

21st Century Community Learning Centers

Central Decatur & Mormon Trail Report

Cardinal Muscle is a collaborative project of Central Decatur & Mormon Trail Community School Districts, and Graceland University, Lamoni Iowa. The partners share resources, responsibilities and risks of the 21st Century program, each contributing to its operations, programming and quality according to individual areas of expertise and mission-alignment.

During the 2013-2014 program year, three 21st Century Community Learning Centers were operated at CD South Elementary, CD North Elementary, and Mormon Trail Elementary.

Before school programs were offered at schools with daily start times of 7:00am. Afterschool programs were offered at all sites until 5:30 PM. Summer programs were operated at all grant sites.

Two goals for programming have been identified and are listed below:

Goal 1: Increase academic achievement for students in reading.

Goal 2: Increase academic achievement for students in math.

The guiding values of the Central Decatur & Mormon Trail Programs are:

- All children deserve physical and emotional environments that satisfy their basic needs.
- All children need supportive adult relationships and role models.
- All children benefit from expanded learning opportunities.

Program Information:

Each program day during the school year, students receive the following from the time school ends to until 5:30 PM:

- A healthy snack provided through the school snack program by Central Decatur & Mormon Trail School Food Service.
- Academic time. During academic time, students receive homework help and tutoring from both certified teachers and Cardinal Muscle staff members. Cardinal Muscle staff members also use high frequency word games, developed specifically for Cardinal Muscle programs, as well as practice spelling words. Each program site has a rotating book bin of books pulled from the school libraries for students to read during independent reading time.
- Enrichment time. During enrichment time, students participate in expanded learning opportunities that help them further explore and apply the knowledge they have learned during the school day. Enrichment activities are supervised and created by Cardinal Muscle staff members and community partners.
- Recreation time. During recreation time, students participate in a variety of structured and semi-structured activities including fitness walking, teambuilding games, playground games, and small group indoor and outdoor activities. Once each month, students attend a field / study trip to expose them to a variety of local enrichment, cultural and entertainment venues. These trips are especially important for our lowest-income students, as they often do not have opportunities to engage in activities such as these in their life outside of school-based programs.

Staffing:

There are four types of staff members in Cardinal Muscle. They are:

- Program Coordinators. Program Coordinators are certified teachers employed by Central Decatur and Mormon Trail Community School Districts. These staff members are certified teachers with experience in leadership and program development. They attend training throughout the year and collaborate at least twice a year.
- Certified teachers & paraprofessionals. Each 21st Century site has between two and six teachers or paraprofessionals who share responsibility for providing extra support around academic activities, homework completion and tutoring. Certified teachers are employed by Central Decatur & Mormon Trail Community Schools.
- Community Members. Each 21st Century site has between one and three community members who share responsibility for monitoring program activities, supervising students, and working on homework. Community members undergo background checks and are provided training by the school districts each year.
- High School Students. Each 21st Century site has between two and seven high school students who assist with individual students, and assist adult program staff in supervision of elementary students. High school students complete a job application each year, and undergo background checks. They are provided training by the program coordinator each year.

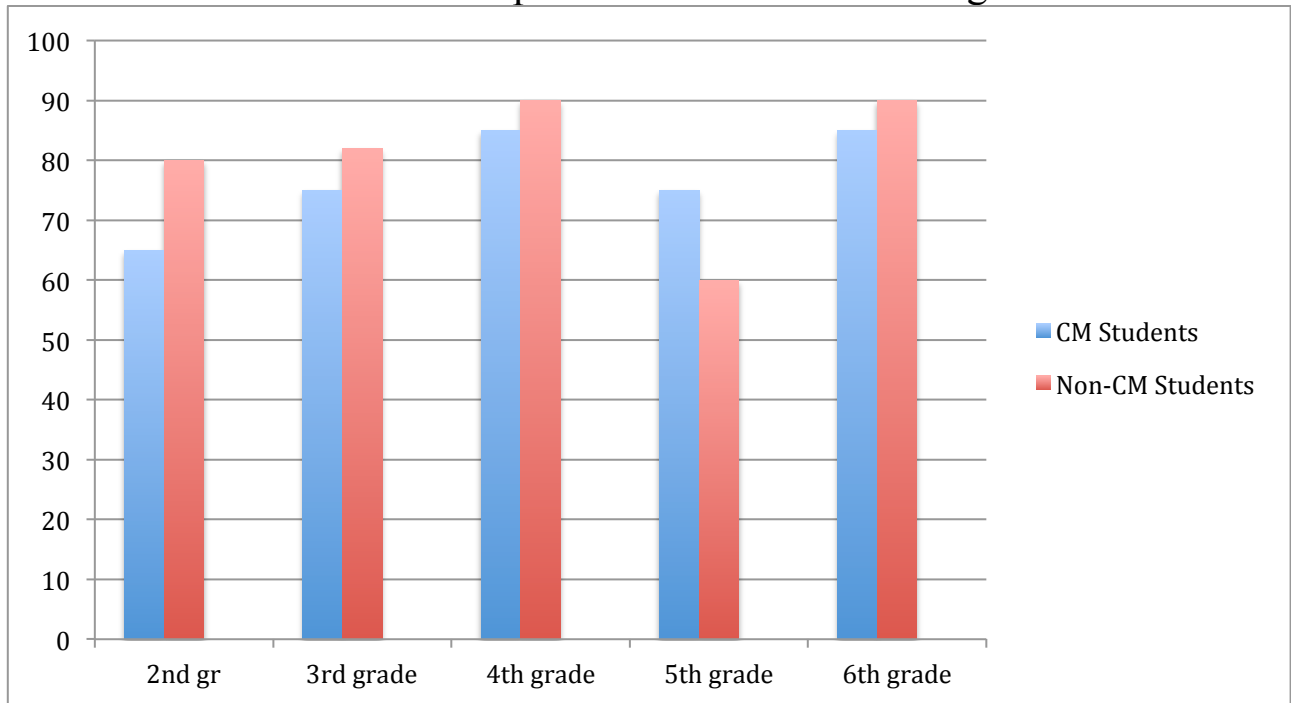
Objectives

Each 21st Century Community Learning Center site may have building specific needs. However, there are two main objectives that are embedded in each 21st century program. They are as listed below:

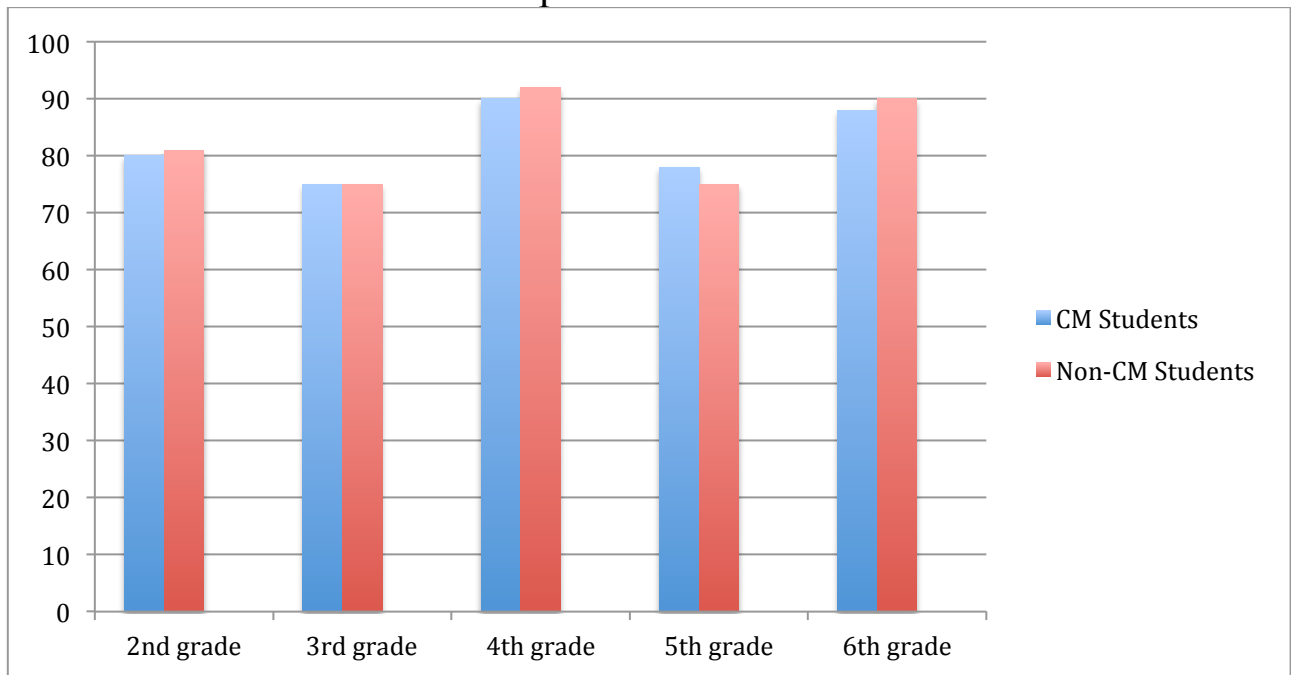
Objective	Assessment Tool	Assessment Method
85% of students (attending 30 or more days) will be proficient in reading as measured by the MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) by June 2015. (grades 2-6)	MAP- Measures of Academic Progress	Spring testing- grades 2-6
85% of students (attending 30 or more days) will be proficient in math as measured by the MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) by June 2015. (grades 2-6)	MAP- Measures of Academic Progress	Spring testing- grades 2-6

Performance Summary:

% of Students proficient on MAP Reading:



% of Students proficient on MAP Math:



Anecdotal Data

Student surveys from the 2013-2014 school year collected information about students' perceptions of the Cardinal Muscle program. Responses were overwhelmingly positive.

Question	Yes	Sometimes	No
I feel accepted by other kids at Cardinal Muscle.	60%	34%	5%
I feel safe at Cardinal Muscle.	84%	12%	4%
I get my homework done at Cardinal Muscle.	71%	22%	7%
Cardinal Muscle has helped me get better grades in reading or language arts at school.	71%	17%	12%
Cardinal Muscle has helped me get better grades in mathematics at school.	68%	17%	15%
I get along well with the other students at Cardinal Muscle.	76%	23%	1%
I like the activities at Cardinal Muscle.	72%	24%	4%
The adults at Cardinal Muscle care about me.	87%	10%	3%

Parent surveys from the 2013-2014 school year collected information about parents' perceptions of the Cardinal Muscle program. Responses were overwhelmingly positive. Anecdotal responses from parent surveys are included below:

- The after school program really helps my children.
- Since I work, I depend on the after school program to keep my kids safe before and after school.
- My children love “walking Wednesdays”. They love running in the hallways for exercise.
- I don't have time after work to help my child with homework, so I appreciate the cardinal muscle workers to help my child get it done.
- I love the fact that my kids can ride the bus home after the cardinal muscle program ends, and that they can ride the bus in the summers both ways.

Recommendations:

Due to the rural nature of the school districts and communities, it can be difficult to provide “cultural” and off site enrichment opportunities. Attendance on these “field trip” days indicates this is a highly preferred activity.

As this grant moves forward, careful consideration of sustainability will be needed. Clearly these programs fill a critical role in the community in serving children before/after school and during summer breaks.

Additional training with program staff on developing STEM activities would benefit the program. STEM opportunities on a small scale were always well attended by students. Staff would benefit from training in the design and implementation of additional STEM activities.

The homework assistance fills a critical need. In addition, program staff need to look at more ways to offer specific tutoring for struggling students.