



# 21st Century Community Learning Centers Newsletter– February 2014



## Program Manager's Message



Greetings! I hope your 2014 has started off well and all of your programs are back in full swing after taking a quick break over the holidays. Many of you have been incredibly busy finishing up your FY15 RFPs, in addition to preparing for monitoring,

completing your formative assessment, and putting out numerous other fires every day. Our staff cannot thank you enough for all of the great work you do for our communities.

2014 started off great for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC on a national level. Congress passed the FY14 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, which largely restores the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding cuts implemented by

sequestration by providing the Federal program with an addition \$60 million. In addition, the new Bill excludes language regarding Extended Learning Time, which potentially could have reallocated funds from out of school time to time when school is in session. Many consider these developments to be big victories for the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program.

With over half of the school year now behind us, it is important to take a critical look at your program to see what is and is not working. The formative assessment will help you do that, but only if you truly make an effort to implement the steps identified on the "Program Recommendations" page of the assessment. In addition, we strongly encourage you to view the attendance webinar held on February

7<sup>th</sup>. This webinar is specifically designed to give you effective strategies to re-energize your program to recruit more students and make it as impactful as possible.

Finally, many of you were forced to close your programs during the recent snowstorm. We would ask that you make a good faith effort to make up these days later in the year; however, there will be no ramifications from our office if your program is unable to do so. It was certainly a tough time for many of our families and communities throughout the state. Thank you for all you did to ensure the safety of our students.

We look forward to an outstanding 2014 and please let us know if our staff can help in any way.

Mike Thaler  
21st CCLC Program Manager

## It's a New Year: Resolve to Reengage Families By Jennifer Bateman, Ph.D., M.Ed.



Forty-four percent of individuals make New Year's resolutions. When resolutions turn into healthy habits, they can make a huge difference in boosting one's well being. This year, consider applying

a resolution framework to your program and, as a team, contemplate how new or revised practices can be embedded in your program's structure.

Overcoming barriers to and enhancing family involvement is often identified as an area for improvement among programs and undertaking this effort is well worth the investment. Thirty years of research confirms that when families and caregivers are engaged in their children's and teenager's education, youth earn higher grades and test scores, attend school more consistently, complete more homework, demonstrate more positive attitudes

and behaviors, graduate from high school at higher rates, and are more likely to enroll in higher education than students with less involved families (Eagle, 1989; Henderson & Berla, 1994; U.S. Department of Education, 1994; Ziegler, 1987).

Whether you are a program seeking to further improve an already strong family-partnership component, a program that has little family involvement, or a program attempting to revise certain elements of your program's image, prioritizing family involvement is an important goal. Harvard Professor Robert Putnam has written that given a choice between a 10% increase in school budgets or a 10% increase in parent engagement, he would invest in parent engagement due to the positive impact that family engagement can have on youth outcomes.

If families are to work as partners in the education of their children and teens, programs must provide them with the opportunities and support they need to become involved. This year, reconsider *how* you are engaging families and caregivers in your program. Research demonstrates that effective family engagement programs share three characteristics: they are comprehensive, well planned, and long lasting.

Consider incorporating these 22 ideas and techniques, adapted from a presentation by John H. Wherry, Ed.D., the President of The Parent Institute (<http://www.parent-institute.com>), as components of a comprehensive and ongoing parent involvement program.

1. Ask staff to make at least two positive phone calls to family members each semester/quarter. Parent communication is a

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# It's a New Year: Resolve to Reengage Families

- cost-effective investment.
2. Develop written policies encouraging parent involvement. If it's not in policy, the message is we don't care much about it.
3. Take heart from the "one-third rule." Research says if you can get *one-third* of family members involved, you can begin to make significant improvement in student achievement.
4. Be aware that staff are more reluctant to contact family members than *vice versa*. Solution: get family members and staff together—just as people—in comfortable social situations.
5. Try "quick notes" home—notes the day something happens. A parent helps the child with a spelling test and the child does better. Shoot an immediate note home to say, "It's working!"
6. Take family members' pictures. Tell them in advance that pictures will be taken with their child, and prepare for a crowd.
7. Ask staff what they would like to tell family members if they had the chance—and ask family members what they would like to tell staff. Then exchange the information!
8. Have handy a ready reference list of helpful materials family members might use to help them cope with student problems. Better yet have a lending library.
9. Provide "Go to the Office" slips for staff to give students who do something good. Students take the slip to the Director who compliments the youth, writes a note to family members on the slip (or calls family members), and sends it home.
10. Be aware that family members are looking for a program where their children are likely to succeed.
11. Don't make judgments about family members' lack of interest in their children's education. You'll probably be wrong. "Walk a mile in their shoes" and understand that what looks like apathy may be exhaustion.
12. Try daylong parent academies with short repeated workshops on topics such as building self-competence, language development, motivating children, encouraging reading, discipline, talking with kids about sex, dealing with divorce, etc. Test weekdays vs. weekends.
13. Involve family members in goal setting for their children. It promotes working as a team.
14. Give family members specific suggestions about how they can help their children. Many just need to know things like: "Read aloud every day." "Turn the TV off during homework time."
15. Try a short student-written newsletter for family members about what students have been learning. (You still need your own parent newsletter. You cannot fulfill your obligation to communicate by delegating the job to students.)
16. Help family members understand that student *effort* is the most important key to program success, not just *ability*.
17. Invite family members to a program about helping children do well on homework and eliminating things that distract them. Most have never had such information.
18. Have children write personal notes to their family members on program papers, surveys, invitations to program programs, etc. Watch parent response rates soar!
19. Try sending home "Resource Bags" filled with games, videos, reading materials and instructions on specific activities family members can do with children at home. They're very popular.
20. Try a "Family Math Night" to inform family members about the math curriculum through math games.
21. Try "refrigerator notes." Ask students to "Take this note home and put it in the refrigerator." That gets attention!
22. Want to get family members out for program meetings? Make children welcome by offering child care.

Recognize that developing a successful family partnership program requires continued effort over time and the involvement of the whole team, not just a few members. Remember to reward yourself and your team for small achievements along the way. Set goals and when you reach a portion of your goal, recognize and celebrate the accomplishment – this will keep your team focused on and excited about the overall goal and process. Best of luck!



## State Staff Spotlight



This issue's spotlight shines on **Lakeysha Hallmon**, one of our Education Research and Evaluation Specialists (ERES). Lakeysha is a proud native of Mississippi. She holds a bachelor's degree in English from Tougaloo College, a master's degree in Curriculum and Instructions from the University of Mississippi, and a specialist degree in Educational Leadership from Liberty University. Lakeysha is currently a doctoral candidate at Liberty University. Before arriving at the GADOE, Lakeysha taught for 10 years. Her last years in the classroom, she served as an English teacher, head women's basketball coach and program director for a Cobb County 21st CCLC program. She has

conducted numerous professional development sessions, including one for Advanced Placement English teachers, and on how to improve student/ teacher relationships and others on academic achievement for exceptional learners. Lakeysha is deeply invested in her community and has orchestrated several outreach missions for the homeless. When Lakeysha is not working, she is an avid tennis player, hiker, writer, and engrosses herself in the arts.



# Program Highlight: Boys and Girls of the CSRA STARS Program

At Boys & Girls Clubs of the CSRA (BGC), we believe success is within reach of every child who walks through our doors. Research indicates the vast majority of children who do not obtain a high school diploma suffered from a variety of environmental factors that placed them at-risk of dropping out. Most commonly these factors include low socio-economic status, low parental educational attainment, minority ethnic status, and single parent household status. Almost 90% of the children attending the BGC have at least two of these risk factors; however, through the Club's comprehensive approach to youth development, young people learn to overcome these risks and reach high school graduation with a plan for their futures.

Students Tapping Academic Resources for Success (STARS) is a program designed by the BGC to improve the academic performance of BGC members to ensure they are on course to graduate. The program is funded by 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) and

includes daily homework help, individual and group tutoring, supplemental instruction, academic enrichment, career exploration, economic and technological literacy, character education, fitness and mentoring. Currently, 930 first through ninth grade Club members at six Club sites are enrolled in the STARS program, and the results are astounding. At a time when only 10% of low-income children demonstrate grade level proficiency in math and only 20% are reading on grade level, through the STARS program, 83% and 87% of our program participants are meeting and exceeding state standards in these respective subjects. Since the program was implemented in 2009, more children than ever are enrolling and their steady improvement is proof of the program's efficacy. Since children that read at grade level are significantly less likely to drop out of school, this progress is indicative of life-saving change for the young people in our program.

Forty percent of eventual high school drop-outs are identified as early as the third grade,

simply based on their inability to read at grade level by this time. That's why STARS is so important to children like Christeanna. When she joined the BGC in the fall of 2011, she was a second grader and very behind in school. She enrolled in the STARS program and made significant progress throughout the year, but it was not enough to earn her promotion to the third grade. She continued to come to the Club throughout the summer and she continued to work hard with her tutors and mentors through the fall quarter of her repeated second grade year. By the end of the first nine weeks, she had so improved that she was able to rejoin her friends in the third grade. Now Christeanna maintains her place on her school's A-B honor roll and has had perfect scores in math and science on her report card. Her standardized test scores are good, and she is in no danger of regressing. Christeanna's story is proof that all children can learn, and her participation in STARS has

removed a barrier to high school graduation. The resources provided through 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC have had a profound effect on the lives of children like Christeanna, and the community is taking notice. With results like the ones recounted above to share, we are able to secure the sustainability of the STARS program with the help of our community partners. STARS works because it addresses a very real need in the community, all participants are enrolled because they want to be, and it is fully funded.

*Submitted by Julie Kennedy,  
Program Director  
STARS 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Program  
Boys and Girls Clubs of the CSRA*



## Remember to block off these dates!

### February

**African American History Month**  
February 2014

**Children's Dental Month**  
February 2014

**National Inventor's Day**  
February 11, 2014

**Beyond School Hours Conference**  
February 12-15, 2014

**National PTA Founder's Day**  
February 17, 2014

### March

**Dr. Seuss Read Across America Day**  
March 2, 2014

**National Youth at Risk Conference**  
March 2-5, 2014

**National Anthem Day**  
March 3, 2014

**National School Breakfast Week**  
March 3-7, 2014

**International Ask a Question Day**  
March 14, 2014

### April

**National Stress Awareness Month**  
April 2014

**Week of the Young Child**  
April 14-20, 2014

**Public School Volunteer Week**  
April 21-25, 2014

**Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day**  
April 24, 2014

**Student, parent, and school day teacher surveys due**  
April 30, 2014



*Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Want to be featured in a newsletter?*

Contact Us  
21stcclc@doe.k12.ga.us

## Monitoring Season is Upon Us!

The Georgia Department of Education's 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC staff have begun making rounds to your 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program sites for

compliance monitoring. Each program is a haven that serves students and families with a kaleidoscope of needs. However, there is nothing like a bit of reflection to check-in on how those services are being delivered.

A monitoring visit can take between 2 to 5 hours, depending upon a variety of factors. Here are a few tips to help you gear up for your next monitoring visit.

- Be sure to thoroughly review the monitoring document in its entirety- it is a good practice to read it at the beginning of the year with your staff to ensure the correct information is being collected and maintained
- Be sure to prepare early for your visit- remember this is a continuous process
- Contact your ERES or FA if you have any questions or concerns
- Attend your regional Brown Bag that covers each year's monitoring process
- Be sure monitoring document package contains all required evidence
- Have program director, finance personnel, and site coordinator work together to ensure documentation is thorough and complete
- Color code sites for requested site specific documents
- Be sure you are using the correct monitoring document for the type of monitoring you are receiving, i.e; desk top or on site
- If you are completing a desk top monitoring, be sure your documents are received on or before the monitoring date

- Be sure your documentation is complete and prepare your folders early, just in case an emergency occurs
- Be sure to only provide documentation that is requested- when a sampling is requested, a good rule of thumb is 5 artifacts per site
- Confirm attendance of all parties at the site monitoring and ensure that proper personnel are available to answer our staff's questions

*We look forward to seeing you again and looking at all the great work you are doing!*

