21st Century Community Learning Center Program: A Study

to Evaluate the Success of a Program in a Rural County

in East Tennessee

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by

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ABSTRACT

21st Century Community Learning Center Program: A Study

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The 21st Century Community Learning Center Program is a key component in the *No Child Left Behind* Act. It presents an opportunity for students and their families to continue to learn new skills after the regular school day has ended. The focus of the program is to provide expanded academic enrichment opportunities for children attending low performing schools. Tutorial services and academic activities are designed to help students meet local and state academic standards in subjects such as reading and math. In addition, programs provide youth development activities, drug and violence prevention programs, technology education programs, art, music, and recreational programs. The purpose of this study was to analyze the components of a rural 21st Century Community Learning Center program located in Tazewell, Tennessee, and to determine the impact of the center on the education and welfare of the students and their families who live in this rural town and attend the three Claiborne County schools involved in the grant program.

The study focused on the extent to which Claiborne County's 21st Century Community Learning Center Program was successful in implementing the criteria set forth by the U.S. Department of Education concerning the eight components necessary to be an effective after-school program. The findings from the study indicated that these eight components were being implemented;

however, there were also areas of need that should be monitored closely to ensure that the

program continues to progress towards becoming an exemplary after-school program.

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this dissertation:

To my husband, Teddy, the one person who has stood behind me in each of my educational endeavors and who believed in me and who gave me support when I needed it most; to my children, Lindsey and Theo, for their understanding when mom had to go to class or work on my dissertation; to my mom who never had a chance to further her education but who encouraged me to pursue mine; and to my staff at Springdale Elementary for their support and help throughout this process. All of you share this special time with me and will forever be a part of this accomplishment.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The 21st Century Community Learning Center Program is a key component of President Bush's *No Child Left Behind* Act. It presents an opportunity for students and their families to continue to learn new skills after the school day has ended. The focus of the program is to provide expanded academic enrichment opportunities for children attending low performing schools. Tutorial services and academic enrichment activities are designed to help students meet local and state academic standards in subjects such as reading and math. In addition, programs provide youth development opportunities, drug and violence prevention, technology education, art, music, and recreational activities. Congress appropriated $993.5 million for after-school programs in Fiscal Year 2003 (21st Century Community Learning Centers, 2003).

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers are generally located in local public schools but other eligible entities include community-based organizations, public or private entities, or a consortia of two or more such agencies or organizations. In recent years, the idea of extending the school day has become popular throughout the United States. The potential of such an idea is clear. After-school programs can provide additional time for learning the basic skills and enrichment activities tailored to the schools' individual needs. What has brought about such need for these programs? In addition to the above advantages of after-school programs, there are also concerns about what takes place during nonschool hours especially when there is no direct supervision of children.

The reasons behind the surge of interest in after-school programs have to do with a combination of many different factors. There has been an increase in the number of working mothers, double-parent families needing supervision of children, single-parent families, violence in communities, low academic performance, and juvenile delinquency in general (Fashola,

2002). Today, more than 28 million school-age children have both parents who work outside the home. An estimated 5 to 7 million, and up to as many as 15 million "latch-key children" return to an empty home after school. When the school's dismissal bell rings, the anxiety for parents often just begins. Parents worry about whether their children are safe and whether they are susceptible to drugs and crime (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

Although 28 million children have both parents who work outside the home, many of these children do not have access to affordable, quality care during the hours before and after school (U. S. Department of Education, 2000). Students who spend no time in extracurricular activities are 49% more likely to have used drugs and 37% more likely to become teen parents than those who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1995).

History and Context

In 1994, congress authorized the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program to open up schools for broader use by their communities (U. S. Department of Education, 2003a). In 1998, the program was refocused on supporting schools to provide school-based academic and recreational activities after school and during other times when schools were not in regular session. As an after-school program, 21st Century grew quickly from an appropriation of $40 million in fiscal year 1998 to $1 billion in fiscal year 2002. (U.S Department of Education, 2003a).

During the 2002-2003 fiscal year, the 21st Century Program became the responsibility of the state government rather than the federal government. Along with that responsibility came the requirement that such programs place more emphasis on academics and not be considered just as a safe haven or recreational environment for children. Many schools use their 21st Century Community Learning Center grant money as a means to bring up low test scores, increase achievement, provide enrichment activities, and help with homework. Because of the high

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number of children living in poverty, these centers are of special importance. The 21st Century Learning Centers may help fill the gap that many children are facing in their education.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to analyze the components of a 21st Century Community Learning Center located in Northeast Tennessee and to determine the impact of the center on the education and welfare of the students who attend Claiborne County's schools, the families who live in this county, and how the community itself has benefited from this program.   The focus was on three schools: Tazewell-New-Tazewell, a kindergarten through fourth grade primary; Springdale, a kindergarten through sixth grade elementary; and Soldiers Memorial, a fifth-through eighth-grade middle school. Results from the study could enable the three schools to have access to data that could help them in the future to re-apply for this federal grant program because their current funding will soon run out. The three schools have received almost $100,000 each for the past two years to implement and maintain these three after-school sites.

Claiborne County's population as of the 2000 census was 29,653. The geographic landscape is large, very mountainous, and somewhat isolated with graveled roads providing the only transport in many areas. Some students have to ride the school bus for close to an hour (one way) to school. Claiborne County has a high poverty rate with 20.9% of the population living below the poverty level as compared to 13.6% for the state of Tennessee. In Claiborne County, 28.8% of children live below the poverty level. Of persons 25 years and older, 60.3% are high school graduates and only 8.9% are college graduates (U.S. Census, 2000). The county is approximately 50 miles from the nearest large city. The isolation and poverty of the area contributes greatly to the need for after-school care. Most parents must work at factories (the major industry in the county) to support their families. Many cannot afford after-school care for their children; therefore, the children must care for themselves and/or younger brothers and sisters in order for their parents to keep their jobs. According to the report *Working for Children*

and Families: Safe and Smart After-school Programs, published in April 2000 by the U. S. Department of Education and U. S. Department of Justice, 69% of all married-couple families with children ages 6 to 17 have both parents working outside the home. In 71% of single-mother families and 85% of single-father families with children ages 6 to17, the custodial parent was working. The gap between parents' work schedules and their children's school schedules can exceed 20 to 25 hours per week (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

After-school programs provide a wide array of benefits to children, their families, schools, and to the entire community. First and foremost, after-school programs can help keep children of all ages safe and out of trouble. They can also help to improve the academic performance of participating children. As an alternative to spending large numbers of hours alone, well-planned and well-staffed programs provide safe havens where children can learn, take part in supervised recreation, and build strong, positive relationships with caring adults and peers (U.S. Department of Education and U. S. Department of Justice, 2000).

In this case study, I investigated the impact of a 21st Century Community Learning Center on students' education and welfare in Claiborne County, Tennessee. The focus of this study was to investigate the extent to which the Claiborne County's 21st Century Community Learning Center was successful in implementing the criteria set forth by the U. S. Department of Education (2000) concerning the eight components necessary to be an effective after-school program and to determine if the program had an impact on students and their families. The eight components are:

1. goal setting, strong management, and sustainability;

2. quality after-school staffing;

3. attention to safety, health, and nutrition issues;

4. effective partnerships with community based organizations, juvenile justice agencies, law enforcement, and youth groups;

5. strong involvement of families;

6. enriching learning opportunities;

7. linkages between school day and after-school personnel; and

8. evaluation of program progress and effectiveness. (p. 35)

Research Questions

Quality after-school programs can provide safe, engaging environments that motivate and inspire learning outside the regular school day. While there is no single formula for success in after-school programs, both practitioners and researchers have found that effective programs combine academic, enrichment, cultural, and recreational activities to guide learning and engage children and youth in wholesome activities (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). In addition to investigating the Claiborne County Learning Center's extent of success in implementing the eight components of a successful after-school program, the following research questions were also explored:

1. What impact has the after-school program had on Claiborne County's students?

2. What impact has the after-school program had on the families of Claiborne County's students?

3. What impact has the after-school program had on the community in Claiborne County?

Significance of the Study

With the appropriation of more money from the U. S. Government earmarked for after-school education, schools are taking on more responsibility than ever in ensuring that students are given a quality experience in after-school programs. Although there have been some descriptions of successful programs, this study specifically considered the components that the U. S. Government has given as guidelines for the program's success. The focus was on three schools: Tazewell-New-Tazewell, a kindergarten through fourth grade primary; Springdale, a

kindergarten through sixth grade elementary; and Soldiers Memorial, a fifth- through eighth-grade middle school. These three schools were the recipients of a state administered grant in January of 2003. By February 2003, all three schools were implementing an after-school program. The information presented in this study might suggest ways for similar communities to develop their own after-school programs using the components set forth by the U. S. Department of Education (2000). The desire of this researcher was to contribute to the field of knowledge about implementation of such a program.

Definitions of Terms

1. *21st Century Community Learning Center* – A U. S. Department of Education program, administered through the states, providing grants to schools, community and faith based organizations, and youth development agencies to provide high quality, expanded learning opportunities outside of regular school hours for children in a safe and sound educational environment (National Center for Community Education, 2003).

2. *At-risk students* – At-risk students are primarily those whose appearance, language, culture, values, communities, and family structure do not match those of the dominant White culture that schools were designed to serve and support (Atelia, 1993).

3. *Before- and after-school programs* – The time before actual classes start as well as the time after dismissal of the regular school day.

4. *Latchkey children* – Latchkey children are defined as children in elementary school who spend some amount of time before or after school without supervision of an adult or older adolescent (Holaday & Turner-Henson, 1994).

5. *Partnership* – The association of two or more persons in any business; fellowship (Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus, 1992).

6. *Site coordinator*- The person at the learning center site who is responsible for implementing and administrating the program. This involves leading recruitment and enrollment efforts, planning and scheduling the youth activities, identifying activity providers, communicating with parents, and providing daily oversight of the program (Hixon & Tinzmann, 2004).

Limitations and Delimitations

This study was limited to individuals who had a connection to the three schools involved in Claiborne County's 21st Century Community Learning Center. The researcher interviewed and surveyed only those individuals who had a connection with the school based after-school program. Twenty-four participants were interviewed and all faculty members and parents of students who participated in the program were asked to complete a survey.

The delimitations of this study are that it can only be related to schools and areas with similar features and characteristics. At the time of the study, the Claiborne County after-school program had been implemented for one and one half school years. This program serves students in grades kindergarten through eight at three different school sites. The researcher interviewed only those individuals who had a connection with the school based after-school program.

In this study, I attempted to describe the implementation and continuation of an after-school program using criteria set forth for an exemplary after-school program by the U. S. Department of Education (2000) as listed in *After-School Programs: Keeping Children Safe and Smart*.

Assumptions

There is an assumption that some personal, preconceived notions and beliefs of the researcher might bias this study. I have worked in a rural school system as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal for 21 years. I have witnessed the advantages and disadvantages of rural

schools. I have been in an administrative position in both a school that does have an after-school program and one that does not. Because of this, I have witnessed first-hand the positive outcomes that are the results of after-school programs. Findings from this study were based upon participants' answers to open-ended interview questions through oral responses and by the use of a survey instrument. It is assumed that the participants were honest and forthright in providing data.

Trustworthiness of the Data

To ensure that correct standards of research were used, I employed measures to validate the authenticity and trustworthiness of the data. I used member checking to allow the study's participants to review their interview transcripts for mistakes and/or misquotes. I also used a peer debriefer to review my work to ensure that I used only acceptable methods of research. We met several times during this project to verify the validity and reliability of my work. Dependability and conformability were established through an audit of the data by an individual completely independent of the schools in the study to assure accuracy and completeness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Organization of the Study

This descriptive research study is organized and presented in the following five-chapter outline: Chapter 1 includes an introduction, the history and context, a statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, definitions of the terms, limitations and delimitations, and assumptions. Chapter 2 includes a review of literature pertaining to rural schools and after-school programs. The literature review addresses several major areas of focus: (a) historical evolution of child care, (b) at-risk children, (c) the need for after-school programs, (d) 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and (e) Claiborne County's 21st Century Community Learning Center. Chapter 3 includes the methodology and procedures for this study,

the development of the interview questions, research design, the participants, the procedures used, the data collection, and the data analysis.

Chapter 4 consists of an analysis of the data showing results from the surveys and interviews. Chapter 5 presents a summary, conclusions, and recommendations to improve practice and for further research relating to the development and implementation of a 21st Century Community Learning Center.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Historical Evolution of Child Care

The beginning of the daycare movement originated with the welfare and reform movements of the 19th Century. The concept of daycare grew out of a welfare movement to care for immigrant and working class children while their impoverished mothers worked. The daycare centers of today evolved from day nurseries that began in Boston in the 1940s. These early nurseries cared for children of working wives and widows of merchant seamen who were an economically deprived and disadvantaged group in society (Scarr & Weinberg, 1986). Daycare, according to Scarr and Weinberg, "was founded . . . as a social service to alleviate the child care problems of parents who had to work and to prevent young children from wandering the streets" (p. 1140).

Child care in the United States has, like other national enterprises, been a melting pot of ideas and interests. During the Great Depression, daycare was sponsored by the federal government. During World War II, the federal government sponsored daycare for 400,000 preschool children. This was not because congress perceived daycare to be beneficial for children but because the mothers of these children were needed to work in industries producing war materials. Ironically, after the war, the federal government abdicated all support for daycare and instructed women to quit working, go home, and take care of their children. Many women, however, chose not to accept that advice. The ranks of working women have been steadily increasing since World War II (Scarr & Weinberg, 1986).

Despite the postwar emphasis on domesticity, maternal employment continued and even increased during the 1950s. Federal surveys reported that the lack of child care put many children at risk; however, congress, committed to restoring the male-headed household, took no action (Scarr & Weinberg, 1986). Attitudes began to change in the early 1960s when congress

decided to push welfare mothers into the work force by supporting targeted child care through block grants to states. Presidential opposition to child care persisted through the 1980s but maternal employment continued to increase. Commercial, voluntary, cooperative, and family-based child care moved in to fill the vacuum. Expense, availability, and quality remained key issues. In 1990, a compromise measure called the Child Care and Development Block Grant was signed into law. Although this law mainly benefited low-income families, child care remained an issue in the debates over welfare reform in the mid-1990s (Michel, 1998).

The United States has yet to establish an underlying principle or set of principles to justify public support of child care. The nation has thus far not recognized the rich, multidimensional character of affordable, quality child care. Some of the most comprehensive child-care programs such as Head Start were supported by the federal government with virtually no public discussion about the care of children. Although some are heartened by the fact that the need for child care subsidies is much more widely appreciated today than it was 60 years ago, others are deeply disheartened that the gap between need and support seems to be growing ever wider (Cohen, 1996)

Children at Risk

The question of what it means for children to be "at-risk" is controversial. When children do not succeed in school, educators and others disagree about who or what is to blame. Many children live in vulnerable families and neighborhoods where the incidence of poverty, teen pregnancy, unemployment, substance abuse, and violence is widespread. Schools are increasingly recognizing that the educational performance of at-risk children will not improve unless efforts are made to remove the barriers to learning created by problems that begin outside the classroom walls (Atelia, 1993).

In the past century, families have changed drastically. Large households are becoming less common as are households headed by a married couple. The fastest growing family group is

the single-parent household. These changes in family structures and lifestyles are changing

schools as well. Schools now provide meals, extended-day activities, and child-care services;

they also take a direct role in teaching skills that were traditionally taught within the domain of

the family or church. Classes such as driver's education, sex education, swimming, and personal

hygiene are common. For many youngsters, the primary adult they speak to during the week is

their teacher (Schargel & Smink, 2001).

The changing context of working families in America includes delayed marriage, high

levels of divorce, longer life expectancies, and the changing work patterns of parents, especially

mothers. There were an estimated 35 million children in the United States from ages 6 to 14 in

the spring of 1999; of these, 22 million (63%) had an employed mother. For the majority of the

children of employed mothers (80%), the primary child-care arrangement was the school

(Smolensky & Grossman, 2001). Many of these children in turn became classified as at-risk in

our schools.

How do children become at-risk? Historically, for schools, at-risk students are primarily

those whose appearance, language, culture, values, communities, and family structures do not

match those of the dominant White culture that schools are designed to serve and support. These

students, primarily minorities, the poor, and immigrants, are considered culturally or

educationally disadvantaged or deprived. According to Goodlad and Keating (1990), as it

became obvious that large numbers of these students were not achieving at minimally acceptable

levels, "It seemed natural and certainly easy to define the problem as arising from deficiencies in

the students themselves" (p. 6).

Students who have certain kinds of conditions such as living with one parent, being a

member of a minority group, and having limited English language proficiency are defined at-risk

because statistically students in these categories are more likely to be in the lowest achievement

groups or to drop out of school altogether (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990).

Why is there a need to focus on at-risk students? Each year, increasing numbers of students are entering schools from circumstances and with needs that schools are not prepared to accommodate. As Brown (1986) noted, this requires that increased understanding and sensitivity to these new contexts for schooling become a more integral part of the national dialogue about educational reform. As noted by Ogden and Germinario (1998), "Society, therefore, can avoid more costly problems in the future by investing more heavily in the development of all its youth today" (p. xvii).

How can we reduce the equity gap? The only way to decrease the equity gap in academic performance is to greatly increase success in school and the achievement of disadvantaged and minority children. If we could place a high floor under the achievement of all children, regardless of social backgrounds, we would substantially reduce inequalities (Slavin, 1998).

The Emergence of Latchkey Children

Not only are children at-risk academically but changes in the workforce have caused another kind of risk for young children. Today, millions of children return to an empty house after school. When the school's dismissal bell rings, the anxiety for parents often just begins. Parents worry about whether their children are safe and whether they are susceptible to drugs and crime (U. S. Department of Education, 2000).

What are latchkey children and when did the term become popular. Latchkey children are children who come home to an unsupervised routine when they leave school. The term latchkey was first used in the 1940s when children first started carrying keys to let themselves into their houses after school.   The number of latchkey children in the United States has been growing astoundingly during the past few decades. Some of this growth is because of more single parent homes, more homes where both parents work, and cases where more responsibility has been turned over to the child ("Middle School Kids Battle," 1999).

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Nearly seven million children from 5 to 14 years old are regularly left unsupervised while their parents are at work or away for other reasons. Self-care is much more prevalent among middle school-aged children than among those in elementary school. Nine percent of children (2.4 million) from ages 5 to 11 and 41% of children (4.4 million) from ages 12 to 14 regularly care for themselves. Children caring for themselves spend an average of six hours per week doing so, according to the U. S. Department of Commerce News (2000). Children of grade-school age are more likely to care for themselves if they live with a single father (31%) than with a single mother (17%). Additionally, the chances of self-care increase with family income--from 11% of children in poverty to 22% of those with family incomes at least double the poverty line (U.S. Department of Commerce News).

The rates for both juvenile crimes and the victimization of juveniles peak in the afternoon hours. Unlike the serious violent crime pattern of adults, juvenile crimes occur most often in the hours immediately following a school's dismissal. The peak that occurs at 3:00 p.m. is twice as high as the percentage of violent crimes committed by juveniles just one hour earlier at 2:00 p.m. A comparison of the crime patterns for school and nonschool days shows that the 3:00 p.m. peak occurs only on school days. Thus, juvenile violence peaks in the after-school hours on regular school days. Children are also at a much greater risk of being the victim of a violent crime (murder, violent sex offense, robbery, and assault) in the four hours following the end of the school day, roughly between the hours of 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. (U.S. Department of Education and U. S. Department of Justice, 2000).

In order to curtail the continuing trend of latchkey children, educators and policymakers have begun to show an increasing interest in programs designed for use in the nonschool hours. In recent years, much emphasis has been placed on after-school programs for three reasons. First, attendance in after-school programs can provide children with supervision during a time in which many might be exposed to and engaged in more antisocial and destructive behaviors. Second, after-school programs can provide enriching experiences that broaden children's

perspectives and improve their socialization. Third, and a more recent emphasis, after-school programs can perhaps help improve the academic achievement of students who are not achieving as well as they need to during regular school hours (Fashola, 2002).

Need for After-School Programs

Across the nation as pressure mounts to improve test scores and boost students' performance, educators are increasingly considering after-school programs to help meet these challenges. Once built around recreational activities and arts and crafts, after-school programs are now being focused on tutoring, skill building in reading and math, and helping with homework (Lauer, 2003).

Not only are after-school programs needed for improvement of students' performance, but they are also needed to ensure that some children have a safe place to spend their after-school time. Children whose families are not home when they return from school face many risks (Schwartz, 2003).

On school days, the prime time for violent juvenile crime is from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The crimes that occur then are more serious and violent including murders, rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults. According to Newman, Fox, Flynn, and Christenson (2000), these are also the hours when young people are most likely to:

1. become a victim of violent crime;

2. be in or cause a car crash, the leading cause of death for teens;

3. be killed by household or other accidents;

4. get hooked on cigarettes; or

5. experiment with other dangerous drugs. (p. 2)

The good news is that after-school programs have now proven to greatly reduce the terrible prospect that children and teens will be caught up in behaviors that can ruin their lives and

devastate thousands of innocent families. Newman et al. reported that after-school programs could:

1. reduce juvenile crime and violence,

2. reduce drug use and addiction,

3. cut other risky behavior like smoking and alcohol abuse,

4. reduce teen sex and teen pregnancies, and

5. boost school success and high school graduation. (p. 3)

Unfortunately, there is a chronic shortage of after-school programs available to serve children. Demand for school based after-school programs outstrips supply at a rate of about two to one. Seventy-four percent of elementary and middle school parents said they would be willing to pay for such a program; yet, only 31% of primary school parents and 39% of middle school parents reported that their children actually attended an after-school program at school (U. S. Department of Education and U. S. Department of Justice, 2000).

Many benefits are associated with regular attendance in after-school program settings. Quality after-school, weekend, and summer programs for children and youth can cut crime dramatically by offering school-aged children a safe haven from negative influences and providing constructive activities. They also teach core values like responsibility, hard work, and respect and concern for others. For example: A study of juvenile arrests in a public housing project that instituted an after-school skills development program showed that the number of juveniles arrested declined by 75% by the end of the program (National Advisory Committee, 1998).

Developmentalists and youth advocates agree that constructive, organized activities are a good use of the adolescents' time because such activities provide opportunities to (a) acquire and practice specific social, physical, and intellectual skills that may be useful in a wide variety of settings, including school; (b) contribute to the well-being of one's community; (c) belong to a socially recognized and valued group; (d) establish supportive social networks of peers and

adults who can help in the present and future; and (e) experience and deal with challenge (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003).

Program Designs

Studies have revealed that good programs can raise math and reading performance, improve attendance, decrease students' involvement in crime, and reduce dropout rates. Other research has linked such programs to improved behavior at school, increased interest in learning, better social skills, and higher aspirations for the future (Gewertz, 2000; Nask & Fraser, 1998). Conversation in the field has now turned to the critical challenge of how to create programs that yield those results.

To promote optimal development and function, after-school environments should be safe, settings and activities should be developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant, and the arrangements should be stable. According to Nask and Fraser (1998), programs should contain the following:

1. an individual approach,

2. the child's involvement in the plan,

3. encouragement of academic performance,

4. fun opportunities for play, and

5. a collaborative approach. (p. 370)

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (1999) presented the following list of quality indicators that they deemed must be met for an after-school program to be successful:

1. The program must reflect a commitment to promote knowledge, skills, and understandings through enriching learning opportunities that complement the school day;

2. the program must seek and promote the involvement and support of the entire county in program planning and implementation;

3. the program must support high quality after-school programming for all children;

4. the program must ensure the safety and security of children;

5. the program is supported with adequate financial and material resources;

6. the after-school program is supported by provision of professional development opportunities for staff;

7. the school supports safe transportation to and from after-school programs;

8. school and after-school staff demonstrate respect for the importance of both school and after-school experiences in children's development;

9. the school supports families' choices of after-school arrangements by communicating with community based programs; and

10. the school accommodates families' choices of community based after-school programs through a supportive transportation policy. (pp. 20-30)

Another large promoter of after-school programs, The National School-Age Care Alliance (as cited in Education Week on the Web, 1996), gave these standards for after-school programs:

1. staff members treat children with respect;

2. staff and families work together to make arrivals and departures between home and child care go smoothly;

3. the indoor space is regularly maintained;

4. furniture is suitable for the sizes and physical abilities of the children;

5. each child has the opportunity to play outdoors for at least 30 minutes for each three hours at the program;

6. the permanent playground equipment is suitable for the sizes, interests, and abilities of all children;

7. children will spend most of their time involved in activities of their choice and there are materials and supplies for creative arts and dramatic play;

8. a system is in place to keep unauthorized people from taking children from the program;

9. drinking water is readily available;

10. staff-child rations and group sizes vary according to the type and complexity of the activity, but group sizes do not exceed 30; and

11. the director provides continuous supervision and feedback to staff. (n. p.)

In addition, the U. S. Department of Education (2000) listed components of an exemplary after-school program as:

1. goal setting, strong management, and sustainability;

2. quality after-school staffing;

3. attention to safety, health, and nutrition issues;

4. effective partnerships with community based organizations, juvenile justice agencies, law enforcement, and youth groups;

5. strong involvement of families;

6. enriching learning opportunities;

7. linkages between school day and after-school personnel; and

8. evaluation of program progress and effectiveness. (p. 35)

Although there is no one single formula for success in after-school programs, effective programs have been found to contain academic, enrichment, cultural, and recreational activities.

Financing After-School Programs

Even though some schools and communities may recognize the benefits of extending learning through after-school programs, they may consider that such an enterprise is too costly or too complicated. Costs for after-school and summer programs vary widely based on the type of

activities and services offered, the times that the program operates, whether transportation and materials are required, the experience of the staff, and the number of skilled volunteers (U. S. Department of Education, 1998).

As one might expect, the cost of providing youth activities, hiring adults to lead the after-school activities, and providing equipment and materials were some of the most expensive items (on average, 35% of total cost). At the same time, the cost of the remaining services was a smaller part of the total cost than program planners might have initially thought. The total cost of providing transportation, snacks, and custodial help accounted for only 11% of programs' expenses (Grossman, Price, Fellerath, & Jucovy, 2002).

The cost for after-school programs can range from $50,000 to $500,000 a year depending on the number of students served and the types of services offered. Parents' fees are often the main financial support for programs ranging from $2.40 to $5.00 per hour per child. Unfortunately, fewer programs are available to low-income youths who may have the greatest need for them. Many programs are burdened by the lack of resources and trained staff, which is common in an area where salaries average less than $10 an hour and turnover rates are about 40% a year. Because most school budgets are already strained, program developers often turn to the community to tap into a wider range of funding sources. These can include federal and state grants, city money, foundation grants, business contributions, and community fundraising (Davis, 2001).

Fletcher and Padover (2003) found that the most successful formula for long-term program sustainability was the 20% rule. Within the context of a shared vision, if all key local financial stakeholders (school districts, cities, counties, community foundations, and businesses) agreed to finance at least one fifth of the operational costs of programs regardless of the number of sites, sustainability would be possible. Each stakeholder would commit to investing 20% of total local funding sources that could be maintained over time. Funding partners such as mentioned above would agree that their investments would remain at the same percentage for

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each identified site as the number increased over time. Funding partners entered into a contractual relationship or similar arrangement to secure long-term local funding. By pooling financial resources, a school district's investment of 20% automatically produced five times that amount locally (Fletcher & Padover).

21st Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Center Program is a key component of President Bush's *No Child Left Behind* Act. It provides an opportunity for students and their families to continue to learn new skills and discover new abilities after the school day has ended. The intent of this program, re-authorized under Title IV, Part B, of the *No Child Left Behind* Act, was to provide expanded academic enrichment opportunities for children attending low-performing schools. In addition, the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program provides youth development activities, drug and violence prevention programs, technology education, art, music, and character education to enhance the academic component of the program (21st Century Community Learning Centers, 2000).

After-school programs are emerging as a popular strategy for improving students' performances. After-school programs are easy to implement when compared to many other school reforms. New funding streams for after-school programs have been growing rapidly. Funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Center that provides three-year grants has increased tremendously over the past few years (Miller, 2001).

Growing evidence suggests that after-school participation is associated with higher grades and test scores especially for low-income students. A wide variety of studies focused on various program models linked after-school program participation with improved attitudes toward school, higher expectations of school achievement, better work habits, and higher attendance rates (Halpern, 1999).

Eligible entities served by the 21st Century Community Learning Centers include local educational agencies, community-based organizations, other entities, or a consortia of two or more of such agencies, organizations, or entities. States are required to make awards only to applicants that will primarily serve students who attend schools with concentrations of poor students. Also, states must provide a priority for projects that will target services to students who attend low-performing schools (21st Century Community Learning Centers, 2003).

What about actual statistics? Nationwide, the average grantee ran three or four centers that together reported enrollment of nearly 700 students over the course of the school year. Attendance varied by day with some students attending regularly and others more occasionally and with students enrolling and exiting from the program at different points during the year. Fifty-seven percent were minority students compared with 37% of students nationwide. Most centers (95%) were located in elementary or middle schools or located in schools that included some combination of kindergarten through grade eight. Typically, enters were open 10 or more hours a week after school and 33% were open 20 hours or more a week. Some were open on Saturdays, and many offered summer programs. Sixty-six percent of host schools were considered high-poverty (at least half of their students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches). Nationally, 17% of schools are considered to be high-poverty. The centers' budgets averaged about $196,000 per center, or about $1,000 per enrolled student with the 21st Century grant accounting for about 70% of budgets. Programs typically were free for both students and parents (U. S. Department of Education, 2003a).

As stated earlier, there is strong support for after school programs from the public's safety community. For example, nearly 9 in 10 police chiefs acknowledged that expanding after-school programs would "greatly reduce youth crime and violence" (National Advisory Committee, 1998, p. 3). Nine out of 10 chiefs also agreed, "If America does not make greater investments in after-school and educational child-care programs to help children and youth now, we will pay more later in crime, welfare, and other costs" (National Advisory Committee, p. 3).

The creation of 21st Century Community Learning Centers and after-school funding by foundations, legislation, school districts, and community-based organizations addressed not only a need for after-school programs but also provided access to services for a large number of students who would otherwise not be able to afford them (Fashola, 2002). The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (2000) served populations in rural and inner-city locales; 55% of the 21st Century projects would be considered rural and 45% were in inner cities. Schools with 21st Century Community Learning Center grants also served more minority students and were likely to serve more high-poverty students than average schools. Research from 21st Century Community Learning Centers clearly showed that quality after-school programs coordinated their activities with those offered during the regular school day. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers' grantees conceded the importance of these day-to-day linkages. Among the linkages were: recruit and refer students, provide feedback on students, set goals and objectives, share instructional practices, and communicate school day curriculum to the center's staff (21st Century Community Learning Centers, 2000).

Evaluation of After-School Programs

For many states, after-school programming is uncharted territory. Because of their newness, relatively little is known about after-school best practices, program implementation, cost effectiveness, and impact. However, in these times of decreasing public investments, it is necessary for monetary contributors, policymakers, and their constituents to know which investments are effective and how programs can be improved. As noted by Little and Traub (2002), this situation makes it imperative that those developing policies and implementing after-school programs are able to learn, over time, whether after-school investments are working, how they could be improved, and whether they should be expanded. Hence, states need to begin to grapple with the issue of evaluation.

Evaluation is a form of information exchange and communication among program implementers, program evaluators, monetary contributors, policymakers, and the public. These overseers are responsible to each other and to the public to explain how the various dollars are being spent in terms of program creation and implementation as well as the results and effects of these programs. Evaluation is one way that the supervisors are able to fulfill this responsibility. The interest in evaluating after-school programs is relatively new; consequently, it is important for overseers of programs to share their results so that errors will not be duplicated. Programs should not compete against each other but rather their overseers should communicate with one another to show what does or does not work (Fashola, 2002). According to the California Center for Community-School Partnerships (1999), effective evaluation consists of five basic stages:

1. focusing on goals and objectives for program strategies,

2. clarifying assumptions about the processes by which the program should work,

3. selecting indicators of success,

4. collecting information, and

5. analyzing and using information for continuous program improvement. (p. 14)

Good evaluations are done by and with families and partners, not to them. Overseers of these programs should gather information continuously to assess progress toward established goals, measure how strategies are working, and determine whether efforts are achieving desired results.

Evaluation of 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs

According to federal 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs' evaluation guidelines (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), State Education Agencies must ensure that programs:

1. meet the principles of effectiveness based on the assessment of objective data, an established set of performance indicators, and scientifically-based research on helping students meet a state's high academic achievement standards;

2. use performance indicators and performance measures for evaluation;

3. conduct a periodic evaluation of how the program or activity is providing high quality academic enrichment;

4. use evaluation findings for continuous improvement of the program, broader dissemination of promising practices, and for the general information of the public; and

5. receive ongoing technical assistance and training that enables them to implement effective program and evaluation strategies. (n. p.)

Why are evaluations of 21st Century Community Learning Centers necessary? As the programs' funds devolve to the states, those who evaluate their after-school programs will be in the forefront and able to capitalize on evaluation results to create sustainable after-school programs that best serve the children and youth of their state in a cost-effective manner. Results from after-school evaluations nationwide indicated that after-school programs did make a difference. They contributed to increased student performance, provided a safe haven for children and youth during nonschool hours, and reduced school violence (Little & Traub, 2002). All sites are required to submit annual performance reports that provide state education agencies with center-level data collected from the 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs' objectives and performance indicators. According to Little and Traub, the objectives are as follows:

1. Participants in 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes;

2. 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs will offer a range of high-quality educational, developmental, and recreational services; and

3. 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs will serve children and community members with the greatest needs for expanding learning opportunities. (n. p.)

First-Year Findings Concerning 21st Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program began in 1998 under the *Elementary and Secondary Education* Act with $40 million awarded to 99 grantees in 34 states and supporting programs in about 360 schools. Reauthorized under the *No Child Left Behind* Act, the program received $1 billion in 2002 (21st Century Community Learning Centers, 2003). On February 3, 2003, the U. S. Department of Education released the first-year findings from the National 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program's evaluation. Conducted by Mathematical Policy Research (21st Century Community Learning Centers, 2003), the national evaluation examined the characteristics and outcomes of typical 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs. Simultaneous with the report's release, the President's Fiscal Year 2004 Education Budget Summary and Background Information cited the "disappointing initial findings from a rigorous evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program" as a rationale to request a decrease of 40% in funding for the program (U. S. Department of Education, 2003b, n. p.). According to the budget summary, "The evaluation indicates that the centers funded in the program's first three years are not providing substantial academic content and do not appear to have a positive impact on students' behavior" (U.S. Department of Education, 2003b, n. p.).

Several researchers disagreed with the findings and wrote articles to explain their reasoning. According to Vandell (2003), a researcher at the University of Wisconsin, serious methodological problems have come into question concerning the report's findings. She determined that the elementary-schools' evaluation had four fundamental problems:

1. Baseline data were selectively omitted from the report. The math scores in the treatment group increased during the evaluation year, whereas the math scores in the control group decreased during the evaluation year. Unfortunately, the study's authors did not test these changes in test scores to determine if they were statistically significant.

2. Data were collected at only half of the intended sites. Instead of examining impacts in 14 school districts as originally planned, data were collected in only 7 school districts. This reduced sample size substantially limited the investigators' ability to detect program effects.

3. A substantial proportion (4 of 18 programs, or 22%) of the programs in the elementary schools' evaluation had only an incidental focus on academic and developmental experiences for children. These four programs were designed to serve adults in the school's community (another focus area within the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Programs' charge). It is not clear why or how these adult-focused programs would be expected to directly impact child outcomes.

4. Sites for the elementary-school evaluation were not representative of the larger body of 21st Century Community Learning Centers Programs. Consequently, it would not be possible to use performance data (either positive or negative findings) as indicators of the success or failure of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Programs generally. (n. p.)

Claiborne County and the Need for After-School Programs

The Claiborne County School District is a rural school system located in Northeast Tennessee. The County's population as of the 2000 census was 29,653. Claiborne County has a high poverty rate: 20.9% of the population live below poverty level, as compared to 13.6% for the state of Tennessee and 28.8% of the county's children live below the poverty level as

compared to 18.9% for the state. Of the county's residents 25 years and over, 60.3% are high-school graduates and only 8.9% are college graduates. Adult illiteracy is a challenge for Claiborne County. Geographically, the county is spread out (434 square miles) and the population is more isolated because there are only 68.8 persons per square mile compared to 138 persons per square mile for the state of Tennessee. Claiborne County is approximately 50 miles from the nearest large metropolitan area (U.S. Census, 2000).

Claiborne County is also lacking in youth organizations available for extra curricular activities. There is no YMCA, local recreational center, or academic support/tutorial assistance services such as Sylvan or Huntington Learning Centers. There is only one public library to serve the entire county (J. Barnard, personal communication, July 2, 2004). In addition, there is the problem of juvenile crime. From January through June 2003, the Claiborne County Juvenile Court had 257 cases referred for disposition or adjudication (including offenses such as unruly behavior, truancy, possession of controlled substances, unlawful possession of a weapon, carrying weapons on school property, assault, aggravated assault, reckless endangerment, theft of property, vandalism, disorderly conduct, criminal trespassing, public intoxication, and other minor offenses). Of these 257 cases, 57 involved juveniles from birth to age 10; 17 cases involved juveniles from ages 11 to 12; 49 cases involved juveniles from ages 13 to 14; 78 cases involved juveniles from ages 15 to 16; and 55 cases involved juveniles from ages 17 to 18 (Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, 2004). This scenario paints a poignant picture of school-aged children with little to do after school.

21st Century Community Learning Center Program in Claiborne County

In the fall of 2002, it was decided by Claiborne County's school district officials that they would pursue the opportunity to write a grant that would give the county a chance at getting a 21st Century Community Learning Center Program. The decision was made by the director of schools and his administrative staff that the three schools most eligible for the grant were

Soldiers Memorial Middle School, Springdale Elementary School, and Tazewell-New-Tazewell Primary School. These schools were selected because of the high concentration of free/reduced lunches, eligible students, and the number of adults and children living in poverty. Not only were the poverty rates considered but also an analysis of the 2002 State *Terra-Nova* Achievement Test results showed that all three schools fell short of reaching the expected national percentile in one or more subject areas.

In January of 2003, the director of schools was notified of the award made to the above listed schools. Claiborne County became the recipient of a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant in the amount of $750,000 for the three schools to be used in the upcoming three years. By February of the same year, all three sites had begun implementation of their after-school programs and all are currently operating in their individual sites. Not only are the schools open for after-school use but all three also have an early morning component and a summer program. The average time the centers are open is between 15 and 20 hours a week during the school year and approximately 9 hours a day during the summer months for a total of 45 hours per week.

Summary

This literature review provided information relevant to after-school programs including the 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs. It presented positive research on the potential that quality after-school activities could make in keeping children safe, out of trouble, and learning. Specifically, it presented evidence of success for after-school activities and it identified key components of high-quality programs and effective program practices. It also presented a perspective on how after-school programs could affect a student's academic performance and behavioral and social issues. The status of after-school care in America and Claiborne County was explored and current data were disclosed.

The implications of this literature review could benefit grant writers and/or school systems that might be interested in initiating an after-school program or studying the effects of existing ones. The literature indicated that after-school programs are a success and that they help keep children of all ages safe and out of trouble. They provide an alternative to children spending large numbers of hours alone or with peers. These programs provide safe havens where children can learn, take place in supervised recreation, and build strong, positive relationships with responsible caring adults (U. S. Department of Education, 2000).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Chapter 3 presents the methods and procedures used for conducting a descriptive evaluation case study using action research to examine the components of an after-school 21st Century Community Learning Center Program located in the school district of Claiborne County, Tennessee. This chapter also describes the research design, the sampling techniques, and the procedures for data analysis.

Research Design

Qualitative research is an approach in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (the multiple meanings of individual experiences and meanings socially and historically constructed with an intent of developing a theory or pattern), advocacy/participatory perspectives (political, issue-oriented, collaborative, or change-oriented), or both. The researcher collects open-ended emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data (Creswell, 2003).

According to Best and Kahn (1993), a descriptive study describes what is. It is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing. It is primarily concerned with the present, although it often considers past events and influences as they relate to current conditions. Evaluation research is concerned with the application of its findings and implies some judgment of the effectiveness, social utility, or desirability of a product, process, or program in terms of carefully defined and agreed upon objectives or values (Best & Kahn).

The purpose of action research is to go a step further and ask, "What, if anything, should change?" In action research, theory plays a secondary role. Key research questions derive from

practice. While the results of action research often have theoretical implications, the focus is on the tangible and the here and now. Not only do action researchers need to pay attention to the general criteria governing all education research, they also need to consider the consequences of their findings (McMillan & Wergin, 1998). In practice-based research, the focus is on the improvement of educational practice and the researchers are usually the practitioners themselves.

As noted by McKernan (1991), the aim of action research is to solve the immediate and pressing day-to-day problems of practitioners. Action research is carried out by practitioners seeking to improve their understanding of events, situations, and problems so as to increase the effectiveness of their practice.

The case study method of qualitative research concentrates on a single phenomenon or entity in order to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). It is a methodology that uses thick, rich descriptions and explanations. For education research, the case study is especially appropriate as the focus of inquiry is often on gaining knowledge of human development and of people in their natural settings (Merriam, 1998). Merriam pointed out that the case study is especially appropriate to educational research for examining specific issues, illuminating problems, and evaluating programs and interventions.

To explore the research questions and the extent to which Claiborne County's 21st Century Learning Center Program was successful in implementing the eight components necessary to be an effective after-school program as set forth by the U. S. Department of Education (2000), I developed a case study that relied primarily on data collected from surveys and interviews. The selection of participants was both purposeful and random. This method included particular subjects because they could facilitate the expansion of the developing theory (Bogan & Biklen, 1998). According to Best and Kahn (1993), nonprobability samples are those that use whatever subjects are available rather than following a specific subject selection process.

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This case study focused on an after-school 21st Century Community Learning Center Program located in Claiborne County, Tennessee. The researcher distributed surveys, conducted indepth interviews, and studied available written data pertinent to the program. The research was conducted during the fall of the 2004-05 school year with the researcher making regular visits to the three after-school program sites. The intent of this study was to examine the components of the Claiborne County's 21st Century Community Learning Center Program and to check for alignment with the recommended components for an exemplary after-school program.

Population and Sample

A purposeful sample of individuals was chosen because of their participation, their expertise, and/or their relationship with the after-school 21st Century Community Learning Center Program. Survey instruments were given to all children who attended the program on a regular basis (at least two days or more per week) to take home for their parents to fill out and return. The number of surveys distributed to parents of students at the three schools was 227 with 124 returning the survey to the school. This number is somewhat misleading as many students attending the program have brothers and/or sisters that also attend and parents may have filled out only one survey. Even so, there was a 56% return rate. Fifty-four surveys were given directly to after-school staff, principals, and site coordinators (see Appendix F) and 51 of those surveys were completed and returned for a 94% return rate. In addition, personal interviews were conducted with teachers, parents, and site coordinators/principals in order to obtain further input. Twenty-four interviews were completed consisting of 9 teachers, 12 parents, and 3 site coordinators and/or principals using open-ended interview guides (see Appendices B & D).

Methods of Data Collection

The data consisted of detailed interviews that were conducted to investigate the perceptions and opinions of teachers, parents, and site coordinators/principals concerning the

services provided by Claiborne County's 21st Century Community Learning Center Program. Surveys and document analysis further expanded the data collection.

According to Creswell (1998), qualitative research is emergent rather than tightly prefigured. Creswell pointed out that the interview questions could change and be refined as the inquirer learns what to ask and to whom it should be asked and that the theory or general pattern of understanding would emerge as it begins with initial codes, develops into broad themes, and coalesces into a grounded theory or broad interpretation.

The setting for this study was Claiborne County, Tennessee, a rural school district with a high poverty rate. The 21st Century Community Learning Center Program consisted of three sites: one kindergarten- through fourth-grade primary school (Tazewell-New-Tazewell), one kindergarten- through sixth-grade elementary school (Springdale), and one fifth- through eighth-grade middle school (Soldiers Memorial).

The researcher visited the director of schools and received permission to conduct the surveys and interviews (see Appendix A). Survey instruments were made available to teachers, parents, and site coordinators/principals (see Appendix F). A letter of introduction (see Appendix C) explaining the procedures accompanied each survey. Those completing the surveys were asked not to sign their names, thus giving anonymity to each participant.

In addition to the surveys, 24 interviews were conducted comprising 9 teachers, 12 parents, and 3 site coordinators/principals. Each interviewee was first asked to read and sign the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix I); next, each interviewee was asked to complete a demographic survey (see Appendix G & H); then, each was assigned a pseudonym to be used throughout the study to ensure anonymity. The interviews took place at the learning center sites.

Survey

The 21st Century Community Learning Center survey was designed especially for this case study (see Appendix F). The purpose was to garner understanding of the perceptions and

attitudes that the stakeholders have about the program. Specifically, the questions focused on whether key components have been followed and/or met by the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program. The surveys for school personnel were taken to the participating schools and given to staff, teachers, site coordinators, and/or principals. Students in the program were given an envelope containing the survey to take home to their parents. No signature was required so that parents might remain anonymous. One person at each school site was responsible for collecting the surveys.

Interview Approach

The researcher also employed interviews to add qualitative depth to the study. I contacted the principal at each chosen school to get his or her recommendation of teachers who might be willing to participate in the study. Each principal gave me a list of six teachers from which I could select three from each school. A total of 9 names were randomly drawn from a container and teachers were contacted to check for agreement to be interviewed. All participants from the names selected agreed to participate in the interview process. I then asked the site coordinator from each learning center site to recommend parents who might be willing to participate. From that group, I again randomly chose 12 parents to participate in the study. All parents selected agreed to participate in the interview process. The site coordinator and/or principal from each learning center comprised the three remaining interviews. The interviews took place at the learning center sites at each of the three participating schools. I used a tape recorder to make an audio cassette recording of each interview as well as made use of field notes during and after each interview. The taped recordings were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. These transcriptions were analyzed and compared continuously throughout the study. This constant comparison allowed patterns and themes to emerge from the data.

Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness in a naturalistic inquiry relates to persuading the audience that the findings are worth paying attention to or that they are meaningful. In order to establish trustworthiness, the researcher must provide credibility, transferability, dependability, and reliability of the study. Because the researcher serves as principal for one of the participating schools, questions could be asked about the objectivity of the study. In order to establish the credibility of this study, the researcher used multiple methods. Triangulation was used to examine evidence from the sources. As data were collected and analyzed, they were cross-checked with other sources in order to verify their accuracy. In this study, triangulation occurred through the use of field notes, interviews, and survey questions. Basically, triangulation is comparison of information to determine whether or not there is corroboration (Wiersma, 1986).

As a second step, I used peer debriefing. This process involves locating a person who reviews and asks questions about the study so that the account will resonate with people other than the researcher (Creswell, 2003). My peer debriefer for the study was the curriculum coordinator for the Claiborne County School System (see Appendix J). Next, dependability and conformability were established through an audit (see Appendix K) of the data by an individual who was completely independent of the schools in the study to assure accuracy and completeness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

As a last measure, I used member checking as my most critical technique for establishing credibility. Member checking consisted of submitting notes to informants to ensure that their perspectives were recorded accurately (McMillan & Wergin, 1998).

Summary

Chapter 3 included the research design and methodology that were used in the study. The procedures used to assemble and acquire data were discussed and explained. The participants

who were part of the study were described and their relationship to the study was given. The review of records was explained and the measures of trustworthiness were presented. The methods of data collection and data analysis were introduced. Results of the analysis of the data is presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to describe the impact that the 21st Century Community Learning Center After-School Program located in Northeast Tennessee had on the education and welfare of students who lived in this rural county and attended the three Claiborne County Schools involved in the program.

The focus of the study was to investigate the extent to which the Claiborne County's 21st Century Community Learning Center Program was successful in implementing the criteria set forth by the U.S. Department of Education concerning the eight components necessary to be an effective after-school program. These eight components are:

1. goal setting, strong management, and sustainability;

2. quality after-school staffing;

3. attention to safety, health, and nutrition issues;

4. effective partnerships and community based organizations;

5. strong involvement of families;

6. enriching learning opportunities;

7. linkages between school day and after-school activities and personnel; and

8. evaluation of program progress and effectiveness; (U.S. Department of Education, 2000)

In addition to investigating Claiborne County's 21st Century Community Learning Center Program's extent of success in implementing the eight components of a successful after-school program, the following research questions were also explored.

1. What impact has the after-school program had on Claiborne County's students?

2. What impact has the after-school had on families of Claiborne County's students?

3. What impact has the after-school program had on the community in Claiborne County?

A multi-pronged approach was used to develop this study. Surveys were given to parents of all students who attended the after-school program. Also, teachers, principals, and site coordinators who had participated in the program were surveyed.

Further data were produced by interviews with 24 people who had direct contact with the Claiborne County 21st Century Community Learning Center Program. The study's participants were divided into three groups consisting of 9 teachers, 12 parents, and 3 principals/site coordinators. Each of the participants was interviewed for approximately 20 to 30 minutes using an open-ended semistructured interview guide developed exclusively for this study. Participants were purposefully and randomly selected with the help of the principals and site coordinators at each school site.

The interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participants and were audio taped for accuracy and subsequently transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. After the interviews were transcribed, the data were gathered and analyzed. The participants were encouraged to read the transcriptions of their interviews to check for mistakes and inappropriate statements (member checking). A peer debriefer was used to edit process and content of the project as it progressed (see Appendix J). An auditor was used to review the project design and to verify accuracy in all sections of the research (see Appendix K).

Surveys

All parents of students participating in the after-school program were asked to complete a survey and return it to the school. There were 227 surveys sent to parents with 124 being returned to the schools. Teachers, and principals/site coordinators were also asked to complete a survey. Fifty-four surveys were given to staff with 51 being returned to the schools. Following

the collection of surveys, I developed figures to compare the answers given to each survey question.

Survey Results

Survey Question #1: The after-school program has a strong focus on academics such as math and reading.

On survey question #1, there was definite agreement by both groups of participants that the after-school program had a strong focus on academics. As shown in Figure 1, 92% of staff and 63% of parents agreed that " almost always" the focus was on academics. Another 8% of staff and 24% of parents agreed that the focus was "sometimes" on academics.

However, I noticed that 10% of parents responded by saying they "didn't know" if the focus was on academics.

A = Almost Always   B = Sometimes   C = Rarely   D = Never   E = Don't Know
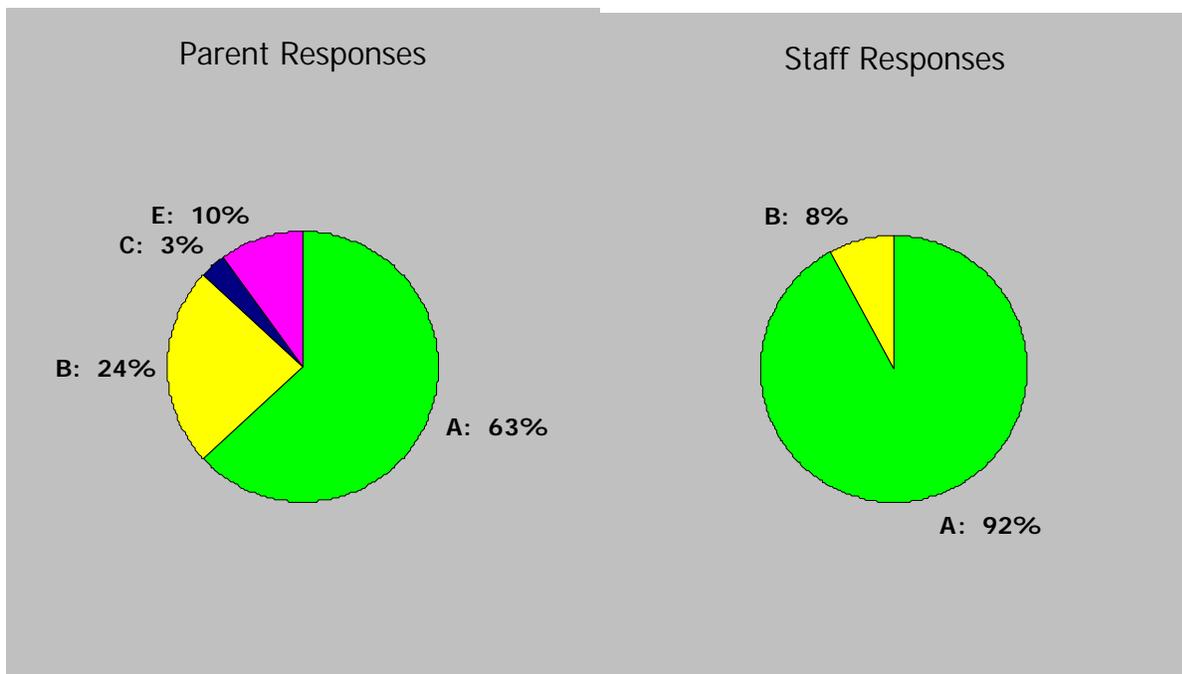
Figure 1. Survey Question #1

Survey Question #2: Students are encouraged to attend the after-school program.

Survey question #2 had an even greater agreement by both participants. As presented in Figure 2, a full 96% of staff and 74% of parents responded that students were encouraged to attend the after-school program. Parents were a bit more unsure of the answer as 15% stated "sometimes" and 9% answered "don't know."

A = Almost Always   B = Sometimes   C = Rarely   D = Never   E = Don't Know
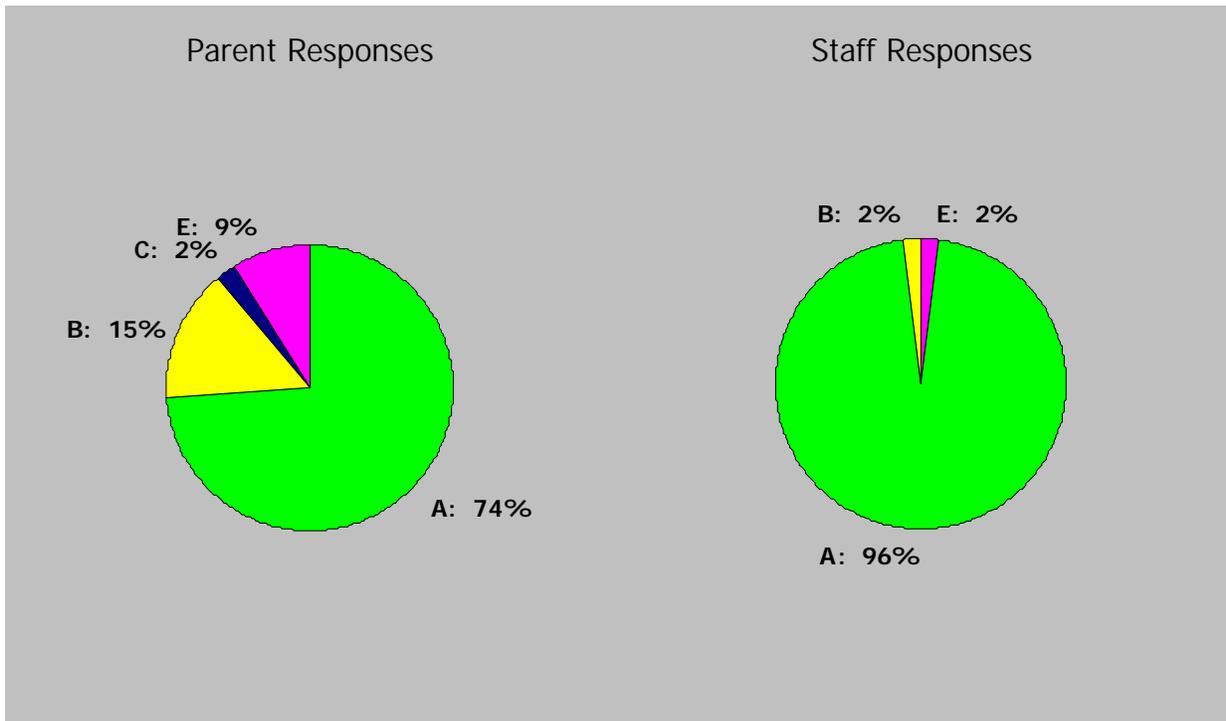
Figure 2. Survey Question #2

Survey Question #3: Parents/Staff are given rules for student enrollment in the program.

Survey question #3 also had a large percentage of participants agreeing with the question asked. As shown in Figure 3, 98% of staff and 78% of parents responded that they were given the rules for student enrollment in the program. However, 14% of parents stated that this happened "sometimes" and 6% did not know.

A = Almost Always   B = Sometimes   C = Rarely   D = Never   E = Don't Know
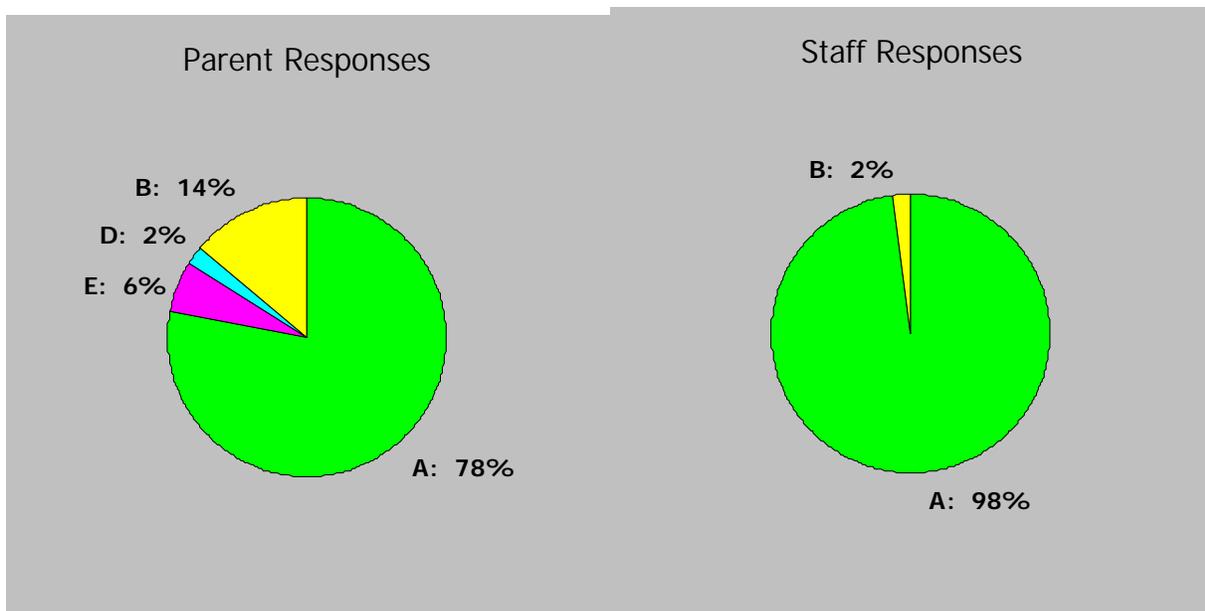
Figure 3. Survey Question #3

Survey Question #4: Students are placed in small classes with no more than 15 children per room.

Survey question #4 had more variation in participants' responses with 74% of staff and 40% of parents agreeing that students were placed in small classes whereas 24% of staff and 16% of parents stated that this sometimes happens. However, as shown in Figure 4, 44% of

parents answered "don't know" to this survey question. I determined that this could have occurred because the staff had knowledge that parents did not have concerning this question. However, the number of parents who were unaware of the class size suggested that the schools may need to make parents more aware of the number of students placed in classes at each school site.

A = Almost Always   B = Sometimes   C = Rarely   D = Never   E = Don't Know
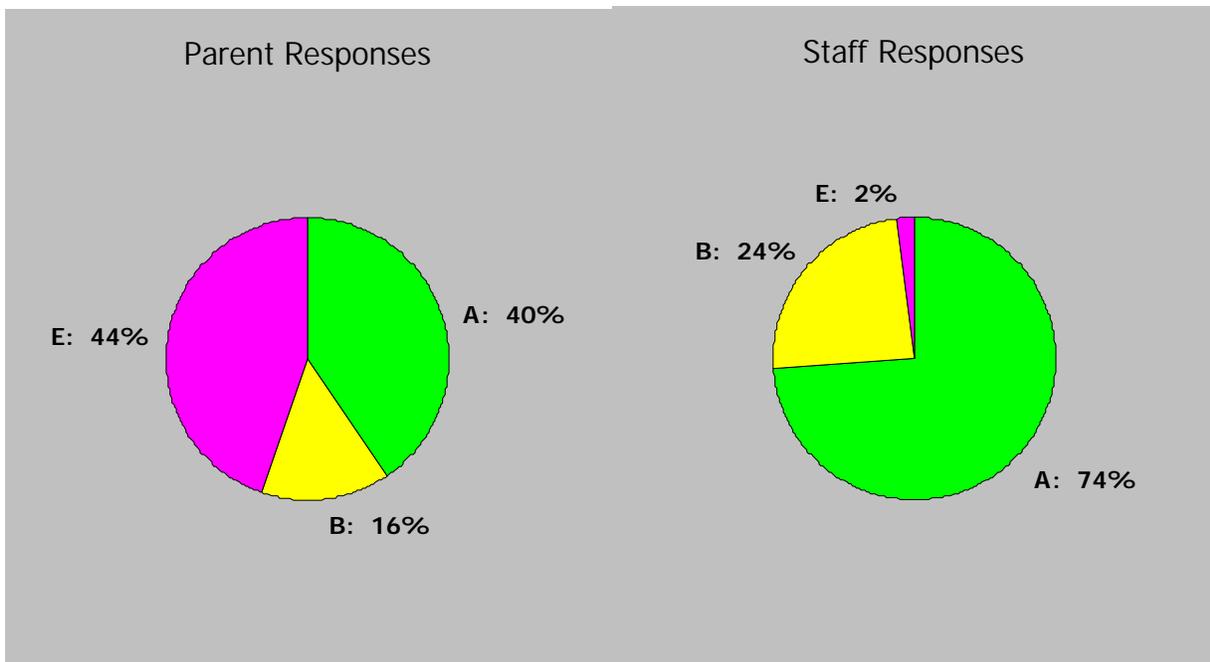
Figure 4. Survey Question #4

Survey Question #5: Students feel safe and secure at the after-school program.

Survey question #5 dealt with the safety issue for after-school students. As shown in Figure 5, consensus was very high among participants with 100% of staff and 85% of parents answering that their children felt safe and secure while attending the after-school program whereas 9% of parents answered "sometimes" and 6% did not know.

A = Almost Always   B = Sometimes   C = Rarely   D = Never   E = Don't Know
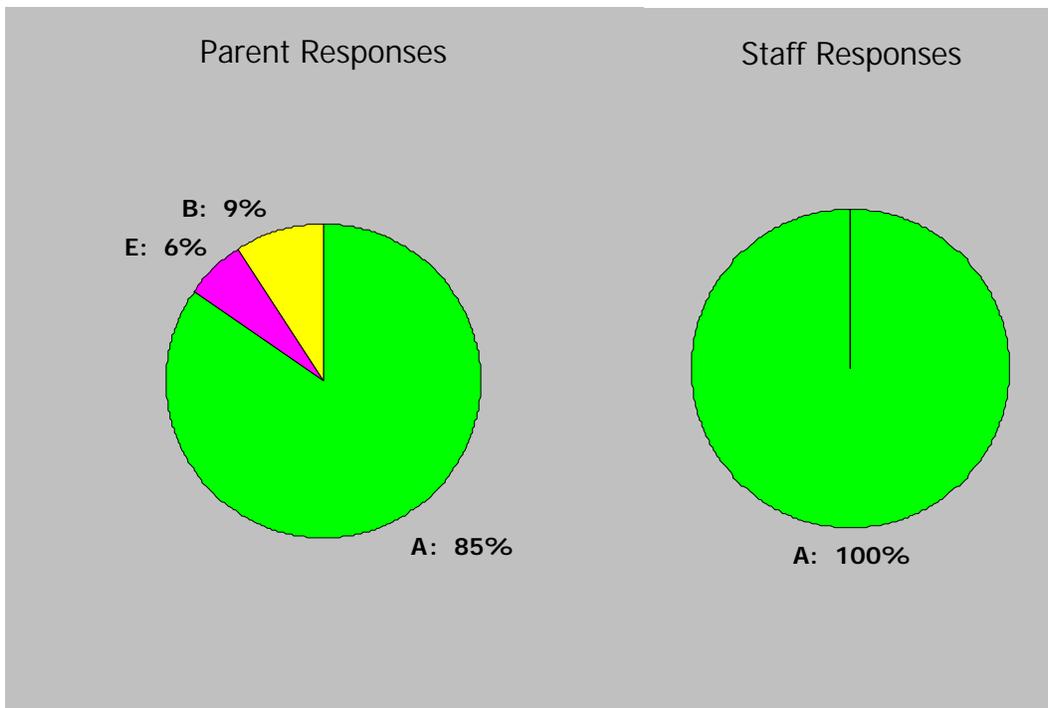
Figure 5. Survey Question #5

Survey Question #6: Healthy snacks are served each day.

　　　Survey question #6 dealt with the nutritional component of the program. Again, there was much agreement among the participants with 98% of staff and 75% of parents answering that a healthy snack was served each day whereas 12% of parents answered "sometimes" and 11% did not know. Based on the percentages, I determined that healthy snacks were being served. The result of the survey question is shown in Figure 6.

A = Almost Always　　　B = Sometimes　　　C = Rarely　　　D = Never　　　E = Don't Know
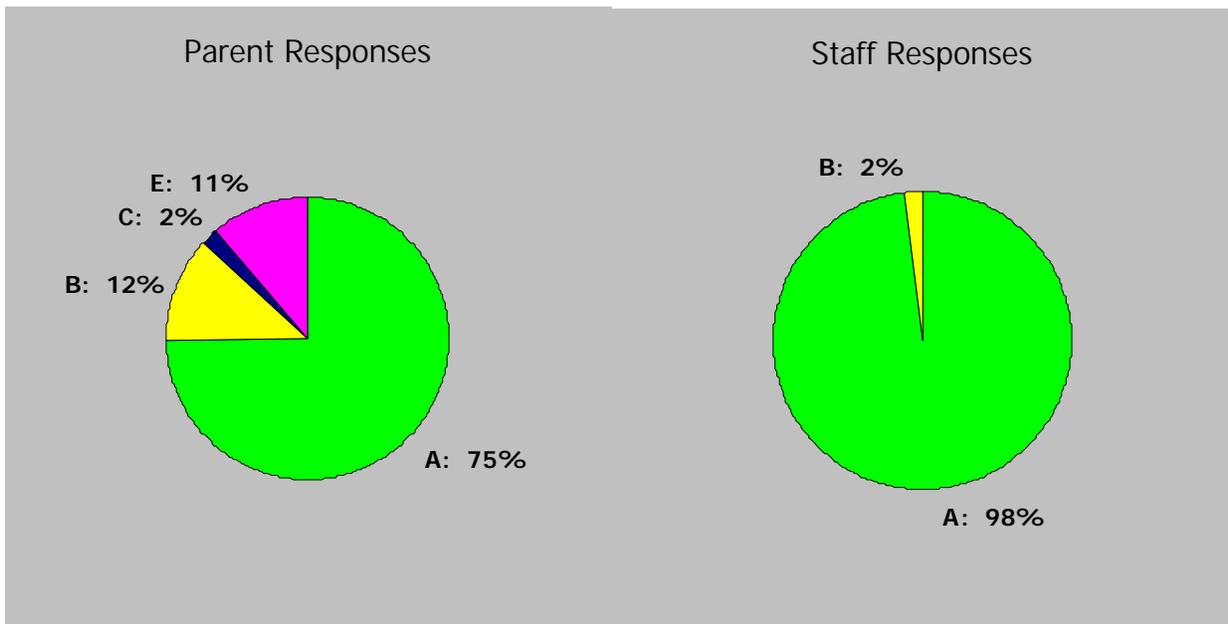
Figure 6. Survey Question #6.

Survey Question #7: Local organizations such as 4-H and the library participate in the after-school program.

With Survey question #7, I asked the participants if they were aware of outside organizations that took part in the after-school program. As shown in Figure 7, 43% of parents answered that either "almost always" or "sometimes" that there was participation from outside organizations. However 74% of staff answered either "almost always" or "sometimes" there were outside organizations that participated in the after-school program. This discrepancy may be because parents were not actually present during the times that outside organizations were present at the schools. A full 50% of parents answered that they "don't know" if there were outside organizations participating and a rather surprising 24% of staff members also answered that they did not know. Parents may need to be made more aware of organizations that are involved in the after-school program.

A = Almost Always   B = Sometimes   C = Rarely   D = Never   E = Don't Know
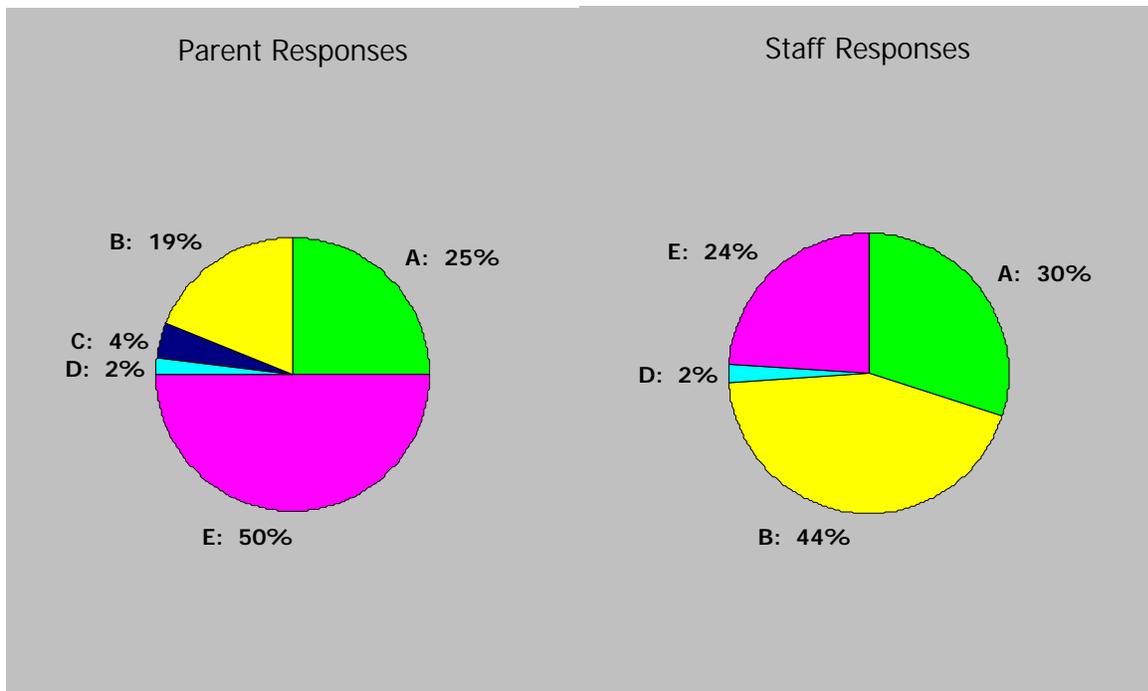
Figure 7. Survey Question #7

Survey Question #8: Parental involvement is part of the after-school program.

Question #8 asked if parental involvement was part of the program. There was considerable variation in the answers given. Only 27% of parents and 38% of staff responded that "almost always" was the correct answer whereas 22% of parents and 28% of staff responded that they were "sometimes" involved. Response C "rarely" was given by 5% of parents and 20% of staff and the response "don't know" was given by 37% of parents and 14% of staff. With a total of both A and B responses for parents at 49% and 64% for staff, this researcher determined that parental involvement was taking place. Results are shown in Figure 8.

A = Almost Always   B = Sometimes   C = Rarely   D = Never   E = Don't Know
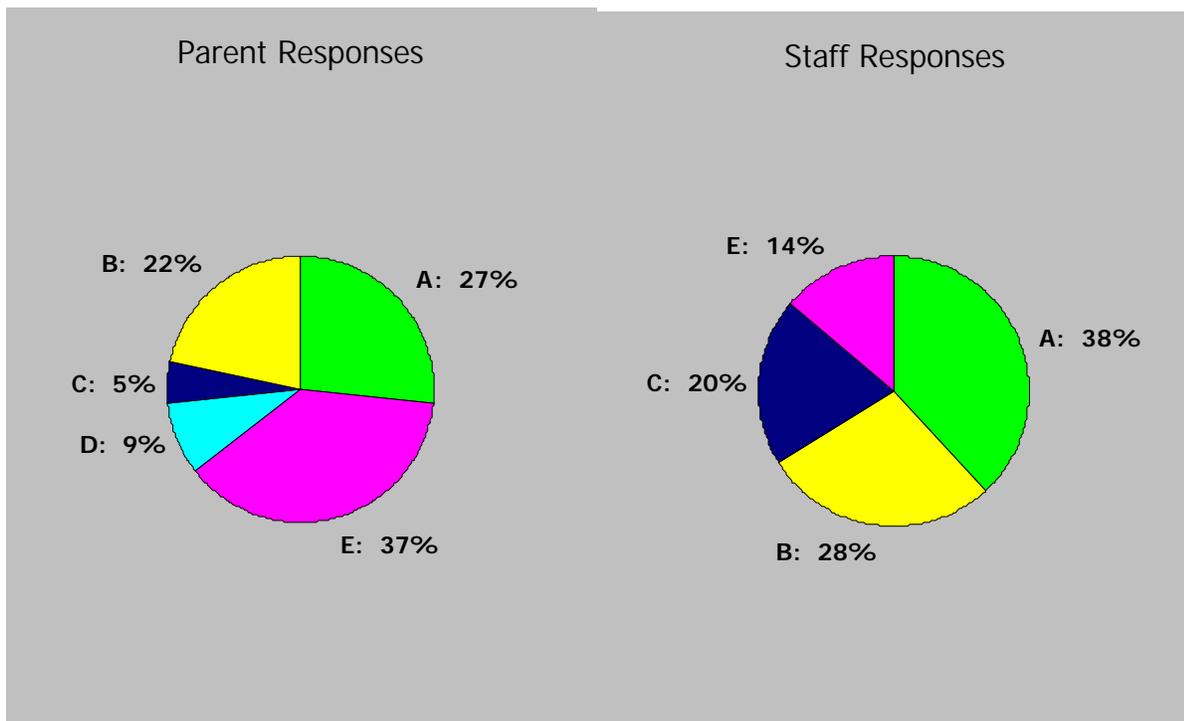
Figure 8. Survey Question #8

Survey Question #9: Parents are asked to participate or volunteer in the after-school program.

Survey Question #9 was somewhat similar to question #8 but asked specifically if parents had been asked to participate or volunteer in the after-school program. As shown in Figure 9, 50% of parents responded that they "almost always" or "sometimes" had been asked to participate or volunteer in the program whereas 70% of staff stated that parents had been asked to participate. This difference in percentages may be because many of the same parents were asked on more than one occasion to participate in the program. Only 11% of parents stated that they had "never" been asked to volunteer or participate and 33% of parents and 20% of staff responded that they "don't' know" if parents were asked to volunteer or participate.

A = Almost Always   B = Sometimes   C = Rarely   D = Never   E = Don't Know
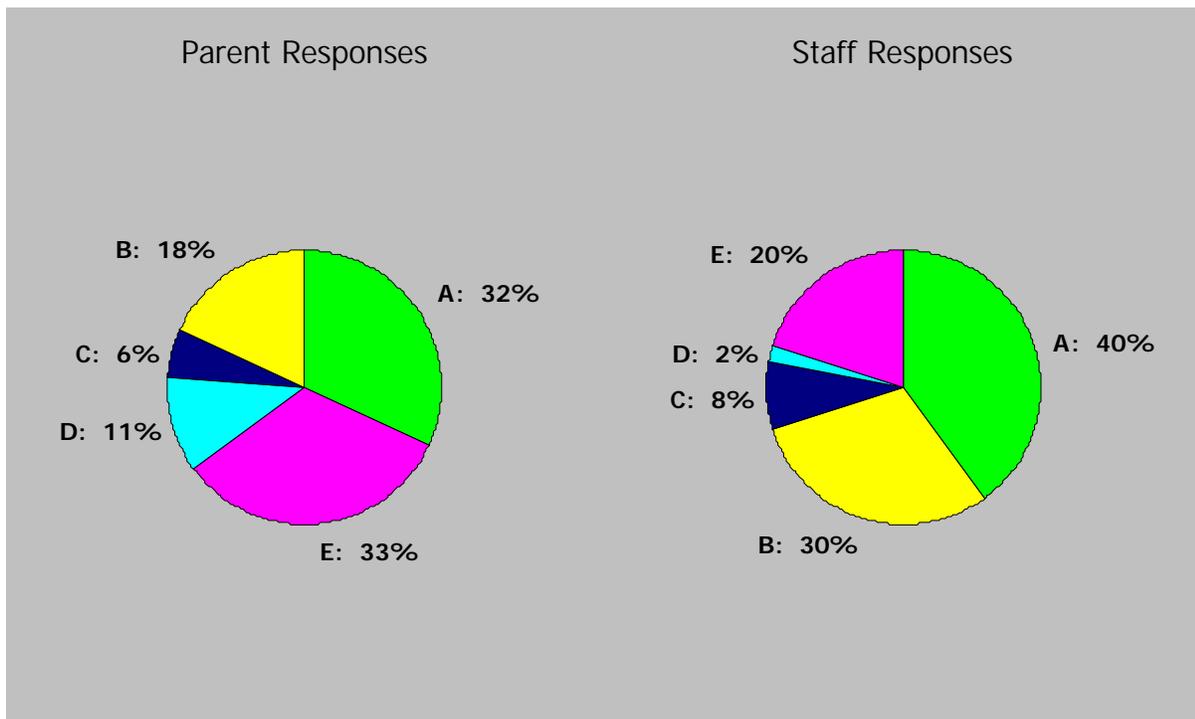
Figure 9. Survey Question #9

Survey Question #10: Students are offered enrichment activities in the after-school program, such as computer, art, and music.

Question #10 asked participants if students were offered enrichment activities in the after-school program. Such examples as computer, art, and music were given for further explanation. Both parents and staff' members' responses were favorable. As shown in Figure 10, a full 83% of parents stated "almost always" or "sometimes" that their children received enrichment classes with only 14% stating that they "don't know." The staff had an even greater response to this question as a full 100% stated that students are offered enrichment classes "almost always" or "sometimes" during the after-school program

A = Almost Always   B = Sometimes   C = Rarely   D = Never   E = Don't Know
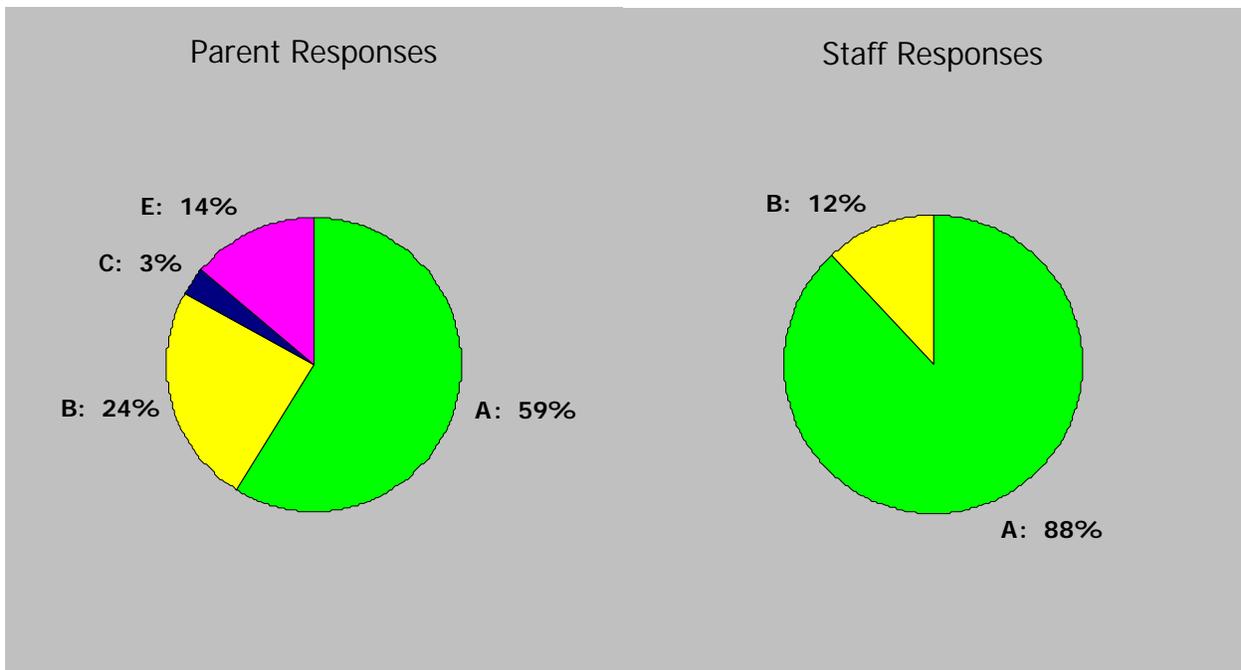
Figure 10. Survey Question #10

Survey Question #11: Students in the after-school program are taught by well-trained staff.

Survey question #11 dealt with the aspect of qualified staff. Parents seemed to agree that staff met the qualifications as well-trained because 79% stated they "almost always" were and 9% said they were "sometimes." However, 9% stated that they "don't know" if staff were well trained. The staff themselves stated they were well trained with 96% responding "almost always" and 4% responding "sometimes." Results of this survey question are presented in Figure 11.

A = Almost Always   B = Sometimes   C = Rarely   D = Never   E = Don't Know
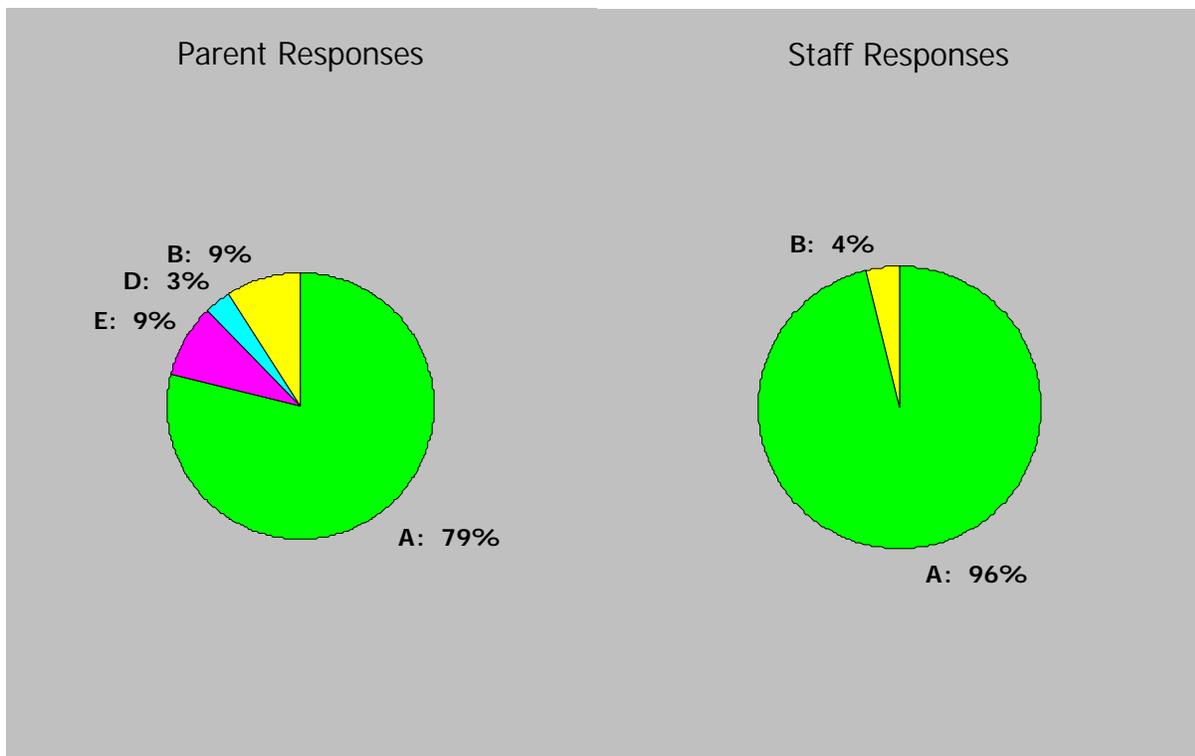
Figure 11. Survey Question #11

Survey Question #12: The after-school program relates to and builds on the regular school day's program.

Survey question #12 had very favorable responses from all participants. Of parents, 84% stated "almost always" or "sometimes" that the program builds on the regular school program. However, 14% answered that they "don't know" if it builds on the regular school day. Staff responses seemed to be a lot more confident as 98% of staff members responded that the after-school program did indeed build on the regular school day program. Results are shown in Figure 12.

A = Almost Always   B = Sometimes   C = Rarely   D = Never   E = Don't Know
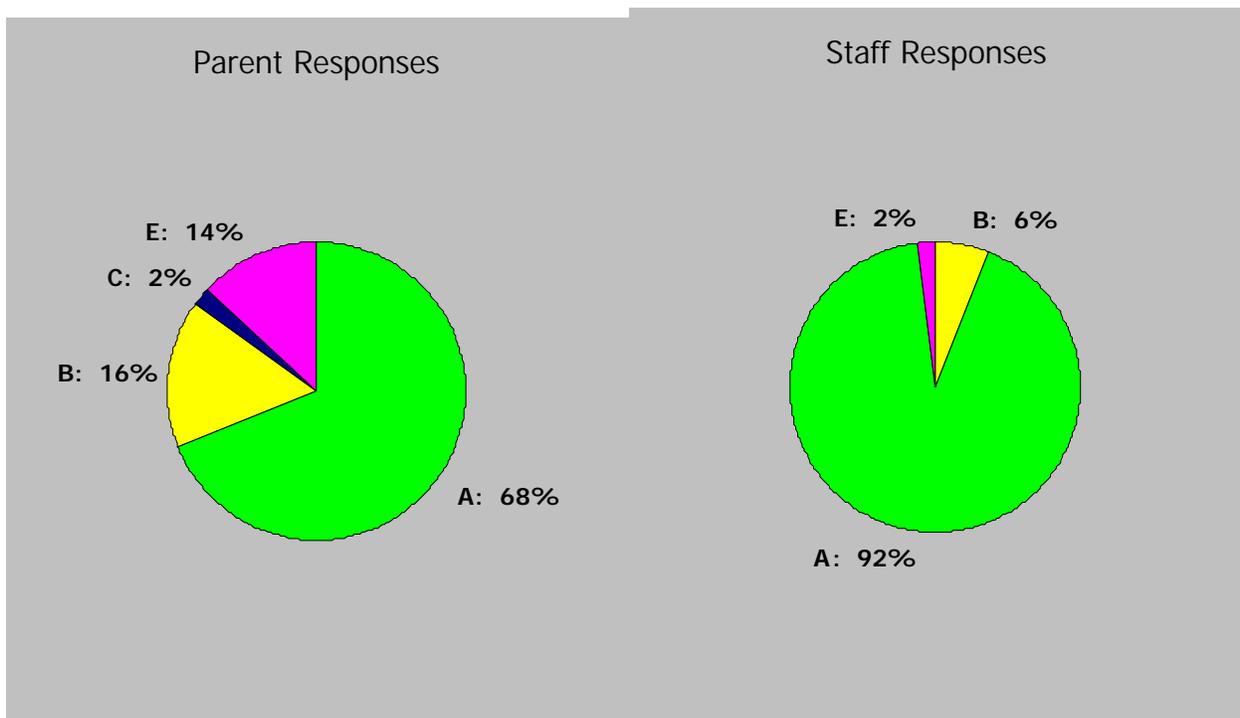
Figure 12. Survey Question #12

Survey Question #13: Evaluation of the program takes place on a somewhat regular basis (examples: questionnaire, survey, etc).

Survey Question #13 asked about the evaluation of the program. Examples such as questionnaires and surveys were given. The answers were varied somewhat with the parents having a more difficult time with choices. Of the parents, 44% stated that "almost always" there was evaluation taking place, 15% stated that it "sometimes happened," and 11% responded that it "rarely" happened. Another 30% of parents stated that they "don't know" if evaluation took place. The staff had a more clear picture of what was happening with evaluation. As shown in Figure 13, 76% stated that it happened "almost always" and 20% responded "sometimes." The wide variation in answers by the participants may have occurred because some questionnaires/surveys did not make it home to the parents and they were not present when some of the evaluation was taking place on site.

A = Almost Always   B = Sometimes   C = Rarely   D = Never   E = Don't Know
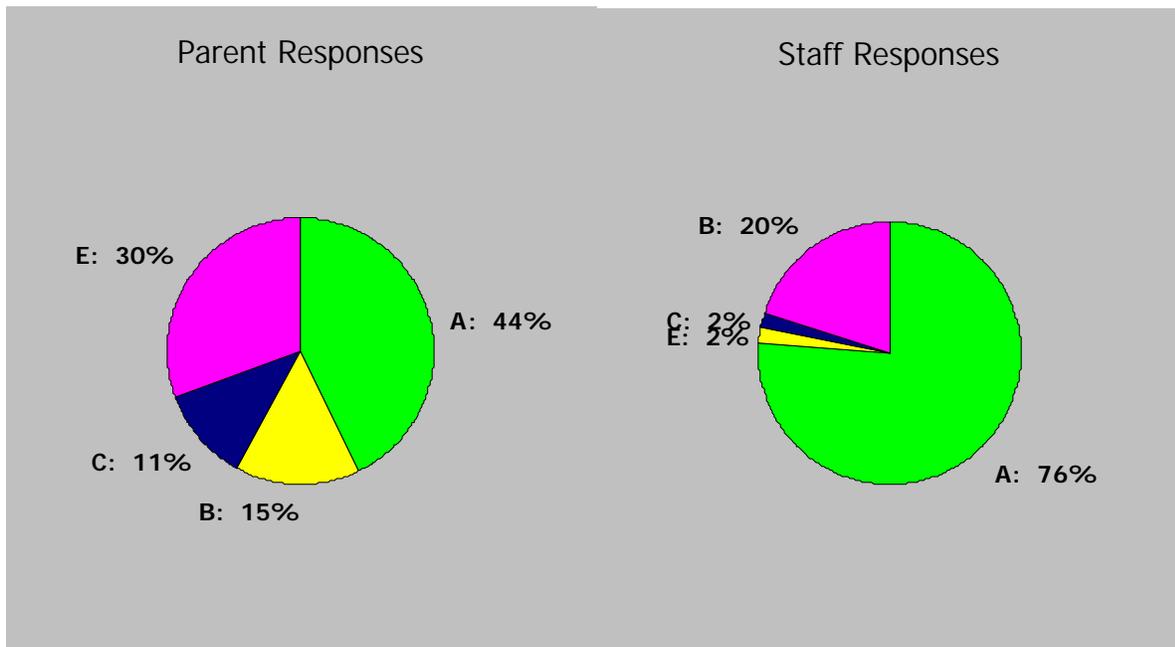
Figure 13. Survey Question #13

Survey Question #14: Monitoring of the program is done on site by the principal/site coordinator.

Question #14 asked participants to respond concerning monitoring of the after-school program. Parents stated that 61% of the time they felt the program was "almost always" monitored by the principal/site coordinator. Another 8% responded that it happened "sometimes" and 31% responded that they "don't know." The staff, on the other hand, appeared to know more about the visibility and monitoring of the principal/site coordinator. They responded with 98% stating that the program was monitored, and the other 2% stating that it happened "sometimes." The discrepancy between the parents and staff may have to do with the fact that parents did not always see the principal/site coordinator when their children were picked up or in the case of two of the three sites that provide transportation, they did not see the parents on a daily basis.

A = Almost Always   B = Sometimes   C = Rarely   D = Never   E = Don't Know
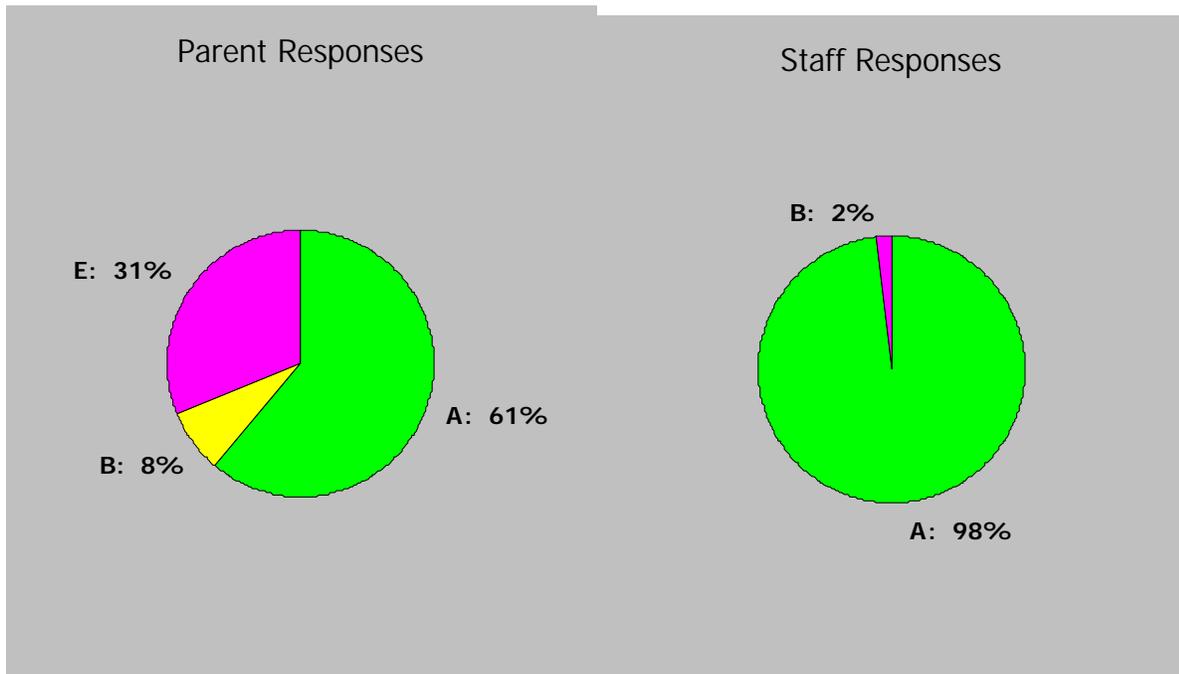
Figure 14. Survey Question #14

In summary, I found that all eight components recommended by the U.S. Department of Education for an effective after-school program to be present in the Claiborne County's 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs.

Summary of Responses From Parent Surveys

Table 1 presents a summary of responses from the surveys returned by the parents in the study.

Table 1. *Summary of Parents' Responses to Survey Questions*

Survey Question	Almost Always %	Sometimes %	Rarely %	Never %	Don't Know %
The after-school program has a strong focus on academics such as math and reading.	63	24	3	0	10
Students are encouraged to attend the after-school program.	74	15	2	0	9
Parents/Staff are given rules for student enrollment in the program.	78	14	0	2	6
Students are placed in small classes with no more than 15 children per room.	40	16	0	0	44
Students feel safe and secure at the after-school program.	85	9	0	0	6
Healthy snacks are served each day.	75	12	2	0	11
Local organizations participate in the after-school program, such as 4-H, Library, etc.	25	19	4	2	50
Parents are asked to take part in the after-school program.	27	22	5	9	37
Parents are asked to participate or volunteer in the after-school program.	32	18	6	11	33
Students are offered enrichment activities in the after-school program, such as computer, art, and music.	59	24	3	0	14
Students in the after-school program are taught by well-trained staff.	79	9	0	3	9
The after-school program relates to and builds on the regular school day program.	68	16	2	0	14
Evaluation of the program takes place on a somewhat regular basis (examples: questionnaire, survey, etc).	44	15	11	0	30
Monitoring of the program is done on site by the principal/site coordinator.	61	8	0	0	31

Summary of Responses From Staff Surveys

Table 2 shows a summary of responses from the surveys returned by the staff in the study.

Table 2. *Summary of Staff Members' Responses to Survey Questions*

Survey Question	Almost Always %	Sometimes %	Rarely %	Never %	Don't Know %
The after-school program has a strong focus on academics such as math and reading.	92	8	0	0	0
Students are encouraged to attend the after-school program.	96	2	0	0	2
Parents/Staff are given rules for student enrollment in the program.	98	2	0	0	0
Students are placed in small classes with no more than 15 children per room.	74	24	0	0	2
Students feel safe and secure at the after-school program.	100	0	0	0	0
Healthy snacks are served each day.	98	2	0	0	0
Local organizations participate in the after-school program, such as 4-H, Library, etc.	30	44	0	2	24
Parents are asked to take part in the after-school program.	38	28	20	0	14
Parents are asked to participate or volunteer in the after-school program.	40	30	8	2	20
Students are offered enrichment activities in the after-school program, such as computer, art, and music.	88	12	0	0	0
Students in the after-school program are taught by well-trained staff.	96	4	0	0	0
The after-school program relates to and builds on the regular school day program.	92	6	0	0	2
Evaluation of the program takes place on a somewhat regular basis (examples: questionnaire, survey, etc).	76	20	2	0	2
Monitoring of the program is done on site by the principal/site coordinator.	98	2	0	0	0

Interviews

I interviewed 12 parents, 9 teachers, and 3 principals/site coordinators who were associated with three schools in Claiborne County: Tazewell-New-Tazewell, a kindergarten through fourth grade primary; Springdale, a kindergarten through sixth grade elementary; and Soldiers Memorial, a fifth- through eighth-grade middle school. These three schools were the recipients of a state-administered grant in January of 2003. By February 2003, all three schools were implementing an after-school program.

The participants representing the staff (teachers and site coordinators) were comprised of 11 females and 1 male. Their mean average years of teaching experience was 18 with the least experience being 3 years and the most experience being 34 years. The mean average age of the staff members was 42 with the youngest being 27 and the oldest participant being 56 years of age. Concerning educational attainment, there were two staff members with bachelors degrees, five with masters degrees, and five with masters + 30.

The group of parents who were interviewed consisted of 11 females and 1 male. The mean average age of the parents was 35, with the youngest being 24 and the oldest being 42 years of age. Educationally, this group consisted of four high school graduates, four with two years of college, and four having four years of college.

The purpose of my interviews was to examine the perceptions of those who were either serviced by, teaching at, or overseeing the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program in Claiborne County. Specifically, I sought to garner the insight of these stakeholders to determine whether, based on their experiences, the program had implemented the eight components that the U.S. Department of Education has set forth as necessary to be an effective after-school program. Twelve of the 14 interview questions dealt directly with the eight components; the 13th addressed a general overall question and the 14th question gave parents and staff a chance to add any other information that they so desired.

The interviews took place in the fall of 2004. Because of the need for anonymity and for retaining accuracy of information, each participant was identified first by his or her group (parent, teacher, or site coordinator) and then was assigned a letter of the alphabet; thus, the teachers were labeled Teacher A--Teacher I; the parents were labeled Parent A--Parent L; and the site coordinators were labeled Coordinator A--Coordinator C.

Components

The focus of this study was to investigate the extent to which the Claiborne County's 21st Century Community Learning Center was successful in implementing the criteria set forth by the U. S. Department of Education (2000) concerning the eight components necessary to be an effective after-school program and to determine if the program had an impact on students and their families. The eight components are:

1. goal setting, strong management, and sustainability;

2. quality after-school staffing;

3. attention to safety, health, and nutrition issues;

4. effective partnerships with community-based organizations, juvenile justice agencies, law enforcement, and youth groups;

5. strong involvement of families;

6. enriching learning opportunities;

7. linkages between school day and after-school personnel; and

8. evaluation of program progress and effectiveness. (p. 35)

Each interview question was associated with one or more of the eight components necessary for an effective after-school program as recommended by the U.S Department of Education. The eight components were used as guidelines and themes for interviewees' answers.

Component #1

Component #1 focused on goal setting, strong management, and sustainability. Interview questions 2, 5, and 9 gave insight to this component. In interview question 2, participants were asked to discuss what they felt was the goal or focus of the after-school program. Teacher G answered for most staff members when she stated, " I feel the goal of our after-school program is to provide mainly academic and recreational activities for our children in this rural area, who might otherwise have to go home to an empty house." However, Teachers A and C and Coordinators A and C mentioned the fact that homework played a big part in their program. Coordinator A also stated that part of their focus was to "help the kids develop a better attitude towards school." Parents A, B, E, I, J, and K all stated that they, too, felt that homework was a big focus of the program. Parent J explained:

> The main focus that I understand is that they help them with homework and then they have enrichment programs to let them socialize with other children. So far, its done very well for my kids in getting their homework done before they come home so they have more time for freedom when they come home.

Parents C and F shared their opinions by stating that the program and the staff tried to strengthen the areas of academic weakness for each child. A number of parents commented that the main focus of the program seemed to center on reading.

Component #2

Component #2 stated that quality after-school staff must be present for an after-school program to be effective. Guided by interview question 3, I asked parents if they felt that the staff participating in their child's after-school program was highly qualified. Parent B expressed an affirmative answer, stating, " Yeah, its usually one of the qualified teachers that helps him on his homework, so yes, I think they're qualified." Parent G agreed, stating, "Oh yes, some of them are the same teachers that she has in the academic program during the day; it's just a continuation of the day for her in many ways." Several parents gave short but affirmative answers such as,

"Yes," "Definitely," and "Yes, I do." Not one parent stated that they felt the staff working in the after-school program was not qualified.

This question concerning staff was worded somewhat differently in the teachers' and site coordinators' interviews. They were asked to respond to the question, "How is staff solicited to work in the after-school program?" All nine teachers explained that they were asked if they wanted to work in the program by the use of a form or memo in which they could respond that they did wish to work. Coordinator C explained in greater detail, saying:

> Before we begin the program each time, we send out a sign-up sheet for whoever wants to teach in the program and [asking] what grade they would like to teach. They turn that in and they get placed in their positions.

Component #3

Component #3 involved attention on safety, health, and nutritional issues. Interview questions 4, 6, and 13 addressed this component. On interview question 4, I asked both parents and staff how the students' nutritional needs were taken care of. The staff gave very quick and knowledgeable responses. Coordinator B said, "Their nutritional needs are taken care of by the head cook who works in our program. She prepares the after-school snack for all the students. This is funded through the State Department." Teacher B pointed out, "They have a snack in the afternoon; we usually give ours around 3:30 or 4:00. It's usually milk or juice and crackers and a sandwich, fruit, or some type of snack. It is a nutritious snack; it's not junk." Teacher I concurred, saying:

> They are taking care of them very well. They're called in at 3:15 to the cafeteria and they're served snacks that consist of juice or milk. Yesterday, we had pizza; or, they will have fruit and some crackers. They're well taken care of.

The parents also agreed that their children were given a snack although they were not quite sure what it consisted of. Parent A admitted, "I'm not really sure about that; she's a picky eater. She says that they have pop tarts sometimes, and crackers, stuff like that." Parent D also acknowledged, "They have a snack, but I'm not really sure what it consists of. I know they get a

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snack." Several other parents did state that they felt sure that their children were served a

nutritious snack each day.

Interview Question 6 also addressed Component #3. I asked the staff and parents how

they knew that the school's environment was safe for the children during the after-school hours.

Teacher G contributed an insightful explanation:

> A lot of our procedures that we use in after-school go right along with what we do during the regular school day. We don't normally have any problems with our students not feeling safe here at school and I think that just carries right over into our after-school program. As far as procedures that are in place, I'm not aware of any specific structured procedures other than . . . our instructors are normally with then when they're on the playground or in the classroom. They're never left alone.

She continued by reassuring:

> The other thing I guess that is very important is that we always--and this is done in our regular school day as well--Anytime children are picked up here at school, the person picking them up must sign them out. If we have any restrictions or anything, that's kept on file in the office and the people in front are made aware of children who are restricted and know to recognize any particularly dangerous situations.

Teacher A shared the precautions taken at her school, explaining:

> Well, its just like a regular school day. If there were a tornado drill or a fire drill, it would be exactly like it is during the regular school day. We are very careful about who they go home with. They cannot just go home with John, Jennie, and Joe. They have to, if they are going to someone else's house, they have to go to their home first and then they can go to another house unless we have a note signed by a parent.

All teachers gave answers that pertained to the process of using sign-out sheets that were

used for those picking up students. Others described on-site monitoring equipment and cameras

that surveyed the grounds and doors of the building. They all mentioned that doors were locked

and that parents or anyone else must buzz and be identified in order to be allowed into the

building. Coordinator B gave details of the process, explaining:

> I think the parents and students both can feel safe by knowing that the teachers in our after-school program are well aware of who is restricted and who is not. Students have to be checked out in the office when they come to pick them up. If it's a strange person who we're not used to picking them up, we have made phone call to make sure that this person is allowed to pick up the child. Also, in some situations we've had children to come up and tell us who the person is before we let them go with them.

Coordinator C described her building as being extra secure for their students:

> One thing that lets us know they're safe is that they have to be buzzed in at the front door when they come to pick up the kids. We always have the door locked and they have to go through that procedure everyday, no matter if you know who it is or whatever. We have sign-out sheets for the pickups so we know who they left with and we have a roll sheet for the buses every day.

Parents were just as confident that their children were safe while in the after-school program. Parent C answered the question by saying, "Well, you have to sign them out. Most everyone knows the parents so they can't go with anyone. There's always a teacher around if they're outside on the playground." She paused and then added, " Usually there's at least three or four teachers outside with them when I arrive." Parent G added, "When I go to the school, I have to stop by the office and they call for her. If I take her before the end of the day, I sign to take her because she's leaving outside the building." She stopped for a moment and then continued, "There's also cameras in the building. The doors are locked except the one door that you are directed to come to, which is right by the office. I've never had a concern about safety." Finally, Parent H firmly stated, "It's safe" and then added:

> You have to sign your children out and they know who you are. If they don't know . . for instance, if somebody else were to come, they would have to call and get my consent or I would have to send a written note or call myself for somebody else to pick them up.

All parents gave positive responses concerning school safety.

Component #4

Component #4 stated that effective programs have partnerships with community based-organizations. Answers were somewhat scattered regarding compliance with this component for both staff members and parents; both groups seemed to be not quite as knowledgeable about the community's involvement. Teacher A admitted, "We have a lot of field trips, especially in the summer, that we take to different businesses and things like that." She then stopped and thought some more and added:

We have a lot of people who come in and speak to us about different things. We do things for the nursing home out here; we do cards for every occasion for them. We have taken groups to sing for them.

She finished by recalling, "Oh, and the Church--for the First Baptist Church up here, we did the landscaping and helped with it." Teacher F seemed very knowledgeable about the community's involvement with the after-school program. She shared:

We try to have someone in a couple of times a month; 4-H is real good at coming in and working with us. They bring animals. The kids love that. We've had a teacher from the high-school cosmetology who came in and worked with the girls one time with their nails and make-up. We take karate; they come in and give demonstrations.

Another participant, Teacher I, replied this way, "I am aware that last year in the after-school program, they had some people come in from the hospital. It was some nurses and they came in and did some presentations for the students and gave them some things." She paused for a moment to reflect and then stated, "Also, some woodworking people came in and talked to the students as well. This year, I've just started in it so that's about all I've seen so far."

At a different site, Teacher D answered this question by stating, "The only outside organization that I'm aware of is Physician's Medical, which comes once a week." I requested that she explain further and asked if this program was open to all students. She explained, saying, "It's open to students and their immediate families and siblings." Coordinator B gave an interesting response when she shared:

Yes, we have outside organizations come in to help our school. One thing we have is that we are in partnership with Lincoln Memorial University and our students are allowed to go over there and take swimming lessons. They also allow our teachers to come in for professional development activities. We have Modern Woodmen who come and work with our students and we also have 4-H clubs that come in.

Coordinator A contributed a very detailed explanation relating to her site by saying:

We try to work hard with the community here. It's easier in the summer sessions to schedule people because of the time factor. We've tried to rely on 4-H, the county extension has been good to me. The local merchants and banks, those people, the electric and health community has been really good to us to provide people here. We try on a weekly basis to have some type of outside person that comes to talk to them about safety and maintenance. Like, the 4-H people helping us make bird houses with the kids. Drawings and make-up people . . . the cosmetology people have been really good to us.

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Coordinator C had a somewhat different answer, admitting, "Currently, we don't have any outside organizations. We have the Cumberland Gap water, but that's during the school day. Its available after school too, so you might count that."

Parents had a more negative and somewhat vague response on this question. Parents A, B, D, J, K, and L stated that they were not aware of any outside organizations that participated in the after-school program. Parent I said, "There's 4-H and cosmetology that comes by." When asked about community involvement, Parent F stated, "Yes, I do realize that. We go to the library quite a bit due to the school." The most specific answer came from parent G. She gave this response concerning her daughter's experience:

> She's had several field trips. She's gone two years to after school and summer programs and she's had a lot of people come in. They had karate people come and demonstrate one day. They actually walked to the public library because it's close to them and just down the hill by the school for reading conferences and things they have at the library. They've had the band director come in and explain some things to these students because there aren't many of these students who are in the band. They've had the health department come in and talk to these children. So, there have been a lot outside people come in. Someone from the zoo brought some small animals in and let them touch them and talk about them.

Component #5

Component #5 recommended a strong family involvement for after-school programs. Interview questions 8 and 9 garnered some insight on this component. With interview question 8, I asked the staff if their program involved parental participation. The responses I received were brief in nature for both teachers and coordinators. Teacher D simply stated, "Unfortunately, we have no parental participation." Teacher F also acknowledged:

> We have not had, that I am aware of, a lot of parental participation. We had a lady last year who would bring snacks in, but as far as actually spending time working with the students, no, we have not.

Teacher H made a good point concerning parental involvement, stating:

> What I consider parental participation is to invite a parent in to let them perform an activity or a demonstration. Every once in a while there will be parents who come in. But, there's also another way that a parent participates. That's by coming by the school

to pick up their child. They have a chance to meet with the teacher and see firsthand how their child is doing.

Coordinators B and C both stated that their programs had no parental participation to speak of. Coordinator A first answered the question by saying, "Very little." After some reflection, she added:

> We've had some parents who have worked at some of the beautician salons. We've used some of those parents. But, that's not been a resource that we can tap into . . . because, I don't know. We've not used it. We didn't see a need to use it, I guess.

The question was modified for parents who were asked the question, "Have you ever participated in the after-school program in any way?" The overwhelming response was "No." Eleven of the 12 respondents answered "No." One parent who was formerly a teachers' assistant at one of the three sites stated that she had substituted on occasion in the program. Other than the one parent, there had been no parental participation in the program.

On interview question 9, I asked both the staff and parents to explain how the after-school program kept parents informed about the program. There was agreement between the two groups as to how, if, and when they actually did get information about the program. Teacher G began:

> We send a lot of notes home, I know that. The notes that go home give schedules and upcoming events. We are available for a conference anytime the parents wants one. They are allowed to come in or call and set up a time to come in. Often, I know that the principal or site coordinator is in the office and available for someone to just walk in and ask to speak with them. I feel like parents have access to our staff and our administration anytime they want to.

Teacher E explained that they kept parents informed about the program "by notes that we send home with the kids." She added, "And sometimes you make contact with them in the hall and talk or they will ask you questions." Teacher F gave a somewhat ambiguous answer, stating,

> We try to send a note at the beginning of the year when we send home the form that has, it mentions activities, it doesn't list them specifically. It lets them know that homework is the priority; we'll help the students get that completed and focus on reading and math. Other than that, I'm not sure.

When asked how she kept parents informed, another teacher described the process she used, stating,

> Well, we send newsletters home and of course we tell the students sometimes to tell their parents things. We also sometimes put things in the paper like when it's going to start. We put it on the local news channel too.

Coordinator B answered by stating:

> We try to change our after-school program each six weeks. So every six weeks we send notes home to parents telling them what we plan to offer the kids the next six weeks. They sign their children up at that time.

When asked to describe how the site kept parents informed, Coordinator C revealed:

> Well we send home--like whenever the doctor is going to be here or if he has to change his day, we send home letters. Also, if we have to cancel the after school for a day, we send home notes. We also do surveys. We do parent surveys and student surveys periodically.

Coordinator A explained how her system kept parents informed about ongoing activities, stating:

> By posting what we're doing; and, we'll send letters home with the kids when we're doing something special or out of the ordinary; if we go on a field trip, we try to keep them informed of that. If there's an activity here that we want them to come and see, we notify them. We've had animals on a number of occasions; the parents come in and bring younger siblings to see those things.

Parents had almost identical responses to the same question. One parent acknowledged, "If there is anything going on in the program, they are very good about sending stuff home and letting parents know what's going on if there's special things like field trips and so forth." Parent L simply said, "Yes, surveys and word of mouth." Parent I added, "Occasionally they send home notes." All parents but one stated that they did receive notes on occasion; however, one parent said she did not receive any notes or information about the program.

Component #6

Component #6 was concerned with the need for students to be exposed to enriching learning opportunities. During the interviews, I asked both parents and staff to name some classes that the students have participated in during the after-school program. Interview question

10 specifically addressed this component. Teacher D gave an insightful answer as to how the

program worked, saying:

> Their main focus at the beginning of the class is homework. Then, most of our teachers teach the same grade. For instance, I teach kindergarten so I know what those kids are working on and what to review that day. We review rhyming words and sight words. They also have enrichment where they have art and computers. It's on a rotating schedule.

Teacher F answered the question by describing some of the after-school program's activities:

> We work on arts and crafts; we have P.E. The site coordinator really enjoys doing P.E. with the students. We try to use Brain Child; it's like a Game Boy. It focuses on reading and math and there's even cartridges for science and social studies. The kids like working with those. We've not brought those out yet, but in the summer program and last year they really enjoyed those.

Teacher C stated, "We have computer, classes and they get to go to art class and gym. Those are

our three special classes they can go to and we rotate them." Coordinator B described her

program's academic enrichment activities, saying:

> We have computer lab set up for students each six weeks and each six weeks we change that to a different grade. We try to focus a lot on reading and math skills so students throughout the building are being reinforced in their reading and math skills through the after-school program.

Coordinator C explained that homework came first in his program:

> Every child has to do homework first. Then they practice reading. When that is finished, enrichment classes are computer, art, and gym. They go to that one time a week per grade. We have many more students than we had last year so they cannot go every day.

Coordinator A explained how the program concentrated on building an interest in reading,

stating:

> One of the big things here at this level with some of the lower achieving kids, especially the boys, is that we try to get them involved in reading and to reintroduce them to it. It's been difficult, but we use books about sports characters or NASCAR people and use lower-level reading material. Some of those kids will actually take those books home and finish them. We have them write a little something in there on a little index card about something that they took away from the book. It's been real successful.

She continued by describing some of the computer-based programs:

> Our summer program is more geared toward academics than our after school areas. Of course that's reading and math. We try to get them once a week in the computer lab

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down here. We have language arts and reading that's on a computer based program. Also, a math based program that we try to get them into at least once a week. Basically, that's it. If it's rainy or the weather is not good, we try to use that time for free reading for the kids.

The question about this component was rephrased to the parents. I asked them to "Describe the classes that your child has participated in at the after-school program." Parent F enthusiastically shared her son's progress, saying:

My little boy was in the reading tutoring last year and he has got a wonderful understanding of reading now. When we started, he wasn't a very good reader at all and now he can read as good as any second grader is able to!

Parent D was not really sure; however, after pausing a moment, she gave this response, "Well, I think they do something different every day, maybe. Maybe they do some computer work in the evening too. Recess . . . I'm not real sure." Parent L had a quick answer, "Reading and English, I think. Also, computers." Parent J answered, "They have computer programs for enrichment. They have sports programs where the principal actually participates with them. They do the homework programs with any subject they're working on. There's teachers there to help with that." Parent C noticed something different. She explained, "They use computers, they've also gotten to go swimming. My oldest one went to Lincoln Memorial University for swimming classes. There are also outside activities on the playground." From the parents interviewed, 11 of the 12 parents agreed that their children received some sort of enrichment. One parent said she was "not sure."

Component #7

Component #7 concerned the linkages between the school day and the after-school program. I asked the staff to answer the question, "Does the 21st Century Community Learning Center after-school program link its curriculum and activities with the regular school day and if yes, how?" Coordinator A adamantly answered by saying, "Well it's *always* tied to us because homework is always an issue." He explained further, saying:

We've seen definite positive results with that. If we can get those kids in there and help them with their homework, that transfers to our regular program. If they'll participate and they've got their homework, it gives them a better attitude in those classes during the day. The main link that we have with the regular program on a daily basis is projects that we help them with--or reports and homework.

Coordinator B gave an affirmative answer by pointing out, "Yes we link this by making contact with the regular education teachers throughout the day. We have curriculums that we also follow in the after-school program that go along with the grade that the student is in." Coordinator C agreed by acknowledging:

Yes they do. If the teacher is not already in the grade that she is teaching, that's the way we have it set up. If a first-grade teacher signed up and wanted to work, she would get the first-grade kids. But, if we have so many and there's somebody who doesn't regularly teach in that grade, they will talk to the teacher in that grade and get the newsletter from that grade.

Another staff member, Teacher B, described other activities as well as an academic link. She explained how their program linked to the regular school day, saying:

It does because we're focusing on the whole child, socially and academically. We have in our after-school program, counselors that come in to do grooming lessons with them and how to get along with other students; that's the counseling part of it that's involved. Academics? Definitely. Whatever's going on during the day is going on in the after-school , so it all gets blended together.

Teacher I quickly answered, saying, "Absolutely." She continued by giving several examples:

. . . with the computer lab and the math program we're doing right now. I've heard many students say, "Well, that's what we are doing in math class right now." It also builds on itself. The more they accomplish in that program, we will make it harder and harder to where they have to learn new things. They'll come back and say, "My teacher went over that today and we already knew how to do it." I definitely think it builds on their curriculum.

All members of the staff were in agreement that the after-school program and the regular school day were very much linked together.

Parents answered the question, "Do you feel that the 21st Century After-school Program has helped your child with his/her regular school day activities and/or classes?" Parent B answered saying, "Yeah, I think it has helped my son more than anything, especially in reading." Parent D who had more than one child in attendance, echoed the comment, saying:

Yeah, I think so; definitely. Especially my little boy. He's doing much better in reading. I'm not a good helper with his homework and stuff. And, they don't listen to you at home as much as they do here. I think he gets a lot out of doing his homework here and he has someone to help him.

The same agreements were expressed from almost all the parents who participated. One parent enthusiastically answered the question, saying, "Oh, I know it has!" She continued to explain her satisfaction by detailing how the after-school program had helped her son:

. . . if he didn't make it home with that sheet to do his homework on . . . he's forced to focus on it first and get that done. His grades have shown an improvement too. It's not just that he's not having to bring it home and do it, he's doing it; and, doing it more effectively and his grades are reflecting those hours.

Parent L agreed by acknowledging, "Yes, he's come up in math a whole lot." Finally, Parent E stated her satisfaction with her daughter's academic progress by explaining:

I know that she tries to get most of her homework done while she's in the after-school program and I can tell that its improved her reading and understanding of what she has read. That's something that she really needs to be working on and I'm glad of that.

All of the parents interviewed eagerly related that their children's academic progress had been positive.

Component #8

For component #8, I asked the staff to explain the type of evaluation process used in their after-school program. A typical response received was, "We have done parent, teacher, and student surveys." Teacher C was the only one to mention a formal evaluation. She stated:

Well now this summer I had a state lady come in and evaluate me while I was teaching, which was fine because we were singing these little learning songs about vowels and the kids were loving it and she loved it. It went great.

Teacher I talked about the way students were evaluated. She shared, "We fill out surveys and also with the students, we have a pretest and a posttest that we normally give to check their growth from the beginning of the program to the end." Teacher F gave a somewhat different response, admitting:

No, I've not done any pretest or posttest. Mostly we send home questionnaires and try to look at last year's scores, where they were at when they first come in and we try to look at their strengths and weaknesses there to try and see what attention we can give them on the weak areas.

Coordinator B also mentioned a pretest and a posttest, explaining:

Our teachers are encouraged to give the students a pretest and a posttest when they enter their classrooms to tell where they are and what they need to work on. Usually, this is done each six weeks in the after-school program.

Coordinator D had a different response:

We do surveys at the end of the year to see how the parents liked it and if it worked well for them. We also look at the Terra Nova scores for the kids that are in it. We had to do that for the report that we sent in. Of course, kindergarten through two doesn't test, we just go by their grades.

Coordinator A had a unique perspective to the question about evaluation. She shared:

Well, we're constantly looking for feedback about that from parents that we have contact with about how their kids like this program. The feedback has always been positive. Here, on a day-to-day basis, basically the evaluation we use is *me*. Everyday we try activities. If the kids don't like them or if there's something that doesn't work or is not fitting into what we do, then we stop it.

The responses from the parents concerning evaluation were more simple and shorter answers. Parents E, F, G, I, J, K, and L stated that on occasion they had indeed received a questionnaire or survey to fill out concerning the after-school program. Parent H acknowledged, "Last year there was a survey given and it wanted to know what you thought about different things about the after-school program. How your child benefited from it and why you felt that way." Parents B and D stated that they were not aware of any types of evaluations. Evaluation was a vague area for most parents; some confessed they did not know of any type of evaluation at all.

Impact of the 21st Century Community Learning Center on Claiborne County

To help answer the research questions proposed in this paper, two interview questions were added to give both parents and staff a chance to express their opinions of what impact the 21st Century Community Learning Center has had on the students of Claiborne County. All

participants had a comment to make concerning their impression of this impact. Teacher A first

described her community and tied the impact from her school's perspective, saying, "Well, for

here, we pull from two hardcore trailer parks and two housing projects and I feel like if we can

keep some of those kids from getting in trouble, then we've achieved a lot right there." She

continued by linking the program's assistance with homework:

> With the homework, some kids are right on the edge of passing or failing. We also, with some of the kids that haven't been doing their homework, we'll keep them in our program and let their parents come and pick them up. It's like a punishment for them. But it's just so they will have their homework and won't fail. Most of these kids are capable of doing their homework. It's just that nobody's at home to help them or to guide them and be with them.

Teacher B explained the impact on the community by saying:

> One of the things that I see is that the majority of our kids that stay here and your lower socioeconomic kids, is that when they go home in the afternoons, they are going to get in trouble. Maybe they won't have a parent at home. So, if nothing else, I think we're providing a safe environment to help them keep out of trouble out in the community.

She went on to describe the "fun" aspects of the program:

> As far as them, as a group learning to get along with each other, I think anytime that you do fun things with them . . . they've been in a classroom all day where its very structured. This is not as structured. They have to learn, if we're playing a game, there's rules that you follow, there's winners and losers, yes, you can get mad and have a little bit of a temper, but its just a game so… learning how to get along with one another is one of the main things because a lot of these kids in our program are the ones that get in trouble with each other. And, when you're stuck with some kid that maybe you don't like but you have to sit down and work with them, I think it helps them get along with each other.

Teacher I focused more on the academics, saying:

> Well, I feel it has definitely benefited our students; especially those students who needed a little catching up. They can get that in the after-school program. I don't know if I've personally seen any studies showing it's improved their scores or anything, but I know a lot of parents have said this has pulled them up in reading or this has pulled them up in math. They were struggling with this concept. I definitely do think it's had an impact on our students in our school.

Teacher H talked about the poverty and academics:

> For our kids in Claiborne County, the poverty is great and as far as nutrition, its great for them. Some kids don't have an opportunity for a snack in the afternoon. As far as the development, and their knowledge? It has increased. The students have more one-on-

one teacher time and they gain more that way. Plus, they have an opportunity to have activities that focus on the curriculum and the children don't realize they they're learning during that time.

Teacher G brought up the aspect of the children having a safe place to go to after school, stating:

I think it's had a tremendous impact for a variety of reasons. First as I mentioned earlier, many of our children in our rural area would not have anything to do once they go home and many of them would not even have a parent there. Many of our parents work in factories and don't get home until later.

She then brought up another unique advantage, describing:

Another benefit is that through our evaluations of our program, we've found that our children have benefited academically from the enrichment classes that have been offered for instruction. Also, because we continue to have children who want to stay in our after school program, and new ones who sign up each six weeks, we know the kids are enjoying our activities, our recreational activities, and the classes they they're allowed to participate in.

Teacher D gave a short, but to the point answer, stating, "I think the impact has been positive. It gives them a place to go and sometimes that's the only homework help they would get." Teacher F stressed the safety issue by pointing out:

I think it's had a positive impact. A lot of students would be having to go home to an empty house without supervision; that can cause students to get in trouble, the older ones anyway. They're more likely to get out and roam. It could be a dangerous situation for a younger child, so I think it provides a safe place for them to stay.

Coordinator B stressed the academic help that the program has provided. She related, "I think the after-school program has helped us to focus on the reading and math skills of our students and it has helped to improve their reading and math skills on our achievement test scores."

Coordinator B pointed out the benefit for parents, admitting:

I know for our parents who work and don't get off work until 5:00, they've really enjoyed having their kids in the program. It gives the kids something to do and the parents don't have to pay for a babysitter. It's probably the same in the other schools also for the working parents.

Coordinator C gave a combination of answers, by saying:

I think the impact's been tremendously more than we'll ever know the positivism of it because of these kids. And, a lot of these parents appreciate it because they know their kids are safe. These kids would be going to a trailer park and be running around until the parents get home from work. Working parents were really concerned when we didn't

kick off our program the first day of school. My phone was ringing wanting to know about this after-school program because they were paying a babysitter. I think it's a positive thing.

She then tied it all together by adding:

Then, the academic thing is these kids' grades are better. My kids from poor economic conditions are making better grades now because they're getting help with homework here and not going home and not getting it done for whatever reason. That's the most positive thing that I see from the after school program.

The parents' responses were not as lengthy but they reinforced many of the staff's answers. Parent K looked to the future for a beneficial impact, explaining:

I think you have to look at all of this long-term. I don't think it's necessarily had an impact on today, but if these children get a better foundation here, it's only going to make it easier as they go through school and they're going to be more productive mirrors of this society. It give them a chance to meet a different group than they might not always interact with and I think you can learn a lot by just learning to work with people that are different from yourself or your two or three little buddies that you might hang with all the time. I've been very happy with it.

Parent L stressed the safety issue, stating, "Well, there are a lot of kids not left at home by themselves when parents have to work late." Parent J recognized the importance of her children having their homework done before they got home. She explained not only her viewpoint but also that of the other parents in her neighborhood by saying:

Well, the children in my neighborhood and my children, I have five or six enrolled in the after school most of the time, and the ones I talked to . . . the parents . . . they absolutely love it. Their kids' grades are higher. They're not so stressed out from coming home with all this homework and having to do it in the minimum time before bed. I think it's a wonderful program.

Parent I echoed the same response, saying, "I think the kids have done better academically and they're also staying out of trouble and not having to be home a lot by themselves." Another parent recognized that her children were able to get more one-on-one time from instructors. She acknowledged:

At this school and other schools they really get the one-on-one that they need in the after school program that they might not get during the day just to reinforce something they may not have grasped because there were too many kids in their class. They might be able to get it in the smaller class size of the after-school.

Parent G brought up the safety issue again. Safety was an often-mentioned aspect of the program that many parents and staff considered was a benefit of the program. Parent B iterated:

> Well in general it just helps the students prepare for the next level they are going to and in this age children, kids from 10 to 14, its keeping them from running loose on the streets and probably keeping a lot of these kids from getting into some kind of petty trouble before their parents get home from work.

Parent F brought up an issue that had not been stated before, saying:

> I think it's done wonders because we've got a lot of single parents in this county and this program does wonders for kids who don't have somebody at home in the afternoons and it helps them with their homework. I think it's a great thing.

Parent E emphasized the importance of academics, stressing, "Well, as far as my child is concerned, I hope it improves her academic status. I hope it helps her to be a better reader and a better mathematician and an overall better student in school." Parent D gave a response from her family's perspective, saying:

> I think it's wonderful. For one thing, my husband and I don't get off work in time to get here and pick them up by fifteen 'till four. I mean that should not be a big focus but it does help. It helps a lot. Plus, the homework is done when they get home.

Finally, Parent B gave insight into a problem that comes with having multiple children in the family. She explained the impact of an after-school problem on parents with more than one child, saying, "I think it's great. I mean it helps the kids and it helps the parents. You don't have to spend so much time helping with homework every night. I've got four kids and it takes a long time."

Summary

On the final interview question, I asked all participants if there were any other things that stood out about the program that they would like to mention. Several staff members and parents did make comments. Parent F, in a heartfelt tone, stated, "I feel like the school really does take good care of the kids." Parent H restated how important she felt the program was by saying:

I know it works really well with parents who may work and may not be able to get here right on time when school is out. It also lets the students be more casual with learning. They're not as rigid, like, "We've got to get to this and this." It's not as time oriented.

Parent K answered this way:

I'm just the most pleased with the one-on-one type work. This could be a tutoring program or a babysitting . . . I'm sure you have children in there that you're babysitting. But for my child, it has been valuable to get those extra few minutes of somebody focusing on his reading because he is not a strong reader but he is getting stronger and I think this is a big reason that his grades are improving.

Parent J brought up an aspect from a parent's perspective that could be explored further. She pointed out:

The only thing that would help parents more would be information being sent home maybe every other week or so telling us what's going on. Or, by letting us know if they do want volunteers. I've never been asked to volunteer.

The staff members' responses were very positive as well. Teacher G summed up the program, stating:

I feel like it's a well-structured and well-run program. Not that we don't have our flaws, but we are continually trying to determine what those are and make necessary changes and improvements. I'm just real proud of it.

Teacher H gave the program glowing remarks in her summarization as she acknowledged:

Yes, I'm glad this program is in place because of the poverty that is in Claiborne County. So many parents don't have time to work with their kids that really need that work, that additional help. Those parents--they rely on us to help that kid.

Coordinator B gave this response, "Well, I just think that we have a very caring staff and they are very interested in helping our students. I think it helps to change our children's attitudes about our school as a whole." Finishing up the comments was Coordinator A, who sincerely stated, "I think it's one of the most positive things; it's been some of the best-spent money to help kids directly that I've seen in a long time."

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE PRACTICE

AND FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a 21st Century Community Learning Center Program on students and their families in three schools in Claiborne County, Tennessee. The focus of the study was to investigate the extent to which the program was successful in implementing the criteria set forth by the U.S Department of Education (2000) concerning the eight components necessary to be an effective after-school program. The eight components are:

1. goal setting, strong management, and sustainability;

2. quality after-school staffing;

3. attention to safety, health, and nutrition;

4. effective partnerships with community based organizations;

5. strong involvement of families;

6. enriching learning opportunities;

7. linkages between school day and after-school personnel; and

8. evaluation of program progress and effectiveness. (p. 35)

Information was gathered through a review of related literature, a survey, and 24 interviews with parents, teachers, and principals/site coordinators. All data collected were analyzed and decisions were made as to whether the program was, in fact, effective in implementing the eight components.

General Findings

Through a review of the related literature, it was found that the school site is the logical environment to provide after-school enrichment and recreational activities for students. After-school programs are becoming more popular and necessary as standards for students and schools are raised. With this growing need comes the challenge to provide an effective program from which both students and parents can benefit. The remoteness and poverty of Claiborne County along with the lack of youth organizations such as YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, or any type of tutorial assistance programs such as Sylvan or Huntington Learning Centers, added to the county's existing need for after-school care. A 21st Century grant has made it possible for three schools in Claiborne County (Tazewell-New-Tazewell, a kindergarten- through fourth-grade primary school; Springdale, a kindergarten- through sixth-grade elementary school, and Soldiers Memorial, a fifth- through eighth-grade middle school) to offer academics and enrichment classes for their students. Both staff and parents have expressed the opinion that the program has been very beneficial to all participants.

Conclusions From the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the extent to which the Claiborne County's 21st Century Community Learning Center has implemented the eight components set forth by the U.S. Department of Education as deemed necessary for an effective after-school program.

Component #1

I concluded that this component (goal setting, strong management, and sustainability) was in compliance from the responses given by participants who completed the survey and those who were interviewed. The survey questions revealed that 92% of the staff and 63% of the parents agreed that the after-school program had a strong focus on academics; another 24% of the parents stated that this was sometimes the case. The interviews with both staff and parents

presented similar results. One teacher gave a response that answered for most of the participants, stating, "I feel that the goal of our after-school program is to provide mainly academic and recreational activities for our children in this rural area who might otherwise have to go home to an empty house." Several parents commented that the main focus of the program seemed to center on reading.

Component #2

I found this component (quality after-school staffing) to be in good standing. Survey question #11 asked participants if students in the after-school program were taught by well-trained staff. From the staff members' surveys, 96% responded by saying the teachers in the after-school program were well-trained and 78% of the parents agreed. The interview participants also gave favorable responses with statements such as, "Oh yes, most of them are the same teachers that they have in the regular school day." Many short answers such as, "Yes," "Definitely," and "Yes, I do" were expressed. Site coordinators gave answers that explained how they recruited their staff. All three coordinators stated that they gave preference to teachers who already worked in the school and that they tried to use the teacher for the same grade level in the after-school program.

Component #3

This component, attention to safety, health, and nutrition, drew as much positive response as any questions on the survey and interviews. Survey questions 5 and 6 dealt with this component. On question 5, I asked participants to rate the statement, "Students feel safe and secure at the after-school program." From the survey responses, it was determined that 100% of the staff and 84% of the parents "almost always" agreed that the after-school program's setting was safe. On question 6, I asked if nutritious snacks were served each day. From the staff members' responses, 98% agreed that they were and 74% of parents agreed that a nutritious

snack was served each day. The staff gave quick and knowledgeable responses during the interviews and parents were equally swift to say they felt the school was taking very good care of students concerning safety and nutrition. Component #3 seemed to be implemented strongly at all three schools.

Component #4

Survey question 7 addressed this component of having effective partnerships with community-based organizations. Specifically, I asked participants if they were aware of outside organizations that took part in the after-school program. Of the staff, 74% stated that outside organizations did indeed participate in the after-school program whereas only 43% of the parents agreed. This discrepancy was probably because parents were not actually present when the organizations were at the schools. According to the interviews, this view was also prevalent. One teacher stated, "We have a lot of people come in and speak to us about different things. We do things for the nursing home. We try to have someone in a couple of times a month." One coordinator gave this response, " We try hard to work with the community here. We've tried to rely on 4-H, the county extension, the local merchants, and banks." Several parents stated that they were not sure or they did not know if community organizations did come to the after-school program. This component has been implemented in all three schools; however, the need exists for better communication between school officials and parents so that parents are more aware of these activities.

Component #5

Survey question numbers 3, 8, and 9 helped to determine the state of this component (strong involvement of families). On survey question 3, I asked parents and staff if they were given guidelines for student enrollment in the program. From the responses, 98% of staff and 78% of parents agreed that they were given guidelines. On question 8, I asked if both staff and

parents felt that parental involvement was part of the after-school program. The response to this question was not as positive. Only 64% of the staff agreed that parental involvement was part of the program and 49% of parents agreed that it was. Finally, on survey question 9, I asked specifically if parents were encouraged to participate or volunteer in the program. From the parents' responses, 50% stated that they had been asked to participate whereas 70% of the staff stated that they had been asked. The difference in percentages might be attributed to the fact that the same parents had been asked more than once. The interview responses were in direct disagreement with the survey responses. Two of the site coordinators stated that they had no parental participation in the program and the other stated that he had very little. When parents were asked directly during the interview if they had participated in the after-school program, the overwhelming response was, "No." Only one interviewee stated that she had substituted on occasion in the program. However, there was some out-of-the-box thinking when one teacher gave this response, "Every once in a while there will be a parent come in to perform an activity or demonstration, but there's another way that parents can participate. That's by coming by the school to pick up their children and making contact with the teacher and seeing firsthand how their children are doing." Concerning the need to keep parents informed, the response was positive as both staff and parents stated that information in the form of notes were often sent home to keep parents informed about changes in the program. Although this component seemed to be in compliance, it was not as fully implemented as it should be.

Component #6

Question 10 on the survey helped to provide information concerning the component of providing enriching learning opportunities. On the question, I asked if students were offered enrichment activities in the after-school program. Responses from both parents and staff were favorable. A full 100% of the staff and 83% of the parents stated that they felt that the after-school program provided enrichment activities for the students. Interview question 10 addressed

this component. Responses by both parents and staff indicated that students were exposed to enrichment classes. The most common ones were computers, art, swimming, bowling, football, and other physical education activities. The researcher determined that this component was being implemented in all three schools.

Component #7

The survey results concerning the component of linkages between school day and after-school activities and personnel were very favorable. Of the parents, 85% agreed that the after-school program did indeed link with the regular school day and 100% of the staff agreed. The interview responses were positive as well. Many of the parents' comments focused on praise for how the staff members in the programs focused on homework with the students so that they had more free time when they got home. Several parents mentioned that the students had the same teacher in the after-school program as they did during the day; therefore, they received more one-on-one attention in the small-group setting. The staff members also confirmed the implication that students were given more individualized attention in the after-school program and that they coordinated with the regular school day personnel to make sure they were covering the appropriate material for their students. This researcher determined that this component was being implemented.

Component #8

Survey question 11 helped to determine if this component (evaluation of program progress and effectiveness) was being implemented. Both parents and staff were asked if evaluation of the program took place on a somewhat regular basis. The response from parents was that 53% agreed that it almost always or sometimes happens; alternatively, 96% of staff gave the same response. The wide variation in responses might suggest that more evaluation takes place on-site than what is actually sent home. Another possibility is that students of

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elementary-school age do not always make it home with paper evaluations. On interview question 12, I asked both staff and parents to explain any type of evaluation process that they were aware of being used in the after-school program. A typical response was, "We have used parent, teacher, and students surveys." Other responses made by teachers were, "The principal/site coordinator meets with us and comes to our classroom." One coordinator stated, "Our teachers are encouraged to give the students a pretest and a posttest; that is one type of student evaluation. We also send home questionnaires and try to look at last year's achievement test scores." The responses from parents were more simple in nature. Several stated that they had received a questionnaire or survey in the past year. Based on this information, the researcher determined that this component was being implemented in all three schools.

It appeared that all eight components necessary to be an effective after-school program were being implemented in the Claiborne County's 21st Century Community Learning Center Program; however, results also showed that there is room for improvement concerning some components: Component 4 addresses effective partnerships with community-based organizations. Although there was some participation on the part of the community, I did not find a sustained effort on the part of the schools to maintain a consistent and on-going relationship among the community partners. Also, there was an evident need to make parents more aware of the actual organizations that do take a part in the after-school programs. Second, component 5 concerned the involvement of families. Whereas most parents agreed that they did receive information about the after-school program, the majority did not actually participate in the program. To be successful, the U.S Department of Education stressed that families must be made a part of the program. This was an area of need found in all three schools. Finally, component 8 appeared in need of improvement. Although the staff seemed well aware of the kinds of evaluations that take place in the program, most parents were not as aware. It appeared that parents were not asked about or given enough information about what actually takes place in the after-school programs.

In addition to investigating the Claiborne County Learning Center's extent of success in implementing the eight components of a successful after-school program, the following research questions were also explored:

1. What impact has the after-school program had on Claiborne County's students?

2. What impact has the after-school program had on the families of Claiborne County's students?

3. What impact has the after-school program had on the community in Claiborne County?

Research Questions

Research Question #1. What impact has the after-school program had on Claiborne County students? All participants who were interviewed answered this question. The three themes that emerged were homework and academics, safety issues, and childcare. Common responses from parents included, "It has helped my child with homework," "They are doing better in school," and "Well, there are a lot of kids not left at home by themselves when parents have to work late." In addition, there was an indication that single parents have many needs and that the after-school program helped alleviate some of their problems.

The staff members gave similar responses. One member of the staff mentioned that many of his students lived in less than desirable conditions and that when these students stayed in the after-school program, they were in a safe and caring environment. Several teachers stated that the students were given more one-on-one attention and were able to go beyond the regular school day in some instances. Other staff members related occurrences of students being able to relate better to their peers and teachers because of the low teacher-student ratio. The majority of the staff agreed that many of these students just needed some extra attention.

The conclusion drawn from the above responses was that the after-school program has had a tremendous impact on the lives of the students who attend regularly. Both parents and

staff agreed that the students got help with homework and other academics, that they were safe and were staying out of trouble, and that it was a good way to provide child care for parents who might not otherwise be able to afford it.

Research Question #2. What impact has the after-school program had on the families of Claiborne County? The themes for research question #2 were similar to research question #1. They were child care issues, safe environment, homework and academics, and more family time. Research question 2 was explored in the interview questions 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 11. Question 2 addressed the focus of the program. Both parents and staff members indicated that the academic part of the program had been very beneficial. Many parents mentioned that their children's enrollment in the program saved them time at home because their children came home from the after-school program with their homework already done. They also stated that their children were making better grades in both math and reading. Parents also understood the importance of having their children in a safe and caring environment. They considered that their child/children always received a snack and were safe in the environment. They indicated that knowing these aspects eased their minds and enabled them to work at their current jobs with less stress. It was also mentioned that single parents benefited from the program because of their need for child care after school.

The staff mentioned such advantages for the parents as having free child care, enabling children to have their homework already done, and keeping them out of a less than desirable or "latch-key" home situation during the after-school hours.

In conclusion, the impact on the families of students who attended the after-school program has been remarkable. Parents frequently mentioned that homework was completed and that they could have more family time without stress. They also stated that the environment in the schools was safe for their children and that their nutritional needs were taken care of. Several

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parents, both married and single, mentioned that the program was good for them financially as they did not have to pay for child care.

Research Question #3. What impact has the after-school program had on the community in Claiborne County? Although there has been some participation from community based organizations, this question has been harder to answer. It was evident that some organizations such as 4-H, the county extension agency, the local nursing home, the town's library, a local cosmetologist, Lincoln Memorial University, a medical center, and a few others had been present in one or more of the after-school programs. However, these organizations did not seem to have consistent contact with any of the after-school programs. This is an area that needs to be explored and implemented more frequently as participation in the after-school program would only strengthen the ties and understanding between local organizations and the schools.

In conclusion, I determined that the community needs to become a more regular participant in the after-school program. Statements made by participants (both staff and parents) suggested that they too, expected and wanted more involvement. Coordination among the businesses and organizations that are presently involved in the program is an area that needs much work. Lastly, the communication between the schools and parents must improve before they can all fully realize the impact the community can make in the after-school program.

Recommendations to Improve Practice

1. More communication is needed between parents and schools that gives information about the after-school program such as:

   a. classroom size,
   b. academic material,
   c. community involvement,
   d. parental involvement and/or volunteers,
   e. enrichment activities,
   f. evaluation of programs, and
   g. rules for attending

2. Meetings with staff and staff development should take place on a regular basis with all staff required to attend as some staff seemed unsure of some major components of the program.

3. A sustained effort should be made by all three schools to promote both parent involvement and community involvement in their after-school programs.

Recommendations for Further Research

I recommend that further research be conducted as follows:

1. Conduct a follow-up study that includes parents and students in the same three schools in a longitudinal study within the next two or three years to check for implementation of areas of need that were found to be evident in this study.

2. Analyze more school data including achievement data of students who attended the program versus students who did not to determine the amount of growth, if any, shown for students who attended the program on a regular basis.

3. Conduct studies to determine the effects of after-school programs. For example:

   a. What is the effect of the program in terms of students' attitudes?

   b. What is the effect of parental involvement in the school?

   c. What is the effect of community organizations participating in the schools?

   d. What type of evaluation works best for after-school programs and who should be responsible for it?

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letter of Request to Director of Schools

Mr. Donald Dobbs
Director of Schools
Claiborne County, School District
Tazewell-New-Tazewell, TN 37879

Dear Mr. Dobbs:

 I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee University. I am interested in conducting a study within your school system to determine if the Claiborne County 21st Century Community Learning Center After-school Program has been successful in implementing the components set forth as guidelines by the U.S. Department of Education. This study will take place at the three sites that are part of the program.
 These sites are:
1. Springdale Elementary
2. Soldiers Memorial Middle
3. Tazewell-New-Tazewell Primary

This study will involve interviewing 24 participants: 9 teachers, 12 parents, and/or the site coordinator or principal from each of the three sites. Additionally, I will send home a survey with all students who are enrolled in the after-school program for their parents to complete. All names and persons or places involved in the study will be changed to insure the confidentiality of participants. Any participant may withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the study at any time.

I am requesting your permission to conduct this study within the Claiborne County School District and will provide your office and the participating schools with copies of the finished report. This should be helpful to the district in providing information that could assist other after-school programs by giving a detailed examination of the current three sites and the effectiveness of their implementation of the U.S. Department of Education's recommended components of 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs.

Please feel free to contact my doctoral advisor or me if you have any further questions about my study. My telephone number is (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

Joy Collingsworth
Doctoral Student
East Tennessee State University

APPENDIX B

School Personnel Interview Guide

Pre-Interview Items:
1. Introductions
2. Explain the Purpose of the Study
3. Describe the Informed Consent Form and its purpose

1. Please describe who you are and the kinds of contact that you have had with the Claiborne County, 21st Century Community Learning Center, After-school program.
2. What do you feel are the goals/focus of the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program?
3. How is staff solicited to work in the after-school program?
4. How are student's nutritional needs taken care of?
5. Does student-teacher ratio hinder or help your after-school program?
6. How can parents and students be assured that they are in a safe environment? What procedures are in place?
7. Are outside organizations a part of your after-school program? How often?
8. Does your program involve parental participation? If so, how.
9. How does the 21st Century Program keep parents informed about the program and its happenings?
10. Describe some of the course offerings at the after-school program in your school.
11. Does the 21st Century Program link its curriculum and activities with the regular school day and if yes, how?
12. What kind of evaluation process is implemented in your after-school program?
13. What impact has the after-school program had on Claiborne County students?
14. Are there any other things about the program that you would like to mention?

Thanks so much for helping with this study of the Claiborne County 21st Century Community Learning Center Program

APPENDIX C

Cover Letter to Parents

Dear Parents and Staff:

The survey attached to this letter is part of a study being conducted by a doctoral student from East Tennessee State University. This study will be used to determine if the Claiborne County 21st Century Community Learning Center After-School Program has been successful in implementing the components set forth by the U.S. Department of Education.

Please fill out the enclosed survey and return it to school as soon as possible. Some of the questions could cause mild discomfort. If you so choose, you do not have to respond to those questions. By returning the survey you are giving consent to take part in this research study.

No signature is required so that all names can be confidential. If you have questions, please call 423-626-9142 and ask for Joy Collingsworth.

Thank you for your time and assistance in this research project.

Sincerely,

Joy Collingsworth
Principal, Springdale Elementary

APPENDIX D

Parent Interview Guide

Pre-Interview Items:

1. Introductions
2. Explain the Purpose of the Study
3. Describe the Informed Consent Form and its purpose

1. Please describe who you are and the kinds of contact that you have had with the Claiborne County, 21st Century Community Learning Center, After-School Program.
2. What do you feel are the goals/focus of the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program?
3. Do you feel that the staff that your child has had in this program are highly qualified?
4. How are your child's nutritional needs taken care of in the after-school program?
5. Describe your understanding and feelings concerning class size.
6. How do you know if your child is in a safe environment? What procedures have you noticed?
7. Are you aware of any outside organizations that participate in the after-school program? (example, 4-H, Town Library, etc)
8. Have you participated in the after-school program in any way, if so explain?
9. How does the 21st Century Program keep you informed about the program?
10. Describe the classes that your child has participated in at the after-school program.
11. Do you feel that the 21st Century program has helped your child with his/her regular school day activities and/or classes?
12. Are you aware of any type of evaluation done at the after-school program, (example, questionnaire, survey, tests, etc.)?
13. What impact has the 21st Century After-school program had on Claiborne County students?
14. Are there any other things that stand out about the program that you would like to mention?

Thanks so much for helping with this study of the Claiborne County 21st Century Community Learning Center Program.

APPENDIX E

Letter of Request to Principals

August 9, 2004

Dear Principal of Springdale Elementary, Soldiers Memorial Middle, and Tazewell-New-Tazewell Primary:

 I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University, I am interested in conducting a study within the three schools listed above to determine if the Claiborne County, 21st Century Community Learning Center Program, has been successful in implementing the components as set forth as guidelines by the U.S. Department of Education. This study will take place during the months of August and September of 2004.

This study will involve interviewing 24 participants: 9 teachers, 12 parents, and/or 3 site coordinators or principals from each site.   Additionally, I will send home a survey with all students that are enrolled in the program for their parents to complete. All names and persons or places involved in this study will be changed to insure the confidentially of participants. Any participant may withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the study at any time.

I am requesting permission to conduct this study within your school concerning interviews with three teachers, four parents, and the site coordinator in addition to the take-home survey. I will provide all participating schools with a copy of the finished report.

Please feel free to contact my doctoral advisor or me if you have any further questions about my study. My telephone is (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

Joy Collingsworth
Doctoral Student
East Tennessee State University

Parent and Staff Survey

Instructions: Please circle the letter to choose the answer that most closely shows your belief about each statement.

(Check one) I am   _____a parent   _____school personnel

	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't Know
1. The after-school program has a strong focus on academics, such as math and reading.	A	B	C	D	E
2. Students are encouraged to attend the after-school program.	A	B	C	D	E
3. Parents/Staff are given rules for student enrollment in the program.	A	B	C	D	E
4. Students are placed in small classes with no more than 15 children per room.	A	B	C	D	E
5. Students feel safe and secure at the after-school program.	A	B	C	D	E
6. Healthy snacks are served each day.	A	B	C	D	E
7. Local organizations participate in the after-school program, such as 4-H, Library, etc.	A	B	C	D	E
8. Parents are asked to take part of the after-school program.	A	B	C	D	E
9. Parents are asked to participate or volunteer in the after-school program.	A	B	C	D	E
10. Students are offered enrichment activities in the after-school program, such as computer, art, and music.	A	B	C	D	E
11. Students in the after-school program are taught by well-trained staff.	A	B	C	D	E
12. The after-school program relates to and builds on the regular school day program.	A	B	C	D	E
13. Evaluation of the program takes place on a somewhat regular basis (examples: questionnaire, survey, etc).	A	B	C	D	E
14. Monitoring of the program is done on site by the principal/site coordinator.	A	B	C	D	E

Demographic Survey for Teachers/Principals

Male _____   Female _____

Age _____   Number of years teaching experience _____

What grade, if any, do you teach during the regular school day? _____

What grade or grades, if any, do you teach in the after-school program? _____

Highest Degree Earned _____ Year _____

If applicable:

Number of years of administrative experience _____

What is your title during the regular school hours? _____

What is your title during the after –school hours if different from above? _____

Demographic Survey for Parents

Male _____   Female _____

Age _____   Occupation _____

Please check the highest educational level obtained:

1. _____ Elementary School

2. _____ High School

3. _____ Vocational School

4. _____ 2 Year College

5. _____ 4 Year College

6. _____ Other - Please explain _____

What grade or grades are your child/children in? _____

Informed Consent Form

East Tennessee State University
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

Page 1 of 3

Informed Consent Form

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Joy Collingsworth

TITLE OF PROJECT: *21st Century Community Learning Center: A Case
Study of Components to Evaluate the Success of a Program
in a Rural County in East Tennessee*

This informed consent document will explain about being a research subject in a study. It is important that you read the material carefully and decide if you wish to be a volunteer.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to document the process of the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program and determine if the components recommended by the Federal Government have been implemented in the three sites that comprise the program. Each participant in this research will be interviewed regarding his/her experiences of the 21st Century After-School Program. Interviews will be conducted with teachers, parents, and site/coordinator and/or principal to document their perceptions of implementation.

DURATION: This study is not an experiment; no variables are being manipulated. The interview will take place on site and will last for approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question you find uncomfortable, or quit at any time. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed for response accuracy. All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential.

PROCEDURES: The procedures used will consist of face-to-face interviews. Information gained will then be analyzed using the NUD*IST computer program. This software program will allow comparison of information from interviews so that conclusions can be drawn concerning the implementation of program components.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS: Some of the questions could cause mild discomfort. If you so choose, you do not have to respond to those questions.

10/18/2004

Subject's Initials (_____)

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Joy Collingsworth

TITLE OF PROJECT: *21st Century Community Learning Center: A Study to Evaluate the Success of a Program in a Rural County in East Tennessee*

POSSIBLE BENEFITS and/or COMPENSATION: There will be no direct benefits, compensation, or cost to any subject participating in this study.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS: If you have any questions, problems, or research related problems at any time, you may call Joy Collingsworth at (XXX) XXX-XXXX, or Dr. Nancy Dishner at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.   You may also call the chairman of the Institutional Review Board (423) 439-6055.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Each participant's right to privacy will be maintained. The results of the study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a participant. The research information will only be available for inspection by personnel from the East Tennessee State University Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis in collaboration with the researcher, East Tennessee State University Campus Institutional Review Board and one other individual familiar with the subject and research procedures as a peer reviewer. Records will be stored for a period of 10 years following the study at the home of the researcher. All information about the participants will be treated confidentially and will not be revealed, except as noted above, unless required by law.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: The purpose, risks, and benefits of the project have been explained to me as well as are known and available. I understand what my participation involves. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to ask questions and withdraw from the project at any time, without penalty. I have read, or have had read to me, and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A signed copy has been given to me. My study record will be maintained in strictest confidence according to current legal requirements and will not be revealed unless required by law or as noted above.

This research project will begin in September of 2004 and conclude in November 2004.

10/18/2004

                                                                Subject's Initials (_____)

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Joy Collingsworth

TITLE OF PROJECT: *21st Century Community Learning Center: A Case Study to Evaluate the Success of a Program in a Rural County in East Tennessee*

    I understand the procedures to be used in this study and the possible risks involved. I also understand that participation in this study is strictly voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time by signing on the line below, I consent to participate in this study.

_____   _____
    Signature of participant   Date

_____   _____
Signature of principal investigator   Date

10/18/2004

                                    Subject's Initials (_____)

1. Name of Principal Investigator

Joy Collingsworth

2. Project Title

21st Century Community Learning Center Program: A Case Study of Components to Evaluate the Success of a Program in a Rural County in East Tennessee

3. Place

This study will take place in Claiborne County Tennessee. It will involve three schools, Springdale Elementary, Soldiers Memorial Middle, and Tazewell New Tazewell Primary.

4. Objectives

The objective of this study will be to analyze the components of a rural 21st Century Community Learning Center Program and to determine the impact of the center on the education and welfare of the students and their families.

5. Summary

This study will look closely at a 21st Century Community Learning Center Program located in Tazewell, TN. The program's purpose is to provide expanded academic enrichment opportunities. This study will focus on whether or not the program has implemented the eight components set forth by the Federal Government for exemplary after-school programs. Data will be collected from parents of children attending the program as well as staff members and site coordinators. Survey instruments will be sent home with all participating students for parents to fill out and return to the schools. Interviews with the staff members, parents and site coordinators will be held at the three participating schools.

6. Methods of Recruitment

Survey instruments will be sent home with the students attending the after-school program. A self-addressed envelope will accompany the survey. Directions are given for completion and parents are asked not to sign the survey. For interviews, principals will be asked to compile a list of persons willing to be interviewed for the study and a random selection will take place at that time.

7. Research Data

Research Data will be kept confidential at all times. Parents are requested to not sign the survey that will come home with their child. Survey forms will be gathered at the individual school and investigator will collect from each site coordinator. Interview participants will remain anonymous and at no time will their names be used in the study. The actual interviews and survey documents will remain in the care of the investigator and will be locked away in a designated file cabinet while not in use.

8. Specific Role of Human Subjects

Subjects will be asked to fill out a survey concerning the after-school program at their child's school. They will be asked to return the survey by a certain date. Subjects involved in the interview process will be asked to spend approximately 45-60 minutes with the investigator to answer interview questions. All interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed for accuracy. Investigator will travel to all three schools in order to keep the interviewee's inconvenience to a minimum.

9. Specific Risks to Subjects

There are no known risks associated with this research

10. Benefits to Subjects

Subjects will be offered a copy of the finished research and may be able to determine if the after-school program has the qualities they want for their children.

11. Inducements

None are being offered

12. Subject Confidentiality

All subject/participant's right to privacy will be maintained. The research information will be available for inspection by study related personnel. All information about the subject/participant's will be treated confidentially and will not be revealed, except as noted above

13. Informed Consent

The Informed Consent is located in this folder. All participants will be given Informed Consent and have any questions answered by the principal investigator or other knowledgeable, qualified

designee(s), and will receive a copy of their signed Informed Consent Document, unless the requirement has been waived by the IRB.

Participants who respond to the survey will receive a cover letter found in this folder on page seven that will explain the research being conducted and that by completing and returning the survey to the school they are consenting to take part in the research study.

14. Adverse Reactions Reporting

No adverse reactions expected

15. Pertinent Literature

Bibliographic listing is located in this folder

16. Location of Records

All records will be stored in the office of the principal investigator and will remain in a locked file cabinet when not in use.

Peer Debriefer's Letter

November 5, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

I served as peer reviewer for Joy Collingsworth during her work on her dissertation, the study of a 21st Century Community Learning Center After-school program. This study took place in Claiborne County, Tennessee. Throughout her study, we discussed the work she was doing, from the prospectus through the research and analysis.

Joy discussed her problems with me and I provided her with feedback and reactions to her study. She shared the process of her data collection with me, and we discussed her methods of analysis. We talked about the importance of validity and reliability issues pertaining to her study. I looked over her references and research questions, providing feedback and some recommendations.

I believe that the data gathered in this study has much potential to be extremely useful to other similar rural school settings that may be considering starting an after-school program.

I was glad to have helped Joy through this study and participate in the research process. I hope my assistance and support have been beneficial to the overall outcome.

Sincerely,

Dr. Janet Barnard
Curriculum Coordinator, Claiborne County

APPENDIX K

Auditor's Letter

Dr. Michael Belcher
420 Court Street
Sneedville, TN, 37869

November 1, 2004

Dear Ms. Collingsworth,

On October 27th, 2004, I had the opportunity to meet with you and begin the process of auditing your qualitative dissertation. The time you took familiarizing me with your study on the 21st Century After-School Program was very interesting and helpful. I have enjoyed reading your study and confirming the accuracy of the data you have collected.

My review consisted of these items:

A review of the design section

The interview list was verified and checked to make sure that a recorded copy was present for each

interview.

The interview itself was reviewed to determine what type of information was collected.

Interview transcripts were checked with the paper to verify accuracy.

Review and verification of all informed consent documents were also accomplished.

Conclusions: The research design accurately described the research questions to be addressed. The interview protocol was followed, and the documents were analyzed and found to have clear direction and focus. The interview guides were well designed and asked appropriate questions and the files were accurate and clear.

Auditor Comments:

I conclude that this study was conducted in a professional and thorough manner. All researched data were present. There was evidence of credible qualitative research techniques.

I commend you on the work you have done for this study. It is my judgment, based on my observation of the audit trail, that you have maintained a degree of professionalism as a researcher and have conducted a valuable and worthwhile research study.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Belcher
Principal, Hancock County Elementary School

VITA

JOY COLLINGSWORTH

Personal Data:	Date of Birth: December 31, 1961 Place of Birth: Morristown, Tennessee Marital Status: Married
Education:	Hancock County High School 1978
	Walter's State Community College, Morristown, TN; 1981 (transferred to LMU)

	Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, TN;
	    B.S. Degree in Elementary Education
	    1983

	Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, TN;
	    M.A. in Administration and Supervision
	    1988

	East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN
	    Education Specialist, Ed.S.
	    1994

	East Tennessee State University, Johnson City
	    Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Ed. D.
	    2005

Professional Experience:	Teacher, Hancock County Schools 1983 – 1992
	Assistant Principal, Hancock County Schools 1992 – 1999
	Elementary Principal, Claiborne County Schools 1999 – Present
Professional Associations:	Claiborne County Education Association Tennessee Education Association National Education Association Tennessee Association of Elementary School Principals