

# Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver, Cohort 9

## 2024-2025 EVALUATION SUMMARY

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



#### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Since 1961, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver has played a vital role in supporting youth and families across the Metro Denver region. From our inception, we have grown into one of the largest and most comprehensive youth-serving organizations in the Metro Denver region. Today, we operate 27 Club sites, including the Cole Boys & Girls Club funded through Cohort 9 of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program. Membership at all our 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC sites is offered at no cost to participants, and we continue to be one of the most affordable out-of-school time providers statewide. This level of accessibility is especially critical given that 96% of Club members attending the Cole Boys & Girls Club qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, underscoring the importance of access to high-quality enrichment and academic support.

Our mission is to provide Club members with a safe, supportive, fun, and enriching environment that inspires them to achieve their greatest potential. We accomplish this through our evidence-backed and premier out-of-school time programs, specifically designed to foster the growth and development of school-aged young people in four core program areas: 1) Academic Success, 2) Character & Leadership, 3) Healthy Lifestyles, and 4) Mental Health. By empowering kids in these crucial areas, we help them develop resilience, and strive for fulfilling, healthy, and successful lives.

Each Club provides daily academic and enrichment activities, including:

- Academic Success:** Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver operates Project Learn, an evidence-based program providing reinforcement in academic enrichment and school engagement. Staff lead Power Hour daily for one-on-one support with homework; evidence-based reading programs through Renaissance products such as Accelerated Reader and MyON, and Freckle for math support; tutoring support for literacy and/or math; STEM-based learning opportunities; and cultural arts where young people have opportunities for self-expression and creativity through performances, digital art, painting, photography, and more.
- Character & Leadership:** Club members can participate in year-round service-learning activities through leadership programs like Keystone Club and Torch Club. Young People can also engage with Boys & Girls Clubs of America's premier leadership program, Youth of the Year which recognizes outstanding members monthly and includes a formal annual selection process to recognize Club leaders within various age groups. Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver also supports young people through critical transitions from education to career pathways through our NEXT Program, a post-secondary, workforce exploration and readiness program available to members of all ages supporting young people in developing a sense of agency about their future self. This program provides tools and resources to prepare for college as well as explore careers through real-world context with trusted industry partners. Specifically, this program supports young people with skill-building and exploration, resume and essay development, interview preparation, and identifying unique college or career pathways members can explore and engage within high-demand fields.

3. **Healthy Lifestyles:** A variety of programming is offered to Club members including nutrition education, cooking classes, healthy relationships education, substance use prevention, and gardening, among many more. In addition, the Clubs offer sports and recreation including organized sports leagues. Club members can also participate in variety of field trips. Particularly, in the summer, Club members have the opportunity to spend time in the mountains at Gates Camp – a summer camp facility owned and operated by Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver. In addition to high-quality programming, all Club members receive nutritious meals and snacks daily.
4. **Mental Health:** Within all programs, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver incorporates emotional and mental wellness, including Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to develop skills in self-control, self-awareness, emotional management, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills. A dedicated team of 14 mental health professionals provide one-on-one support and group SEL sessions, creating safe spaces for young people to process emotions and build resilience. Families and caregivers are also supported with connections to community resources that help strengthen the family unit. Together, these efforts ensure that every young person has the tools and support they need to navigate life's challenges with confidence and care.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver is proud to play a vital role in supporting the success and well-being of youth and families across the Metro Denver region. Through our evidence informed, comprehensive programming, and strong community partnerships, we address critical needs in academic support, leadership development, healthy lifestyles, and mental health. Our 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funded Clubs reflect this mission by providing high quality, no-cost out-of-school time services to young people who need them most. As we continue to grow and adapt, we remain committed to ensuring every young person who walks through our doors is equipped with the tools, opportunities, and support to thrive into the future.

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

During the 2024-2025 program year, Cole Boys & Girls Club served a combined total of 148 unduplicated active members, 96 of whom were regular attenders (defined as Club members attending 75 hours or more). To ensure meaningful impact and drive continuous quality improvement at the Cole Club, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver employs a comprehensive, multi-method evaluation strategy. This approach centers youth voice, monitors program fidelity, assesses staff practices, and aligns Club experiences with organizational goals and youth development outcomes. By leveraging a blend of internal tools and nationally validated frameworks, we capture real-time data to assess youth engagement, academic and social-emotional growth, and the overall Club environment.

In 2024-2025, we deepened this commitment by examining a key research question: ***What are the impacts of a continuous quality improvement system, central to 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC afterschool centers, on staff practices?***

The following core components collectively guided data-informed decision-making, strengthened program delivery, and expanded our capacity to deliver high-impact, youth-centered programming at Cole Boys & Girls Club:

- **Club Pulse Check:** Conducted monthly by leadership, this structured assessment gauged staff engagement, meeting participation, leadership dynamics, inclusivity, and alignment with Club goals. The data collected guides timely support, training, and resource adjustments to ensure the Cole Club remains a vibrant and responsive space for youth development.
- **Kid Perception Data (KPD):** Age-appropriate tools such as dot voting, exit tickets, and focus groups are used regularly to gather immediate feedback from members, ensuring their voice shapes the Club experience.

- National Youth Outcomes Initiative (NYOI): Boys & Girls Clubs of America's annual research-based survey captures youth perspectives on key quality indicators: safety; fun; supportive relationships; opportunities and expectations; and recognition.
- Social Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SELPQA): This research validated observational tool assesses the Club staff's practice that supports social and emotional learning – use of this tool ensures Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver, and the Cole Club specifically, are focused on SEL development for both staff and youth. This tool has been validated by the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).
- Teacher Surveys: Conducted annually for those who attend programming 75 hours or more, these surveys provide an essential external perspective on student progress. These surveys offer a direct connection between out-of-school time experiences and in-school performance, allowing Clubs to measure the transferability of program impacts to the classroom. The data also serves as a critical tool to validate program outcomes and guide ongoing staff development and support strategies.

Together, these strategies help build and sustain the infrastructure needed for the Cole Boys & Girls Club to remain responsive, inclusive, and impactful – advancing outcomes and positioning both staff and young people for long-term success.

## PROGRAM RESULTS

This year's evaluation demonstrates progress toward State Performance Measures and participation targets, while also highlighting enhanced staff capacity, improved Club environments, and positive youth outcomes through multiple data sources.

### **Pulse Checks**

Our monthly *Pulse Check* system served as a powerful tool for driving real-time program quality at Cole Boys & Girls Club. These structured, observational assessments examined five key domains using 15 indicators that reflect national standards for high-quality out-of-school time programming. This approach allowed us to identify trends, flag emerging needs, and respond immediately with targeted coaching, support, and professional development. Below is an overview of each domain and the observable indicators used to drive data-informed action.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver's Pulse Check Domains and Indicators	
Domain	Indicators
<b>1. What the Club Looks and Sounds Like</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Members are acknowledged for their successes.</li><li>- Visual, up-to-date schedule posted and Club is clean.</li><li>- Behaviors are mitigated with trauma-informed de-escalation practices.</li></ul>
<b>2. How Our Kids Experience the Club</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Staff demonstrates a warm welcome as members arrive and use appropriate tone and volume.</li><li>- Members' movements in space are calm and comfortable.</li><li>- Members engage positively with each other.</li></ul>
<b>3. How We Engage Our Families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Families are recognized and greeted warmly.</li><li>- Club entrance is clearly labeled and generally clean.</li><li>- Monthly newsletter and visual postings celebrate member successes.</li></ul>

Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver's Pulse Check Domains and Indicators	
Domain	Indicators
<b>4. Readiness of Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Clear behavior expectations posted and supported by staff; staff are actively engaged.</li><li>- Staff have and use what they need to be safe (radios, keys, badges).</li><li>- Ratio is regularly maintained, and staff communicate well with each other.</li><li>- At least one of the four core programs is offered to each age group.</li></ul>
<b>5. How We Deliver Programs to Our Kids</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Members are actively engaged at least 75% of the time.</li><li>- Members can name their favorite activity at the Club.</li></ul>

#### Key Findings and Trends

- **Evidence of Growth:** Despite variations in observation methods across months, Pulse Check results at Cole Boys & Girls Club reflected steady improvement in program quality over the academic year. For example, one month identified seven indicators needing attention, but the following month, only one remained, demonstrating timely response and progress.
- **Staff Strengths:** Staff-to-member ratio and internal communication were consistently rated as strong, as well as providing one-on-one support for students when they were having difficulty in transitions or listening.
- **Informing Professional Development:** Trends from Pulse Checks were integrated into twice-annual staff training sessions, allowing site leadership to tailor professional development to real-time needs and reinforce practices that support a safe, engaging Club environment.
- **Opportunities for Consistency:** Over the course of the year, multiple staff conducted Pulse Check observations at Cole, which led to some variation in how indicators were interpreted and scored. This highlighted the importance of consistent training and calibration across observers to ensure reliability and comparability of data over time. Future efforts will prioritize standardized observation protocols to strengthen data accuracy and support more targeted improvement.

*The Pulse Checks help staff remain accountable for practices that should consistently be in place at their clubs at all times. Our goal is to ensure that the Club experience for our kids and families is consistent across all locations, even if it looks different from one Club to another. When something isn't happening as expected, staff are able to address it promptly and incorporate feedback."*

*-Regina, Academics & Leadership Manager*

#### **Youth Voice: Kid Perception Data**

Our commitment to elevating youth voice is seen through kid perception surveys conducted throughout the 2024-2025 program year. These surveys provided insight into how young people experience programming at the Club – from academic engagement to emotional development and confidence in future readiness.

While the total number of responses includes some duplication across survey periods and does not reflect every item asked, this data still offers valuable directional insight into program impact and, importantly, how well staff are applying consistent, high-quality practices across domains.

2024-2025 Program Year Kid Perception Data Cohort 9, Cole Boys & Girls Clubs			
Question Asked	Grade Levels Surveyed	# of Respondents	% Positive
<b>I enjoy learning math skills at the Club</b>	K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade	77	82%
<b>I get support with my homework at Club</b>	K-12 <sup>th</sup> grade	77	81%
<b>I can recognize my emotions and name what I am feeling</b>	K-12 <sup>th</sup> grade	29	100%
<b>I have learned skills that will help me be successful in the future</b>	K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade	33	88%

These data points stand out when compared to organization-wide results across all of Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver Clubs:

- **Math Enjoyment:** Across all Clubs, 65% of members indicated enjoyment in reading or math. At Cole, 82% of Club members reported enjoying math, a notable 17-point increase, suggesting more engaging or effective instructional approaches at this site.
- **Homework Support:** While 62% of young people across the organization said they received help with homework, 81% of Cole youth felt supported – nearly a 20-percentage point gain. This indicates strong staff-student academic relationships and consistent reinforcement of homework help practices.
- **Emotional Recognition:** Cole Club members reported 100% positive responses in recognizing and naming their emotions, compared to 86% organization-wide. This reflects staff's use of SEL strategies and trauma-informed practices that help young people develop emotional awareness.
- **Future-Ready Skills:** 88% of Cole Club members felt they had gained skills for future success, compared to 84% across all Clubs. This clearly indicates how staff embed future-focused conversations and skill-building into Club member activities and interactions.

These youth outcomes serve as evidence of the impact that a strong continuous quality improvement system has on staff practices. The increases in academic engagement, SEL competency, and future-readiness reflect:

- Consistent staff implementation of quality practices, as monitored through monthly Pulse Checks
- Responsive professional development, tailored to real-time needs and designed to equip staff with tools for academic and emotional support
- Intentional coaching and feedback, ensuring staff sustain high standards even when Clubs serve youth with complex needs

Kid Perception Data affirms that well-trained, consistently supported staff create emotionally safe, academically supportive environments where young people thrive.

### **National Youth Outcome Initiative**

We are pleased to share key evaluative metrics from the National Youth Outcomes Initiative (NYOI) that reflect the social-emotional and motivational conditions foundational to academic success. These metrics give us insight into how well staff are fostering inclusive, values-based environments where young people can thrive.

Cole Boys & Girls Club NYOI Snapshot		
Indicator	Cole Club	Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver
I take care of my feelings and emotions	87%	91%
I stand up for what is right, even if my friends disagree	91%	91%
I care about other people's feelings	91%	94%
I care about how my actions affect other people	83%	93%

While scores from the Cole Boys & Girls Club are slightly lower than organization-wide averages, they still represent strong and consistent SEL outcomes – particularly empathy and moral reasoning. More importantly, these results provide indirect evidence of improved and consistent staff practices, which have been shaped by the Club's continuous quality improvement system.

Here's how:

- SEL-focused programming and staff training (reinforced by Pulse Checks) help staff create emotionally safe spaces where youth learn to regulate emotions and act with empathy.
- Targeted Coaching and feedback loops ensure that practices like modeling respectful communication, using restorative language, and leading values-based discussions are consistently applied.
- The high percentages of youth indicating care for others' feelings and standing up for what is right – even when hard – demonstrate that staff are effectively embedding SEL and character development into daily programming.

These outcomes are not accidental – they reflect staff doing the work of intentional, consistent SEL reinforcement across the year, made possible by a continuous quality improvement system that monitors, coaches, and uplifts best practices.

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

Cole Club staff were observed through the SELPQA in both the fall and spring. This nationally validated tool measures how effectively staff foster critical social-emotional skills in young people through program environments and instructional practices.

SELPQA results at Cole demonstrate a strong foundation in emotional safety, connection, and youth development. Scores are based on a 1-5 scale, with five being the highest. Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver aims for a minimum score of 3.5 (70%), which reflects high-quality practice. To aid interpretation, the scores below are converted into percentages.

The table below highlights Cole's results alongside organizational averages across all Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver sites.

Cole Boys & Girls Club SELPQA		
SELPQA Scale	Cole Club	Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver
Creating Safe Spaces	80%	82%
Emotion Coaching	90%	67%
Fostering Growth Mindset	100%	78%

Promoting Responsibility & Leadership	76%	70%
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Cole staff exceeded the organization-wide average in every measured domain, most notably in Emotion Coaching and Fostering Growth Mindset – two key indicators of strong, trauma-informed youth development practices. These results affirm the Club’s ongoing commitment to creating safe, responsive, and empowering environments that support young people in building emotional awareness and resilience.

### **Teacher Survey Results**

Teacher survey data collected for 72 students at the Cole Boys & Girls Club show strong and consistent growth in key academic and behavioral indicators. These findings provide compelling evidence of the positive impact of 21st CCLCs in not only catching up academically, but also in sustaining positive classroom behaviors and engagement over time.

While we recognize there is an emphasis on the percentage of students who improved in each indicator, it’s important to note that many students ended the year already meeting expectations. For these young people, maintaining or exceeding baseline success is equally critical – and a strong reflection of how out-of-school programming reinforces school-day goals.

2024-2025 Teacher Survey Results for Cole Boys & Girls Clubs		
Indicator	% Improved	% Maintained/Did Not Need to Improve
Completing classwork/homework on time	36%	55%
Completing work to teacher’s satisfaction	40%	50%
Participating in class	43%	56%
Attending class regularly	24%	67%
Coming to school motivated to learn	32%	60%
Being attentive in class	31%	59%
Behaving well in class	29%	58%
Getting along well with others	29%	59%

How these results reflect staff practice:

- **Skillful Academic Support:** Improvements in completing classwork and participating in class reflect how Club staff create structured, engaging environments that reinforce key academic behaviors – an outcome directly tied to high-quality program delivery practices observed through Pulse Checks.
- **Positive Reinforcement and Consistency:** Nearly 60-67% of students across multiple indicators either maintained success or didn’t require intervention. This signals that staff are sustaining gains over time, demonstrating consistency in behavior modeling, relationship-building, and proactive engagement – core indicators of continuous quality improvement informed practice.
- **SEL Support and Motivation:** The improvements in motivation, behavior, and peer relationships reflect staff’s application of trauma-informed strategies and SEL-aligned approaches emphasized in staff trainings. These practices support students’ holistic growth and readiness to thrive during the school day.

The teacher survey outcomes provide clear evidence that the continuous quality improvement system in place at Cole Boys & Girls Club is working as intended – driving stronger, more consistent staff practices that translate into improved student outcomes. Whether helping young people make meaningful gains or sustaining success across the year, staff are delivering on the mission of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC to close gaps and elevate readiness – inside and outside the classroom. ***In short, strong staff practices, shaped by a responsive quality improvement system, are building the conditions for youth success across academic and behavioral domains.***

## CONCLUSION

The 2024–2025 evaluation of the Cole Boys & Girls Club demonstrates the powerful and measurable impact of a well-integrated continuous quality improvement (CQI) system on staff practices, youth outcomes, and overall program quality. Evidence from Pulse Checks, SELPQA observations, youth surveys, and teacher feedback confirms that staff performance was strengthened through strategic use of real-time data and targeted professional development.

Professional development sessions were thoughtfully aligned with trends identified through monthly Pulse Checks, ensuring that training was timely, relevant, and actionable. Topics such as trauma-informed de-escalation, summer safety, and cultural responsiveness equipped staff with the tools to foster consistency, empathy, and high-quality engagement across all program settings. This intentional investment in staff capacity translated CQI insights into day-to-day practice.

As a result, Cole staff demonstrated growth in both relational and instructional competencies, reflected in SELPQA scores that exceeded organizational averages in emotion coaching and growth mindset. Kid Perception Data also revealed meaningful increases in math enjoyment, emotional recognition, and future-readiness, underscoring the quality of youth experience.

Teacher surveys validated these findings, with 87–99% of students maintaining or improving across academic and behavioral indicators. Notably, 89% of regular attendees met or exceeded literacy comprehension benchmarks—surpassing the state performance goal of 80%.

In alignment with our CQI approach, we have identified the need to strengthen our collection of family engagement feedback following events. Despite strong family attendance, structured feedback mechanisms remain an area for growth. As such, we recommend implementing a streamlined process for collection of family engagement feedback post-event. To achieve this, program staff will receive monthly reminders, feedback will be reviewed during quarterly 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC meetings and analyzed at least twice annually for program adjustments and planning. Our goal is to improve our family feedback mechanisms to provide real-time insights and maintain high levels of family engagement moving forward.

In sum, the Club’s CQI system elevated staff capacity, consistency, and responsiveness, helping create the conditions essential for holistic youth development. The outcomes are a direct result of a system that monitors practice, builds capacity, and, most importantly, improves lives.