impact kids, and their families, and the community so much better if educators can focus on education, and they can help with all the other pieces that kind of get in the way. I really feel every Title I school should have a community partner." – CPS director*

One District Partner shared that they could build on their work at the existing CPS school to expand the model, stating, "I think we definitely highlight and leverage [CPS leaders] as mentors as we try to incorporate these components of [the model] at other schools." Expanding the model (within the district) may also better support families and students who have had to move to other schools, as they would be able to receive similar resources in their new settings.

Moreover, one director suggested that increasing the UCF Center's coordination with legislators might help secure more funding for the model. The director said that, when schools advocated for the model independently, legislators . . .

> *"…just hear more funding for a program. Whereas if we could do more of celebrating the accolades, and celebrating the processes that we've done, and how that's actually in some ways saved money for other types of opportunities, and then why we're really asking or requesting for this area, then they can start to see where it's not always an ask for money, sometimes it's an ask for, "Can you help us to break down barriers?" – CPS director*

The director proposed that, if the UCF Center were able to facilitate connections between schools and legislature, schools would have a collective opportunity to share the benefits of being a CPS school.

Section 3. UCF Center Supports

The UCF Center provides a suite of supports for schools implementing the CPS initiative, as well as support for the initiative as a whole. In this evaluation, we focused our efforts on understanding the way the support provided directly to schools was taken up by schools in our

sample. Specifically, the UCF Center offers targeted support to recertified and certified CPS through

- one-on-one technical assistance, including navigation of certification requirements, data collection and analysis, project management, and management of partner agency relations

- professional development opportunities for directors and partner stakeholders

- facilitation of networking events, professional development workshops for partner agencies, and regular director learning exchanges (DLEs)

- development of static materials and resources for CPS schools in a variety of areas

We asked directors and partner agency representatives their experiences and reflections on the supports provided by the UCF Center, including those supports they felt were most valuable in certification and the day-to-day management of the initiative. These data were used to address the following implementation-related evaluation question: To what extent does the technical assistance provided by UCF support the implementation of the CPS model, and what types of services are most useful in supporting implementation with high fidelity?

We highlight our primary findings in Table 3, and then describe the most useful and necessary supports in detail in the sections that follow.

Table 3. Most Useful and Necessary Supports, and Related Considerations From Directors School Administrators and Partner Agency Representative Interviews

Most useful supports	Necessary supports	Additional considerations
• One-on-one technical assistance • Opportunities to share with other schools, partners, and directors	• Early and more robust onboarding on the certification process • Topic-specific professional development for directors • Professional development for directors on data collection analysis, and use • Retreats for nonprofit partner agencies	• Some nonprofit partner agencies have similar internal structures of support. Directors associated with the nonprofit saw less value in the supports from the UCF Center because of this parallel.

Most Useful Supports

Variation in usefulness, by respondent role. Overall, respondents spoke positively about all of the supports that were provided by the UCF Center, in particular, the one-on-one technical assistance provided by Center staff. Respondents differed somewhat by role in terms of how useful they found professional development opportunities, networking meetings, and

workshops. Directors varied according to their associated nonprofit agency in terms of how useful they found any of the resources, DLE meetings, and professional development opportunities provided by the UCF Center in supporting their daily work (Figure 5 displays the most useful supports by role of respondent). For example, directors associated with one of the large nonprofit agencies reported finding the DLEs minimally useful, while those from other nonprofit agencies found them to be some of the most helpful supports provided by the UCF Center. Directors from one large nonprofit reported that their organization already provided similar supports and meetings for the directors they were associated with. Several of these directors noted that they did not have many touch points with the UCF Center and that they relied mostly on their home agencies. Further, representatives from university, district, and health agencies found the partnership retreats to be very useful in terms of planning, learning from others, and developing an understanding of the initiative. However, **one director reported that there was currently no such opportunity for nonprofit partners.** This may be problematic, considering the outsized role the nonprofit agencies play in supporting directors and initiative activities (see the section on decision making for more detailed information).

One-on-one technical assistance. Overwhelmingly directors, district respondents and university, health, and nonprofit partner organizations felt that the one-on-one TA provided by the UCF Center was the most helpful and impactful support

Figure 5. Most Useful Supports, by Respondent Role
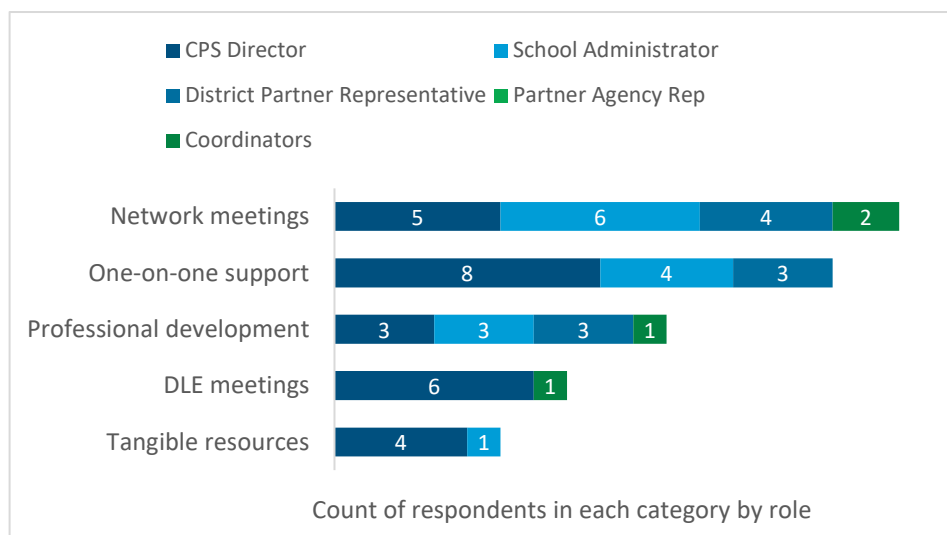
Note: Data used in this chart comes from interviews with school administrators, CPS Directors, partner agency representatives, and school coordinators

provided. Even in circumstances in which the nonprofit agency offered multiple additional supports to CPS directors, the one-on-one TA support from UCF was reported as being consistently responsive and helpful in reassuring or guiding stakeholders in making the right decisions, clarifying rules and regulations, and letting schools know "if they were headed in the right direction." Also mentioned by several respondents as supportive was the UCF Center

staff's checking in on directors to see how they were doing and ask if they needed any assistance.

The UCF Center staff was frequently credited with helping think through ways to improve the retention of coordinators, recruitment and retention of volunteers, and strategic planning for programs and staffing. Directors from one large nonprofit reported having significant support from their home agency in terms of certification and day-to-day operations but maintained that the UCF Center staff were always prompted to answer with clarification questions and eager to help. One director described the comprehensive one-on-one support from the UCF Center:

> *"They're [the UCF Center staff are] beyond [TA], but having them all and having someone that you are directly linked to . . . and I can go to for assistance. And they are knowledgeable, they are extremely helpful, they are fantastic, they are just your biggest cheerleader. They are there to talk to you off the ledge whenever it's needed with legitimate this is next steps, but I also absolutely love that they were able to find people who had very different backgrounds. So you know if you need assistance with certain things you go to [one staff member]. If you need assistance with other things, you know you go to [another staff member]." – CPS director*

There appears to be a tension between the supports offered by UCF and the supports provided by the structures built into the larger nonprofit in terms of professional development and day-to-day supports. Some respondents from one nonprofit reported feeling that the TA from UCF Center was less accessible because of their home nonprofit agency norms or that the role of UCF in supporting implementation was less clear, in part because of limited exposure to the full suite of UCF supports. One director differentiated the way meetings from their nonprofit differed from the trainings given by the UCF Center. They stated that the meetings "definitely [provided] a different perspective from that of UCF because . . . most of our statewide team, they served as frontline workers, so they definitely have a different understanding of what the work is on the ground." The director also shared that their home organization met with directors monthly in one-on-ones sessions and provided feedback on implementation and certification regularly.

> *"[My nonprofit] has built the in-house quality team. So the quality team comes in and they help you gather your evidence. And then they also help you find like, I don't know where this goes. Oh, this would go here. So imagine if I'd [had] that three years ago. Oh, so on [the nonprofit] end, that's amazing having several other directors, because at that time only Evans and Weiss [were] the only schools that were certified. So people didn't know that process. People didn't know how to tell you. So now several other schools have been certified since then. So all those feedback, relationships, communication, [have] been*

amazing. Their authenticity and them showing and sharing has been great. Having that data team now in [the nonprofit] for somebody to help you build your data." – CPS Director

Director Leadership Exchanges. DLEs were the second most frequently mentioned useful support from the UCF Center. Directors from smaller nonprofits strongly expressed that these meetings offered a unique chance to learn from other schools, shared needed information, and served as a source for innovation. One director noted that the DLE meetings had improved the structure and efficiency of their work because of what they had learned in the exchanges. However, for directors from one large nonprofit, these meetings were reported as being less useful, since their home agency also hosted similar meetings for their directors. Several directors noted that they were looking forward to being able to attend DLE meetings in person once pandemic concerns had subsided.

> *"And when we all came together, you don't see titles of nonprofits. You see a group of directors focused on a model and an Initiative to making change and growing students' families and their communities. So to me, the leadership and the guidance and the technical support, as well as just the one-on-one support for me as a director, I know I can call my program manager or text her and say, "Do you have time for me?" And she makes that time. So whether that's support for reporting, whether that's support for data, the director's resource library that they have for us, the director's manuals that they've created. . . . So I think it's robust and it's available, but not intrusive, if that makes sense." – Director*

Networking meetings and workshops for partners. The partnership retreats were described as very useful to partner agency representatives. Both partner agency representatives and directors described the utility of these meetings in supporting partner's understanding of the Initiative and learning about innovations at other sites. District partners and school administrators found particular use in the annual principals' retreat. The chance to share with each other the strategies, challenges, and successes was highly valued by those who participated. Some participants noted that that the virtual nature of the retreats during COVID-19 were less ideal. However, the content remained relevant and useful to their ongoing support of the Initiative. Several principals reported that these retreats provided conduits for communication with other schools and districts even beyond the CPS Initiative.

> *"One of the most powerful things I felt . . . was, they would do a principal and director retreat over each summer. And it stopped during COVID. Well, it didn't stop, but they went to online and it just wasn't the same, but I would always made sure that I went over the summer and the networking that happened for me, at least with all of the principals that our community partnership partners with down south. . . . " – District partner*

One director pointed out that there were no specific retreats for nonprofit representatives. They speculated that this might be because of one of the large nonprofit's outsized role in the CPS initiative, which seemed antithetical to the model of the four pillars to support the initiative.

> *"We have a Directors Learning Exchange, we have a principals' retreat, we have the medical retreat, and then we have the university retreat, but there's never really been a nonprofit retreat. And that should tell you why would all of the other partners need to come together and learn from each other, but yet we don't do it with this? . . . It is an odd thing. Why do you not have that if you have it for everything else?" – CPS director*

Needed Supports

The most frequently reported supports needed were additional training on the expectations of the initiative for partner agencies and directors, earlier trainings on the expectations and processes of certification, supports for standardizing data collection and sharing findings with stakeholders, and additional subject-specific trainings to address gaps in directors' previous experience, such as project management and navigation of education systems.

Onboarding for certification. Interestingly, there was not much variation in the recommendations for additional support from the UCF Center based on the certification status of schools. If anything, the schools that had reached certification shared that there was a need for more intensive onboarding for partner agencies and directors in understanding the initiative and parameters of implementation involved in certification. These requests for more onboarding came from both partner agency representatives and directors whom we interviewed. Because of the importance of certification for continued funding and advancement of the model, it would be beneficial to have additional training for certification, earlier in the phase of work, for all partners and the directors.

> *"I think for me, it's really clearly understanding the certification model, especially for someone who's new at it. And I know that the directors, they really try to explain it to us, but I think, maybe just getting some PD [professional development] on what that looks like, what it sounds like, and then also maybe some PD around how can the district continue to support the UCF model? What can our role . . . look like even more to bridge that?" – District partner*

Topic-specific training. Directors also requested training in specific topic areas. Since directors are expected to navigate systems related to each of the partner agencies, several directors expressed that it would be beneficial to have **support in understanding the systems, expectations, and language of each partner (e.g., education, health, social services).** In particular, many directors did not appear to have a background in education or educational

systems, making it challenging to communicate with their closest operational partner. Two directors also noted that it would be beneficial to have continued support in learning the **project management** aspects of the director position. These topics were frequently mentioned as being covered in DLE meetings. However, CHS directors may have less access to the specific trainings provided by the UCF Center.

> *"But I'm a social worker. That's not the life I lived. So we speak two different languages. So you have to meet us where we are. We're not all coming from an education background. I mean, most of us aren't. We're coming from a public administration. I know one of us, one of the directors, is a lawyer. So this is different for us, coming into the school. So we need to be educated on the school side of things too." – CPS director*

Data collection and analysis. While university partners are heavily relied on to collect and analyze data, more guidance and training on collecting, assessing, and using data was also requested by four respondents (two directors and two partner agencies). Specifically, stakeholders need support for defining meaningful thresholds and expectations for improvement in student and family outcomes and translating data to key stakeholders in a meaningful way. Additionally, two directors expressed that standardized data collection tools, such as surveys, would be welcomed to assess progress and program quality. These types of requests have been common in other community school initiatives we've evaluated across the country. Frequently, positions such as directors in CPS or other program leaders in other initiatives are tasked with roles that span multiple types of systems (health, community, education, etc.), as well as with serving as analysts in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data.

> *"We can look at other schools and see what they've done and create. . . . There's a data glossary that makes it clear, but if it was like, "This is what standard utilization should be of a wellness kiosk or of a wellness facility on campus," if it was an actual number based off this 500 students, your utilization should be 15 within a year, and they can't say that because we're still new, but if it was building your outcomes based off what UCF expects and taking the guesswork out of it, I think that would be helpful. When we have that final report and we can go back and say, "This is what UCF told me," and then we could take it to our cabinet and we could take it to our partners instead of it being, "Well, this is what I've seen other schools do." This is the way I think we should answer this question." – CPS Director*

Section 4. CPS Programming and Student Survey Findings

Section Overview

Provision of programming to ensure wraparound supports for students and their families is a central component of the CPS model. In particular, students and families should have access to the programming and services that support students' academic, health, and general well-being, including academic enrichment and tutoring opportunities. The provision of these kinds of programs supports academic and social-emotional development of students. In addition to the services provided by partners for tangible resources (e.g., food, housing, access to medical care), partner agencies agree to provide a wide range of programming experiences to students to support their academic and social-emotional development. In the following section, we present findings from both qualitative and quantitative approaches to present a more contextually robust assessment of the types of programming being offered through the Initiative and the way students are experiencing participation in programs.

In the first section, we present data from interviews and focus groups conducted with directors and partner agency stakeholders, and focus groups with site coordinators. We describe the types of programming typically offered by each partner agency, the most popular programming opportunities, strategies schools reported for engaging and recruiting students and families in programming, and COVID-19-related challenges and changes to program offerings.

In the second section, we present findings from the student survey of experiences in CPS programming carried out with a sample of schools and students in Grades 5 and above. We describe our methods for data collection and analysis of the survey, and we present key findings related to the student survey domains.

Qualitative Summary of Program Offerings

Programming by Partner Agency

In this section, we summarize the range of programming offered by CPS schools as described by key stakeholders including directors, school principals, partner agency staff, and school coordinators.

Partner agencies differed in the programming offered with the community nonprofits focusing primarily on offering expanded learning and enrichment opportunities and health partners focused on providing health services. University and district partners contributed to programming primarily through provision of ancillary supports (i.e., volunteers, transportation, and space) for schools to carry out services and programs. CPS schools frequently reported

leaning on additional partners (noncore heath, university, district, or nonprofit partners) for additional enrichment and mental health programming. We describe the specific forms of programming offered by partner agency in greater detail below.

Nonprofit partners. Nonprofit partners for all school sites reported offering support for expanded learning, mainly in the forms of tutoring, "homework cafes" (open hours for homework help), and provision of afterschool academic classes in subjects such as STEAM, Spanish, math, and reading. Partners at most sites (12 of 15 schools) reported offering enrichment opportunities like sports, gardening, student council/leadership, and visual/performing arts. Seven schools also reported offering summer programming; while varying in structure, this programming usually included both academic and enrichment components. For example, one principal described offering an enrichment summer camp focused on providing new experiences for youth:

> *"And so our kids went to the beach. Our kids haven't gone to the beach, we only live 45 minutes away but they haven't done that before. They went to museums downtown, they went out to eat at a restaurant where you sit down and you order from a menu, not a board through the drive-thru kind of thing. So she [CPS director] was providing these experiences."*
> *– Principal*

Nonprofits at about half of the CPS schools (eight of the 15 schools) also reported offering additional counseling, behavioral health services, and social-emotional curriculum. Finally, all nonprofit partners reported putting the greatest effort into providing additional resources or services—such as food, clothing, and financial supports—directly to families.

Health-care partners. Health care providers in most sites offered access to primary medical, dental, and vision care, and in some schools, mental health services. In almost all cases, schools were able to offer these resources to families, school staff, and members of the broader community. Nine schools reported having a health partner that offered onsite care either through health providers visiting campus or the presence of an on-site health kiosk, cottage, or clinic. Another three schools described being in the process of building an on-site medical facility or intending to build one. In addition to providing direct health services, health care partners described providing additional funding for staff to promote health services, providing appointment reminders and conducting follow-up conversations with caregivers and families. Health care partners at six schools also reported regularly providing COVID-19 tests and standard immunizations.

University partners. University partners primarily reported contributing to programming by sourcing volunteer tutors and mentors (nine schools) and, in some schools, offering adult education classes (four schools) and expanded learning or enrichment for youth (three schools).

University partners also found additional ways to contribute to schools through offering field trips and presentations to promote students' postsecondary academic ambitions. For example, one school reporting offering a "college tour day" in partnership with the local university:

"We tour the university. We take all of our eighth graders over so that they can see the different offerings that our local university has. And they talk about finances for them because our kids may not be thinking that this is something that they can do. They may be the first generation of college goers. So they talk about that". – Principal

District partners. District partners often contributed to expanded learning efforts by financing (either partially or fully) staffing for afterschool academic programs. Interviewees in five schools reported that their district partner financed positions for teachers and aides to staff their expanded-learning classes. In four schools, district partners reported providing transportation to or from afterschool activities to enable more youth to participate. In one school, interviewees reported that the district's role expanded over time in regard to funding; specifically, it agreed to provide a tutoring program using CPS funds when the school was struggling to finance its existing tutoring:

"I guess it was, semester two, the district said, "We're going to do some afterschool tutoring," and we're like, "Yes, we don't have to beg for funds." So, we just kept it going, and it was amazing. What a difference that we saw, with our fifth-graders especially." – Principal

Other contributing organizations. Almost all schools reported working with additional organizations (i.e., local nonprofits, faith-based organizations) outside of the core partnership structure. Like the district and university partners, additional organizations primarily supported programming by providing volunteers to staff expanded learning, enrichment, and mentoring activities. Schools reporting relying on external providers for additional academic enrichment programs (six schools) and integrated student supports and/or mental health services (seven schools). Outside organizations were not typically reported as being the sole providers of mental health services; rather, they were frequently reported as providing additional resources to schools. For example, one CPS director explained that referrals were first given to their nonprofit partner and then outsourced to additional providers when the nonprofit partner was at capacity for providing services. Finally, eight schools also reported leveraging external community nonprofits, churches, and other local organizations to provide food, clothing, and other resources to their school communities. Directors reported that external organizations would frequently assist with running food and clothing drives, and leading fundraising efforts. The example below illustrates the way schools utilized local organizations:

"And bringing in our local partners to provide hands-on [services] . . . they did just about everything. We had canine therapy readers here, we had the local library doing scavenger

hunts, we had just about anything that you can think of. So that's . . . I think kind of goes outside of the core partners to the local partners that are contributing to those processes as well." – CPS director

Well-Attended Programs

We asked interviewees to identify the best attended programs at their schools. Their answers broadly fell under the following categories: (a) academic supports, (b) enrichment, (c) food and resource drives, (d) health care, and (e) skill building. Figure 6 displays the most popular programs reported across all interviewees (directors, principals, partners, and coordinators). Most directors reported that events that were free of charge to families and those that offered food items were the best attended over the year. We provide more detail and some examples of unique and popular programming approachs in the sections below.

Figure 6. Best Utilized Programming Areas Supported by CPS Funding
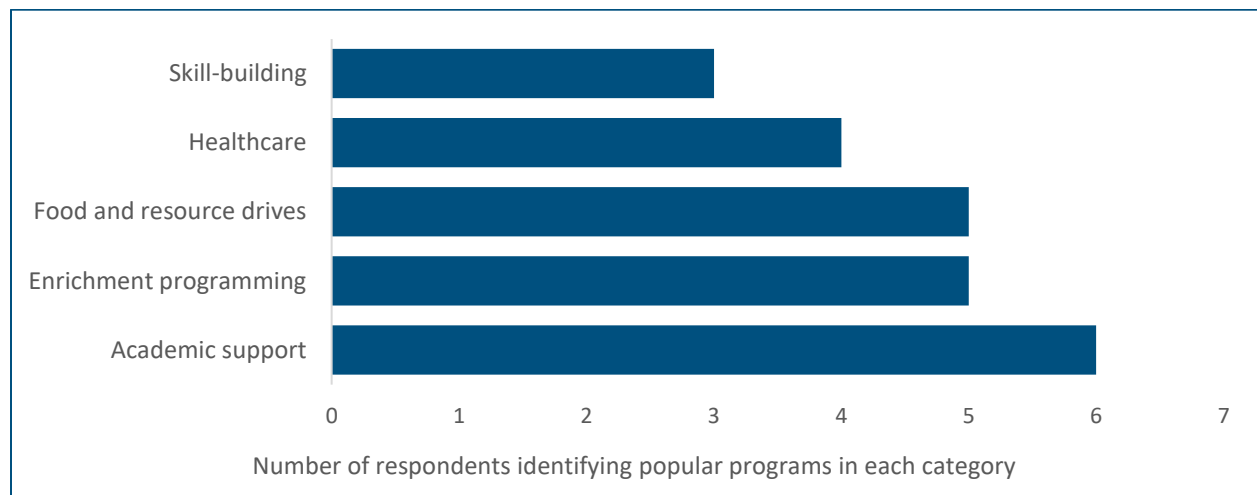
Number of respondents identifying popular programs in each category

Note: Data used in this chart comes from interviews with school administrators, CPS Directors, partner agency representatives, and school coordinators

Academic supports consisted of tutoring, homework cafes, and additional programming focused on math and literacy, such as reading club celebrations. Several CPS directors and school administrators reported challenges keeping youth engagement high in academic programming. Two respondents also described specific strategies to address these challenges; these included incorporating celebration events and being creative about approaches to academic programming. One director reported offering theatre as a way to encourage students to read:

"They don't have strength in reading and it's okay. But if you'd like to be in a play, you have to read. So you got to trick them into. . . . Like, "Okay, girl. You like to act. You want to be an actress. Okay. Read that script." So you have to trick them. Overall, respondents reported

that events and celebrations focused on academics produced high levels of youth engagement." – CPS director

Enrichment programming consisted of a variety of out-of-school-time activities and weekend events including physical activities, arts and music, and general enrichment. Several CPS directors noted that their enrichment directly targeted their students' well-being and would often help minimize behavioral incidents. For example, several schools discussed offering programming centered on social and emotional skill development, and others mentioned including mental health components in physical activities (i.e., a "running club" that helped students burn off excess energy and yoga classes with breathing and meditation built in).

Skill building. Programming that focused on the development of students' leadership skills, postsecondary-related skills (e.g., preparing for college or the workplace), and programming centered around developing self-esteem and self-confidence were reported as popular with students. One initiative, called Suit Up, helped students build employment skills, provided them with appropriate clothing, and assisted in setting up interviews. The district representative for this school reported that participation in Suit Up frequently led to students' having summer jobs in local area businesses and taught the students essential skills for their postsecondary lives. Another initiative, called Curls for Queens, focused on instilling self-confidence in girls in addition to teaching them how to braid hair. The program had originally started as a one-time event and was so well received by both parents and students that it became a regular part of programming. Parents reported to the school that participating in the programs not only helped the girls develop self-management skills but boosted their self-confidence.

Health care. Three schools reported having programming provided by the health care partner for student, parents, and school staff. One school reported that its health care provider offered healthy-eating classes and education about health concerns for teachers. Another school reported a popular yoga and meditation program for teachers. Finally, two schools shared high uptake in counseling services for students and parents.

Food and resource drives. While not always associated directly with programming in the traditional sense, schools reported combining things like food drives and backpack distributions to school celebrations. Offering food, raffles, and other supplies and giveaways were popular incentives offered to elicit parent participation and engagement. Food was the most popular of these, allowing parents to feed themselves and their families while also doing something to support their children. Giveaway items might be big-ticket items, gift cards, school supplies, or small items with CPS branding. Food and resource drives were also reported as being very well attended by parents and families at most of the schools. Schools frequently partnered with outside organizations, like food banks and faith-based organizations, to deliver these resources.

Interviewees also noted that these events were among the few opportunities to engage with families in person:

> *"So again just being the community that we are, being rural, we always have a high success rate of in-person and having those standing factors of you're going to be able to access free services, supports, get information on things that are going to make you a better parent or family, as well as you're going to get fed and you don't have to worry about going home and taking care of feeding your family after you're done participating in this. So that's typically what we've seen and what we're trying to get back to, but we know we've had to adjust in the meantime and take a different approach." – CPS director*

COVID-19-Related Changes to Programming

Impact on programming focus. Several CPS schools reported shifting resources away from nonacademic student enrichment activities to offer more community-oriented supports. New priorities during the pandemic primarily centered on delivery of instruction and engagement of students, ensuring student access to laptops, the internet, and virtual learning platforms; primary health care and mental health care delivery; family check-ins; expanding access to hot meals and on-site food pantries; and creating spaces to offer clothing, household items, and other necessities needed by families. During the start of the pandemic, respondents, also noted placing greater focus on programming to support social and emotional learning and support. Recognizing the strain that the pandemic put on students, mental health counseling and programming were expanded before and during students' return to school. Added mental health programming included activities like teaching mindfulness, yoga, and other activities to help students self-regulate.

Impact of volunteer shortages. The pandemic hindered many schools' ability to recruit, retain, and even utilize volunteers to continue supporting programming and offering additional services. In some cases, schools reported that teachers were able to meet staffing shortages because of a lack of volunteers to continue to offer student enrichment programs, but this was described as a taxing short-term solution. One district partner described the impact that the lack of volunteers caused for their CPS programming:

> *"The model, it thrives off of volunteerism and people who are not part of your school community or part of your school that [are] actually employed through the school district . . . before the pandemic was phenomenal . . . . We worked very hard to get all kinds of programming like ballet dance, Spanish, gardening, theater, tennis, all kinds of things. All of this was done by volunteers, experts in the field in the community that had a heart and wanted to come in and work with our kids. So, then because of the pandemic, when we couldn't, we couldn't have volunteers in, which made complete sense, but that wiped out all of that." –district partner representative*

Shifts in program delivery and frequency. To maintain and sustain programs during the shutdown, CPS schools reported employing several strategies to maintain focus on a holistic approach to supporting students and families. Many stakeholders remarked that their methods of delivery for programming might have changed but that their missions and visions remained the same. In some circumstances, schools reported that programs had to be dropped or paused at the beginning of the pandemic. Additionally, CPS schools became more creative in their efforts to sustain engagement in programming. Several schools reported changing the way programs were being offered and/or altering their meeting frequency. For example, several schools reported maintaining engagement in enrichment programming by offering an abridged version, switching to a virtual format, or offering the program to smaller groups of students.

As with schools across the country, the most common strategy for maintaining CPS programming was moving from in-person formats to virtual platforms. The shift to virtual programming was described as a convenient option for parents to participate. Respondents noted that, for families that were familiar with technology and had ready access to technology and internet, the addition of virtual programming increased parent participation and engagement.

> *"One of our events that we host [is] called Homework Cafe. It's one of our monthly parent engagement events where teachers set up different stations and kids and parents can walk around and kind of learn how to do these kinds of activities at home so parents can model them at home. And we had to pivot that to virtual. And normally in an in-person, we would see maybe 50 to 75 participants, but virtually we were able to get like 800 participants. . . . And that's parents, teachers, students, because they were able to log in through Canvas, and that was the portal that everybody was using virtually to do school. So it was like second nature." – CPS director*

Schools that experienced increased family engagement through virtual formats noted that they wanted to continue to have virtual options or offer hybrid programs in the future, beyond the pandemic, to keep parent engagement levels high. CPS schools in rural areas had a much more difficult time maintaining program engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even if students in these areas now had laptops, internet infrastructure and service was far more limited in these areas. As a result, some of these programs were much less successful. Parents' ability to navigate virtual formats and language barriers also presented obstacles to parent and family engagement in virtual programming.

Findings From the Afterschool Activity Survey

One of the key elements of the CPS model is the provision of academic enrichment and tutoring opportunities through afterschool programming. Afterschool programming provided at CPS

schools affords students the opportunity to receive targeted academic support in key subject areas through tutoring and to explore new interests and develop positive relationships through enrichment offerings. In order to further understand the way afterschool programming was being implemented at CPS schools and the types of experiences that students were having in these activities, an afterschool activity survey was administered during the 2021–22 school year (a copy of the survey can be found in Appendix B). Data from the afterschool survey were used to answer the following implementation-related evaluation question: What experiences are students having in afterschool and expanded-learning programming being provided by CPS-funded schools?

The survey was designed to explore the following set of questions related to afterschool programming provided at CPS schools:

- What kinds of enrichment activities do students report participating in?

- To what extent do students report receiving support in specific subject areas?

- To what extent do students report having positive interactions with peers and activity leaders?

- To what extent do students report having skill-building experiences while participating in afterschool programming?

- How do students report benefiting from their participation in afterschool programming?

Schools were given the option of administering the survey online or using hard copies of the survey and were provided the following guidance relative to selecting a sample of students attending afterschool programming to take the survey:

- Student should be in Grades 4 through 12 (one school requested permission to have students in Grade 3 also take the survey).

- Students should have been actively participating in programming when the survey was given. Collectively, students included in the sample should have been participating in a variety of afterschool activities offered by the school. For example, if a school delivered activities using a club model, in which youth only attended activities they had opted into, schools were directed to ensure that their sample included students from each activity or club they had underway when the survey was administered.

- Students should have been representative of the grade levels the school served in afterschool programs in Grades 4 through 12. For example, in an elementary school serving Grades K through 5, only students from Grades 4 and 5 should have been selected to complete the survey. If the number of Grade 4 to 12 students attending the program was

relatively equivalent, schools were also directed to ensure that their sample reflected this balance across grade levels.

Survey data were collected between October 2021 and February 2022. A total of 11 CPS schools submitted 295 surveys, ranging from 5 to 62 surveys per school, for an average of 27 surveys submitted per school. The demographic characteristics of students who completed the afterschool activity survey can be found in Appendix C.

It is important to acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantive impact on afterschool programs nationwide, particularly in terms of challenges related to staffing turnover. As a consequence, we anticipate that the afterschool programs represented in the survey sample were likely operating in a more challenging service environment. More specifically, it is possible that programs represented in the sample experienced staffing challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, their programming may have been more inconsistent than normal or may have been characterized by challenges related to quality if meaningful staff turnover was experienced. This context should be kept in mind when reviewing survey results described in this section of the report.

Afterschool Activities Attended

The first series of questions asked on the afterschool activity survey pertained to the types of enrichment activities students reported participating in and the extent to which they received support in specific school subject areas.

As shown in Figure 7, students reported most commonly participating in enrichment activities related to sports/recreation (67% of respondents reported participating in these type of afterschool activities), the arts (53% of respondents), and STEM-related activities (37%). Not surprisingly, students attending middle and high schools were more apt to report participating in college-related activities (i.e., going on college visits, getting help applying for college) than students attending elementary schools (25% of respondents as opposed to 7% of respondents, respectively), while elementary students were more likely to report being involved in activities related to books and writing relative to their older peers (24% as opposed to 14%, respectively).

Figure 7. Percentage of Respondents Indicating Attending Afterschool Activities, by Type
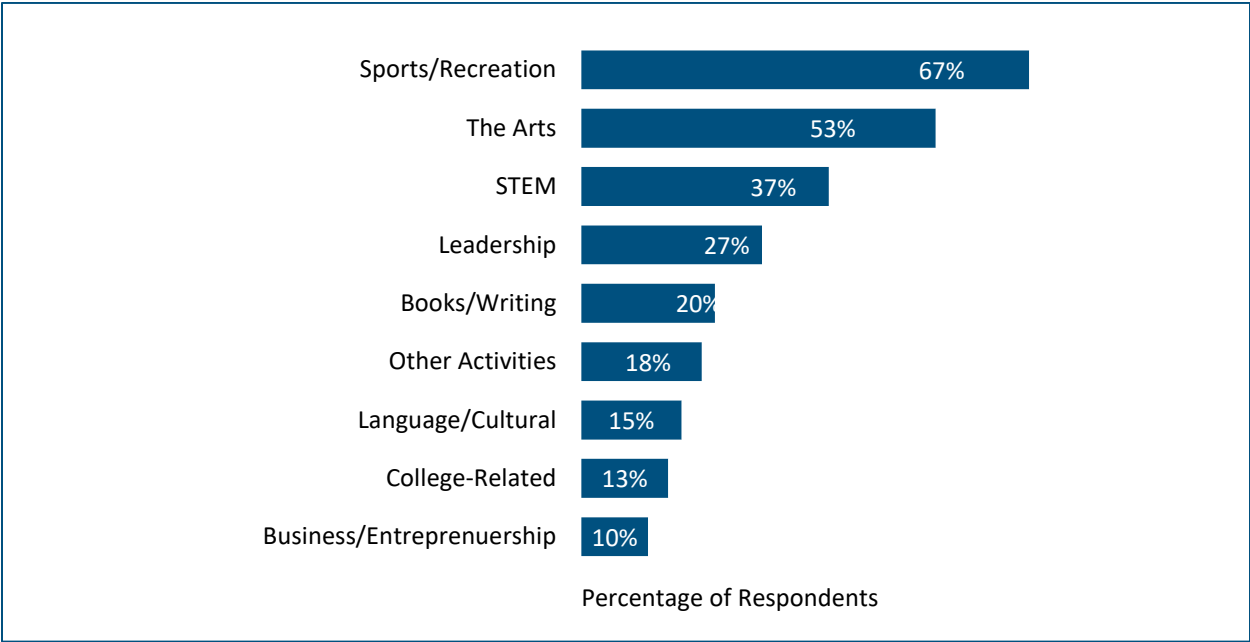
Note. Youth survey data collected from 279 youth at 11 CPS schools

Survey respondents were also asked if they had received extra help in the afterschool programming they attended in relation to a specific school subject area—mathematics, reading/ELA, science, social studies, or a foreign language. As shown in Figure 8, students most frequently indicated getting extra support in mathematics (62% of respondents) and reading/ELA (56% of respondents). Roughly 20% of respondents indicated that they had received lots of help in mathematics and reading/ELA as part of the afterschool programming they had participated in during the course of the school year. The majority of respondents indicated that they had not receive extra help in science, social studies, or a foreign language.

Figure 8 Percentage of Respondents Indicating Getting Extra Help Afterschool, by Subject Area
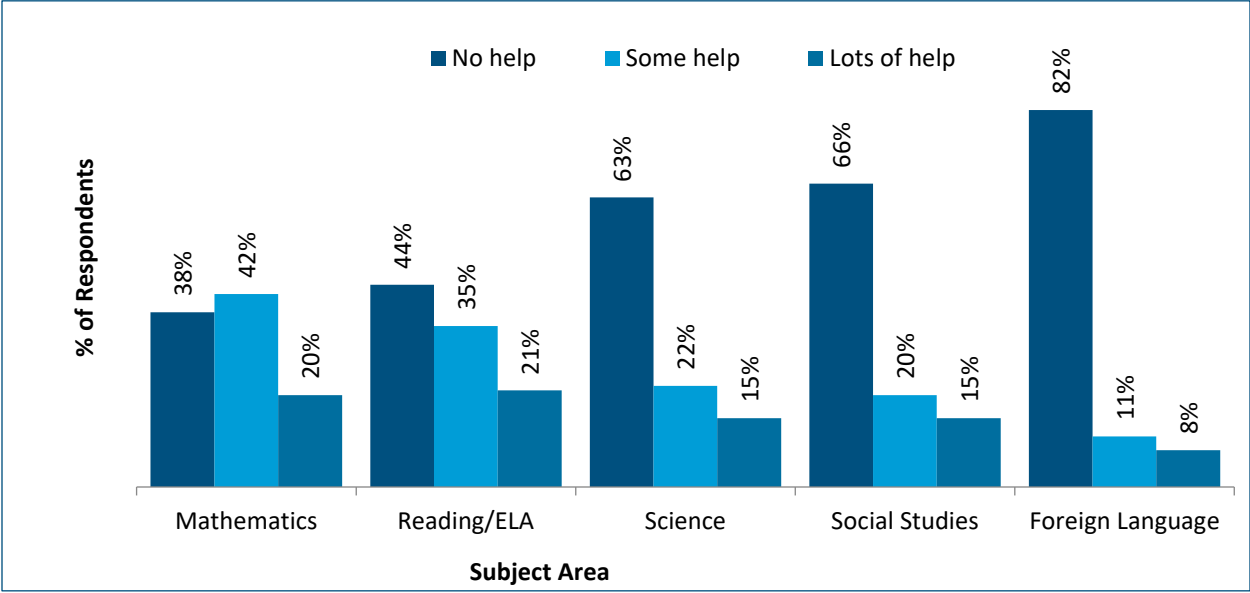
Note. Youth survey data collected from 288 youth at 11 CPS schools

As shown in Figure 9, most of the students responding to the survey attended afterschool programming at least a couple of times a week (55% of respondents) or about once a week (28%). This relatively high level of participation is important because several studies demonstrated a link between higher levels of participation in afterschool programming and more significant program effects (Naftzger et al., 2013; Naftzger et al., 2014).

Figure 9. Percentage of Respondents Indicating How Often They Attended Afterschool Activities

At least a couple of times a week — 55%
About once a week — 28%
A couple of times a month — 7%
About once month — 4%
Less than once a month — 7%

Percentage of Respondents
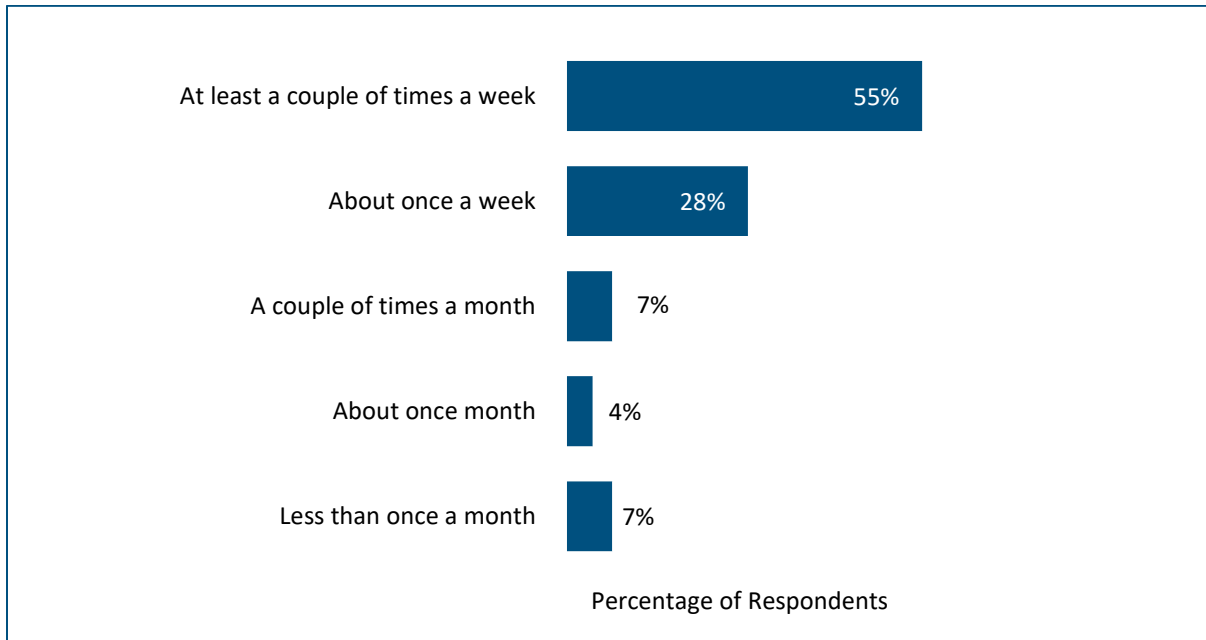
Note. Youth survey data collected from 287 youth at 11 CPS schools

Student Experiences in Afterschool Programming

Questions asked on the afterschool activity survey also focused on the following:

- students' perceptions of how positive their relationships were with program activity leaders and other youth attending the afterschool activities they were involved in

- the degree to which students perceived opportunities to have skill building experience

Collectively, these types of experiences have been shown to be related to youth developing a sense of agency, a positive self-concept and self-efficacy, confidence, and feelings of belonging and mattering that have ramifications for the way they relate to school more broadly and other learning environments outside the program (Larson & Angus, 2011; Larson & Dawes, 2015; Larson et al., 2019; Naftzger & Sniegowski, 2018).

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which statements expressing a positive perception of activity leaders (six items) and other youth enrolled in the program (five items) were true. The questions appearing on these scales are presented in Figures 10 and 11.

Figure 10 Survey Items Making Up the Perceptions of Activity Leaders Scale

> **Thinking about the staff leading afterschool activities you went to this school year, how true are these statements for you? There is a teacher or activity leader here . . .**
>
> who is interested in what I think about things.
>
> who helps me when I have a problem.
>
> whom I enjoy connecting with.
>
> who has helped me find a special interest or talent (something I'm good at).
>
> who asks me about my life and goals.
>
> whom will I miss when the program is over.

Figure 11. Survey Items Making Up the Perceptions of Other Youth Scale

> **At the afterschool activities you went to, how did kids get along? How true is each statement based on your experience?**
>
> Kids are friendly with one another.
>
> Kids treat one another with respect.
>
> Kids listen to what the teachers tell them to do.
>
> Kids don't tease or bully others.
>
> Kids support and help one another.

Responses to all items for a given scale were combined into one overall scale score for each respondent using Rasch analysis techniques. The approach used to create the overall scale score for each scale also made it possible to identify the number of respondents who fell within each response option category associated with the scale—Not at all true, Somewhat true, Mostly true, or Completely true. Generally, the results associated with student perception of activity leaders were more positive than results related to the perceptions of other youth in the program scale, as shown in Figure 12.

For example, 63% of respondents found the positive descriptions about staff represented by the survey items to be completely true or mostly true. This finding was most commonly the case in relation to the following two items: (1) There is a teacher or activity leader here who helps me when I have a problem (74% responding completely true or mostly true) and (2) There is a teacher or activity leader here whom I will miss when the program is over (68% responding completely true or mostly true). The item with the lowest percentage of youth responding completely true or mostly true was, There is a teacher or activity leader here who asks me about my life and goals (54% responding completely true or mostly true). Responses for all items are in Table D.1 in Appendix D.

However, student perceptions of other youth in the program were not quite as positive. As shown in Figure 12, under half of the respondents fell into the completely true or mostly true portion of the scale (47% of respondents). An almost equivalent percentage (48% of respondents) fell in the somewhat true portion of the scale. In terms of individual items, students were most positive about the following two items: (1) Kids here support and help one another (53% responding completely true or mostly true), and (2) Kids listen to what the teachers tell them to do (48% responding completely true or mostly true). The item students were least apt to find true was, Kids here treat one another with respect; with the majority of respondents found this only somewhat true (43%) or not at all true (15%). Responses for all items are in Table D.2, in Appendix D. Overall, the results highlighted in Exhibit D.2 are comparable to what we have observed in other samples that involved data collection during prepandemic periods (Naftzger et al., 2021).

Figure 12. Perceptions of Activity Leaders and Other Youth Scales: Percentage of Students, by Response Category
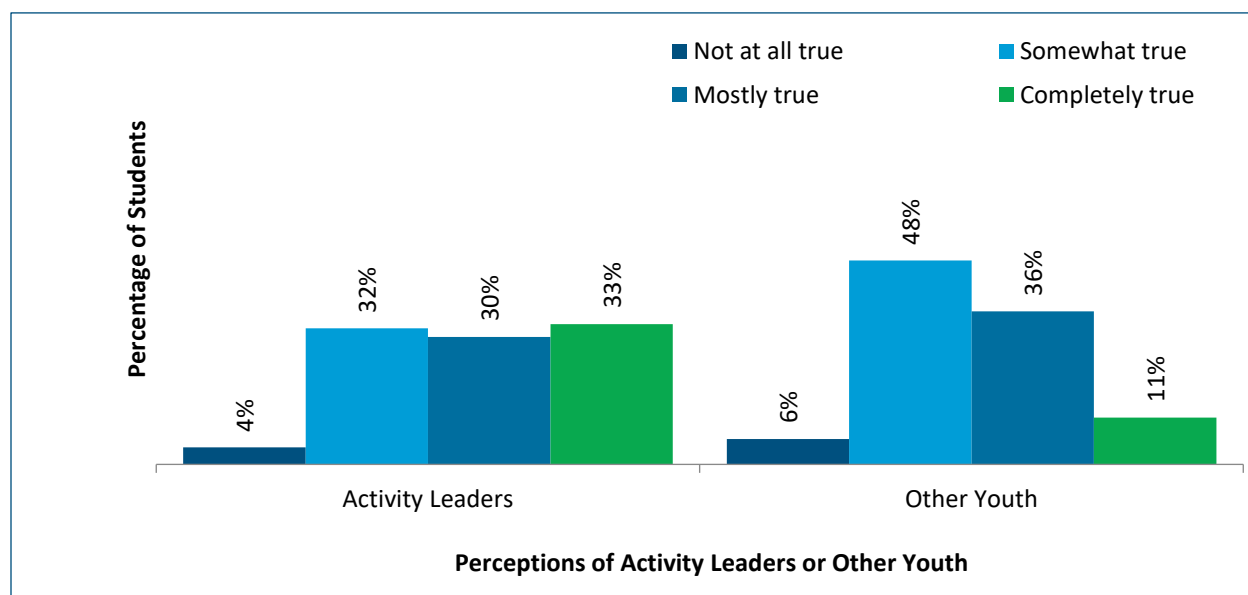
Note. Youth survey data collected from 290 youth at 11 CPS schools

High-quality afterschool programming can provide youth with both key skill-building opportunities that promote both positive mindsets and important feedback regarding what they are capable of accomplishing. For example, project-based learning opportunities are particularly effective in supporting these types of outcomes. Part of presenting project-based learning well is helping youth maintain an optimistic outlook in regard to their project, helping them avoid "the sky is falling" mentality when they encounter failure or setbacks. Damon (2008) noted that what is important to point out to youth is that they have some level of

control over how things turn out, as well as the importance of persisting when encountering challenges. Findings by Larson and Angus (2011) supported Damon's advice in this regard. In a study of youth participation in arts and leadership programs, Larson and Angus found that youth developed what they termed strategic thinking skills, which developed from wrestling with the challenges associated with real-world scenarios and being able to plan the way to carry out specific tasks and work. Key to building these skills was working though challenges they encountered and getting feedback on the outputs they produced. In this sense, project-based learning components that challenge youth to think through and solve problems with the appropriate amount of scaffolding and well-timed encouragement and support to help youth push through those challenging moments can be a key component of effective afterschool programs.

The afterschool activity survey contained items that were designed to assess the degree to which youth had key skill-building opportunities while participating in afterschool programming provide at CPS schools. Questions appearing on the skill-building scale are in Figure 13.

Figure 13. Survey Items Making Up the Skill-Building Scale

Did you have the following experiences when going to afterschool activities?
I tried new things.
I got to do things here I don't get to do anywhere else.
I set goals for myself.
I learned to push myself.
I worked hard to get better at something.
I did things that challenged me a good way.
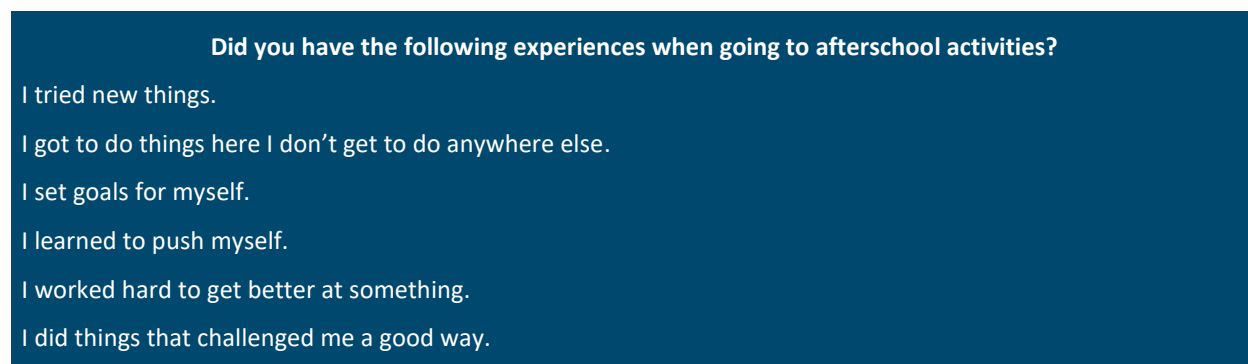
We combined the responses to the six items represented on the skill-building scale into one overall scale score for each respondent using Rasch analysis techniques, resulting in respondents being classified as falling within one of the following response options: Not at all; Sort of; and Yes, definitely.

As Figure 14 shows respondents had a tendency to fall into either the sort of (42%) of or yes, definitely (51%) portions of the scale. The most common skill-building experience reported by youth was working hard to get better at something, with 58% of the respondents answering yes, definitely to this item. The item with the lowest percentage of respondents answering yes, definitely was I set goals for myself, where 45% of the respondents selected this particular response option. Responses for all items are in Table D.3 in Appendix D.

Figure 14. Skill-Building Experiences: Percentage of Students, by Response Category
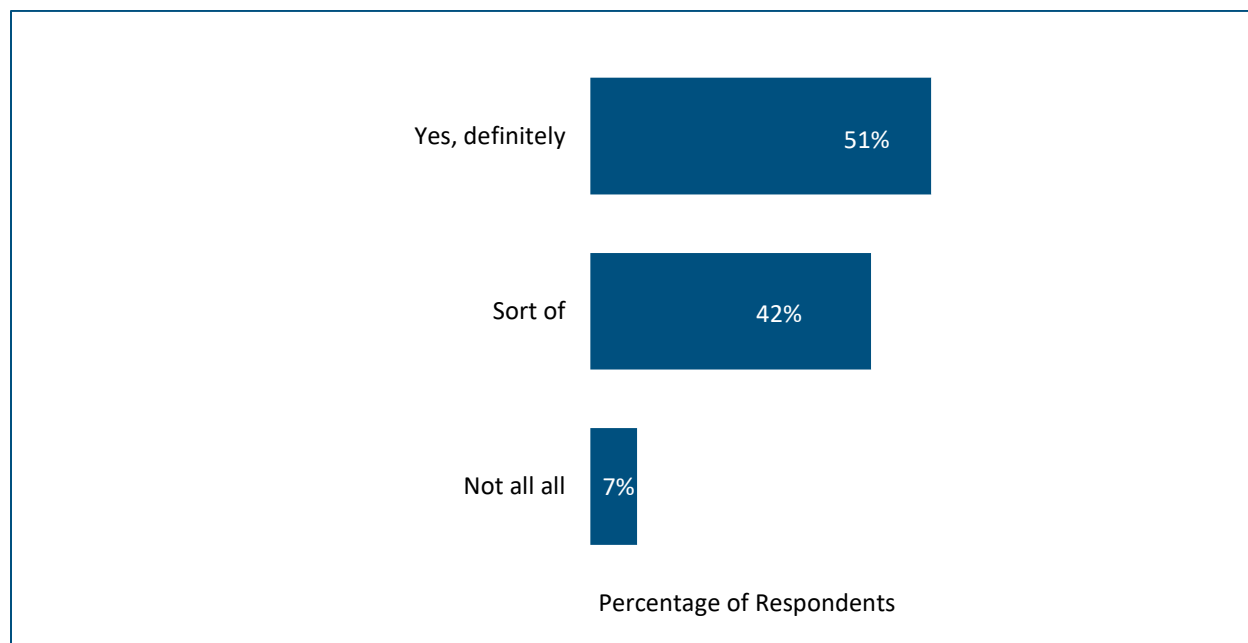
Note. Youth survey data collected from 290 youth at 11 CPS schools

Student-Reported Benefits From Participation in Afterschool Programming

Generally, participation in afterschool programming is hypothesized to lead to a series of more immediate, youth-reported outcomes that result from the positive experiences students have while participating in programming. Many of these outcomes are associated with supporting the students' well-being and development goals consistent with the CPS model.

On the afterschool activity survey, students were asked to identify the top three areas in which they thought the program had helped them most by selecting from a list of possible impact areas. This allowed students to indicate how they thought they might have benefited from participating in their Texas ACE program. Overall, youth-reported outcomes were classified into six main categories:

- **Positive social interactions**. Youth participating in high-quality afterschool programs can experience a sense of belonging and mattering through positive and supportive relationships, both with activity leaders and their peers in the program (Akiva et al., 2013; Auger et al., 2013; Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Kauh, 2011; Larson & Dawes, 2015; Miller, 2007; Naftzger & Sniegowski, 2018; Traill et al., 2013). These experiences are important because youth who have positive relationships and meaningful friendships demonstrate better emotional well-being, prosocial behaviors, and better academic performance than youth lacking such relationships (Wentzel et al., 2012). On the youth experience survey, responses from two items were employed to determine if youth felt that coming to the

program had helped them have positive social interactions: (1) Make new friends and (2) Stay connected with my friends.

- **New interest development**. Afterschool programming can afford youth the opportunity to experience new things, which supports both identity development and young people's ability to make sense of themselves and the world around them. Afterschool programming can also help youth develop new interests in domain-specific content areas, such as STEM and the arts. Interest development is a critical component of youth growth and development and has been linked to numerous motivational elements related to learning, including goal-directed behavior, self-efficacy, self-regulation, and achievement value (Renninger & Hidi, 2011).

  According to Renninger and Hidi (2011), the latent potential for interest in a particular area to develop is present in a person's genetic makeup, and interactions with the environment help determine whether it develops and is sustained. It is hypothesized that experiences in high-quality afterschool programs help youth navigate this interest development process by affording them the opportunity to try many different types of activities and dive more deeply into areas in which they discover they are especially interested.

  On the afterschool activity survey, responses from three items were employed to determine if youth felt that coming to the program had helped them develop new interests: (1) Find out what I like to do, (2) Discover things I want to learn more about, and (3) Find out what I'm good at doing.

- **Self-concept**. The successes that youth have while participating in afterschool programs and the relationship they develop with adult activity leaders and other youth in the program can also support the development of a positive self-concept. Consistently, when youth reflect on how they have benefited from participation in afterschool programs, they have reported that attending the program helped them feel good about themselves (Naftzger et al., 2020; Naftzger & Sniegowski, 2018; Vinson et al., 2020). Larson and Dawes (2015) noted that program staff can play a crucial role in supporting and stabilizing youths' sense of efficacy when encountering challenges or self-doubt while participating in programming.

- Youth can develop positive mindsets and beliefs about their capacities, including confidence and a sense of self-efficacy, by participating in high-quality afterschool programs. Many of the opportunities in high-quality afterschool programs also provide youth with the opportunity to experience a sense of agency by allowing choice and autonomy in selecting program offerings (Beymer et al., 2018; Larson & Angus, 2011; Naftzger & Sniegowski, 2018; Nagaoka, 2016). As Larson and Dawes (2015) assert, this sense of agency is particularly

important starting in early adolescence, enabling youth to use emerging cognitive skills, such as higher order reasoning and greater executive control of their own thought processes to more effectively solve problems and take the steps needed to achieve the goals they are pursuing. This provides youth with feedback about what they can accomplish and their ability to solve problems and overcome challenges, enhancing an underlying sense of self-efficacy and competence (Larson et al., 2019).

- On the afterschool activity survey, responses two one items were employed to determine if youth felt coming to the program had helped them improve their self-concept: Going to afterschool activities has helped me (1) With my confidence and (2) Feel good about myself.

  - **Think about the future**. Afterschool programming has also been shown to help youth discover a connection between the knowledge and skills being acquired through participating in program activities and what goals they may want to pursue in the future, both educationally and in terms of careers they may want to pursue (Dawes & Larson, 2011). On the afterschool activity survey, responses from three items were employed to determine if youth felt that coming to the program had helped them think more about their future: (1) Think about what I might like to do when I get older, (2) Learn things that will be important for my future, and (3) Think about the kinds of classes I want to take in the future.

  - **School-related outcomes**. Youth participating in high-quality afterschool programs have the opportunity to learn new content and develop and practice new skills. In ACE-funded programs, the focus is typically on supporting student skill building specifically in reading and mathematics.

    Youth participating in high-quality afterschool programs also can experience a sense of belonging and mattering through positive and supportive relationships, both with activity leaders and their peers in the program (Akiva et al., 2013; Auger et al., 2013; Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Kauh, 2011; Larson & Dawes, 2015; Miller, 2007; Naftzger & Sniegowski, 2018; Traill et al., 2013). Having a feeling of belonging is a precondition for motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), including student's motivation to attend school. On the afterschool activity survey, responses from one item were employed to determine if youth felt that coming to the program had helped them in relation to school-related outcomes: (1) Learn things that will help me in school.

  - **Self-transcendent outcomes.** While not as common as some types of afterschool activities provided in CPS schools, about 15% of students taking the afterschool activity survey reported participating in service learning activities which can also help promote positive youth development. For example, Dawes and Larson (2011) found that youth development programs that facilitated youth in working toward accomplishing moral,

civic, and social change goals that were consequential to others in their community or the world writ large helped youth form personal connections to and enhanced their engagement in program activities. Yeager et al. (2014) constructed and implemented an intervention that was designed to get youth to reflect on their own self-transcendent goals for learning (i.e., goals oriented toward helping others or making a contribution to society). Participation in the intervention resulted in youth reports of a greater sense of personal meaning in undertaking school-related tasks and demonstrating significant improvement in science and mathematics grades compared with similar youth enrolled in the control group. On the youth experience survey, responses from two items were employed to determine if youth felt that coming to the program had helped them experience self-transcendent outcomes: (1) Feel good because I was helping my community and (2) Learn about things that are important to my community.

Figure 15 outlines the percentage of students indicating on the afterschool activities survey a particular program impact in each of the six categories just described. As shown in Figure 15, the most common area of self-reported impact was related to positive social interactions, with 68% of respondents endorsing an item related to positive social interactions when selecting the top three ways they benefited from participating in afterschool programming provided at CPS schools. More than 40% of survey respondents indicated that participation in afterschool activities had helped them develop new interests and develop a better self-concept, while just over a quarter indicated that participating in afterschool activities had helped them think about their future.

Twenty percent of respondents indicated that participation in afterschool programming had helped them learn things that would help them in school. Interestingly, this is roughly the same percentage of students who reported that they received a lot of extra help in mathematics and reading/ELA in the afterschool programs they attended (see Figure 15). Items related to self-transcendent outcomes were the least commonly endorsed, with only 11% of respondents indicating that they would identify these outcomes as among the top three ways they had been impacted by ACE program participation.

Here again, findings that participation in CPS afterschool programs was most frequently associated with positive social interactions, new interest developments, and improvements in student's self-concept are also consistent with similar findings from other studies who employed similar survey items (Naftzger et al., 2021; Naftzger & Sniegowski, 2018). Additionally, the results outline in Figure 15 were largely consistent across grade levels.

Figure 15. Percentage of Respondents Indicating a Particular Program Impact
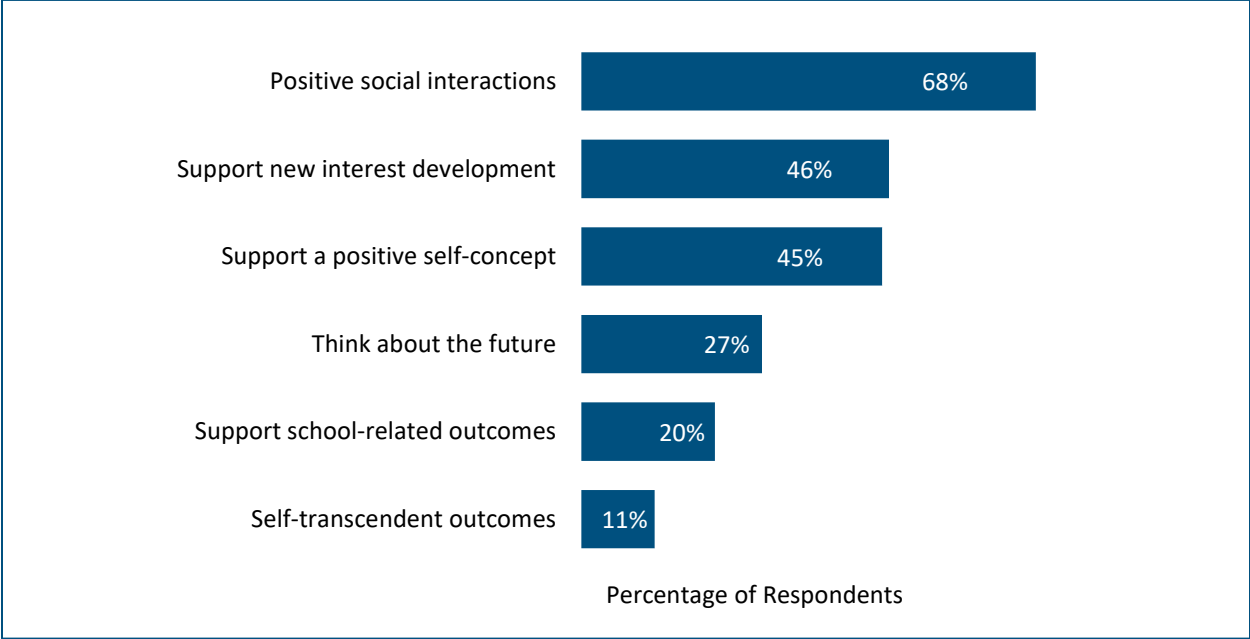
Note. Youth survey data collected from 283 youth at 11 CPS schools.

Finally, an important consideration for any afterschool program is the extent to which it can keep student engaged in programming over time. Toward this end, students were asked on the afterschool activity survey to indicated if they would likely go to similar afterschool activities if those activities were offered again in the next school year. As shown in Figure 16, 73% of responding student indicated they would be willing to attend similar afterschool activities, while another 19% indicated they were not sure if they would do so. Only 8% of students indicated they would be unlikely to attend similar afterschool activities in the next school year if they were available.

Figure 16. Percentage of Respondents Indicating That They Would Go to Similar Afterschool Activities Offered at Their School Next Year
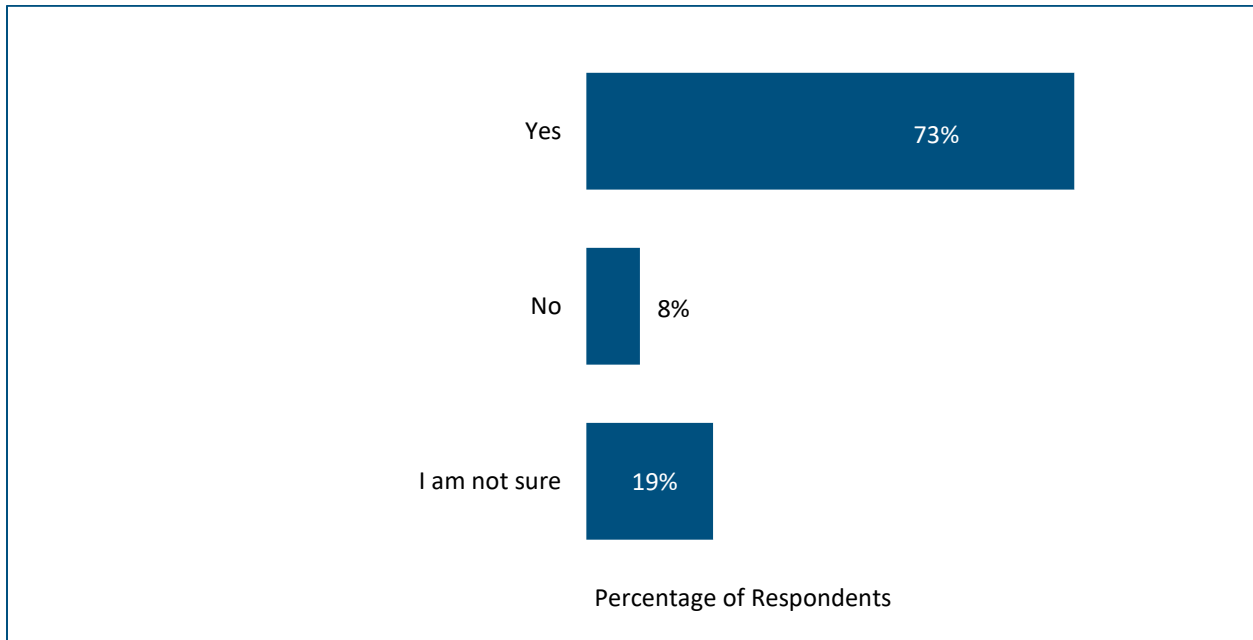
Note. Youth survey data collected from 265 youth in Grades 3 to 11 at 11 CPS schools

We also were curious if any of the student experiences assessed by the survey or any of the areas of student-reported benefits to program participation would be related to a student's inclination to continue participation in similar afterschool activities in the next school year.[5] The only variable found to be significantly and positively related to a student's inclination to attend afterschool programming in the next school year was the student's perception of other youth attending programming (t = 4.546, p < .001). In this sense, the more a student detailed a positive perception of other students attending the afterschool activities they participated in, the more apt they were to indicate a likelihood that they would attend afterschool programs in the future. This may be important finding since, as noted in Figure 17, improving the quality of student relationships in programming was identified as an area in which there was room for improvement in the afterschool activities provided at CPS schools included in the sample.

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[5] The relationship between a student's inclination to continue participation in afterschool programming in the next school year and youth experiences in programming was assessed using independent *t*-tests, while the relationship with between this inclination and youth-reported outcomes was assessed using chi-square analyses.

Community Partnership Schools

SUMMARY OF CPS PROGRAMMING AND STUDENT SURVEY FINDINGS

Findings from the qualitative analysis of perceptions of programming offered, best attended programs, and primary areas of support for students, families, and schools by and large support the findings from the afterschool activity survey. Students are largely being given opportunities to engage in a wide variety of programming that addresses their academic and social and emotional skills, and supports growth in their postsecondary pathways. Additionally, we were able to highlight some unique ways that partner agencies are contributing to innovative and engaging programming.

The most common ways students reported benefiting from participating in afterschool programming was having positive social interactions, developing new interests, and developing a better self-concept, findings that are very consistent with what we have seen in other samples. Students taking the survey appeared to have valued their time spent in programming, since 73% reported a desire to continue participating in similar types of afterschool activities if they were offered again in the next school year.

Results from the afterschool activity survey demonstrated that students in CPS schools are attending a wide variety of enrichment activities on a regular basis, most commonly participating in activities specifically related to sports/recreation, the arts, and STEM. A smaller subset of students (approximately 20% of survey respondents) reported receiving a lot of extra help in mathematics and reading/ELA coursework by participating in afterschool activities at the CPS schools included in the sample.

Most students also reported having skill-building experiences while participating in afterschool programs and a positive perception of the activity leaders providing the activities they participated in during the school year. However, perceptions of other youth participating in programming were generally less positive, which is an important finding because we also found that students were more apt to report an inclination to continuing participating in afterschool programming in the next school year if they reported more positive experiences with the other students attending the activities. In light of this finding, we do recommend that the UCF Center consider adopting a point-of-service quality assessment and improvement framework to further support the afterschool programs provided in CPS schools. These types of tools and frameworks contain information about specific practices that program staff can engage in to facilitate more positive interactions among students attending programming. The most commonly used tool in the afterschool and youth development field in this regard is the Youth Program Quality Assessment supported by the Weikart Center for Youth Program

Section 5. Understanding Outcomes for Students, Families, and Schools

In this section, we present findings from our qualitative and quantitative analyses in relation to benefits to students and families that may be associated with the implementation of the CPS initiative in our sample of schools. We begin by summarizing the anecdotal reports from directors, partner agency stakeholders, and coordinators on witnessing the CPS initiative contributions to the lives of students and families, and the overall climate of schools. We then present findings from our quantitative analysis of school-level effects associated with relatively early implementation of the model at most schools through the 2018–19 school year. It is important to note that findings from an impact analysis on student academic outcomes typically take years of implementation of a community schools approach to come to fruition and show positive impacts on students' academic outcomes. For that reason, we present the anecdotal reports in tandem with the effectiveness analysis to show the more immediate gains that students, families, and schools realize after the implementation of the CPS initiative.

Anecdotal Evidence of Benefits of the CPS Initiative on Students, Families, and Schools

In this section, we describe the most frequently observed benefits to students, families, and school-level staff taken from interviews with directors, school principals, and partner agency representatives. As shared by interviewees, primary benefits for students include mental and physical health supports through programming and services, opportunities to engage in new experiences, supports for developing social and emotional learning, and other growth opportunities that will benefit students in their postsecondary lives. Benefits for families include additional social and health supports, mental health services, and additional resources for maintaining everyday life. In terms of schools more broadly, reported benefits include additional supports for staffing programming, additional professional development for teachers, and helping to build a bridge between the schools and communities by developing mutually trusting relationships with families and community stakeholders (see Figure 17).

Student Benefits

Figure 17. Benefits to students in participating in CPS activities

"Lightening the load" for teachers	*"And knowing that the teachers don't have to feed the kids, they don't have to worry about clothing the kids, they don't have to worry about, 'Oh my gosh, this family needs mental health support' All they have to do is tell us, and then we'll get that for them." -Principal*
Strengthening relationships	*"And our teachers trusting Community and Partnership Schools, when they bring a problem or a concern that they know it's going to be taken care of, and they are kept in the loop…They're not just handing it off and walking away, but also communicating back to the faculty and staff, that this is what we did." -Principal*
Utilizing CPS services, resources, and trainings	*We've just done a financial literacy class with our parents for down payment assistance for home ownership, and I would say more than a third of the participants were school staff. So, some teachers, some administrators, some of the parent support staff. So, a lot of our staff attends almost all of the events." -Principal*
CPS as a bridge to the community	*"We're being more now out into the community. We're getting invited more, which I love. "Are you guys going to come on down and be here for this and that?" Of course, we are, at least one of us. So, I'd like to add that, too, to our piece of we're getting immersed in the community. People are calling us and saying, 'We want you there. We want you there.'" -Principal*

Respondents generally related student benefits to the type of support offered (i.e., mental and physical health services, expanded and enrichment learning time and opportunities). Overwhelmingly, participants (i.e., CPS directors from eight schools and principals from 12 schools) shared observations of academic outcomes, which makes sense, given our communication finding that school administrators tend to be more focused on academic gains.

Mental and physical health services for students. Interviewees at six schools reported that improved access to health care for students appeared to lead to academic growth, self-confidence, decreased behavioral incidents, and other positive outcomes in students. For example, several health coordinators provided examples of students' improving behaviorally after having their dental or vision needs met. Specifically, eight schools referenced their expansion and increased accessibility of behavioral and mental health professionals as a benefit to students. Another CPS director explained that, by preemptively addressing health concerns, schools can minimize students' needing to take time off from school later on because of unaddressed health issues.

> *"There was a kid, and they were saying how this kid was having all these behavioral problems last year. [We] come to find out, he was having mouth/tooth pain or something, and they just figured it out. One day, they discovered, "Hey, this kid just has a cavity." They*

solved the cavity, and the kid wasn't irritable in class anymore, [he] ended up being a decent student. . . ." – Principal health coordinator

Additionally, many interviewees referenced the importance of meeting children's basic needs like food, clothing, and hygiene. Once these needs were met, interviewees reported that schools could then focus on improving academic outcomes with the students, as well as school-day attendance. Interviewees also reported that the students who were able to receive new shoes or access to showers also experienced greater self-esteem and involvement with school academics.

"And I noticed, I hadn't heard [from him] in a couple of weeks and what's going on, did he transfer? Did he withdraw? What's going on with this student? And [we] come to find out he was in the classroom with his peers, learning, because he now has the supports that he needed." – CPS director

Finally, interviewees discussed the way the range of emotional supports offered, such as access to counseling and social and emotional learning-focused curriculum, directly benefited students in ways that led to decreased incidents of behavioral issues. Of the eight schools referencing these supports, half the schools also referenced incorporating social and emotional learning curriculum and/or trauma-informed practices since becoming a CPS school. For example, one expanded learning coordinator referred to her school as a positive behavior intervention school, where students experiencing behavioral incidents are referred to the host of mental health supports available rather than automatically being disciplined.

Participation in expanded learning and enrichment. While seven schools directly attributed improvement in academic outcomes to their expanded learning and enrichment supports (i.e., standardized test score gains, improved grades, more consistent attendance), almost all schools provided anecdotes of ways in which students benefited through their experiences in expanded learning and enrichment programming. These positive experiences include (in order of most to least frequently referenced): (a) students' learning to regulate their behaviors and emotions, (b) students' developing self-confidence and leadership skills, (c) students' forming new relationships with teachers and mentors at their school, (d) students' being exposed to new interests and opportunities, and (e) students being exposed to postsecondary and employment opportunities. Examples of each are provided in Figure 18.

Figure 18. Example Statements of Students' Benefiting From the CPS Initiative

⏱	**Regulation of behavior and emotions**	*"I had one kid who loved gardening. Super sweet kid, but definitely struggled with some emotional disturbances, some mental illness, but gardening was his safe space"*
🧍	**Development of self-confidence and leadership skills**	*"We have our student council…[it] helps for those students to develop self-confidence and learn how to do some public speaking and things like that"*
👤	**New relationships with adults on campus**	*"[Expanded learning] gives our students an additional opportunity to connect with a teacher on campus that may not be their own teacher"*
🏓	**Development of new interests**	*"A lot of our kids don't have the opportunities to, for example, participate in CHS activities in the community. So, we're offering those types of activities here at the school."*
💼	**Exposure to postsecondary and employment opportunities**	*"It [Suite Up] taught them how to dress appropriately for an interview, how to communicate during a interview…So quite a few of our kids actually got hired out of that"*

Caregiver Benefits

We also asked respondents also how parents and families benefited from being part of a community school. Most respondents identified improved school involvement for families, with many reporting that parents now felt more comfortable engaging with their school and asking for needed resources. Respondents shared that, in particular, parents who had migrated to the United States had responded well to the changes brought by the CPS model. Several commented that the integrated supports offered through CPS increased trust between these family units and the schools. Figure 19 displays the most frequently referenced benefits to families.

Figure 19. Most Frequently Reported Benefits of CPS to Families by Interviewees
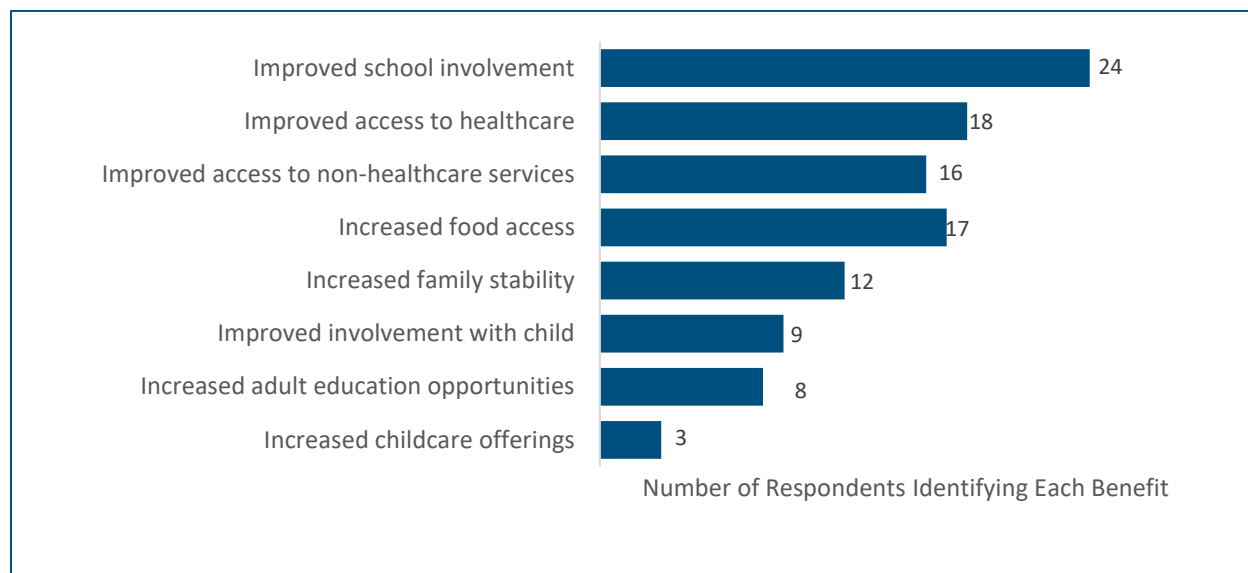
Benefit	Number of Respondents
Improved school involvement	24
Improved access to healthcare	18
Improved access to non-healthcare services	16
Increased food access	17
Increased family stability	12
Improved involvement with child	9
Increased adult education opportunities	8
Increased childcare offerings	3

Number of Respondents Identifying Each Benefit

Note: Data used in this chart comes from interviews with school administrators, CPS Directors, partner agency representatives, and school coordinators. Categories are non-exclusive.

Additionally, interviewees from five schools reported an increase in the use of mental health services by parents. Some schools also reported offering parent education classes around the importance of health care or COVID-19-related procedures.

School Benefits

Interviewees at all schools reported the ways in which the school and its faculty benefited from CPS programming. The primary benefits discussed were (a) CPS lightening the load for teachers by addressing students' needs (n=13 schools), (b) CPS strengthening relationships between teachers and students and teachers and parents (*n* = 10 schools), (c) teachers' utilizing CPS services, resources, and professional development training opportunities (*n* = 11 schools), and (d) CPS enabling the school to serve as a bridge to the community (*n* = 9 schools).

Lightening the load. Many interviewees reported that teachers felt as if they could focus more of their attention on academics because CSP programming was meeting the needs of students outside of academics (e.g., health care, food, shelter, access to social workers).

Strengthening relationships. Interviewees referenced teachers' developing and strengthening their relationships with parents and students as a result of the integration of the CPS model. Directors reported that teachers appeared more confident in referring students to services supported by the CPS model. This shows a deeper integration of the CPS model into some schools in the school day.

Community Partnership Schools

Utilizing CPS services, resources, and training. Directors and coordinators reported that teachers welcomed the access to additional resources, including ready access to health care and mental health supports. Also, some teachers were able to access additional resources and training to support instruction in the classroom.

CPS serving as a bridge to the community. School administrators and district partners frequently described the way the CPS model provided the means to better integrate the school into the broader community. In some cases the schools were described as hubs for the community in terms of accessing resources (e.g., health care, food pantries, social services).

Effectiveness Analysis of Student-Related Outcomes

As we explained at the beginning of this report, implementing the CPS model will support the achievement of a variety of possible positive outcomes for enrolled students and their families, including exposure to new opportunities and content, improvements in academic achievement, the development of behaviors deemed important for school success, better health and well-being among enrolled youth, and closer ties and relationships among members of the school community. In this sense, the CPS initiative represents a substantive and complex whole-school reform strategy that is likely to take years to implement in an optimal fashion.

This section of the report provides a summary of key findings from a series of effectiveness analyses undertaken in relation to early implementation of the CPS Initiative. One substantive limitation of the effectiveness analyses summarized in this section of the report was that data related to service referrals, activities, and events were only available at the school-level, as opposed to the student-level, meaning it was not possible to specifically examine program effects for those students and families that actually participated in CPS activities and services. Instead, the analyses conducted to explore program effectiveness examined outcomes for all students enrolled in a CPS school irrespective of whether or not they were direct recipients of or participants in CPS activities and services. As a result, it was likely more challenging to detect program effects as a result of the analyses outlined in this section of the report.

As we have noted throughout this report, the implementation of the CPS model was also disrupted with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020. In light of this, a decision was made in conjunction with the UCF Center to design an impact analysis that examined school-level effects associated with relatively early implementation of the model at most schools through the 2018–19 school year. The goal of these analyses was to answer the following research questions:

- What effect did attending a CPS have on student outcomes compared with outcomes of students attending similar schools not implementing the CPS model?

- What effect did attending a more mature CPS have on student outcomes compared with outcomes of students enrolled in similar schools not implementing the CPS model?

- What effect did attending a CPS have on student outcomes among certain subpopulations of students compared with outcomes of students from the same subpopulations attending similar schools not implementing the CPS model?

In the sections that follow, we describe the way we approached answering these questions and what we learned in terms of CPS impact when these analyses were undertaken.

Comparative Interrupted Time Series

In order to complete an early assessment of the way implementation of the CPS initiative may be affecting student outcomes, the evaluation team opted to employ a comparative interrupted time series (CITS) design. CITS is one of the strongest quasi-experimental designs that can be used when a comparison or control series can be constructed in the absence of a randomized controlled trial (Bloom, 2003; Shadish et al., 2001). The goal of a CITS analysis is to compare the trends for a given outcome over time of a treatment group (in this case, schools receiving CPS funding) and a comparison group (in this case, similar schools associated with the same school districts as those schools receiving CPS funding). This process requires having data about the outcomes being examined both before CPS was implemented at a given school and after implementation had begun for the treatment and comparison schools. What we hoped to see was that, after CPS implementation was underway, the trends in the treatment schools would begin to shift in a more positive manner than the trends in the comparison schools.

The research team, in conjunction with staff from the UCF Center, decided to include treatment schools in the analysis if they had been implementing the CPS model for a minimum of 2 years by the completion of the 2018–19 school year. Eleven CPS schools met this treatment criterion (see Table 4).

Table 4. CPS Schools Included in Impact Analyses by First Year of CPS Implementation and 2 Years of Model Implementation as of 2018–19

School name	First year of CPS implementation	Years of CPS model implementation by 2018–19
Evans High School	2011–12[a]	8
C. A. Weis Elementary	2015–16	4
Endeavour Elementary Magnet School	2015–16	4
Gulfside Elementary	2015–16	4

School name	First year of CPS implementation	Years of CPS model implementation by 2018–19
Edward H. White Military Academy of Leadership	2016–17	3
Mort Elementary	2016–17	3
Sulfur Springs K–8	2016–17	3
Howard Bishop Middle School	2017–18	2
OCPS Academic Center for Excellence	2017–18	2
Southwoods Elementary	2017–18	2
Webster Elementary	2017–18	2

[a]Evans High School began implementing what would be known as the CPS model in 2011–12, but did not receive funding from the CPS grant program until 2015–16.

To reliably estimate the preintervention trend, a CITS design requires preintervention data for at least four time points before the intervention begins (Somers et al., 2013). Since CPS implementation began during the 2015–16 school year for most of the earliest implementers (under the auspices of the current grant program), AIR used preintervention data for the 2011–12 to 2016–17 school years. The treatment period spanned the 2015–16 to 2018–19 school years, although this varied by school, as summarized in Table 4.

While Evans High School began implementation in 2011–12 of what eventually would come to be known at the CPS model, we did not have access to data for the preintervention period at Evans High School. For the purposes of this analysis, Evans was treated as having a program start date of 2015–16, when it started to receive funding through the CPS grant program. It is conceivable that this approach to including Evans in treatment population may have served to mute program effects to some extent.

Comparison schools were selected from the same districts supporting the 11 schools receiving CPS funding, excluding schools receiving 21st Century Community Learning Centers funding during the treatment period. AIR obtained school-level data through the Florida Department of Education website, while student-level data were obtained through a data request submitted to the department. There were 629 schools in this group of eligible comparison schools for which data were available before and after the start of CPS funding. Our impact analyses were conducted on a matched subset of the comparison schools that were most similar to the 11 CPS schools included in the analysis.

The matched set of comparison schools was selected via propensity scores using data from the 2013–14 and 2014–15 school years. This approach modeled the propensity (probability) that a school received CPS funding on the basis of a long list of pre-CPS variables. CPS schools were then matched to comparison pool schools with similar propensity scores. Each CPS school was matched to four comparison schools (44 comparison schools in total).

The matching process was conducted using a litany of school contextual and performance variables, including the following:

- student demographics: percentage of African American or White students, students in exceptional education, English learners, and students receiving free or reduced-price lunch

- student school day absences, including unexcused absences

- student behavior: number of incidents and days of school missed because of disciplinary incidents

- student grade-level promotion rate

Variables that were similar to outcomes that would be modeled at the student level (e.g., attendance, discipline) were matched not only for the immediate pre-CPS year, but for all years in the prior trend. This helped control for schools' overall level of performance on these variables, as well as for any trends in those variables that may be occurring prior to CPS. Appendix E provides a full list of significant variables used in the school-matching process, along with a comparison of CPS and comparison schools on these variables, both before and after the matching process. Matching results were generally good, although the robustness of the CITS design would have also helped to ameliorate any less-than-optimal matching results.

One key difference between CPS and comparison schools that is important for the reader to note is that CPS-funded schools as a group were characterized by greater interest in the CPS funding stream or interest on the part of the District to channel CPS funds to these schools in particular. As a result, there may have been features of the CPS schools that make them different from the comparison schools in ways that were not accounted for in the matching process.

The research design used the preintervention trend line of an outcome variable (e.g., school day attendance, disciplinary incidents) as a comparison for the outcome measurements obtained after the onset of CPS funding. Changes in the overall level of the outcome (intercept change) or its slope over time following the start of CPS funding provided evidence about whether the initiative had an impact on students and their schools.

In a CITS design, a school's performance is first compared with its expected performance based on pre-CPS implementation. In general, CITS robustly controlled for fixed differences between the CPS and comparison schools (e.g., average achievement, demographic composition, neighborhood effects).

CITS designs are strengthened by adding a comparison group of schools that are not implementing the intervention in question—in this case, CPS funding. The primary reason for including a comparison group for a CITS design is to account for "history threat." History threat can occur when multiple factors occurring simultaneously with the introduction of CPS may be influencing changes in performance in the CPS schools. The comparison group can protect against this threat by averaging the effect of other policy and practice changes that may have occurred in the district at the same time as the introduction of CPS funding. The CITS models were run specifically for the matched comparison group, and those results are highlighted in the report.

Outcomes Examined

The CPS initiative is designed to support whole-school transformation in accordance with the CPS model, which is designed to support a variety of academic support and enrichment opportunities, as well as primary medical, dental, and behavioral health care for the students, the students' families, and the surrounding community. As a result, a large number of short- and long-term outcomes are envisioned to result from schools receiving CPS funding. Outcomes examined in undertaking the CITS analysis were as follows:

- number of school days present

- number of school days absent

- number of school day unexcused absences

- number of discipline incidents

- school days missed because of discipline incidences

- performance on mathematics assessments

- performance on English/language arts assessments

It is important to note that the mathematics and English/language arts assessment utilized by the Florida Department of Education changed during span of the pre- and postintervention periods, going from the FCAT to the Florida Standards Assessments (FSA) in 2015. As a consequence, standardized FCAT and FSA scores were used to create the trendlines developed when undertaking the CITS analyses in question.

It is also important to note that data related to some important outcomes potentially associated with CPS implementation were not available for the CPS implementation period examined. Ideally, measures would have been available for the following types of outcomes, as well, which directly aligned with the way implementation of the CPS model is expected to impact both students and families:

- improved student engagement and perceptions of the relevance of school day instruction

- improved school climate

- improved student functioning in social and emotional outcomes

- improved relationships between and among parents and the school

- improved confidence on the part of parents that they can support their child's learning

- improved parent leadership and influence in partnering with teachers and educators to address their child's needs and interests

Unfortunately, many of these outcomes represent some of the more immediate ways that CPS implementation was likely to affect students and their families. Some of these outcomes are addressed in the recommended set of key performance indicators AIR developed for the CPS initiative. **In this sense, we encourage the UCF Center to consider other metrics that could be employed more broadly and that could be used to document progress in achieving these outcomes through CPS implementation as part of future evaluation efforts.**

CITS Subpopulations

The CITS analyses undertaken to examine CPS impact on the outcomes outlined in the previous section were completed using available data for all students enrolled in the schools in question, as well as separately for students in the following subpopulations:

- Black students

- White students

- female students

- male students

When examining program effects using CITS, it was important that the subpopulations examined were selected on the basis of characteristics that were relatively stable and time invariant for the period under examination. The racial and gender categories used to examine the ways the CPS initiative affected different student groups were reflective of this requirement.

CITS Results

The results from the CITS analyses undertaken that were statistically significant can be found in Table 5, which outlines significant positive (i.e., resulting in a desired outcome) and negative (i.e., resulting in an undesirable outcome) effects, respectively. In each exhibit, the following structure is used to communicate effects found to be statistically significant.

○ indicates a significant positive effect among CPS school students ($p < .05$).

○ indicates significant negative effect among CPS school students ($p < .05$).

It is important to note that findings outlined in Table 5 represent annual effect estimates comparing CPS schools with the 44 comparison schools. Significant annual effects were only found in relation to implementation Years 1 and 2 of the CPS model. Efforts to examine a Year 3 annual effect in 7 CPS schools in order to answer the research question *What effect did attending a more mature CPS have on student outcomes compared with outcomes of students enrolled in similar schools not implementing the CPS model?* resulted in no significant findings.

This latter finding may not be surprisingly, given the way CITS analyses have been shown to perform, with results less likely to be biased closer to the moment of intervention implementation and less so over time as the point of initial implementation becomes more distant (Hallberg et al., 2020). As Table 5 shows, 14 of the 15 significant, positive effects associated with implementation of the CPS model were found in the first year of CPS implementation at the treatment schools. Full model results for Years 1 and 2 of CPS implementation can be found in Appendix F.

Table 5. Student Outcomes Where CPS-Funded Schools Were Found to Have a Significant Effect Compared With a Matched Set of Comparison Schools on the Basis of a CITS Analysis

Outcomes	All students		Black students		White students		Female students		Male students	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
Attendance										
Number of school days present	○ (blue)				○ (blue)		○ (blue)		○ (blue)	
Number of school days absent						○ (blue)	○ (green)		○ (blue)	
Number of school day unexcused absences			○ (green)				○ (green)			
Disciplinary incidents										
Number of discipline incidents	○ (blue)		○ (blue)		○ (blue)				○ (blue)	
School days missed because of discipline incidents	○ (blue)				○ (blue)				○ (blue)	
Academic achievement										
Standardized Math assessments			○ (blue)		○ (green)		○ (green)			
Standardized ELA assessments					○ (blue)					

Note. CITS = comparative interrupted time series; CPS = Community Partnership School.

○ indicates a significant positive effect (*p* < .05).

○ indicates a significant negative effect (*p* < .05).

Significant Positive Effects in CPS Schools

As shown in Table 5, the most consistent significant positive effects were found in relation to **the number of school days attended** and **the number of discipline incidents** during the first year of CPS implementation and included the following:

- **Positive effects related to school day attendance.** Receipt of CPS funding was associated with a significant positive effect in the number of school days attended in Year 1 of CPS implementation relative to school days attended in schools in the matched comparison group. This effect was found when all students attending CPS and comparison schools were included in the model and for each of the subgroups examined, with the exception of Black students, among whom no significant effect was found.

  More specifically, we found a +3% difference in the number of days present among students in CPS schools compared with comparison students in the first year of the intervention, when all students were included in the model. For White students attending CPS school, this difference was +6%, while the difference was +3% and +2% for female and male students, respectively. In a 175-day school year, this would translate into roughly an additional 4 to 11 days of school day attendance in CPS schools across the groups where significant effects were found.

  Additionally, we found a -6% difference in the number of days absent among male students in CPS schools compared with male comparison students in the first year of the intervention, and a -7% difference for White students in CPS schools in Year 2 of CPS implementation. During the 2013–14 and 2014–15 school years, CPS schools in the treatment group averaged about 8 absences per school year, so a 6% to 7% reduction in absences would approximate to a half-day fewer absences.

- **Positive effects related to disciplinary incidents.** Being a CPS school was also associated with a significant negative effect on the number of disciplinary incidents in Year 1 of CPS implementation (meaning fewer incidents) relative to schools in the matched comparison group. This effect was found when all students attending CPS and comparison schools were included in the model and for each of the subgroups examined, with the exception of female students, among whom no significant effect was found.

  More specifically, in the first year of the intervention, we found a -9% difference in the number of disciplinary incidents among students in CPS schools relative to comparison students when all students were included in the model. For Black students attending CPS school, this difference was -24%, while the difference was -14% and -10% for male and White students, respectively. On average, during the 2013–14 and 2014–15 school years, students in CPS schools in the treatment group averaged 0.28 and 0.25 disciplinary

incidents, respectively, to provide some context for what a -9% reduction in incidents might look like among CPS schools.

Additionally, in the first year of the intervention, we also found a -9% difference in days missed because of discipline incidents among students in CPS relative to students in comparison students in the first year of the intervention. Specifically, this difference was more pronounced among White students (-27% difference) and male students (-16% difference). In both the 2013–14 and 2014–15 school years, the average number of school days missed because of disciplinary incidents was 2 days, which means differences in the number of days missed because of disciplinary incidents were less than a school day in magnitude.

Positive effects related to academic achievement in mathematics and English/language arts (ELA) were limited to certain subpopulations. More specifically, in Year 1, receipt of CPS funding was associated with a significant positive effect on mathematics scores for Black students in CPS relative to Black students in matched comparison schools. We found an +8% difference in standardized math scores among Black students in CPS with those having higher mathematics assessment scores compared with comparison students in Year 1 of CPS implementation.

A similar effect was found in ELA scores White students in Year 2 of implementation. In this case, we found a +9% difference in standardized ELA scores among White students in CPS schools relative to comparison students in the first year of the intervention.

Overall, then, in the first year of CPS implementation, the bulk of the positive effects associated with CPS schools indicate that CPS funding contributed most consistently to improving student outcomes in attendance and decreasing disciplinary incidents.

Although we have no strong evidence that this is the case, the evaluation team sees these results as meshing well with the more immediate initiative outcomes outlined earlier in this report. These includes both the self-reported outcomes documented in the afterschool survey and the ways students were seen as benefiting from CPS programming and services documented in the interviews and focus groups the evaluation team conducted. These included improved student engagement, school climate, and relationships between parents and schools. Such findings enhance the potential importance of examining these types of more immediate outcomes in future evaluation activities.

Significant Negative Impacts in SCS Schools

As shown in Table 5, not all significant effects associated with CPS funding were positive.

In Year 1 of CPS implementation, receipt of CPS funding was associated with a higher level of unexcused absences in CPS schools (a significant positive effect in the number of unexcused absences) relative to schools in the matched comparison group for both Black students and female students.

More specifically, in the first year of the intervention, we found a +19% difference in the number of unexcused absences among Black students in CPS schools relative to comparison students. For female students attending CPS, this difference was +15%.

Similarly, in Year 1 of the CPS implementation, being a CPS was also associated with more absences among female students (a significant positive effect in the number of absences) than there were among comparison female students. In this case, we found an +8% difference in the number of absences among female students in CPS schools compared with absences among female comparison students in the first year of the intervention.

Additionally, in the first year of CPS implementation, receipt of CPS funding was associated with a significant negative effect in mathematics achievement for White and female students relative to White and female students in in the matched comparison schools. In this case, we found an -7% difference in standardized math scores among White students in CPS, with those students having lower mathematics assessment scores than comparison students in Year 1 of CPS implementation. For female students in CPS schools, we found a -6% difference in standardized math scores.

What is particularly notable about the negative effects highlighted in Table 5 is that they tended to be concentrated among female students attending CPS schools. We do not have an explanation for why this may have been the case, but this finding may warrant further examination in future evaluation activities relative to the way this population of students is participating in and being served through the programming and services provided with CPS funding.

KEY EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION FINDINGS

The most consistent significant, positive effects (meaning in the desired direction) associated with being enrolled in an CPS school were related to outcomes in school day attendance and discipline-related outcomes during the first year of CPS implementation. Overall, receipt of CPS funding was associated with more school days attended (2% to 6% more days or an additional 4 to 11 days of school day attendance in CPS schools) and fewer disciplinary incidents (9% to 24% fewer incidents) than in the matched comparison schools. For context, on average during the 2013–14 and 2014–15 school years, students in CPS schools in the treatment group averaged 0.28 and 0.25 disciplinary incidents, respectively,

Positive academic outcomes were also found for Black (mathematics assessment performance: +8% difference in scores) and White students (ELA assessment performance: +9% difference in scores) during the first year of CPS implementation relative to comparison students.

Some significant negative effects were also observed in CPS schools in the first year of initiative implementation, particularly among female students in relation to school day absences and mathematics performance when compared with female students in the matched comparison groups. These findings may warrant further attention in future evaluation efforts.

It is unclear why almost all significant, positive effects associated with CPS implementation were associated with the first year of receiving CPS funding. Some studies have shown that CITS designs may be prone to issues of bias the further the examined time period is from the point of initial implementation of the intervention (Hallberg et al., 2020). It is not clear whether this characteristic of CITS analyses is at work here. It is also possible that the enthusiasm of initiating the CPS model in the first year of implementation led to the types of effects that were observed but that this initial interest and enthusiasm waned over time.

Finally, the CITS design is predicated on the assumption that implementation of the CPS model at a given school will lead to whole-school change that will be reflected in the performance of a meaningful segment of the school population. In future evaluation efforts, it may be more appropriate to assess which students and families are directly receiving support through CPS services and programming and exploring how that population specifically does on key outcomes relative to a carefully crafted matched comparison group. We know the UCF Center is currently taking steps to put in place a data collection and reporting infrastructure that will allow for such an analysis in the future.

Section 6. Recommendations and Areas for Future Investigation

In the following section we provide a series of recommendations for the UCF Center to consider based on the findings in this report. Additionally, we suggest several areas that we believe merit further investigation in the future.

Recommendations Based on the Implementation Evaluation

While we found many areas where the CPS model was being implemented with fidelity, several areas for growth stood out in our analysis.

1. **Ensure that all four partners are equally engaged in setting the vision and driving implementation of the CPS model.** As described in the introduction, the vision for implementation is an important driver for the actual activities and supports provided as part of the Initiative. As such, shared ownership and investment in the development of the vision for implementation is fundamental to the other key areas of implementation. The reoccurring theme of the "one-legged stool" was a pertinent challenge for schools and partner agencies in vision, shared decision making, and communication. Some of the underlying issues of this imbalance appear to be either one partner dominating the vision and agenda or one or more partners being disengaged. These may be interrelated, in that nondominant partners struggle to see a role for themselves in the model; or a lack of investment could be a factor of unclear expectations, lack of understanding of the model, or an organizational system at the school that is not as robust as it should be. **We recommend that the UCF Center investigate this phenomenon in more detail to better understand the way the model can be supported by additional strategies to ensure equal voice for all partners. Additionally, the UCF Center should consider additional professional development and resources for partners and directors to help partner agencies deeply understand the model and their roles and responsibilities in supporting the model.**

2. **Work to facilitate data sharing agreements between districts and partners because the absence of these agreements and a lack of means to easily share data among partners creates significant barriers to implementing a model that is aligned with data-driven decision making.** The CPS model is predicated, in part, on data-based decision making and evidence of progress to become a UCF-certified Community Partnership School. Data-sharing agreements and a means for gathering and sharing data efficiently among partners is a necessity to be able to actuate this component of the model. **We recommend that the UCF Center consider ways they can support each site in establishing data-sharing agreements and align data systems among partner agencies. One strategy to consider to support data-sharing may be the development of data-sharing templates and**

expectations as to which data should be shared with directors and partner agencies to create a standard for CPS schools.

3. **Strengthen opportunities to share best practices and strategies for addressing challenges among all partners and directors.** It is problematic that there appears to be no opportunity for nonprofit agencies to engage in this kind of sharing, creating inequity in growth opportunities for all nonprofit partner agencies. Additionally, opportunities for all directors to engage with one another outside of the DLE meetings, perhaps through site visits or smaller group meetings, could help break down some of the barriers directors reported in feeling isolated from other directors or disconnected from the larger network of CPS schools. **We recommend that the UCF Center assess the frequency of offerings for each type of partner, directors, and principals to engage in this kind of exchange. Additionally, it may also be worth assessing how best to incorporate each partner agency into the planning of some of these opportunities in order to allow for equal voice of partners in the CPS network.**

4. **Increase approaches that support the uptake of the supports that the UCF Center offers to better ensure all directors are receiving the same level of interaction and support. It would be worthwhile for the UCF Center to determine which services are duplicative of other agencies and how to better align the services they offer with those being offered by each partner agency. This may include doing further investigation into the types of structures and supports each agency offers their directors and gathering additional reflections on the way home agency norms shape the level of interaction with UCF Center supports.**

5. **Consider adopting a point-of-service afterschool quality measure to support efforts to enhance the quality of expanded learning offerings**. Most students responding to the afterschool survey reported commonly having skill-building experiences while participating in afterschool programs and a positive perception of the activity leaders providing the activities they participated in during the school year. However, students' perceptions of other youth participating in programming were generally less positive, which is an important finding because we also found that students were more apt to report an inclination to continue participating in afterschool programming in the next school year if they reported more positive experiences with the other students attending the activities they were attending. **Many of the commonly used point-of-service afterschool quality measures describe practices that afterschool activity leaders can adopt to better support positive interactions among students attending programming. We advise that the UCF Center adopting such tools to support the development of more effective staff practices in this area.**

6. **Adopt measures that will allow for the assessment of broader possible outcomes derived from implementation of the CPS model.** The most common ways students reported benefiting from participating in afterschool programming was having positive social interactions, developing new interests, and developing a better self-concept, findings that are very consistent with what we have seen in other samples while examining the impact of afterschool programs on participating students. Additionally, in light of the types of programming and services commonly provided in CPS schools, we would expect to potentially observe outcomes that are not systematically assessed in CPS-funded schools, including improved student engagement and perceptions of the relevance of school day instruction, improved school climate, improved student functioning on social and emotional outcomes, and improved relationships between parents and the school. **Several of these outcome areas are addressed to some extent in the key performance indicators developed as part of this evaluation project. We recommend that the UCF Center continue to examine ways to incorporate these types of measures into its long-term evaluation strategy.**

7. **Continue to take steps to capture dosage data and use this information to evaluate program effectiveness.** One of the major limitations of the effectiveness study summarized in this report was the inability to examine outcomes specifically for students who had received CPS-supported services, programming, and supports. **The UCF Center has processes underway to adopt a data collection and reporting system for the initiative that would allow for this type of dosage data to be collected. It is incredibly important for both short-term and long-term evaluation efforts that this work continue and result in a functional data collection system for the Initiative.**

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Appendix A. Summary of Proposed Key Performance Indicators

The purpose of this appendix is to provide a summary of key performance indicators (KPIs) designed to support the CPS Initiative.

KPI Background

The goal of the KPIs is to transform data collected as part of the CPS initiative into a series of metrics that will accomplish the following two purposes:

- The KPIs should facilitate efforts to monitor both implementation of the CPS strategy and the progress schools funded by CPS are making in supporting positive student and family outcomes.

- The KPIs should enhance the capacity of schools and other key stakeholders to engage in data-driven decision making and support continuous improvement efforts.

Using information obtained from staff from the UCF Center and feedback from key CPS stakeholders who participated in a series of virtual convenings held in June, July, and September 2020, the evaluation team from AIR drafted a series of KPIs that are summarized in this appendix and detailed in a longer KPI document provided to the UCF Center.

KPI Organization

The proposed KPIs were organized into three broad category groupings—Activity and Service Provision indicators, School-Level Outcome indicators, and Outcome Indicators Related to CPS Activity and Service Participation—which were then broken down into indicator categories and then into individual indicators that fall within that category. In the final KPI report, in each category grouping, we provided a rationale for why indicators in that category were considered. We then described each indicator and how the indicator would be calculated, along with any subgroups that were recommended to be considered when reporting indicator results. Finally, each category was followed by a summary of potential considerations for developing the data infrastructure to capture the proposed items.

Outlined below are the category groupings and associated categories represented in the final KPI document.

Activity and Service Provision

- Activity and Service Provision Category A: CPS Service and Activity Enrollment

- Activity and Service Provision Category B: Assessing Sustained Enrollment in Expanded Learning Opportunities

- Activity and Service Provision Category C: Positive Developmental Experiences in Expanded Learning Opportunities

- Activity and Service Provision Category D: Indicators Related to More Immediate Youth Development Outcomes

- Activity and Service Provision Category E: Indicators Related to Parent and Family-Member Education or Skill Attainment

School-Level Outcomes

- School-Level Outcomes Category F: Indicators Related to School-Level Academic Improvement

- School-Level Outcomes Category G: Indicators Related to School-Day Attendance, Wellness, and Behaviors

- School-Level Outcomes Category H: Indicators Related to Staff Development and Retention

- School-Level Outcomes Category I: Indicators Related to School Climate

Outcome Indicators Related to CPS Activity and Service Participation

- Participant Outcomes Category J: Academic Outcome Indicators Related to CPS Activity and Service Participation

- Participant Outcomes Category K: Attendance and Behavior Outcome Indicators Related to CPS Activity and Service Participation

Some of the indicators are predicated on data collected from student survey items that were also included in the final KPI report.

In addition, a distinction was made between those indicators deemed *mandatory* and those deemed *optional*. For indicators that would be **mandatory**, it would be expected that **all** CPS schools should collect and report on data related to the indicator in question. For **optional** indicators, schools would have the option of either (a) choosing to collect and report on data related to a given indicator because it is directly relevant to how they have approached implementation of the CPS strategy at their school or (b) choosing not to provide such data because the indicator is not directly relevant to CPS implementation efforts at their school.

Finally, in the final KPI report, we explored some of the topics that emerged during the KPI discussion that we determined were outside the realm of the KPI creation process. We briefly addressed these topics and provide some recommendations to the UCF Center on potential future courses of action in these areas.

Appendix B. Afterschool Activity Survey

1. **What types of afterschool activities provided at your school have you gone to this school year (check all you have done)?**

The Arts			Sports/recreation			STEM/STEAM		
Art	○		Sports	○		STEM/STEAM activities (e.g., science, technology)	○	
Playing an instrument/band	○		Fitness	○		Robotics	○	
Dance	○		Martial arts	○		Computers	○	
Writing/recording music	○		Weight-lifting	○		Learning about nature	○	
Choir	○		Yoga	○		**Books/writing**		
Drama/acting	○		Gaming/chess	○		Book club	○	
Film/movie-making	○		Cooking	○		Comics/cartooning	○	
Photography	○		Sewing/knitting	○		Poetry/Spoken word	○	
Languages/culture			Gardening	○		Creative writing	○	
Learning a new language	○		**Leadership**			School Paper/yearbook	○	
Exploring a different culture	○		Community service	○		**Business**		
College			Student government	○		Creating a business	○	
College visits	○		Racial and social justice	○		**Other**		
Help applying for college	○		Other leadership	○		Please describe:	○	

2. **Did you get extra help in any of the following school subjects this school year by going to afterschool activities at your school?**

	No	Yes, Some Help	Yes, Lots of Help
a. Math	○	○	○
b. Reading/language arts	○	○	○
c. Science	○	○	○
d. Social studies	○	○	○
e. Foreign language	○	○	○

3. **How often did you attend afterschool activities at your school (choose just one)?**

○ At least a couple of times a week

○ About once a week

○ A couple of times a month

○ About once month

○ Less than once a month

4. **How did you attend afterschool activities at your school (choose just one)?**

○ All or mostly in-person at school

○ All or mostly online

○ A combination of some in-person and some online

5. **Thinking about the staff leading afterschool activities you went to this school year, how true are these statements for you? There is a teacher or activity leader here . . .**

	Not at all true	Somewhat true	Mostly true	Completely true
a. who is interested in what I think about things.	○	○	○	○
b. who helps me when I have a problem.	○	○	○	○
c. whom I enjoy connecting with.	○	○	○	○
d. who has helped me find a special interest or talent (something I'm good at).	○	○	○	○
e. who asks me about my life and goals.	○	○	○	○
f. whom I will miss when the program is over.	○	○	○	○

6. At the afterschool activities you went to, how did kids get along? How true is each statement based on your experience?

	Not at all true	Somewhat true	Mostly true	Completely true
a. Kids are friendly with one another.	O	O	O	O
b. Kids treat each other with respect.	O	O	O	O
c. Kids listen to what the teachers tell them to do.	O	O	O	O
d. Kids don't tease or bully others.	O	O	O	O
e. Kids support and help one another.	O	O	O	O

7. Did you have the following experiences when going to afterschool activities?

	Not at all	Sort of	Yes, definitely
a. I tried new things.	O	O	O
b. I got to do things here I don't get to do anywhere else.	O	O	O
c. I set goals for myself.	O	O	O
d. I learned to push myself.	O	O	O
e. I worked hard to get better at something.	O	O	O
f. I did things that challenged me in a good way.	O	O	O

8. **How has attending afterschool activities at your school helped you specifically? Pick up to THREE areas where you think these activities have helped you the MOST. Going to afterschool activities has helped me . . .**

	Pick up to three
feel good about myself.	○
make new friends.	○
have something to do that was important to me.	○
discover things I want to learn more about.	○
learn things that will help me in school.	○
learn about things that are important to my community.	○
with my confidence.	○
think about the kinds of classes I want to take in the future.	○
stay connected with my friends.	○
find out what I'm good at doing.	○
learn things that will be important for my future.	○
feel good because I was helping my community.	○
not to be lonely.	○
find out what I like to do.	○
think about what I might like to do when I get older.	○
This program hasn't actually helped me.	○
I prefer not to answer	○

9. **If you could, would you want to go to similar afterschool activities offered at your school next year?**

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ I am not sure

10. What grade are you currently in at this school? (choose one)

○ 4th

○ 5th

○ 6th

○ 7th

○ 8th

○ 9th

○ 10th

○ 11th

○ 12th

11. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin? (Choose one.)

○ Yes

○ No

○ Prefer not to answer

12. What is your race? (You may choose one or more races.)

○ Asian

○ American Indian or Alaska Native

○ Black or African-American

○ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

○ White

○ Prefer not to answer

13. What is your gender? (Choose one.)

○ Female

○ Male

○ Other

○ Prefer not to answer

Appendix C. Summary of Survey Respondent Demographics

The purpose of this appendix is to provide a summary of demographics associated with students completing the afterschool activity survey.

Table C.1. Grade Level of Youth Survey Respondents

Grade level	Number	Percentage
Grade 3	13	4%
Grade 4	55	19%
Grade 5	105	36%
Grade 6	20	7%
Grade 7	19	7%
Grade 8	25	9%
Grade 9	17	6%
Grade 10	5	2%
Grade 11	11	4%
Grade 12	19	7%

Note. Youth survey data collected from 289 youth at 11 CPS schools

Table C.2. Race/Ethnicity of Youth Survey Respondents

Grade level	Number	Percentage
Black	118	41%
White	115	40%
Hispanic	61	21%
American Indian or Alaska Native	11	4%
Asian	7	2%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	7	2%
Prefer not to answer	46	16%

Note. Youth survey data collected from 290 youth at 11 CPS schools. Categories are not mutually exclusive.

Table C.3. Race/Ethnicity of Youth Survey Respondents

Grade level	Number	Percentage
Female	144	50%
Male	137	47%
Other/Prefer not to answer	9	3%

Note. Youth survey data collected from 290 youth at 11 CPS schools

Appendix D. Summary of Results from Youth Experience-Related Survey Items

The purpose of this appendix is to present item-level findings from the youth experience scales included on the afterschool activity survey.

Table D.1. Percentage of Responses, by Response Category: Perceptions of Activity Leaders Scale

In this program, there is an adult here . . .	Not at all true	Somewhat true	Mostly true	Completely true
who is interested in what I think about things.	9.5%	33.3%	31.2%	26.0%
who helps me when I have a problem.	3.2%	22.6%	29.0%	45.2%
whom I enjoy connecting with.	5.3%	28.9%	28.2%	37.7%
who has helped me find a special interest or talent (something I'm good at).	13.5%	29.5%	24.9%	32.0%
who asks me about my life and goals.	17.7%	28.3%	19.9%	27.2%
whom I will miss when the program is over.	11.2%	21.3%	19.9%	47.6%

Note. Youth survey data collected from 290 youth at 11 CPS schools

Table D.2. Percentage of Responses, by Response Category: Perceptions of Other Youth Scale

How true are these statements for you?	Not at all true	Somewhat true	Mostly true	Completely true
Kids here are friendly with one another.	9.3%	47.2%	30.7%	12.8%
Kids here treat each other with respect.	14.5%	43.4%	28.6%	13.4%
Kids here listen to what the teachers tell them to do.	11.1%	40.5%	27.3%	21.1%
Kids here don't tease or bully others.	17.1%	37.3%	23.7%	22.0%
Kids here support and help one another.	11.4%	35.9%	35.9%	16.9%

Note. Youth survey data collected from 290 youth at 11 CPS schools

Table D.3. Percentage of Responses, by Response Category: Skill-Building Scale

Did you have the following experiences when going to afterschool activities?	Not at all	Sort of	Yes, definitely
I tried new things.	5.9%	46.0%	48.1%
I got to do things here I don't get to do anywhere else.	11.5%	39.4%	49.1%
I set goals for myself.	16.3%	38.8%	45.0%
I learned to push myself.	14.0%	33.6%	52.4%
I worked hard to get better at something.	7.3%	35.1%	57.6%
I did things that challenged me in a good way.	10.3%	42.4%	47.2%

Note. Youth survey data collected from 290 youth at 11 CPS schools

Appendix E. Propensity Score Matching Results

The purpose of this appendix is to present matching results from the propensity score matching analyses conducted to create a comparison group for the CITS analyses.

Table E.1. Mean Values for Variables Used in the Matching Process for the Impact Analyses—Complete and Matched Samples

Covariates used in matching	Before matching			After matching		
	Treatment (*n* = 11)	Comparison (*n* = 629)	SMD	Treatment (*n* = 11)	Comparison (*n* = 44)	SMD
School Level 2013-14 School Year						
Percentage White 2013–14	.50	.59	-0.33	.50	.54	-0.17
Percentage Black 2013–14	.41	.31	0.32	.41	.36	0.16
Percentage other race 2013–14	.09	.10	-0.21	.09	.09	-0.06
Percentage female 2013–14	.44	.48	-0.23	.44	.46	-0.13
Percentage ELL 2013–14	.11	.07	0.29	.11	.09	0.17
Percentage free & reduced-price lunch 2013–14	.71	.56	0.83	.71	.68	0.14
Percentage exceptionality 2013–14	.23	.22	0.10	.23	.22	0.12
Promotion rate 2013–14	.95	.93	0.47	.95	.96	-0.22
Days absent 2013–14	8.13	8.61	-0.16	8.13	8.12	0.00
Unexcused days absent 2013–14	6.49	6.06	0.16	6.49	6.74	-0.09
Disciplinary incidents 2013–14	.28	.27	0.05	.28	.23	0.18
Days missed due to disciplinary incidents 2013–14	.30	.30	-0.00	.30	.25	0.18

Covariates used in matching	Before matching			After matching		
	Treatment (*n* = 11)	Comparison (*n* = 629)	SMD	Treatment (*n* = 11)	Comparison (*n* = 44)	SMD
School Level 2014–15 School Year						
Percentage White 2014–15	.46	.56	-0.26	.46	.51	-0.14
Percentage Black 2014–15	.51	.39	0.32	.51	.46	0.13
Percentage other race 2014–15	.03	.05	-0.55	.03	.02	0.04
Percentage female 2014–15	.44	.48	-0.24	.44	.46	-0.16
Percentage ELL 2014–15	.07	.07	-0.04	.07	.05	0.20
Percentage free & reduced price lunch 2014–15	.66	.55	0.38	.66	.66	0.00
Percentage exceptionality 2014–15	.23	.22	0.10	.23	.22	0.13
Promotion rate 2014–15	.96	.93	0.61	.96	.97	-0.26
Days absent 2014–15	8.00	8.55	-0.17	8.00	8.15	-0.05
Unexcused days absent 2014–15	6.34	6.25	0.03	6.34	6.66	-0.12
Disciplinary incidents 2014–15	.25	.24	0.03	.25	.26	-0.03
Days missed due to disciplinary incidents 2014–15	.25	.26	-0.07	.25	.23	0.11

Note. Florida Department of Education data.

SMD = standardized mean difference.

Appendix F. CITS Results for CPS Implementation Years 1 & 2

The purpose of this appendix is to provide additional information about the CITS model and provided detailed analysis results.

CITS Model

To conduct the comparative interrupted time series analysis, we fit the following equation for each of our outcomes of interest:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * time_i + \beta_2 * pre - intervention_i + \beta_3 * intervention_i + \beta_4 * year2_i + \beta_5 * year3_i + \beta_6 * cohort2_i + \beta_7 * cohort3_i + \beta_8 * (time_i * intervention_i) + \beta_9 * (pre - intervention_i * intervention_i) + \beta_{10} * (year2_i * intervention_i) + \beta_{11} * (year3_i * intervention_i) + \beta_{12} * (cohort2_i * intervention_i) + \beta_{13} * (cohort3_i * intervention_i) + \beta_k * vector\ of\ student\ demographic\ characteristics_i + e_i.$$

In this equation, Y_i represents each of our outcomes of interest for student i (e.g., average days absent), which is regressed on the slope related to time since the start of the study (β_1), an indicator of pre- and post-intervention start (β_2), an intervention indicator representing intervention or comparison (β_3), an indicator of pre- and post- second year of intervention implementation (β_4), an indicator of pre- and post- third year of intervention implementation (β_5), an indicator of schools that began implementation in cohort 2 (β_6), an indicator representing schools that began implementation in cohort 3 (β_7). Each of the remaining coefficients ($\beta_8 - \beta_{13}$), represent an interaction term between our intervention indicator and our previous coefficients. Lastly, we included a vector of student-level demographic and background characteristics plus the appropriate outcome measured at baseline (β_k).

CITS Results

Table F.1. Summary of CPS Effects Compared With a Matched Set of Comparison Schools Based on a CITS Analysis, by Year—Days Attended and Days Absent

Student group	Number of days attended						Number of days absent					
	Year 1			Year 2			Year 1			Year 2		
	Coeff	SE	*p*	Coeff	SE	*p*	Coeff	SE	*p*	Coeff	SE	*p*
All students	0.03	0.01	< .001	0.01	0.01	> .05	0.02	0.03	> .05	0.01	0.06	> .05
Black	0.01	0.01	> .05	0.01	0.01	> .05	0.02	0.05	> .05	0.01	0.09	> .05
White	0.06	0.00	< .001	0.01	0.01	> .05	0.02	0.02	> .05	-0.07	0.03	< .05

| Student group | Number of days attended | | | | | | Number of days absent | | | | | |
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | |
	Coeff	SE	p	Coeff	SE	p	Coeff	SE	p	Coeff	SE	p
Female	0.03	0.00	< .001	0.03	0.01	> .05	0.08	0.03	< .05	-0.04	0.04	> .05
Male	0.02	0.00	< .001	0.02	0.01	> .05	-0.06	0.03	< .05	-0.05	0.04	> .05

Note. Florida Department of Education data from 11 CPS schools and a matched set of 44 non-CPS schools. CITS = comparative interrupted time series; coeff = coefficient; SE = standard error.

Table F.2. Summary of CPS Effects Compared With a Matched Set of Comparison Schools Based on a CITS Analysis, by Year—Unexcused Absences

| Student group | Number of unexcused absences | | | | | |
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | |
	Coeff	SE	p	Coeff	SE	p
All students	0.10	0.05	> .05	0.05	0.11	> .05
Black	0.17	0.08	< .05	0.04	0.13	> .05
White	-0.01	0.04	> .05	-0.10	0.09	> .05
Female	0.14	0.05	< .05	-0.09	0.09	> .05
Male	0.01	0.05	> .05	-0.03	0.09	> .05

Note. Florida Department of Education data from 11 CPS schools and a matched set of 44 non-CPS schools. CITS = comparative interrupted time series; coeff = coefficient; SE = Standard Error.

Table F.3. Summary of CPS Effects Compared With a Matched Set of Comparison Schools Based on a CITS Analysis by Year—Disciplinary Incidents and Disciplinary Days

| Student group | Number of disciplinary incidents | | | | | | Number of discipline days absent | | | | | |
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | |
	Coeff	SE	p	Coeff	SE	p	Coeff	SE	p	Coeff	SE	p
All students	-0.10	0.05	< .05	0.00	0.08	> .05	-0.09	0.04	< .05	-0.03	0.06	> .05
Black	-0.24	0.12	< .05	0.03	0.10	> .05	-0.15	0.10	> .05	0.03	0.08	> .05
White	-0.11	0.03	< .001	-0.05	0.04	> .05	-0.32	0.02	< .001	-0.08	0.04	> .05
Female	-0.03	0.04	> .05	-0.02	0.05	> .05	-0.02	0.04	> .05	-0.01	0.05	> .05
Male	-0.15	0.06	< .05	0.02	0.01	> .05	-0.18	0.04	< .001	-0.07	-0.07	> .05

Table F.4 Summary of CPS Effects Compared With a Matched Set of Comparison Schools Based on a CITS Analysis, by Year—Mathematics and ELA Assessment Results

| Student group | Mathematics | | | | | | ELA | | | | | |
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | |
	Coeff	SE	*p*	Coeff	SE	*p*	Coeff	SE	*p*	Coeff	SE	*p*
All students	-0.003	0.02	> .05	-0.02	0.05	> .05	0.04	0.03	0.05	-0.02	0.03	0.05
Black	0.08	0.03	< .05	-0.01	0.08	> .05	-0.06	0.03	> .05	0.002	0.06	> .05
White	-0.07	0.03	< .05	0.01	0.04	> .05	0.09	0.02	<.001	0.02	0.02	> .05
Female	-0.06	0.02	< .05	0.02	0.15	> .05	0.04	0.03	> .05	0.02	0.03	> .05
Male	0.03	0.02	> .05	-0.01	0.04	> .05	0.01	0.03	> .05	0.01	0.03	> .05

Note. Florida Department of Education data from 11 CPS schools and a matched set of 44 non-CPS schools. CITS = comparative interrupted time series; coeff = coefficient; SE = Standard Error.

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