

Connecticut's State-Funded After School Programs, 2013-14
Connecticut State Department of Education

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Executive Summary

The Connecticut After School Grant Program, as defined in Section 10-16x of the Connecticut General Statutes, was implemented in the 2007-08 school year. The program began its fourth two-year funding cycle during the 2013-14 school year. Each two year funding cycle consists of a new cohort of grantees awarded the grants through a competitive application process.

This report presents the result of a process and outcome evaluation of state-funded after school programs (ASPs) operating during the 2013-14 school year. The Center for Applied Research in Human Development at the University of Connecticut was commissioned to analyze existing data provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education and participating after school programs. The full report provides an overview of the characteristics of the ASP sites and the youth who were involved in the ASPs. The report also presents data on youth's performance on two outcome indicators identified by the legislature: school day behavior and school day attendance. Program participants' outcomes on a third performance indicator, academic achievement, were not assessed during the 2013-14 year due to changes in the state achievement testing procedures. Because of these changes, no students took the CMT or CAPT standardized tests.

Characteristics of After School Program Sites and Patterns of Attendance

In 2013-14, funding provided by the General Assembly supported 26 grant initiatives. Through these grants, 4,411 students were served at 47 after school sites in 18 school districts across the state. For all qualifying participants, students attended an average of 88 days of after school programming, with high school students attending substantially less (Mean: 30 days) as compared to elementary and middle school students (Mean: 96 days). Programs varied in the degree to which they served the number of students they had planned to serve. Across all sites, the average daily program attendance was about 75.7 percent; meaning that, on average, sites were serving three-quarters of the number of youth they planned to serve. This exceeds the 60 percent target set by the Connecticut State Department of Education. Average daily attendance varied from site to site, but only 31 sites (66%) attained or exceeded 60 percent throughout the grant period. Sites serving primarily elementary school students or elementary and middle school students had higher average daily attendance than sites serving either primarily middle school or primarily high school students.

Across all sites, about 82.7 percent of registered students attended 30 or more days of programming (which is defined as an "adequate level of dosage" by the Connecticut State Department of Education). This percentage also varied considerably from site to site. Sites serving elementary school students or middle school students had, on average, higher proportions of regularly attending students compared to K through 8 and high school sites.

Attendance was also examined in terms of individual participants' attendance rates, defined as the number of days a student attended his or her after school site divided by the number of days that site was open. The average participant attended only 57.5 percent of days his or her site was open. Sites serving elementary or elementary and middle school students had, on average, higher rates of individual attendance than did sites serving only middle or high school students.

Characteristics of After School Program Participants

In 2013-14, state-funded after school sites served slightly more females than males, with males showing higher attendance rates. Programs enrolled/served a higher number of elementary and middle school students than older students; older students also attended less frequently.

State-funded ASPs included lower proportions of English Language Learner students (ELLs) and students whose home language was not English as compared to the total population of students statewide. These findings suggests that recruitment and retention of students whose families speak a language other than English at home may require additional attention to meet the needs of students in ASP districts.

Student Performance

Participants were compared with students statewide and with the public school population in the school districts where state-funded after school sites were located on the two performance indicators of interest. The third performance indicator, academic achievement, was not assessed this school year due to changes in testing format.

With regard to school day attendance rates, ASP participants had significantly higher rates of school attendance when compared to students in ASP districts and statewide. Although this is a promising finding, these results may not be practically significant, as they only indicate that ASP participants attend about 1.75 and .75 additional school days, respectively, when compared to students from their districts or statewide.

The second performance measure, school day behavior, was assessed using records of participants' disciplinary infractions during the 2013-14 school year. ASP participants showed a favorable divergence from the population in the districts where sites were located. Among students in the 2013-14 participant group, 8.1 percent had at least one disciplinary infraction. This is similar to the statewide figure of 7.5 percent. However, it is significantly smaller than the percentage for students in the comparison districts, where 12.3 percent of students had at least one infraction. The average number of infractions per student was slightly better among students in ASPs (average of 2.0 incidents), than among students in comparison districts (3.0), and students statewide (2.7).

Finally, comparisons were made between students who attended one, two, three, four, or five years of ASP programming between the 2009-10 and 2013-14 academic years. Comparisons for school-day attendance indicated there was not a statistically significant difference in school day attendance rates between the one, two, three, four, or five-year students. Lastly, comparisons for disciplinary infractions showed that the percent of students who had at least one disciplinary infraction was smaller for three, four, and five-year participants when compared to one- and two-year participants. Similarly, there were a lower proportion of incidents per student in the three, four, and five-year participant groups.

Conclusions

The results of this evaluation indicate that 2013-14 state-funded ASPs delivered programming that was consistent with the After School Grant Program's purpose of providing opportunities for academic enrichment that complement students' school day learning. Moreover, the evaluation results suggest that state-funded ASPs generally are serving students who are representative of the school districts in which the programs are located.

The findings regarding participants' rates of attendance at their ASP sites showed a clear pattern of differences based on the primary age group served by the site. Overall, sites serving primarily elementary students or elementary and middle school students showed higher rates of attendance compared to sites serving middle or high school students. This pattern was found across two of the three metrics used to measure program attendance. State-funded ASPs may benefit from continued examination of the programming being offered to older students and the efforts being made to recruit and retain older participants.

ASP participants had significantly higher rates of school day attendance as compared to students in ASP districts and statewide. This provides a promising finding, but these results need to be interpreted with caution because they indicate that ASP participants attend only 1.75 and .75 additional school days as compared to districts and statewide, respectively. Additionally, ASP participants had statistically significantly lower rates of disciplinary infractions as compared to students in ASP districts. Finally, there were not statistically significant differences in performance across multiple years of participation, but the data show a trend towards lower proportion of disciplinary infractions for students who attended the ASP for three, four, or five years. These results suggest that students are benefiting from their participation in ASP in certain areas, like disciplinary infractions.

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Introduction

Connecticut's state-funded after school initiative began during the 2006-07 school year, when the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) piloted a one-year after school grant program. In the following year, 2007-08, legislation formally established the After School Grant Program, as defined in Section 10-16x of the Connecticut General Statutes. The purpose of this grant program is to implement or expand high-quality programs outside of school hours that offer academic, enrichment, and recreational activities to students in grades K through 12. These activities are intended to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students.

The grants awarded through the After School Grant Program are available to any non-profit organization within the state of Connecticut, including community-based organizations, towns, and school districts. The grants are awarded through a competitive process, and those competing for the grants are required to submit their application with a partner applicant with whom they would collaborate to provide the ASP services. Most partner applicants have been school districts, boards of education, or particular schools or community organizations such as museums, youth service bureaus, or branches of the YMCA. Many awardees serve multiple locations using funds from a single grant.

As established by the legislature, Connecticut's state-funded after school programs (ASPs) operate on a two-year grant cycle. The first cycle spanned the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years, when 36 grant initiatives operated 69 sites across 29 cities and towns. After a second competitive application process, the second cycle of grants spanned the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years. During the second grant award process, a total of 40 grants were awarded to operate 59 sites throughout the state. Of these 40 grantees, 12 were new and 28 carried over from the prior funding cycle (2007-09). During the third cycle of grants, the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years, a total of 35 grants were awarded to operate throughout the state, with 6 grantees being new and the others carrying over from the previous funding cycle (2009-11). The 2013-14 school year marks the start of the fourth funding cycle. During this funding cycle, 26 grants were awarded to operate 47 sites. There was one new grantee, with the other 25 carrying over from the previous funding cycle.

For the 2013-14 academic year, individual grants ranged from \$79,733 to \$187,290, with an average of \$162,307.69. The number of students that grantees intended to serve across all sites operated by the grant during 2013-14 ranged from 28 to 150, with an average of 71.

In addition to allocating funds for direct services, the legislation also provides for "technical assistance, evaluation, program monitoring, professional development, and accreditation support," and further stipulates that a report on performance must be submitted based on measures identified by the legislation. As established by legislation, the report "shall include, but not be limited to, measurement of the impact on student achievement, school attendance, and in-school behavior of student participants" (C.G.S., § 10-16x)¹. For the 2013-14 fiscal year, the CSDE commissioned the University of Connecticut's Center for Applied Research in Human Development (CARHD) to evaluate the state-funded after school programs (ASPs) operating during this period. This report focuses primarily on the sites operating during the 2013-14 period; some information about previous years' ASP participants is also included for comparison purposes.

This report includes the following sections: (a) site characteristics (b) a description of youth who participated in the programs; (c) details about program implementation and activities, including academic and family/parent programming, the relationships programs had with their partner schools, and the staff who worked in these programs; (d) student performance data, including school day attendance and disciplinary infractions; (e) student performance data for students participating across multiple years, and (f) interpretation of results and discussion of next steps in terms of both programming and evaluation.

¹ Connecticut General Statutes, Title 10, Chapter 164, Section 10-16x.

Evaluation Methods

This evaluation examined data from several sources. The evaluation data included site-level information on all Connecticut state-funded ASPs that operated during the 2013-14 school year. It also included individual-level data on students who participated in the state-funded ASPs, as well as comparable state and regional information about the general public school population.

Information about After School Programs

Site- and program-level data were drawn from two sources. Basic information, such as student enrollment in ASPs and program hours of operation, were provided by the CSDE using information stored in the *AfterSchool21* data system. All state-funded ASPs are required to use this data collection system to report to the CSDE regularly and systematically on program operations.

Additional information about program implementation and operations was available from a required End of Year Report (EYR) that was completed by all sites at the conclusion of the 2013-14 program year. CARHD evaluators in collaboration with the CSDE developed the EYR. The survey was used to gather information about specific areas of program operation and implementation, including the academic, enrichment, recreation, and family/parent programming that programs offered, the relationships programs had with their partner schools, and the staff who worked in these programs. The site coordinator at each state-funded after school site completed the EYR.

Information about Individual Participants

Information about individual students' 2013-2014 ASP attendance and some demographic information was obtained from the *AfterSchool21* database mentioned above. The CSDE provided CARHD with data about students who participated in state-funded ASPs during 2013-14, including students' demographics, school day attendance, and disciplinary infractions. Performance data for students who attended multiple years of ASP programming was also available for a smaller sample of participants.

Information about State and Regional Student Characteristics

For an additional point of comparison, CARHD evaluators used information requested from the CSDE to examine differences between ASP participants and the general public school population in the state and in the specific districts where state-funded ASPs operated².

Comparison data from the state and ASP districts in regard to students' school day attendance and disciplinary infractions were specifically requested for the purposes of this report. Therefore, for these measures, comparison data is available for the 2013-14 academic year. It should be noted that schools are only required to report serious disciplinary infractions to the state, but some schools choose to also report less serious disciplinary infractions, like school policy violations. Therefore, the comparison data for disciplinary infractions at the district and state level may be skewed in favor of certain districts because some schools reported both serious and less serious offenses, whereas other schools only reported serious offenses.

² District and state numbers were obtained at the aggregate level, so ASP participants' data are included in district and state level percentages. However, it is unlikely that this biased the results, given that the group of ASP participants is small (4,411) relative to the number of students in ASP districts (167,126 students) and statewide (545,614 students).

Section 1: Site Characteristics

Size, Location, and Participant Enrollment at State-Funded ASPs

Funding provided by the General Assembly for ASPs in 2013-14 supported 26 grant initiatives operating a total of 47 sites. Twelve sites were run primarily by a community-based organization, 27 were operated primarily by a school district, and eight were operated by another agency. Figure 1 (right) shows the number of students that state-funded ASPs served across the last six years.

Twenty-six sites (55.3%) reported serving elementary school students, 13 sites reported serving K-8 students (27.7%), 12 sites reported serving middle school students (25.5%), and 6 sites reported serving high school students (12.8%). (Site coordinators were allowed to choose all categories that applied, so percentages can sum to more than 100.)

The 47 sites were located in 19 Connecticut school districts. Figure 2 (below) shows the geographic distribution of sites throughout the state. Table 1 (next page) shows the specific numbers of grants, sites, and participants for each of the 19 represented districts.

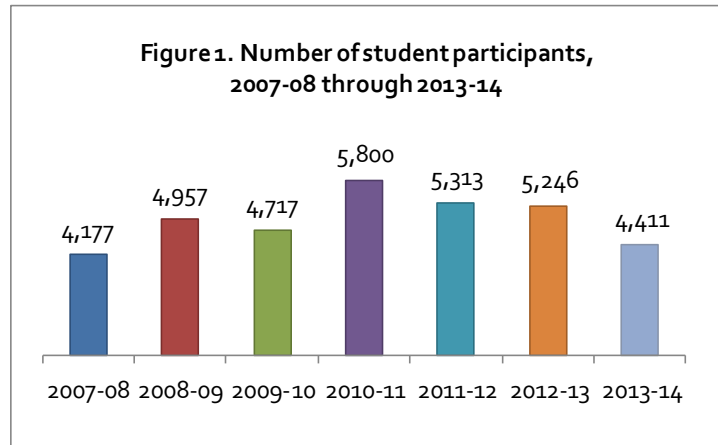


Figure 2. Location of state-funded after school sites in 2013-14

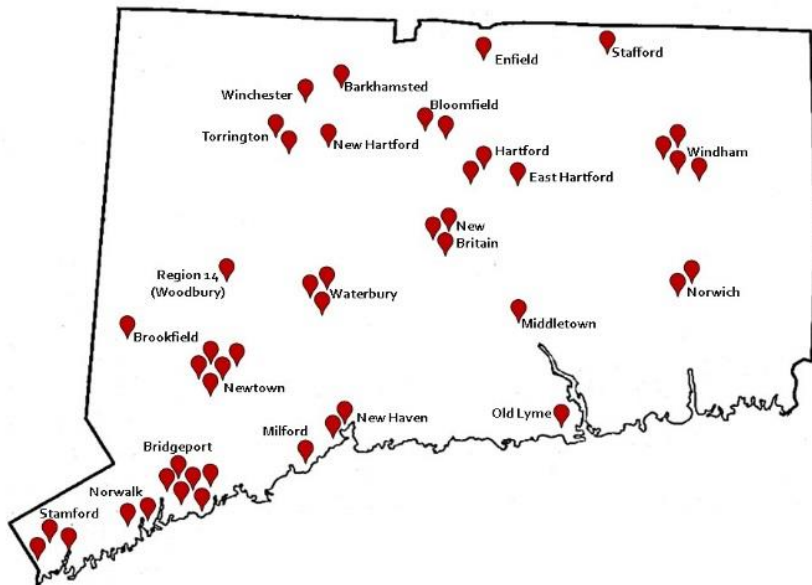


Table 1. Number of grantees, sites, and participants by district

Grantee	# of Grants	# of Sites (Names)	# of ASP Participants
Bloomfield	2	2 (Carmen Arace-Journeys & Carmen Arace-Youth Academy)	152
Bridgeport	2	6 (Blackham, Discovery, Hallen, JFK, Roosevelt, & Tisdale)	987
East Hartford	1	1 (EHMS - Crossroads)	110
Enfield	1	1 (JFK)	95
Hartford	2	2 (Kennelly & Batchelder)	171
Litchfield	1	11 (Barkhamsted, Huckleberry, Antolini, Hawley, Head O'Meadow, , Middlegate, Reed, Sandy Hook, Woodbury, East School, & Vogel Whitmore)	535
Middletown	1	1 (MacDonough)	100
Milford	1	1 (West Shore Middle School)	94
New Britain	1	3 (Jefferson, Gaffney, & Smalley)	155
New Haven	2	2 (Common Ground & COOP)	414
Norwalk	2	2 (Norwalk Housing Authority & Choices for Success)	159
Norwich	1	2 (Kelly & Teacher's Memorial)	295
Old Lyme	1	1 (Dual Language Arts Magnet)	49
Stafford	1	1 (Stafford Elementary School)	151
Stamford	2	3 (Turn of River Middle School, Stamford High School, & Westhill High School)	290
Waterbury	2	3 (Bunker Hill, Driggs, & North End Middle School)	232
Winchester	1	1 (Batcheller)	137
Windham	2	4 (Natchaug, Sweeney, Barrows, & Windham Heights Center)	285
TOTAL	26	47	4411

Snacks

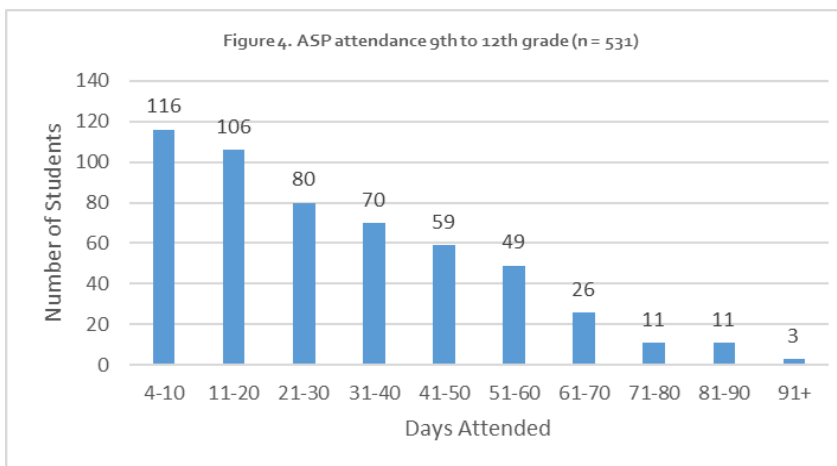
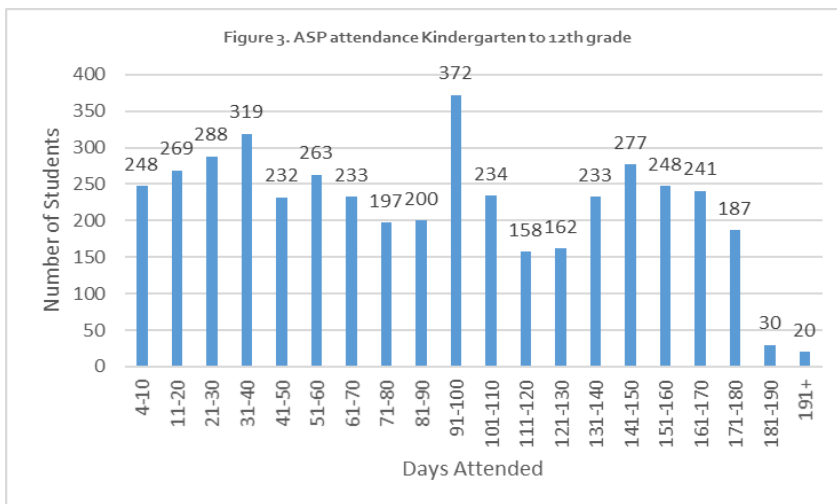
Nutrition is an important component of after school participants' overall wellness, and offering snacks to participants is one way to promote wellness. **All 47 sites (100%) offered snacks for participants.** Seven sites (14.9%) indicated that they used federal reimbursement money to provide snacks. Snacks were also provided through the National School Lunch Program at 18 sites (38.3%) and through the Child and Adult Care Food Program at 14 sites (29.8%), both specific sources of federal funding. Therefore, 36 sites (76.6%) in total used at least one federal funding source to provide either snacks or a meal. Fifteen sites (31.9%) used their own budget for snacks, three sites (3.6%) had children bring their own snacks, three sites (3.6%) funded snacks through donations, and one site (2.1%) used school funds. Other infrequently reported sources of funding included a food service program and a soup kitchen. These numbers add up to more than 47 because sites could select more than one funding source for snacks.

Participant Attendance Patterns across Sites

The requirement of the program as articulated in the RFP is that students must attend their ASP for four or more days over the school year in order to be included in attendance analyses. In 2013-14, 4,411 students met this criterion, and the following analyses pertain to those students.

Of the 4,411 students who attended at least 4 days of after school programming, they attended an ASP for an average of 88 days (Range: 4 to 200 days) during the 2013-14 school year.

Figure 3 (right) shows the distribution of students' ASP attendance. Student attendance at ASPs was then broken down further by grade level. Specifically, high school students' attendance was examined separately from students in elementary and middle school. Figure 4 (right) shows the distribution of ASP attendance for students in grades 9 through 12. As can be seen from this figure, high school students, on average, attended ASPs less often than their younger counterparts. Specifically, high school students attended an average of 30 days of after school programming (Range: 4 to 125 days). Elementary and middle school students attended an average of 96 days of after school programming (Range: 4 to 200 days) during the 2013-14 school year. The distribution of elementary and middle school students' attendance is not shown because it is similar to the



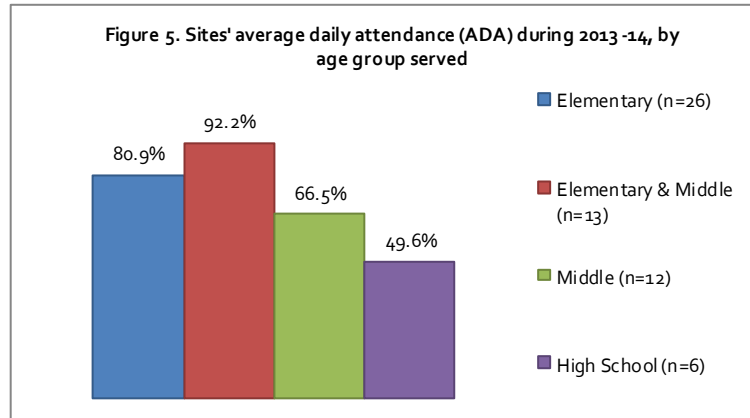
distribution of the total sample. These results suggest that recruitment and retention of high school students is more difficult than recruitment and retention for elementary and middle school students. Therefore, the remaining attendance analyses were broken down into primary age groups served, and the results in the report are presented this way.

Three additional metrics were used to examine patterns of participant attendance across sites: average daily attendance at the site, percent of participants at the site attending at least 30 days of programming, and the average percentage of days of the site's programming that participants attended.

Average Daily Attendance

The first metric, “average daily attendance” (ADA), compares the number of youth attending a site on a given day to that site’s target number.³ The CSDE has established 60 percent ADA as the goal for state-funded ASPs. **Across all sites, the ADA was 75.7 percent, meaning that on an average day, sites were serving at least 75 percent of their target number of students.** Of the 47 sites, 16 had an ADA of less than 60 percent. So although the average daily attendance was well above CSDE’s established target of 60 percent, this suggests attention may need to be given to improving certain sites’ ability to serve their targeted number of participants.

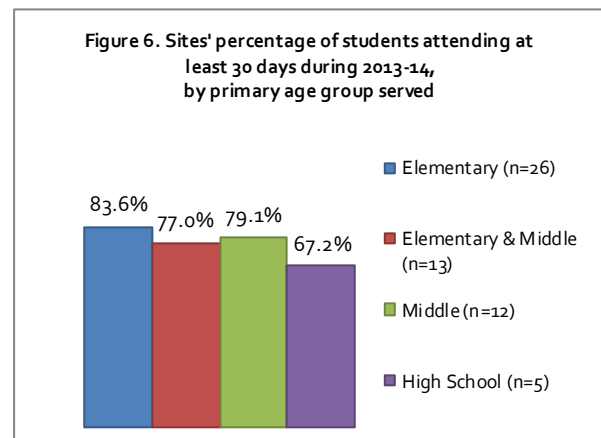
Figure 5 (right) shows the ADA according to the age group served. The total number of sites is more than 47 due to a few sites serving both middle school and high school students. Sites serving elementary school students or elementary and middle school students had a higher ADA than sites serving either middle or high school students. This finding is quite similar to the findings from previous years.



Twenty of the elementary sites (76.9%) had 60 percent ADA or higher, compared to 11 elementary and middle sites (84.6%), six middle school sites (50.0%), and two high school sites (33.3%). In 2012-13, 74 percent of elementary sites, 90 percent of elementary and middle sites, 40 percent of middle school sites, and 75 percent of high school sites had an ADA of 60 percent or more. Therefore, this year there are more elementary school and middle school sites that are meeting an ADA of 60 percent, whereas there are fewer combined elementary and middle school and high school sites that are meeting this benchmark.

Percentage of Youth Attending 30 or More Days of Programming

Average daily attendance is a useful metric for examining how successful sites are at recruiting participants to attend their program. It is also important, however, to know whether sites are able to retain those participants for a significant period of time (for example, sites could have high average daily attendance but serve a different group of students each day). The extent to which sites served a consistent group of participants was examined through the percentage of students who attended the program “regularly” at each site. Individuals were considered regular attendees if they attended the program at least 30 days over the academic year. Similar to ADA, the CSDE has set 60 percent as a target; it is expected that at least 60 percent of the participants registered at each site will attend at least 30 days of programming. Due to issues with the data, one high school site was eliminated from the following analyses.



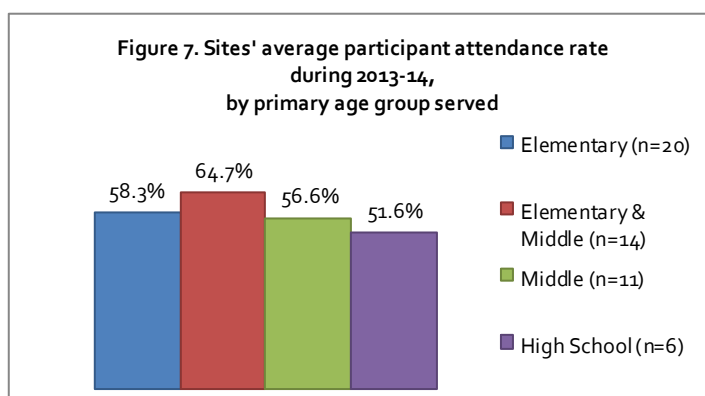
³ The “average daily attendance” value for each site was calculated using the following formula: (Total Number of Individual Attendances) / (Target Number of Youth to Be Served * Total Number of Days Open). An ‘individual attendance’ refers to one student attending on one day.

Across all sites, 82.7 percent of students attended regularly. This means that just over four-fifths of all registered participants attended their ASP at least 30 days during 2013-14. This percentage is higher than that reported for the 2013-14 (63.3%) academic year. Figure 6 (above) shows the distribution of sites in terms of the percentage of students who attended at least 30 days during the 2013-14 year, according to the primary age group served by the site.

Forty-one sites (89.1%) met the CSDE’s target of having at least 60 percent of students attend 30 or more days of programming. There is an overall slight trend toward more sites meeting the criteria of having 60 percent of registered students attend regularly. As with ADA, however, there are differences according to the age group served at the site. Sites serving elementary school students or middle school students had higher percentages of students attending 30 or more days (83.6% and 79.1%, respectively), as compared to the combination elementary and middle school and high school sites. Across the 13 combination elementary and middle school and 5 high school sites, only 77.0 percent and 67.2 percent of registered participants met this criterion, respectively.

Average Participant Attendance Rate

Because sites differ in the number of days they are open, another metric to measure attendance is the actual percentage of available days that youth attend. This was computed individually for each participant by dividing the number of days he or she attended the site by the total number of days his or her site was open during 2013-14. This percentage was then averaged across all participants at each site to obtain a site-level figure of average participant attendance rate.



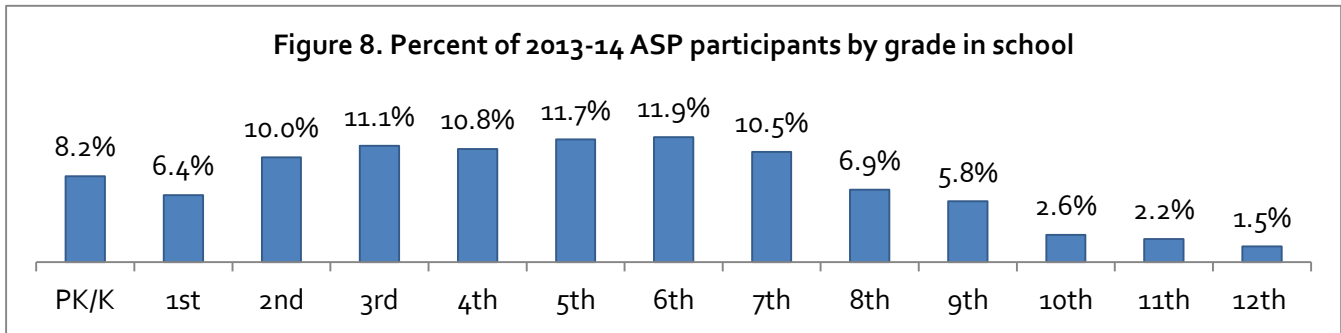
Across all 2013-14 ASP sites, the average participant attendance rate was 57.5 percent. This means that, on average, participants attended about 58 percent of the days that their sites were open. This varied considerably from site to site, however (range: 21%-83%). Average participant attendance rates were higher at sites serving either elementary school students or a combination of elementary and middle school students (Figure 7, above).

Section 2: Description of Participants

Participant Demographic Information

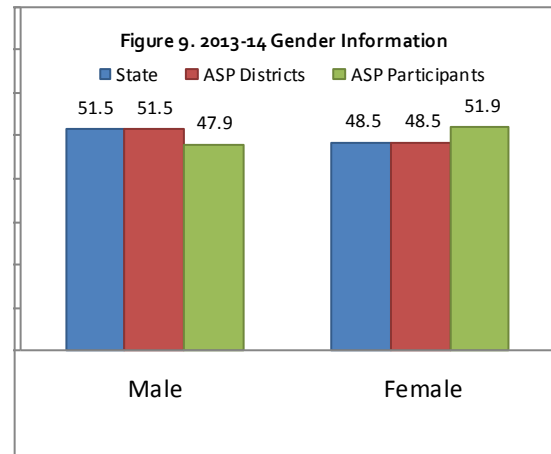
Grade Level

In 2013-14, ASPs served students from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade. Grade level information was available for 4,390 participants (99.5%). Figure 8 (below) shows the distribution of ASP participants by grade. As the figure shows, the highest numbers of participants were in 3rd, 5th, and 6th grade. Far fewer older students participated in ASPs, as was also the case in previous years.



Gender

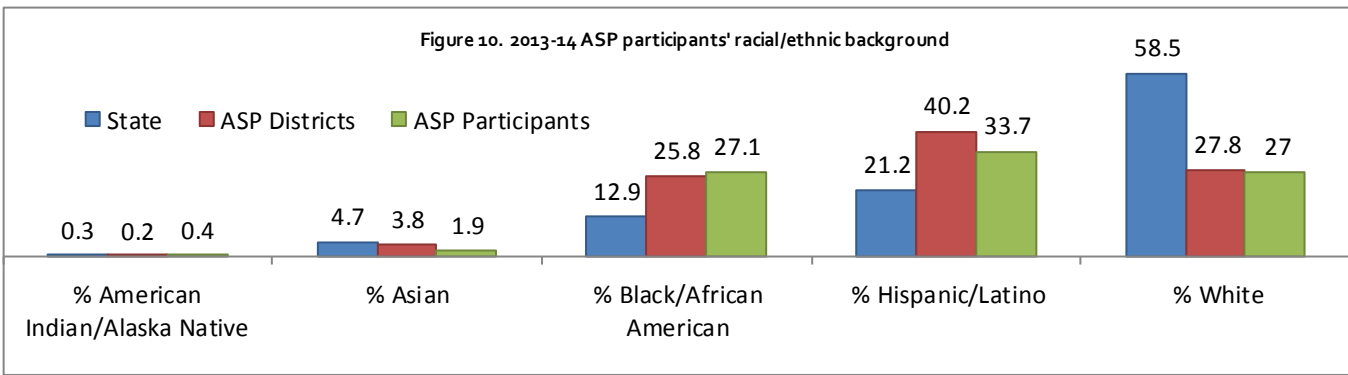
Gender information was available for 4,397 of the 4,411 (99.7%) 2013-14 ASP participants. Figure 9 (right) shows gender information of ASP participants in comparison to the public school population in the same ASP districts and statewide. Slightly under 52 percent of ASP participants were female, compared to the 48.5 percent in the public school population in the districts where ASPs were located during 2013-14. Males comprised 47.8 percent of the ASP group, compared to 51.5 in the ASP districts. Consistent with findings from 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13, it appears that ASPs served a slightly higher proportion of girls compared with the general school population where the ASPs were located.



Racial/Ethnic Background

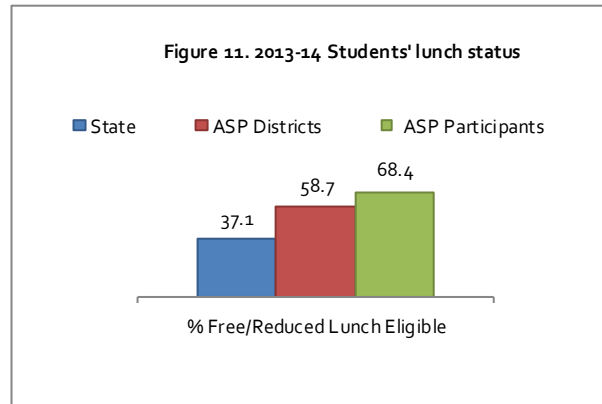
Racial/ethnic background information was available for 3,975 participants (90.1%). Figure 10 (next page) shows the racial/ethnic background of ASP participants in comparison to the public school population in the ASP districts and statewide. Ethnicity and racial data for 407 students who reported to be multi-racial or from another racial background are not included in the table below. ASPs enrolled a higher portion of Black/African American students and a lower portion of all other racial/ethnic groups compared to the student population in the districts in which ASPs were located. The differences for the percentage of Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian students were statistically significant.⁴

⁴ Statistical tests were used to evaluate differences between ASP participants group and students in ASP districts. For some of the racial ethnic groups, the differences were statistically significant. The test statistic was the z statistic, which evaluates whether the difference between two population values is larger than expected due to chance, based on the distribution of scores within each population.



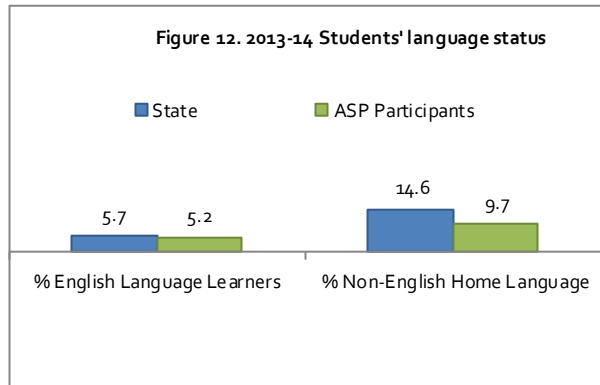
Free/Reduced Lunch Status

Figure 11 (right) shows the percentage of students who were eligible for free/reduced lunch statewide, in the ASP districts, and in the ASPs. During 2013-14, 68.4 percent of ASP participants were eligible for free/reduced price lunch, compared to 58.7 percent of students in ASP districts and 37.1 percent of the general public school population. Compared to students statewide, ASP participants were substantially more likely to be eligible for free/reduced lunch.⁵ ASP participants were also more likely to be eligible for free or reduced lunch than students in ASP districts.⁶



Language Status

Figure 12 (right) shows the percentages of students statewide and in the ASPs who were English Language Learners (ELLs) and who spoke a language other than English at home. Approximately 9.9 percent of ASP district students (not shown in table) were ELLs. Data were not available for non-English Home language speakers at the ASP district level. During 2013-14, 5.2 percent of ASP participants were ELLs and 9.7 percent spoke a language other than English at home. ASP district students were more likely to be ELLs compared to ASP participants.⁷ No differences were found in amount of ELLs between ASP participants and



Statistically significant differences included: proportion of Asian students (1.9% vs. 3.8%), $z = 20.61, p < 0.001$, proportion of Black/African American students (27.1% vs. 25.8%), $z = 2.00, p = .045$, and proportion of Hispanic/Latino students (33.7% vs. 40.2%), $z = -8.79, p < 0.001$.

⁵ Comparing ASP participants with students statewide, there was a statistically significant difference in the proportion of students receiving free/reduced lunch (68.4% vs. 37.1%), $z = 42.74, p < 0.001$.

⁶ Comparing ASP participants with students in ASP districts, there was a statistically significant difference in the proportion of students receiving free/reduced lunch (68.4% vs. 58.7%), $z = 12.86, p < 0.001$.

⁷ Comparing ASP participants with students in ASP districts, there was a statistically significant difference in the proportion of students who were ELLs (5.2% vs. 9.7%), $z = -9.03, p < 0.001$.

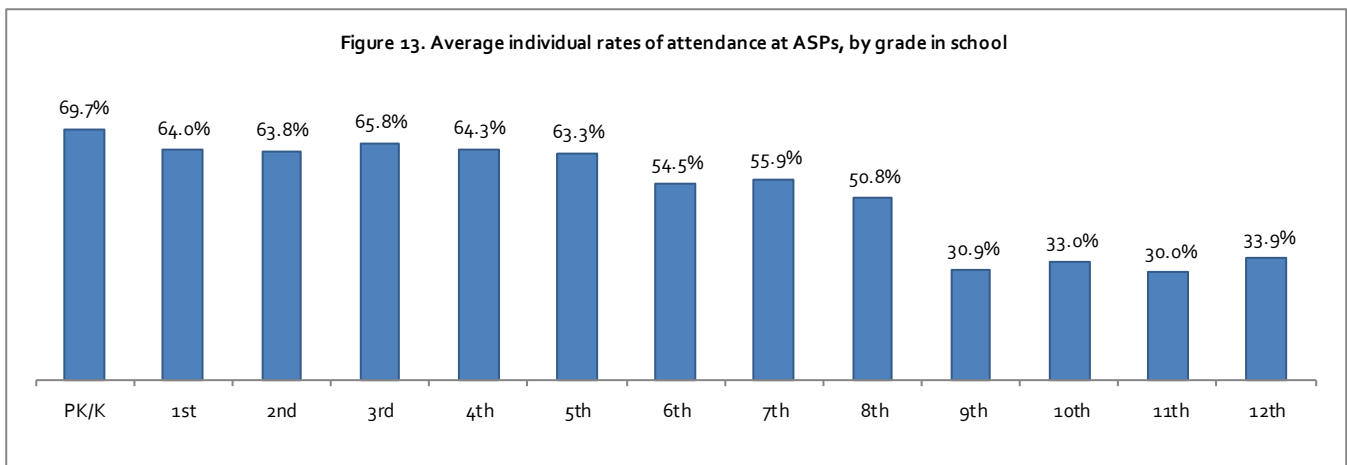
statewide students.⁸ A significantly larger amount of statewide students spoke a language other than English at home compared to ASP participants.⁹

Individual Rates of Attendance

The average participant attendance rate was used to investigate whether individual attendance differed by students' demographic characteristics. As noted earlier, the rate of attendance was computed for each participant by dividing the number of days he or she attended the site by the total number of days his or her site was open. Across all students, the average participant attended about 57.5 percent of the days that his or her site was open¹⁰.

Attendance rates differed based on participants' grade in school, racial/ethnic background, eligibility for free or reduced price lunch, whether participants spoke a language other than English at home, and gender.

Figure 13 (below) shows participants' average attendance rates according to grade in school. As shown in the figure, younger children had significantly higher attendance rates when compared with older attendees.¹¹



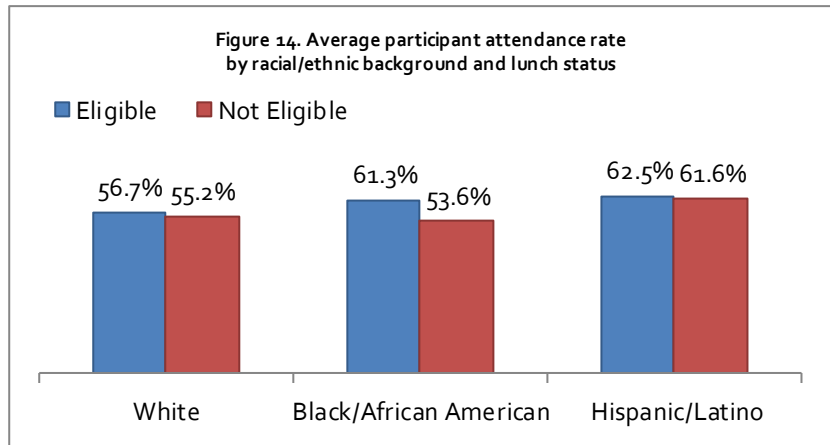
⁸ Comparing ASP participants with students statewide, there was a statistically significant difference in the proportion of students who spoke a language other than English at home (5.2% vs. 5.7%), $z=.19$, $p=.849$.

⁹ Comparing ASP participants with students statewide, there was not a statistically significant difference in the proportion of students who were ELLs (9.7% vs. 14.6%), $z=-9.11$, $p<.001$.

¹⁰ This is different from the 57.5 percent average site-level individual attendance reported in the previous section because the two percentages are calculated differently. The average site-level participant attendance rate starts with individual rates, then combines them across all students at each site, then averages across all sites (so the sample size is the 47 sites). The average reported here, however, is across all students regardless of site (the sample size is 4,390).

¹¹ Overall test for differences by grade was significant, $F(13, 4393) = 58.41$, $p<0.001$.

Attendance rates were statistically different between the three racial/ethnic groups. White/Caucasian participants attended at a lower rate (55.4%) than both Black/African American (59.9%) and Hispanic/Latino participants (62.3%).¹² Attendance rates also significantly differed among participants who were and were not eligible for free or reduced price lunch.¹³ Participants who were not



eligible for free or reduced lunch attended less frequently (55.8%) compared to those who were eligible (61.2%).

However, further analyses showed more complex relationships between participants' attendance rates, racial/ethnic background, and eligibility for free or reduced price lunch. Figure 14 (above) summarizes these differences. It should be noted that these analyses were completed with a smaller number of participants, including only those that had information about both their lunch status and race/ethnicity.

As shown in Figure 11, all students who were eligible for free or reduced lunch had higher attendance rates than participants of the same background who were not eligible. However, the difference between students eligible and not eligible for free or reduced lunch was only statistically significant for Black/African American participants.¹⁴

Overall there was not a statistically significant difference in attendance rates between participants who primarily spoke English at home and participants who did not.¹⁵

Male participants attended ASPs at a higher rate than female participants (58.1% vs. 57.2%)¹⁶.

As is found each year, the elementary and middle school grades have the highest number of participants; this year 3rd, 5th, and 6th grades had the highest enrollment in ASP. Overall, there were some significant difference between ASP participants and the students in ASP districts and statewide. ASPs had a higher proportion of African American students as compared to ASP districts, and they served slightly more female students than the general student body in ASP districts. Additionally, ASP participants were more likely to qualify for free/reduced lunch as compared to ASP districts and statewide. Finally, after school program attendance rates differed based on participants' grade in school, racial/ethnic background, eligibility for free or reduced price lunch, and gender.

¹² Overall test for differences by race/ethnicity was significant ($F(2,3869)=19.19, p<.001$). Post hoc comparisons revealed White/Caucasian participants (55.4%) attended significantly less than Black/African American (59.9%) and Hispanic/Latino (62.3%) participants.

¹³ Overall test for differences between those eligible for free/reduced lunch and those that were not was significant ($t(3765)=-5.01, p<.001$).

¹⁴ Comparing Black/African American students who were eligible for free or reduced lunch with those who were not (61.3% vs. 53.6%) resulted in a significant difference in attendance rates ($t(1155) = 2.98, p=.003$).

¹⁵ Attendance rates of participants who primarily spoke English at home (56.5%) and participants who did not (58.9%) were not significantly different ($t(2548) = -1.52, p=.13$).

¹⁶ Overall test of differences by gender was not significant ($t(4395) = -1.06, p=.291$).

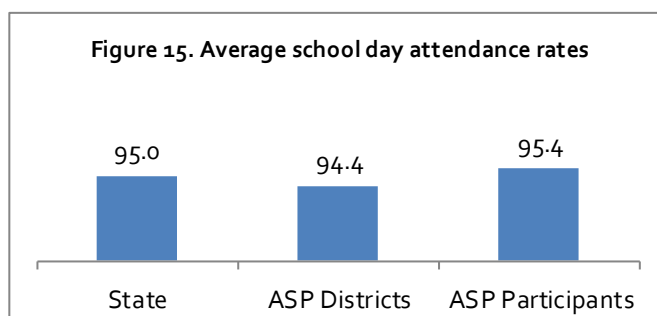
Section 3: Performance Measures

Based on requirements outlined by the legislature, three measures were chosen as performance indicators for ASP participants, two of which are described here: school day attendance and school day behavior. Due to changes in the state achievement testing procedure, data for the third performance indicator, academic achievement, were not available for the 2013-14 academic year.

Performance Measure 1: School Day Attendance

The first performance measure is based on the school day attendance rate of ASP participants. School day attendance is calculated as a percentage (number of days attended/number of days enrolled * 100) to account for variation in students' enrollment across the school year. In other words, due to relocation or school changes, some students will not be enrolled in a specific school for the entire 180-day school year. Data on school day attendance were available for 4,231 students (97.5%). School attendance for individual participants varied, from 40 to 100 percent. The average attendance rate was 95.4 percent (Range: 40% to 100%; SD: .046), which is equivalent to missing 8 days in a 180-day school year.

Figure 15 (right) shows average school day attendance rates for state, ASP districts (Range: 92% to 96%; SD: 1.27), and ASP participants. ASP participants had significantly higher school day attendance rates than students statewide¹⁷ and students in the ASP districts¹⁸. Although these differences were statistically significant, they represent a very small difference in attendance across the school year. Overall, ASP participants attended about .75 school days more per year than students statewide and 1.75 school days more per year than students in ASP districts.

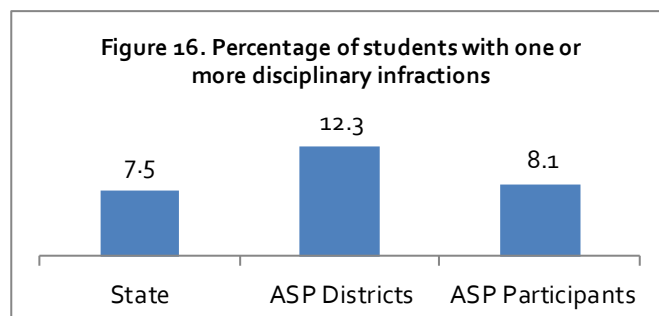


Performance Measure 2: School Day Behavior (Discipline Infractions)

The second performance measure consists of information about the in-school behavior of ASP participants, measured through behavior infractions incurred during the 2013-14 school year. As a reminder, the schools are only required to report serious disciplinary infractions to the state, but some schools choose to report less serious offenses as well. As such, the data may be skewed in favor of the schools and districts that only reported serious offenses to the state.

Percentage of Students with Infractions

During 2013-14, 350 of the 4,339 ASP participants with disciplinary data, or 8.1 percent, had at least one disciplinary infraction. As shown in Figure 16 (right), the rate of disciplinary infractions for ASP participants was significantly lower than the rate for



¹⁷ Using a one-sample *t*-test with a test value of 95.0, ASP participants' rate of school day attendance is significantly higher than that of students statewide [$t(4230)=6.11, p<.001$].

¹⁸ Using a one-sample *t*-test with a test value of 94.4, ASP participants' rate of school day attendance is significantly higher than the rate for students in ASP districts [$t(4230)=14.61, p<.001$].

students in ASP districts (12.3%).¹⁹ The rate for ASP participants was more similar to the rate for all public school students statewide (7.5%).²⁰

Average Number of Infractions per Student

Discipline data for the state and for ASP district students from 2013-14 were used for comparison purposes. Considering only students in ASP districts who had one or more infractions, the average number of infractions was 3.0. For all students in the Connecticut public school system with one or more disciplinary infractions, the average was 2.7 incidents. Finally, based on the available data on number of infractions, ASP participants had an average rate of 2.0 infractions per student.

¹⁹ Comparing ASP participants with students in ASP districts, there was a statistically significant difference in the proportion of students with a disciplinary infraction (8.1% vs. 12.3%, $z=-8.45$, $p<0.001$).

²⁰ Comparing ASP participants to students statewide, the difference was not statistically significant (8.1% vs. 7.5%, $z=1.43$, $p=0.153$).

Section 4: Multi-Year Participants

This section of the report examines students who attended one, two, three, four, or five years of ASP programming between the 2009-10 and 2013-14 academic years. One-year participants were those that attended an ASP only during the 2013-14 academic year, and did not attend during any of the previous academic years according to our records. Two-year participants were those that attended during the 2013-14 academic year and one previous year. Three-year participants were those that attended during the 2013-14 academic year and two previous years, four-year participants were those that attended during the 2013-14 academic year and three previous years, and five-year participants attended all years between 2009-10 and 2013-14.

Comparisons are made between one-, two-, three-, four-, and five-year participants on school-day attendance and disciplinary infractions. The objective of this portion of the report was to examine whether students who attended an ASP for more years differed from those who attended fewer years in terms of overall performance (attendance and disciplinary behaviors). These comparisons were made using data from the 2013-14 academic year since they were the most recent data available and because all students in the sample had participated in an ASP during this academic year.

The subgroup of participants who participated in an ASP across all five academic years consisted of 75 individuals ("five-year participants"). Another 139 participants attended an ASP for four academic years ("four-year participants"), 390 participants attended an ASP for three academic years ("three-year participants"), and 696 participants attended an ASP for two academic years ("two-year participants"). Finally, 2,931 students attended an ASP only during the 2013-14 academic year ("one-year participants").

It is important to note that these analyses span three different cohorts of grantees. The number of grantees changed across time, with some grantees being funded during both cohorts and others only being funded during one of these cohorts. This resulted in differences in students' opportunities to attend a state-funded ASP in their district.

Table 2 (next page) displays the average school day attendance rate for participants within each subgroup. After controlling for differences in school day attendance rates according to grade level, there was not a statistically significant difference between these scores, implying that multi-year participants did not have higher school day attendance rates than single-year participants.

Finally, Table 2 displays the percent of students who had one or more disciplinary infractions and the average number of disciplinary infractions per student during the 2013-14 academic year. There was an overall trend in the positive direction with a lower percentage of students in the three, four, or five-year group having at least one disciplinary infraction when compared to those in the one- or two-year group. However, only the specific contrast between one- and three-year participants was statistically significant.²¹ Although statistical comparisons could not be made on the average number of disciplinary infractions per student, the data suggest a positive trend. Examining only students who had at least one disciplinary infraction, the number of disciplinary infractions per student was lower for three, four, and five-year participants than one- and two-year participants.

²¹ The following difference was statistically significant: one- vs. three-year participants (9.1% vs. 4.5%, $F=3.52$, $p=0.007$)

Table 2. Performance Indicator Data by Number of Years Attending an ASP

Performance Indicator	1-Year	2-Year	3-Year	4-Year	5-Year		
	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>
School Day Attendance	95.4 (.05)	95.3 (.05)	95.6 (.05)	95.2 (.04)	96.6 (.03)	1.551	.185
Disciplinary Infractions (Percent of Students)	9.1	6.7	4.5	4.3	3.9	3.524	.007
Disciplinary Infractions (Number of Incidents Per Student)	2.0	2.1	1.7	1.2	1.3		

Section 5: Discussion

The results of this evaluation indicate that, during the 2013-14 school year, the operation of Connecticut's ASPs was consistent with the After School Grant Program's purpose: to provide K-12 students with high-quality out-of-school enrichment opportunities that complement school day learning. Within this section of the report, observations and recommendations are presented based on the overall trends observed within the data.

Meeting Students' and Families' Needs: Serving the Target Population

Program Capacity and Participation across Age Groups

As in prior years, the majority of ASP sites appeared to succeed in serving the number of students they planned to serve and in encouraging their participants to attend regularly. As noted in Section 1 of this report, the average daily attendance (ADA) across all 47 sites was 75.7 percent, which exceeds the 60 percent target set by the CSDE. The percent of registered students attending their after school site at least 30 days was 82.7. Although programs collectively were successful in serving the number of participants they expected to serve, there was variability in the degree to which sites were able to recruit participants and encourage their regular attendance. Sixteen sites did not meet the 60 percent ADA benchmark set forth by the state. These findings suggest that some sites still need to focus on recruitment and retention of students. Attendance patterns across sites clearly indicate differences according to the primary age group served at the site. Sites serving elementary or elementary and middle school students had higher rates on two of the three measures of participant attendance, whereas sites serving middle and high school students had lower rates on two of the three measures. In addition to these site level findings, analysis of individual-level program attendance data indicated differences between older students and younger students. There were few older students participating in programs, and older students, on average, attended their ASPs at a lower rate.

These findings are consistent with those reported in previous years. The constancy of these results indicates that sites serving older participants face unique challenges, and they may benefit from technical assistance and quality advising directed at these challenges. Other possible strategies might include allowing middle and high school programs to have greater flexibility in how they reach the program dosage requirements for ASPs, perhaps by creating a separate grant competition for programs that target older students, or adjusting the expectations of attendance for older students.

Considering the Needs of English Language Learner Students and Families

Data on the demographics of 2013-14 ASP participants indicate that English Language Learners and students speaking a language other than English at home were underrepresented among ASP participants (compared to the population in the districts where programs were located). These findings warrant further consideration of the after school service needs of diverse Connecticut students and families, particularly those students and families whose first language is Spanish or another language besides English. Just as in the 2012-13 academic year, sites served a higher portion of Black/African American students as compared to the other racial and ethnic groups.

Performance Indicators: How Are ASP Participants Doing?

Findings in regard to ASP participants' school attendance rates were positive. Participants had significantly higher attendance rates than students in ASP districts and students statewide.

The findings for ASP participants' school day behavior are also positive and promising. Participants showed a rate of disciplinary infractions considerably lower than students in ASP districts and more similar to that of students

statewide. Participation in ASPs may have positive effects on students' in-school behavior, perhaps through increasing their connection to or engagement in their school. It is also possible, however, that ASPs tend to recruit and retain students who already have a low rate of infractions.

Multi-Year Participants

Multi-year participants also had a lower incidence rate and a smaller number of disciplinary infractions. However, it cannot be determined whether multi-year participants' improved performance was due to their increased participation or these students are characteristically different from other participants who choose to not participate for more than one year. In order for such conclusions to be made, evaluation data that include baseline measures, more than one measurement point, and data from a comparison group of similar students are needed.