



ESSER

COLLABORATIVE ELO



SUMMER 2024 REPORT

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ESSER OVERVIEW

The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER), administered by the U.S. Department of Education in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, provided emergency financial assistance to public school districts nationwide.

ESSER III funding allowed state and local education agencies to ensure safe in-person instruction, address unfinished learning, and support evidence-based, sustainable programs that mitigated the pandemic's impact on students.

In May 2021, the State Board approved the creation of the ESSER Collaborative ELO in partnership with Beyond School Bells (BSB)—Nebraska’s statewide afterschool and summer learning network and a program of Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFE). This collaboration supported the distribution and administration of ESSER III funds for summer and expanded learning programs. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) served as the fiscal agent, with NCFE-BSB providing technical assistance, support, and professional learning.



ESSER COLLABORATIVE ELO COMMUNITIES

To identify highly impacted communities and sites, the NDE triangulated school identification (e.g., CSI, TSI, ATSI) and achievement data, COVID-19 impact, and measures of a community’s ability to respond to crisis (social vulnerability index). ESSER III dollars were provided to highly impacted districts with pre-existing after-school and summer programs and to start new programs that would help students recover learning loss from the pandemic. Selected communities were categorized into Incubator, Accelerator, or Accelerator with Incubator sites.

Incubator sites are newly developed programs and/or sites that do not receive 21st Century Community Learning Center funds.

Accelerator sites are established programs and/or sites that receive 21st Century Community Learning Center funds in addition to ESSER funding.

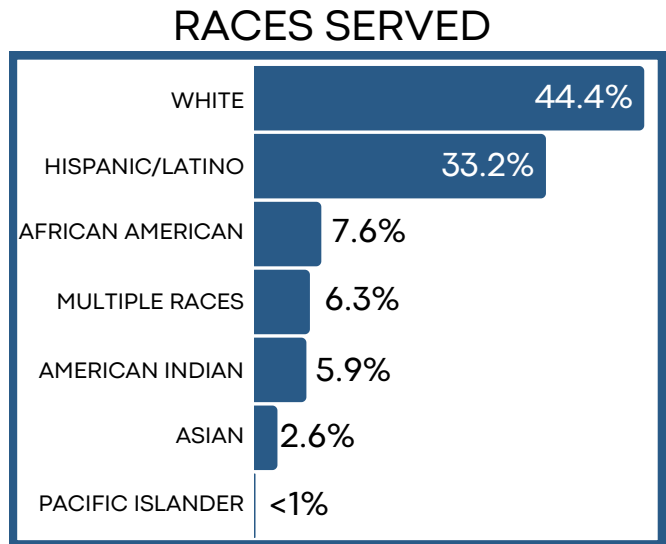
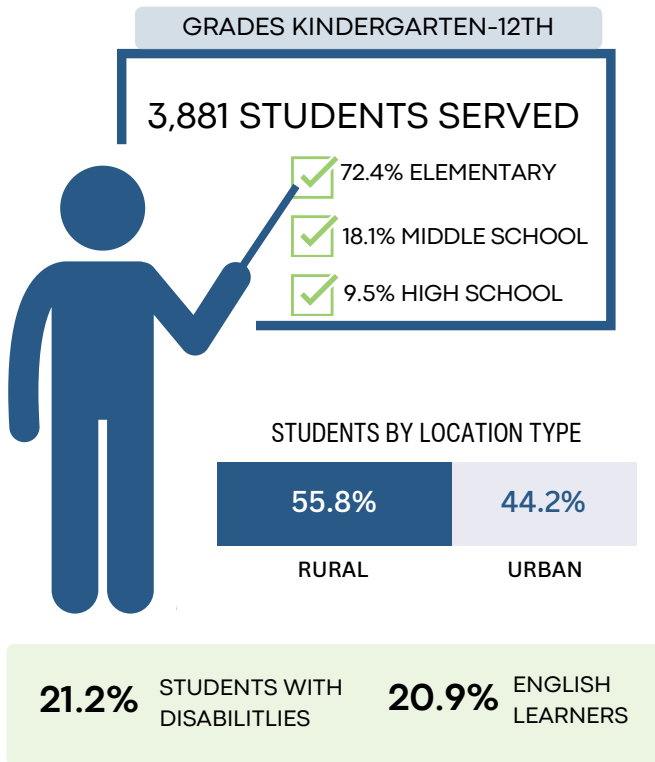
Accelerator with Incubator sites are established programs that added additional new programming sites with ESSER funds.

Six of the 26 incubator sites operated summer programming for the first time in 2024. Many other Incubators were in their second year of summer operation and expanded their programs by increasing capacity, engaging with new community partners, and integrating student and family feedback into activity planning.



WHO WE SERVED

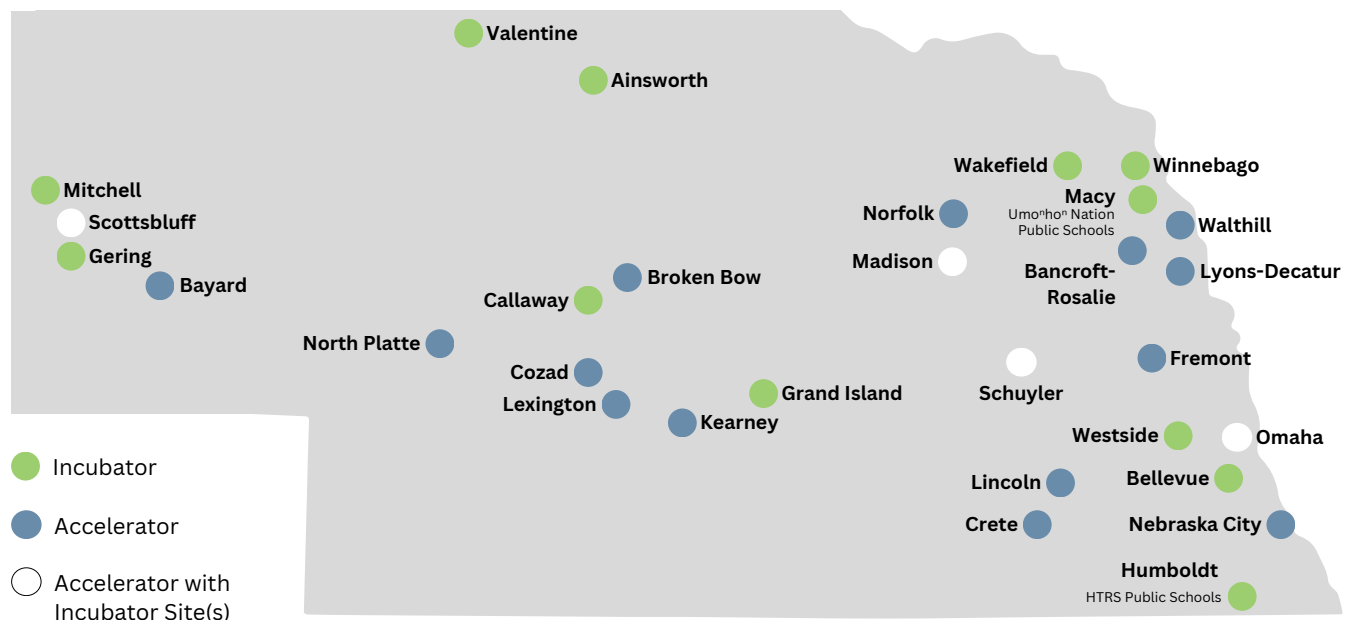
ALL ESSER-FUNDED SITES



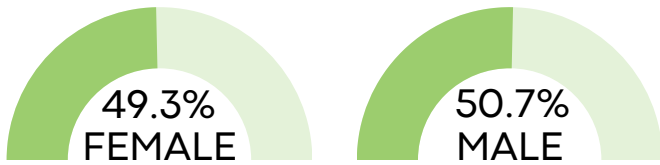
SUMMER SITE LOCATIONS

ESSER Collaborative ELO Communities

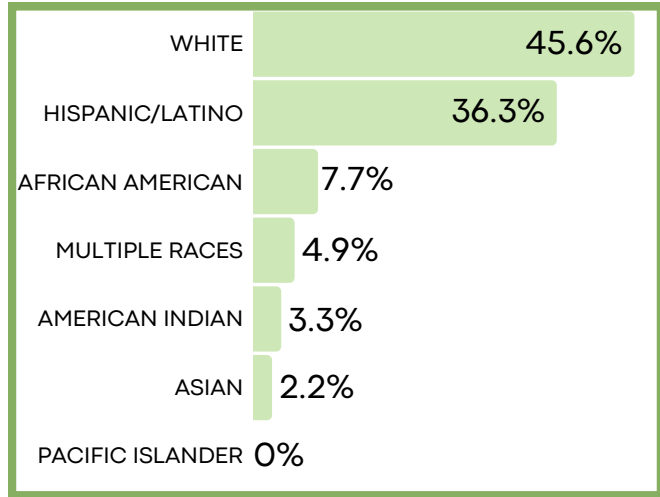
Summer 2024



INCUBATOR SITES



RACES SERVED



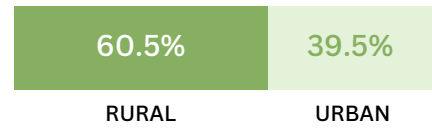
GRADES KINDERGARTEN-12TH

909 STUDENTS SERVED



- 64.7% ELEMENTARY
- 14.5% MIDDLE SCHOOL
- 20.8% HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENTS BY LOCATION TYPE



17.1% STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

21.9% ENGLISH LEARNERS



ACCELERATOR SITES

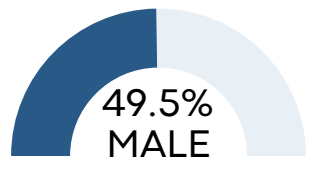
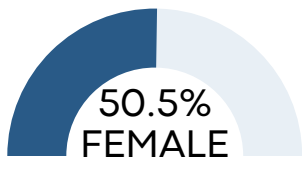
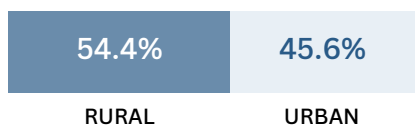
GRADES KINDERGARTEN-12TH

2,972 STUDENTS SERVED

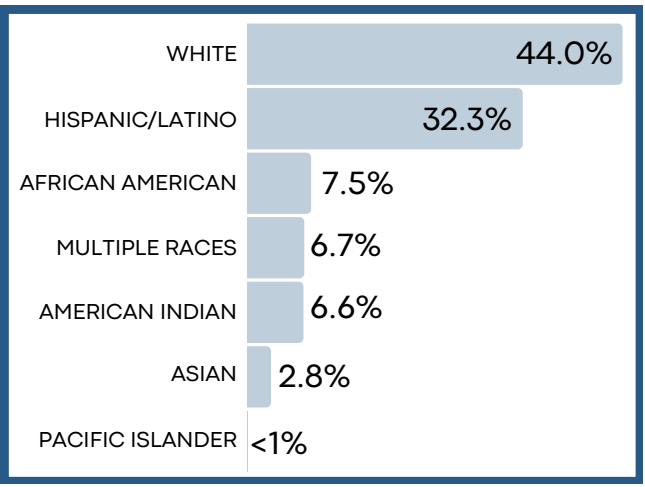
- 74.7% ELEMENTARY
- 19.2% MIDDLE SCHOOL
- 6.1% HIGH SCHOOL



STUDENTS BY LOCATION TYPE



RACES SERVED



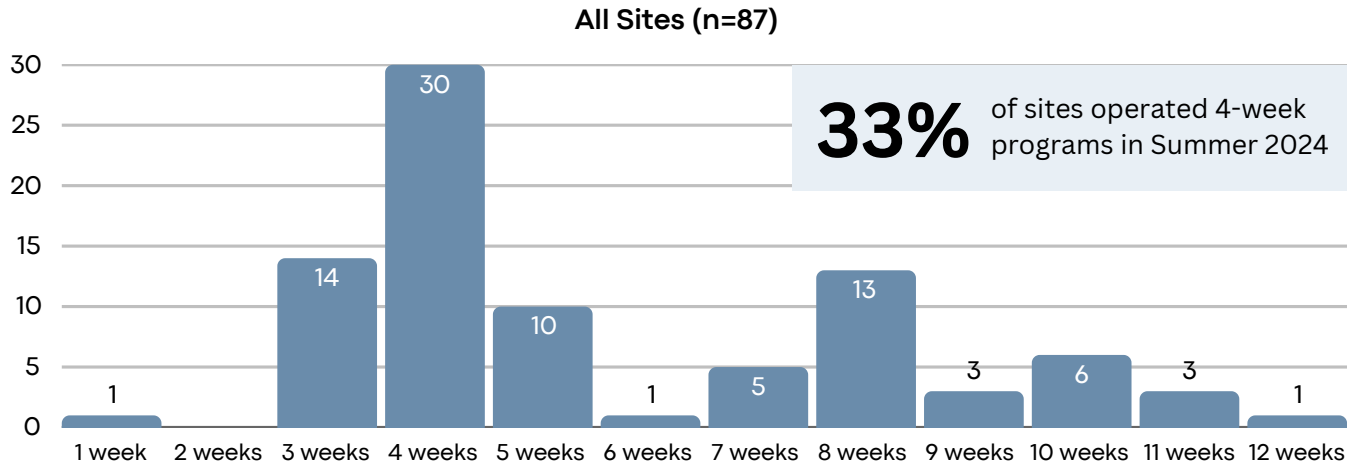
22.5% STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES **20.5%** ENGLISH LEARNERS



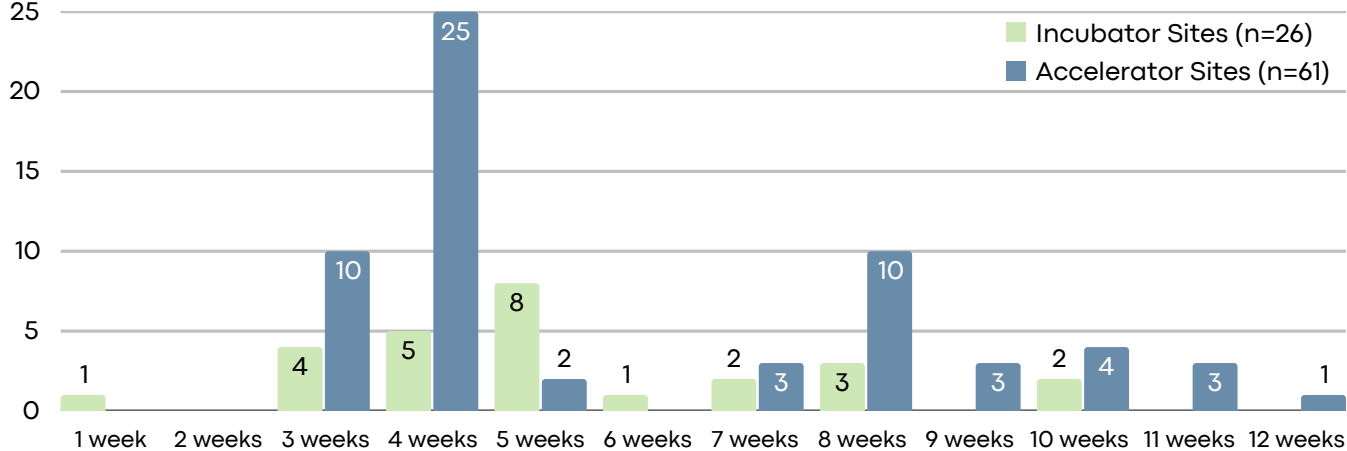
SUMMER PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Communities saw a variety of summer operating schedules, with programs ranging from 1 week to almost 3 months. June 3 was a popular start date, with 60% of sites kicking off their summer programs that day. Many sites scheduled their programs to align with their district’s summer school sessions, demonstrating the year-round collaborative relationship between schools and afterschool programs.

Number of Weeks Sites Offered Programming



Program Length by Site Type



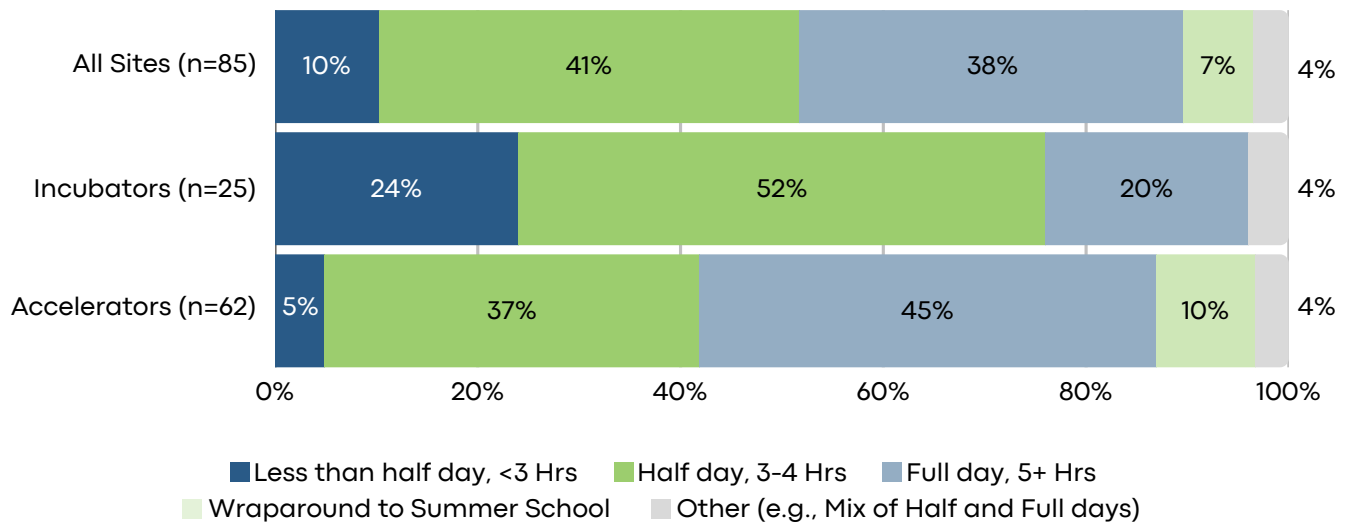
“We would not have been able to provide summer programming or activities without these funds. It gives students a safe and engaging place to spend time during the summer.”

“ESSER funds allowed the program to exist— providing extra time for working families to have somewhere safe for their students to be. By offering this, we made summer school more accessible and contributed to increased student academic achievement.”



Program Hours per Day

Most sites operated half-day or full-day programs. A higher percentage of Accelerator sites offered full-day programming compared to Incubator sites.



STAFFING

Summer program staff are essential in site goals to provide safe environments, build relationships with students, and grow students’ confidence in participating in programming while helping them connect with their peers. Some of the many responsibilities staff provide are supervision, academic support, activity creation, and collaboration with other staff, caregivers, teachers, and community members.

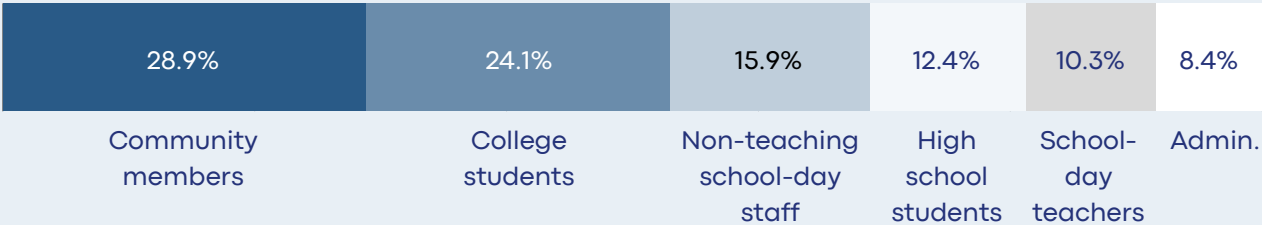
Many sites reported the way staff organized activities and engaged youth was highly impactful. Some programs also noted that staff demonstrated excellent leadership skills, which helped the programming run smoothly. While staff developed relationships with students during programming, they connected with caregivers during pick-up time.



One unique skill utilized by a few sites was bilingual staff who worked with students and caregivers who spoke a language other than English. These staff members provided another layer of connection to the communities they serve.

Accelerator Sites Staffing

Accelerator sites reported 942 staff worked in their programs during the summer of 2024. Community members and college students made up over half of the total staffing population. Programs used a mix of paid and volunteer staff (89% paid vs. 11% volunteer). Community members made up the most volunteers, but more high school students volunteered compared to all other groups.



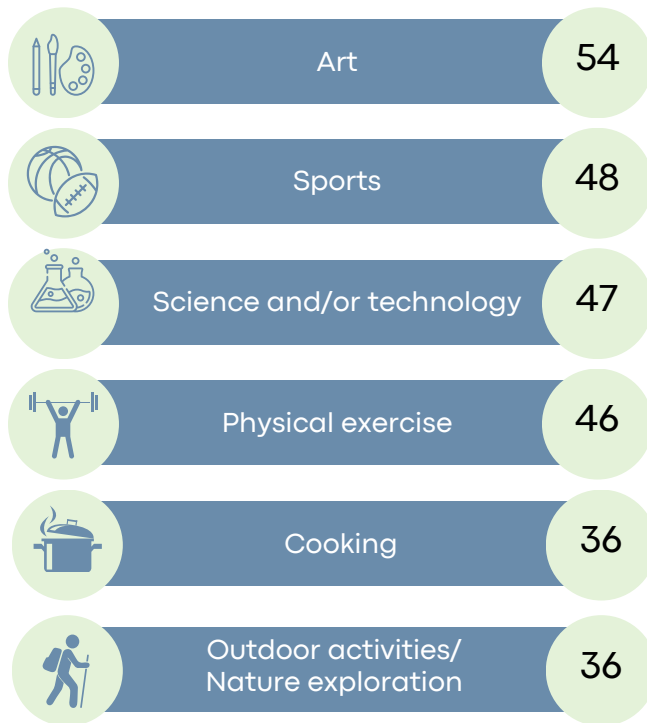
ACTIVITIES

Participation in summer programming offers students access to engaging, hands-on, expanded learning activities. Many summer sites offer longer hours than they do during the school year, themed weeks or additional and unique community partners. Often with better weather and longer days, participants can engage with outdoor sports, nature walks, or play spaces that they might not be able to access during the school year.

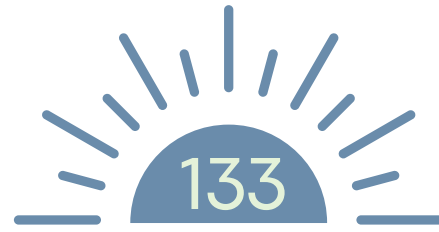


SUMMER CLUBS

Common Club Themes

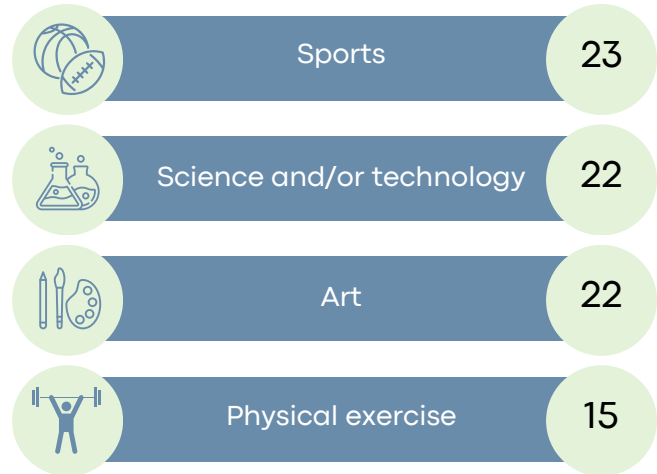


Additional themes included field trips, gardening, career exploration, and eSports.



SUMMER CAMPS

Common Camp Themes



Additional themes included engineering, outdoor activities/nature exploration, field trips, cooking, career exploration, and experiential learning via local partnerships.



CLUB AND CAMP HIGHLIGHTS

“All of our kids were able to take swim lessons throughout the four weeks. We had multiple kids who expressed fear or uncertainty at the beginning of the program. However, by the end those kids were comfortable in the water and having fun! It was a highlight to see them gain confidence and to help all the kids gain skills to keep them safe in and around the water.”

“We were able to incorporate more students voice than ever before. Our summer camp themes were derived from student surveys taken earlier in the year. Students were able to choose which clubs they wanted to participate in throughout the summer as well.”



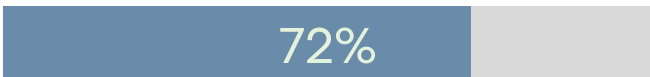
“Students were tremendously engaged in the offerings and enjoyed working with other students to create a product.”

“I am proud of the dedication to partnering with community organizations to expose our students to real-life professionals in their field. Our students also got a plethora of practice of learning skills around healthy eating through our cooking/culinary club that sparked a ton of ideas for them and their families.”

“It was great to partner with different community members during our summer programming. They helped us provide opportunities such as pottery, water play, and exotic animals for our students.”

“Our program offered plenty of different STEM activities during the summer that the kids really enjoyed. We also offered a variety of sports and physical activities that were a huge hit!”

Field trips can be a highlight for any student in their summer program. They are also opportunities to broaden students' understanding of their local and state communities, businesses, industries, and other potential future workplaces, as well as science-focused activities, natural areas, museums, and various arts. For students who live in underserved areas, these trips can be first-time exposures to new areas of inquiry and understanding and provide safe spaces to learn and have fun with friends and staff.

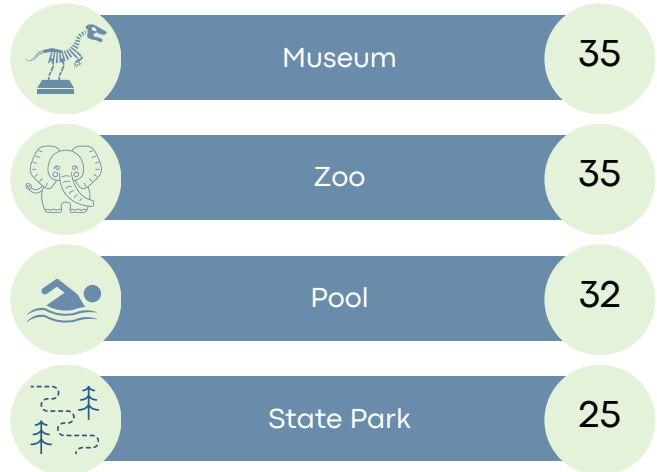


of sites included field trips with students



Field Trips

Common Event Themes



Other destinations included bowling, skating, movie or live theaters, local parks and gardens, government buildings, and local businesses

FIELD TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

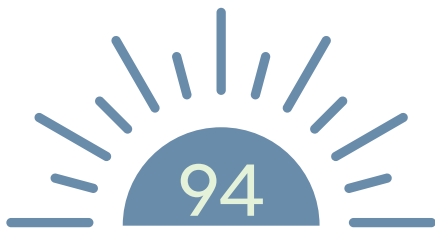
“I think my absolute favorite was taking the students hiking at a state and national parks, learn about geology and American history.”

“The students were able to go fishing and learn all about the wildlife that can be seen in Nebraska...”

The zoo field trip was exciting for the kids because they were able to get a unique stamp at every exhibit we went to. It got them excited to go see each of the animals...”

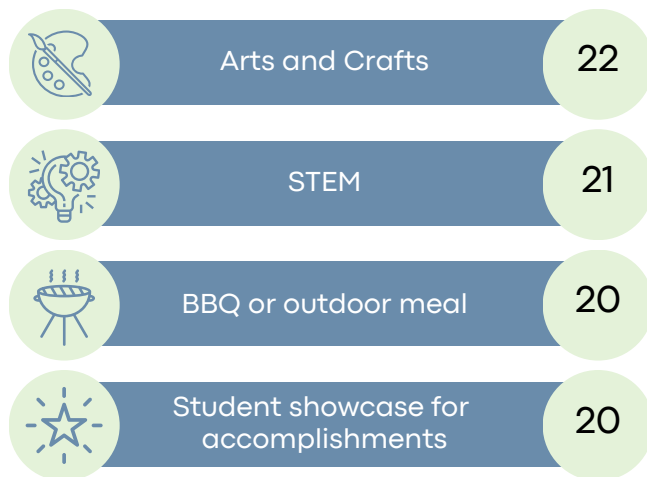
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Family engagement aims to increase the involvement of caregivers in both after-school and summer learning programs. Partnership and coordination between afterschool programs, school partners, and families are essential to the academic, behavioral, and social success of our students. Programs held 94 family events over the summer, an increase from last year’s total of 63. These inspiring summer gatherings are often put together in partnership with key community stakeholders for students and their families around a variety of themes and activities.



Family Engagement Events

Common Event Themes



Other events included 5k races, family swimming, carnivals, and whole-community events with local businesses, organizations and government leaders.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

“Parents along with community members were able to come and experience our farmer’s market.”

“A highlight was having our Hispanic families share their culture with us during our party at the end of June.”

“Families were able to join their students for an afternoon and participate in various projects. Families enjoyed working closely with their students to design and build bridges.”



44% of sites held family engagement events

What Does Family Engagement Look Like?

North Platte Kids Klub, an Accelerator program, reported 10 family engagement events at each of its sites in Summer 2024. Director Carrie Lienemann shared about Kids Klub's 5K event.

How does family engagement look different during the summer?

We do our event outside and involve staff, students, families, community partners, and district administrators. Our 5k event started with training in May with our partner from West Central District Health. We logged miles in the community pool. A local shoe store owner sized each child and provided discounted, name-brand shoes for the event. Beyond School Bells provided the funding for food after the race, and we used ESSER money for the shoes and shirts.

Our families participated or cheered from the sidelines with signs and words of encouragement. Some of our teaching staff supervised the park entrances and provided assistance as needed. Our paras typically participate in the event alongside students. My husband rode his bike on the course and provided first aid if needed. The radio station did a live show from the park and provided music on big speakers as we ran.

How does your program measure success in family engagement?

Honestly, I would have to say we measure success by the number of people and partners

who show up for us every year. And by the number of students who wear our 5k shirts long after the event. We love seeing former and current students at school or out in our community wearing their shirts. They always have a look of pride when they point out that they're wearing their shirts or 5k shoes. It definitely makes us all feel like part of a team and if that isn't success, I don't know what is.

What advice would you give to other programs looking to grow their family or community engagement?

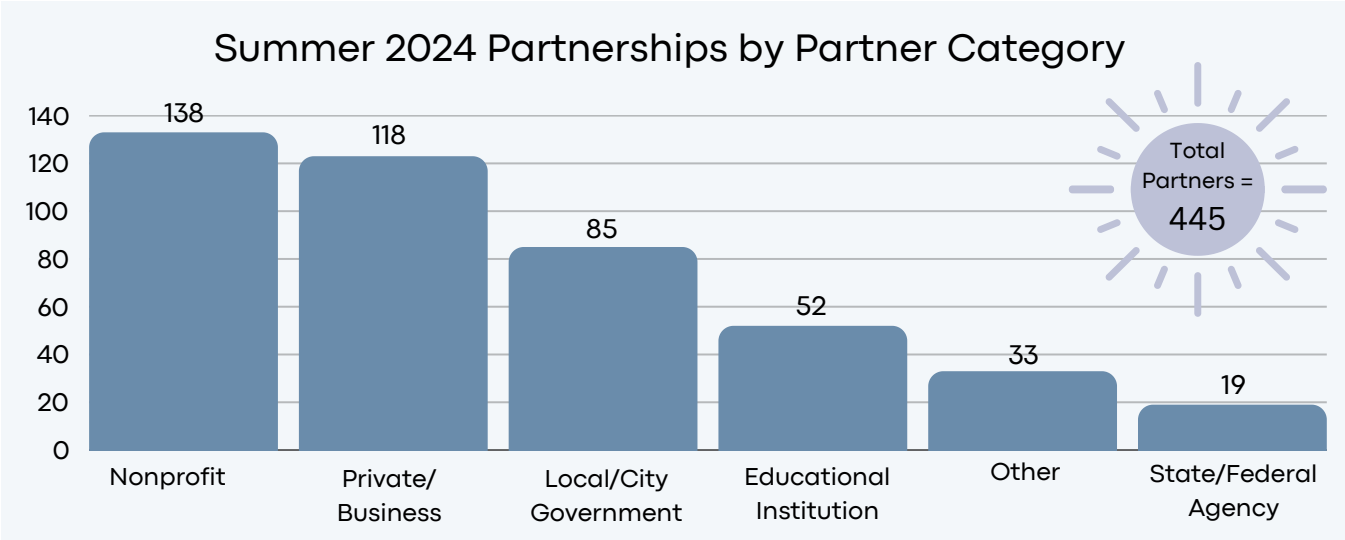
It doesn't have to be a huge coordinated event. Start small. Involve the kids in making the invitations or flyers, and give plenty of notice so everyone has an opportunity to attend. If possible, make it a meal. You will have more involvement if you can provide food. If you have sponsors, be sure to follow up with a thank you. Invite the media to cover your event, or do social media coverage that mentions your event and partners. If there are photos or child interviews, be mindful of students with FERPA forms on file.

You can build bigger and better each year. Just hosting the event itself and welcoming families into your program is a success.



SUMMER PROGRAM PARTNERS

Partnerships within the community aid in the sustainability of afterschool and summer programs. Sites partnered with a variety of organizations and individuals in Summer 2024. Nonprofit groups (e.g., Boys and Girl Scouts of America and the YMCA) and private/business entities accounted for over half of all partners. Local and city government (e.g., chambers of commerce and city parks and rec) made up almost a fifth of partnerships. Educational institutions, community members and religious organizations (which fall into the Other category), and state and federal agencies were other common partners for summer programs.



Partnership Categories at Incubator and Accelerator Sites

Partnerships at Incubator and Accelerator sites varied in Summer 2024. Both Accelerator and Incubator sites had the same percentage of nonprofit organizations that partnered with them (31%). Nonprofit organizations were the most common partners for Accelerator sites (30%), and private companies and businesses were for Incubator sites (42%). Accelerator sites had six partners on average, while Incubator sites had almost two partners on average.

Incubator Partnerships (n=48)



Accelerator Partnerships (n=397)



- Nonprofit
- Private/Business
- Local/City Government
- Educational Institution
- State/Federal Agency
- Other

SURVEY DATA

Surveys were distributed to all students enrolled in the ESSER Collaborative ELO summer programs. The parents or primary caregivers of enrolled students were also surveyed. Both surveys provided lists of statements regarding the quality of the program and asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the statement. The following pages share the statewide results (Accelerator and Incubator sites together), Incubator-only results, and Accelerator-only results for the student and parent groups.

Surveys were given to students in grades kindergarten through 12th, and included five different statements. Students were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement, on a scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. The statements focused on the areas of *education, program fun, peer relationships, staff*, and whether they would *recommend the program* to others.

The structure of the parent survey was identical to the structure of the student survey, but focused on the areas of *enrollment, their child's experience, school readiness, staff, parent involvement*, and *whether they would recommend the program* to other families.

“

I liked that it got him out of the house while I was at work so he wasn't in front of a screen all day. It provided physical activity and social interaction with other kids. I also liked how he learned new things, new topics, and games.

”



STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS: ALL ESSER-FUNDED SITES

Across the state of Nebraska, a total of 2,060 surveys were completed by students in kindergarten through 12th grade who were enrolled in summer programming. The following results are from surveys collected from all ESSER funded programs and sites. The percentages below reflect the student's level of agreement with each of the five statements included on the survey.



81%

of students either agreed or strongly agreed that they learned something new during the summer program.

89%

of students either agreed or strongly agreed that the summer program was fun

89%

of students either agreed or strongly agreed that the summer program staff were good leaders

88%

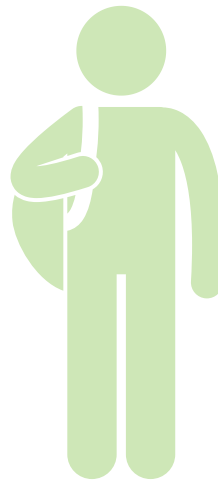
of students either agreed or strongly agreed that they had friends and/or made new friends during the summer

84%

of students either agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the summer program to other students

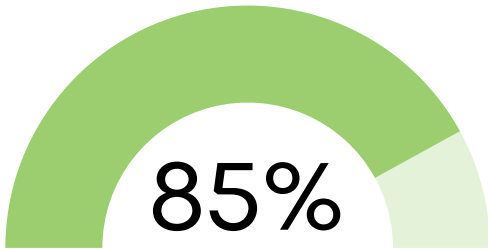
STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS: INCUBATOR SITES

Incubator sites are those that are newly developed, and do not receive 21st Century Community Learning Center funds. A total of 379 students from Incubator sites completed the survey for Summer 2024. The student responses collected across these sites ranged from 1st grade through 12th grade.

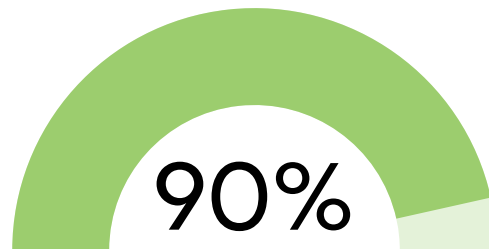


81%

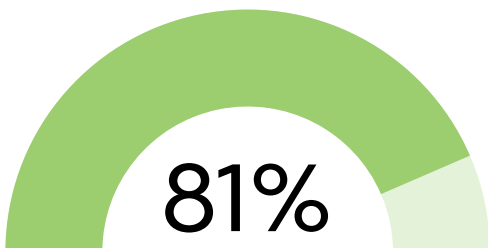
of students across sites either agreed or strongly agreed that they learned something new during the summer program.



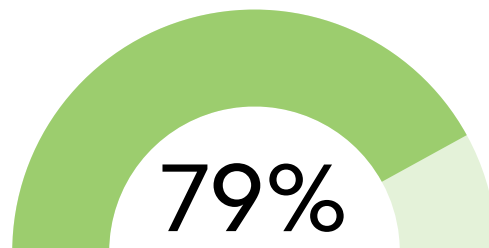
of students across sites either agreed or strongly agreed that the summer program was fun.



of students across sites either agreed or strongly agreed that the summer program staff were good leaders (friendly, prepared, and energetic).



of students across sites either agreed or strongly agreed that they had friends and/or made new friends during the summer program.



of students across sites either agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the summer program to other students.

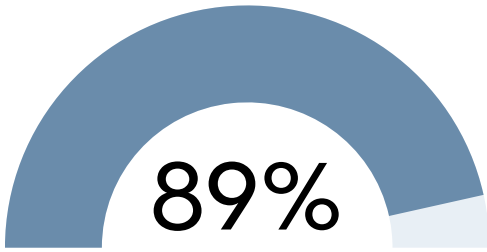
STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS: ACCELERATOR SITES

Accelerator sites are established programs that receive both 21st Century Community Learning Center and ESSER funds. A total of 1,681 students from Accelerator sites completed the survey for Summer 2024. The student responses collected across these sites ranged from 1st grade through 12th grade.

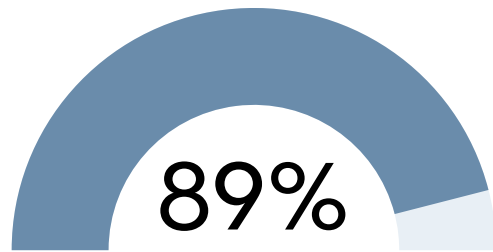


81%

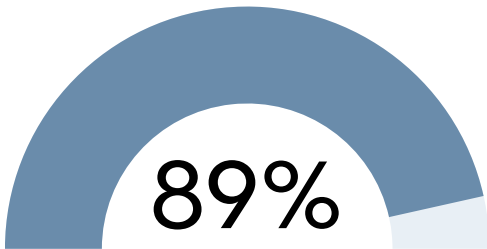
of students across sites either agreed or strongly agreed that they learned something new during the summer program.



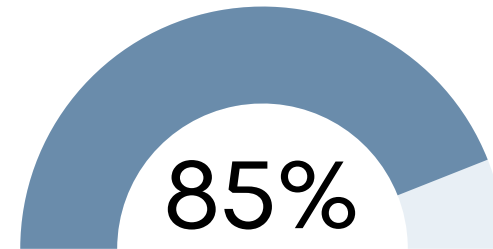
of students across sites either agreed or strongly agreed that the summer program was fun.



of students across sites either agreed or strongly agreed that the summer program staff were good leaders (friendly, prepared, and energetic).



of students across sites either agreed or strongly agreed that they had friends and/or made new friends during the summer program.



of students across sites either agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the summer program to other students.

PARENT SURVEY RESULTS: ALL ESSER-FUNDED SITES

Across the state of Nebraska, surveys were completed by 891 parents of students enrolled in ELO summer programs. Similar to the student surveys, parents were given a set of statements, and asked to indicate their level of agreement with each on a scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. The following results are from the surveys collected from parents with children enrolled in ESSER-funded programs. The percentages reflect the parent's level of agreement with each of the survey statements.

95%

of parents either agreed or strongly agreed that their child was highly engaged in the summer program and enjoyed attending.

96%

of parents either agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend this program to other parents.

96%

either agreed or strongly agreed that their child had increased opportunities to interact socially with others.

89%

felt satisfied with the level of communication from the program.

94%

either agreed or strongly agreed that the summer program staff were good leaders.

55%

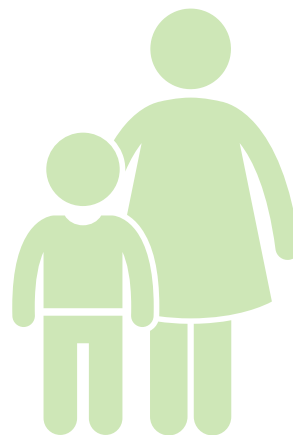
either agreed or strongly agreed that they had opportunities to get involved in the summer program.

83%

either agreed or strongly agreed that their child is more prepared for the upcoming school year.

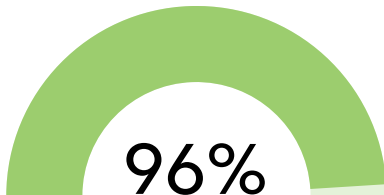
PARENT SURVEY RESULTS: INCUBATOR SITES

Sixteen Incubator sites collected surveys from parents of the students enrolled in their programs. The following results reflect the parents' level of agreement with each of the statements regarding the summer programming.



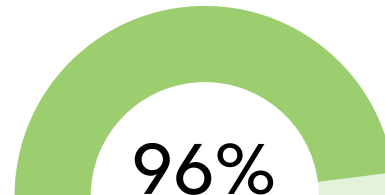
96%

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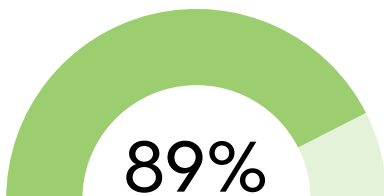
96%

either agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend this program to other parents.



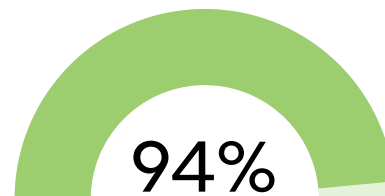
96%

either agreed or strongly agreed that their child had increased opportunities to interact socially with others.



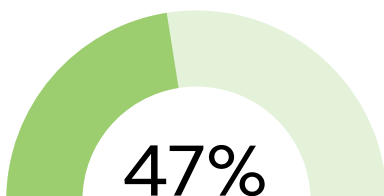
89%

of parents felt satisfied with the level of communication from the program.



94%

either agreed or strongly agreed that the summer program staff were good leaders.



47%

either agreed or strongly agreed that they had opportunities to get involved in the summer program.



79%

either agreed or strongly agreed that their child is more prepared for the upcoming school year.

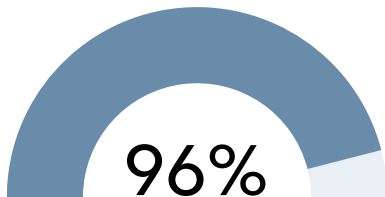
PARENT SURVEY RESULTS: ACCELERATOR SITES

Parents from 56 Accelerator sites responded to the Summer 2024 survey. The following results reflect the parents' level of agreement with each of the statements regarding the summer programming.

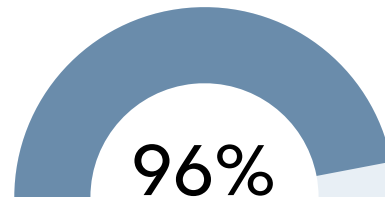


95%

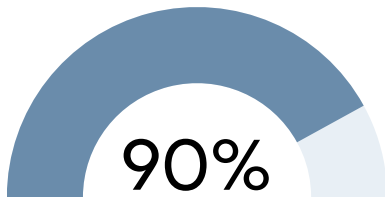
of parents either agreed or strongly agreed that their child was highly engaged in the summer program and enjoyed attending.



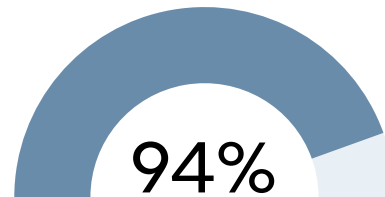
either agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend this program to other parents.



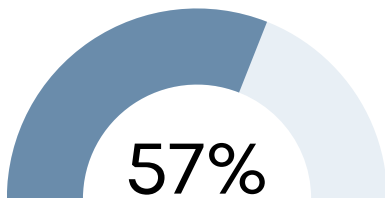
either agreed or strongly agreed that their child had increased opportunities to interact socially with others.



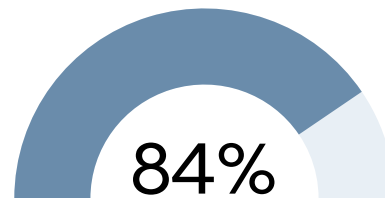
of parents felt satisfied with the level of communication from the program.



either agreed or strongly agreed that the summer program staff were good leaders.



either agreed or strongly agreed that they had opportunities to get involved in the summer program.



either agreed or strongly agreed that their child is more prepared for the upcoming school year.



SUMMER STORIES

Program staff in Cozad, Mitchell, and Valentine shared how the ESSER III grants impacted their communities by enhancing their summer programs and expanding opportunities for their youth. These stories highlight how afterschool programs utilize different types of programming, field trips, student input, and supplies to help youth grow in important skills and develop deeper connections to the communities they are a part of.



Cozad Afterzone

The program focused on career exploration through community engagement. Kindergarten to fifth-grade students learned about diverse careers each week from different community members, including students' caregivers.

Cozad has a strong agriculture and industry background and, along with its local business and medical sites, provides many future career opportunities for youth. Agricultural scientists and radiologists were some of the types of speakers invited to share their knowledge with students in the summer program. Students also went on field trips to different businesses including a bank and a grocery store. The site also developed a playroom with career-themed areas such as a doctor's office and a veterinary clinic.

The program also works to ensure all participating youth are exposed to potential careers in the local economy and other programming opportunities by hiring bilingual staff that reflect the language and culture of the community.





Mitchell Tiger Club

The summer program in Mitchell aims to equip its students with life skills for adulthood. It utilized 4-H programming and teaching numerous teamwork, leadership, creativity, and problem-solving skills. Staff also supported growth in confidence through encouraging participation in programs and the importance of contributing to their community.

Students felt pride in working on different projects, increasing their engagement. Staff noted student dedication on sewing projects, arriving early to create their scrunchies and boho bags. Students learned basic engineering skills and tool safety in the creation of birdhouses. Arts and ceramics classes provided more opportunities for problem-solving, growth mindset, and perseverance. Many of the materials used throughout the programming came from donations from local businesses.



Valentine Badger Club

When creating programming for their site, club organizers seek to integrate youth perspectives into the process. Using the interactive brainstorming process developed by Beyond School Bells, students share their preferences and help to create enriching activities that support engagement and are a lot of fun.

High school staff are an essential part of the Valentine program. They provide meaningful mentorship to the younger youth and help connect them with other program staff. Creating these personal connections increases student engagement with the programming offered and can lead to academic and personal growth that impacts students' lives in the wider community.

Program enrollment is provided at no cost to the families that participate, ensuring no financial constraints. The Valentine Badger Club program is an important part of the community and serves nearly half of the elementary school's students. It provides a safe space for lasting connections with staff and the community members that help support it.



SUMMER CHALLENGES

Several sites reported the challenges faced with student **attendance and enrollment**. Sites expressed a desire to increase participation in their programming for certain age groups but admitted challenges unique to summer, such as summer sports and community pools drawing students away. Other programs described that student participation would not be consistent over the summer due to similar factors or planned family vacations.

A number of sites reported struggling with their **student behaviors**. Some programs hired specialized staff to meet the needs of the students, while others said the behavior issues impacted other parts of the program, such as field trips, which were reportedly decreased due to staff concern of keeping all participants safe.

Sites frequently discussed **maintaining, finding, and scheduling staff**. Many programs worked throughout the summer to recruit more staff. Staff shortages led a few sites to limit the amount of field trips and programming. Other sites expressed the difficulty of working with numerous staff schedules and vacations to maintain enough staff for the number of students attending each day of programming.

Transportation for programming at schools and for field trips was another issue of concern. At times, programs had to problem solve not having consistent



options due to availability or funding. One site noted that their issues were temporary as the school district was switching contracts with bussing companies and didn't anticipate the issue to continue.

Future **funding** once the ESSER grant period ended was voiced by a few programs, expressing long term sustainability concerns. One program explained how a funding cut over the summer meant they reduced the length of their daily program, ending after lunch, and how that may have impacted how many students were able to attend.

Some sites also discussed issues around **language**. Programs wanted more bilingual staff to help translate for students and families. They noted that it would help manage student behaviors, increase family engagement, and deepen connections within their communities.

Some sites saw their **challenges as successes**. One site reported that their initial struggle to find staff led them to seek out teachers. By the end of the summer, they had built a strong core of dedicated teachers as staff, which was ultimately a strong benefit to their program. A site explained how a gardening project that originally was stopped because of planned construction at their site became a community outreach opportunity where the plants to be used in the garden were transplanted into a new bed at a local community garden for the club to use. Along with these stories, sites noted good challenges

to have, such as having too many activities to plan for or having a waitlist of interested students and families, and balancing challenges, such as acknowledging that despite staffing shortages, the summer program was the best so far for those sites.

Though a fair share of challenges were discussed, **many sites noted their programs ran smoothly**. Almost a quarter of Incubator sites reported no challenges (23%) and almost a third of Accelerator sites reported few to no challenges in their programs (27%). Incubator and Accelerator sites noted that working with great partners was one of the reasons for the reduction in challenges, explaining further that partners helped ensure their programs were well-run. They also reported that good preparation practices helped program staff mitigate the impact of the challenges they faced.



SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS

In light of the challenges reported by sites, many successes were highlighted to celebrate their summer programming. Most sites emphasized students' excitement in participating in the unique programming offered and various field trips. Seeing students enjoy themselves was inspiring to the staff. Several sites noted that **student engagement had improved** from the previous year, positively impacting student behavior and strengthening relationships between students and staff.

Programs were happy to share **increased enrollment and daily attendance**. Multiple sites discussed the number of students enrolled and daily attendance, which had grown from the previous year.



A few sites were impressed that their daily attendance stayed consistent throughout the summer and how that contributed to great summer programs. Also noted were that many students were trying out summer programs for the first time and loving them.

Almost all sites reported how **multiple different strands of programing** offered provided their students with great learning opportunities. Problem solving and innovation through STEM and robotics camps, athletic skill training with Olympic-themed programming, healthy living and life skills with cooking classes and activities, exposure to nature conservation and management from field trips to state parks and nature learning centers, and more were some of the praised programming offered at many sites.

Community partners and staff were also appreciated. A few sites shared that they had over twenty partners and remarked how appreciative they were for their partners and the continued growth in their connections to the community. These partnerships enhanced field trips and provided multiple supports, including great programming, funding, and materials to the sites they worked with. Staff was recognized for their work in building relationships with students and facilitating engagement with programming.

Programs also shared successes around field trips. Many sites reported more field trips this summer and increases in **student participation and community engagement** on the trips. The trips offered opportunities to view current community outreach projects, businesses within the community, local and state colleges, nature and wildlife, museums, and community pools. Students were exposed to many skill-building opportunities in conservation, farm production space exploration, swimming, fishing, dance, rock climbing, and more. Some sites reported that caregivers were given more opportunities to attend with students on field trips. The majority of sites reporting their field trip highlights remarked on how much students enjoyed these enrichment opportunities.

Many programs also offered **academic support**. Sites reported that tutoring and academic support were offered as part of their summer programming. This included homework help during programming, credit recovery or attainment, and career readiness activities. Some sites also

offered cultural programs exposing students to other languages or local cultures in their communities. Opportunities for students to develop skills for future careers such as entrepreneurship, arts and music, and community service projects were provided through engaging activities in many sites.

Programs shared the lasting impact of **family engagement opportunities**. Many programs offered multiple opportunities for families to come and engage with the program with different themed events or showcases. Some sites shared an increase in engagement from the previous year, and one site noted the involvement of their families coming to events even when they had previous cancelations due to weather. Events strengthened program relationships with their families and community partners. Sites shared the positive impact on families by hosting showcases featuring student work, student performances, or opportunities for caregivers and students to work together.



Key Findings

- Overall, 3,881 students were served at different summer programs across Nebraska, ranging from a few weeks to the entire summer break.
- ESSER funds supported a wide range of expanded learning opportunities that aided students' skills development and connections to their local and state communities. Sites offered a total of 1,173 clubs, camps, field trips, and family engagement events.
- Sites reported that staff improved student engagement and that leadership skills were valued. Most staff connected with caregivers during pickup times, and some sites used bilingual staff for better communication.
- Summer program partnerships provided additional materials, programming opportunities, and direct funds to sites. Nonprofit organizations and businesses made almost 60% of summer partners.
- On average, Accelerator sites had six partners while Incubator sites had almost two which highlights that as programs become more established, they are able to build and maintain increased partnerships.
- 2,368 surveys were completed by caregivers and students. The majority of parents were satisfied with the programs and felt they prepared their child(ren) more for the coming school year. Students reported that summer programs were fun and offered opportunities to spend time with friends.

Recommendations

- While caregivers ranked opportunities to get involved in summer programs lower than any other category on the surveys, some summer programs reported an increase in family engagement by offering additional engagement opportunities. Continue to prioritize creating engaging ways to include families in specialized events that showcase student accomplishments and highlight all the ways programs support youth. Include youth voice in planning and executing family events. Start small if needed, offer meals, invite local media, and be sure to send thank you notes to supporting partners.
- Summer programs were excited to offer fun and engaging activities that took advantage of extended operating hours and unique program partners and dedicated staff. Support programs' ability to provide innovative, hands-on learning opportunities through staff development and connections to programming partners.
- Some programs experienced challenges with student behavior. Engage staff in professional development around behavior management or reach out for guidance, resources, and opportunities around this topic.
- Some new programs experienced challenges with competing with other summer activities, and transportation. Provide summer programs with marketing strategies or materials to increase their visibility with families and community stakeholders.

