

# Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver, ESSER II 2022-2023 EVALUATION SUMMARY

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Grant



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Since 1961, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver (BGCMD) has provided kindergarteners through high schoolers with a place to become inspired, build relationships, and learn how big a part they play in their community and their future. As a pillar in the community, we provide a safe, accessible, fun space full of caring adults to ensure kids have what they need to achieve their greatest potential.



Since our founding, we have grown into one of the largest, most accessible and comprehensive youth-serving organizations in the Metro Denver region, operating 25 Clubs (starting July 1, 2023), including our ESSER II 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, Johnson Elementary School (Johnson Boys & Girls Club). Furthermore, we are one of the lowest-cost providers in the State with an annual Club membership fee as low as \$2 per child and free for students attending 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs. This is especially important as 78% of our active members attending an ESSER 11-funded Club during the program year were eligible for free or reduced priced lunch.

Our mission is to provide Club members with a safe, supportive, fun, and enriching environment that inspires and empowers them to achieve their greatest potential. This is accomplished through afterschool and summer programming which supports the development of school-aged youth in four core program areas:

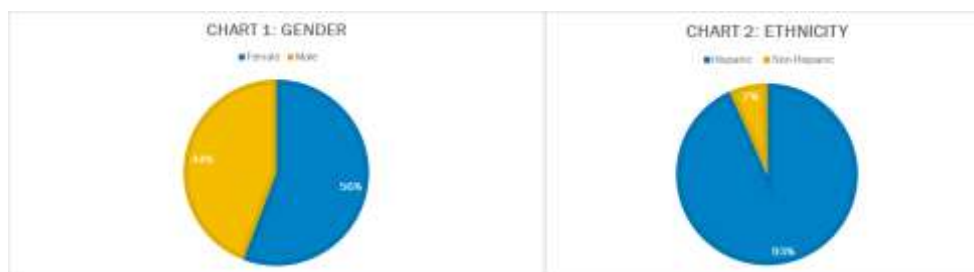
1. **Academic Success:** Club members receive support to keep learning all year long through programs intentionally designed to foster skill-building and spark passion for learning. When kids experience academic success, they grow their confidence, are less likely to compare themselves to their peers, and have healthier self-esteem (Fick Educational Services, 2020).
2. **Character & Leadership:** Members grow as leaders through programs that develop strong character and community building skills. Leadership programs teach youth to take initiative in ways that are meaningful to them, resulting in Club members demonstrating high levels of responsibility. Clubs regularly facilitate Keystone and Torch Clubs, which offer small groups of youth unique opportunities to plan and lead service-learning projects in their communities, as well as the Next Program, a workforce and post-secondary readiness program that supports youth in developing a sense of agency to their future self through skill-building and exploration.

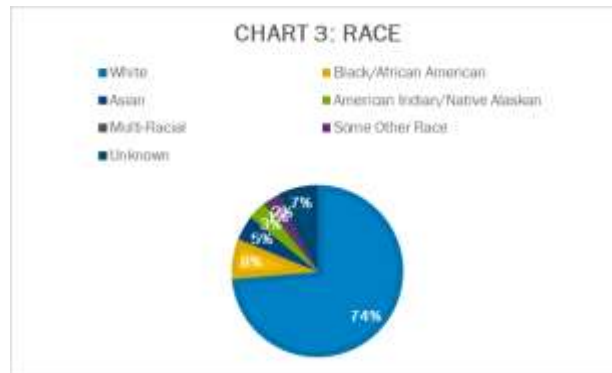
3. **Healthy Lifestyles:** Club members receive the tools they need to envision and build a healthy life, are educated on nutrition, participate in sports, and know how to avoid substance abuse and other risky behaviors. Ultimately youth become informed consumers who use critical thinking skills and a sense of self to identify pathways for a healthy future.
4. **Mental Health:** Youth learn to navigate big emotions, conflict resolution, and skills necessary for being a good friend, as well as receive individual support for navigating health challenges. This is accomplished by employing a team of 11 full-time mental health professionals who work directly in Clubs each week to provide one-on-one and group social emotional learning sessions. Mental health professionals utilize motivational interviewing to support youth in identifying pathways that lead towards greater problem solving, emotional management, responsible decision making, relationship skills, critical thinking, sense of awareness, and sense of self.

By helping Club members succeed in these areas, they are better equipped to overcome life challenges and lead happy, healthy, and productive lives. This report will focus specifically on how Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver’s out-of-school time programming supports students in achieving academic success.

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

BGCMD operates as an informed and accessible community-based organization, using the voices of the youth and families we serve to drive our approach. Through doing so, we have established a robust evaluation practice drawing from the results of several tools to measure program effectiveness and quality. **The purpose of this report is to review how BGCMD supports academic success for program participants, where we asked, “How can comprehensive out-of-school time programming support Club members’ academic engagement and achievement?”** During the 2022-2023 program year, BGCMD served 215 students at Johnson Boys & Girls Club; charts 1 and 2 show demographic data for these students:





BGCMD engaged in the following surveys and tactics with Johnson Boys & Girls Club members to evaluate programming offered to participants:

1. **National Youth Outcomes Initiative:** This annual research-based survey was developed by Boys & Girls Clubs of America in partnership with 3C Institute, where it provides an in-depth understanding of the Club experience. This survey is administered to students through 3C Institute's QUEST platform, a research-based, child-friendly online data collection system that uses characters and game-like activities to engage youth and reward them for their progression throughout the survey. NYOI is developmentally appropriate and easy for youth to navigate and is offered in English and Spanish and has audio capabilities to read and replay the presented text. Specifically, NYOI measures: safe, positive environment; supportive relationships; opportunities and expectations; academic expectations; and recognition for ages nine (9) and older.
2. **Kid Perception Data:** BGCMD gathered data on kid perception, allowing for real time understanding of how all youth, even our youngest (K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade), view our programs. Data was collected through dot voting, verbal and written exit tickets, drawing pictures, virtual polls, and discussion groups. Some examples of questions we asked regarding academic success include: "I am inspired to learn new things at the Club;" and "I am confident about reading."
3. **Family Satisfaction Survey:** BGCMD administered a family satisfaction survey where families provided feedback on their child's Club, staff, communication, their child's behavior, activities offered, overall safety of the Club, and skills their child has learned through BGCMD's programming.
4. **Social & Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SELPQA):** This tool is an efficient and effective research-validated observational tool for assessing adult youth leader practices that support social and emotional learning (SEL) – use of this tool ensures our organization is focused on SEL development for both staff and youth. This practice has been validated through the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality and through the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). BGCMD measures several 'environments;' specifically in relation to academic

success we measure Fostering Growth Mindset meaning staff support youth to have a growth mindset rather than a fixed mindset.

## **PROGRAM RESULTS**

Below is a snapshot of our key findings through utilization of the aforementioned tools. Each of these metrics indicate how programming promoted academic engagement and achievement for students:

### **National Youth Outcomes Initiative (NYOI)**

Johnson Boys & Girls Club administered NYOI in Spring 2023 to 45 students. Key results in relation to academic engagement and achievement are as follows:

- 96% of surveyed Club members indicate the adults at their Club believe they will be a success;
- 96% of surveyed Club members indicate the people at their Club accept them for who they are;
- 91% of surveyed Club members will indicate the adults at their Club encourage them to do their best;
- 93% of surveyed Club members indicated they enjoy learning new things; and
- 83% of surveyed Club members indicated they expect to graduate high school.

These metrics are important as they indicate afterschool programming contributes significantly to the achievement gap, especially programming at 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) like Johnson Boys & Girls Club (2023); this, too, is backed by research conducted by the Afterschool Alliance (2022). Additionally, youth learning and development are directly influenced by safe, relationship-based learning environments, a sense of belonging, and connection the community (Duffrin, 2020). The NYOI results for Johnson Boys & Girls Club demonstrate that Club members have established positive and secure relationships with Club staff. These positive connections foster an environment centered on relationships, enabling youth to cultivate a sense of belonging and enjoy a fulfilling learning experience. As a result, they can remain highly engaged and enthusiastic in their educational journey. These results were accomplished through the implementation of several strategies:

- BGCMD offers hands-on, academically enriching learning activities in various program areas, including cultural arts, athletics, education, outdoor education, STEM, and healthy lifestyles programs. These activities are designed to support youth in meeting state academic standards;
- The Clubs actively involve youth in post-secondary and workforce readiness activities that align with high-demand fields. This collaboration often takes place with trusted industry partners. Examples of such activities include financial literacy programs,

college tours, opportunities for peer leadership and work-based learning, as well as guest speaker events; and

- BGCMD incorporates social-emotional learning into all program activities, focusing on developing skills such as self-control, self-awareness, emotion management, responsible decision-making, and relationship-building abilities. These skills are integrated throughout each program to foster personal growth and well-being.

### Kid Perception Data

During the 2022-2023 program year, Kid Perception Data was collected regularly across all Club locations and program areas. At the Johnson Boys & Girls Club, staff collected 410 responses for Club members; results related to student learning included:

| Table 1: 2022-2023 Program Year Kid Perception Data<br>Johnson Boys & Girls Club |  |                        |  |
|--|--|------------------------|--|
| Question Asked   | Grade Levels Surveyed                  | Number of Participants | Results  |
| I learned something new today.   | K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade                | 37                     | 73% of surveyed Club members indicated they learned something new at Club. |
| I gained new skills at BGCMD.  | 3 <sup>rd</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> grade | 9                      | 100% of surveyed Club members indicated they gained new skills at BGCMD.   |

BGCMD is uniquely positioned to engage students year-round during out-of-school time, which is why we prioritize building confidence in students and providing ongoing learning opportunities to support academic engagement and achievement. Collecting Kid Perception Data allows BGCMD Club staff to gauge how students are responding to programming and where their needs lie in real time. For example, when Club members were asked if they felt confident in reading, several shared with BGCMD Club staff they felt embarrassed and insecure about their reading ability. Johnson Boys & Girls Club used this information to create intentional practices around building self-confidence at Club. Confidence and self-esteem are crucial for students to take risks in learning, engage in learning, and feel valuable (American Psychological Association, 2022). For these reasons, BGCMD also approached supporting students' academic success with social-emotional learning (SEL). Further information on how SEL is evaluated in regard to academic achievement can be found in the "Social Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment" section below.

### Family Satisfaction Survey

In Spring 2023, BGCMD administered a Family Satisfaction Survey which measures how families view our programming. On a scale of 0-100, families ranked their overall satisfaction with BGCMD, which resulted in an average score of 90 across all Clubs. Johnson Boys & Girls Club families also scored an average of 90. Families indicated the top skills their child gained

or improved this year at Johnson Boys & Girls Club were empathy and following directions. As previously indicated, confidence plays a vital role in achieving academic success as young people are more likely to take on challenges, persevere through difficulties, and actively engage in their learning.

Other highlights from our Family Satisfaction Survey include:

- 93% of surveyed families indicated they feel welcome at their child's Club;
- 93% of surveyed families indicated BGCMD staff treat their child with respect;
- 90% of surveyed families have recommended BGCMD to other families; and
- 87% of surveyed families indicated their child learns new skills at BGCMD.

Research shows students whose families are involved and engaged are less likely to drop out of high school, have higher grades in school, are less likely to engage in risky behavior, show improved educational achievement, and experience increased attendance (Youth.gov, 2023). These reasons emphasize the critical importance of BGCMD actively involving families in meaningful ways, as it directly contributes to supporting student success. Collaborating with families creates a strong network of support and resources that can positively influence a student's educational journey. When families are actively involved, they can provide guidance, encouragement, and reinforcement of learning at home. This partnership between BGCMD and families establishes a cohesive and holistic approach to supporting students, and we are pleased to see families agree with BGCMD's program effectiveness and commitment to fostering safe spaces to learn and grow.

### **Social Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SELPQA)**

Johnson Boys & Girls Club staff participated in the Social Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SELPQA) in both the fall and spring semesters. Staff were evaluated on several environments such as, Emotion Coaching, Fostering Growth Mindset, Promoting Responsibility & Leadership, and Creating Safe Spaces. The environment that most closely relates to academic engagement and achievement is "Growth Mindset" where staff are assessed in how they support youth in developing a growth mindset, rather than a fixed mindset. BGCMD's goal is for Clubs to score a 70% in each environment and we are excited to share the Johnson Boys & Girls Club achieved 80%! To achieve this score, BGCMD staff were evaluated on their abilities to guide young people to self-correct; use non-evaluative language, or language that does not calculate the value of something (for example, telling a student "good job" or "that picture is beautiful" when commenting on their work); and attribute youth's achievement to effort.

Recent research conducted by National American University in 2023 highlights the positive outcomes associated with a growth mindset among students. It reveals that individuals who possess a growth mindset perform well academically, experience higher levels of well-being, and are more engaged in their academics. Recognizing the significance of this mindset, BGCMD places great emphasis on fostering a growth mindset among member. Through well-



designed and high-quality programs that purposefully cultivate this mindset in youth, BGCMD actively contributes to empowering Club members and equipping them with the motivation and tools necessary to achieve success.

## CONCLUSION

Research links comprehensive, high-quality out-of-school time programs, like BGCMD, to increased engagement, more positive emotions, improved social competence, enhanced personal confidence, and academic achievement for young people (Shernoff, 2010). **This report clearly evidences that the implementation of high-quality, evidence-based literacy support and intervention within the out-of-school time space can empower students to not only engage more in their academic journey, but also thrive.**

The results previously shared are overwhelmingly positive, particularly considering the additional academic support and interventions provided. An impressive 93% of surveyed students expressed their enthusiasm for learning new things at the Club, indicating a genuine love of learning fostered by the Johnson Boys & Girls Club. Equally noteworthy, 73% of surveyed students reported learning something new during programming this year, underscoring BGCMD's ability to enhance skills, broaden knowledge, and expand youths' horizons. The feedback received from BGCMD's Family Satisfaction Survey further reinforces how BGCMD contributes to students' academic success. Families shared that their children have acquired new skills this year through participation in BGCMD's programs, demonstrating the tangible impact on students' educational development.

The data presented in this report serves as a valuable guide for program quality improvement, enabling BGCMD to continue meeting the evolving needs of students and the Johnson Boys & Girls Club community effectively.