











## Executive Summary

With funding from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC), Living Classrooms Foundation implements the Baltimore Environmental Education Summer Math and Reading Trailblazers (BEE SMART) program. The program is designed to prevent summer learning loss and raise below-average reading scores among low-income rising 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students from Lakeland Elementary Middle School (Lakeland) and Maree Garnett Farring Elementary Middle School (Farring), both school-wide Title I schools. The three program sites are Masonville Cove, Lakeland, and Farring. The program weaves academic learning with hands-on enrichment that emphasizes linkages between school year learning and summer activities. The following findings are based on evaluation data from the 2018-19 academic year, Year 1 of this 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding cycle. Please refer to the full technical report for a more detailed description of the program and its evaluation findings.


### Findings by MSDE Objective

The following is an overview of BEE SMART's progress toward MSDE's 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Objectives. For more detailed information about the rating scales and available data, please refer to the body of the report.











Objective	Performance Measures
<b>Objective 1: <i>Progressed</i></b> Educational and social benefits and positive behavioral changes	 <b>85%</b> of students increased by one level or more or were at level W from the beginning to end of the program. (n=78) <i>Target=70%</i>
	-- Fall 2019 standardized reading assessment data not yet available
	-- Fall 2019 Q1 report card grades not yet available
	 <b>86%</b> of students demonstrated appreciation of the value of high expectations. (n=37) <i>Target=70%</i>
	 <b>77%</b> of students participated in the Family Night event. (n=79) <i>Target=85%</i>
	 <b>92%</b> average daily attendance for the summer program. <i>Target=85%</i>
<b>Objective 2: <i>Met</i></b> High-quality educational, developmental, and recreational services	 All participants engaged in daily STEM lessons, weekly reading tutoring sessions, morning mentoring sessions, and guided recreation sessions.
	 All participants contributed to a service-learning project.
	 Staff offered a Family Night for each partner school.
	 Staff maintained frequent communication with families via text system, phone calls, and weekend conversation assignments.
	 Staff were available in-person during arrival and dismissal for discussion with parents/guardians.
	 A bilingual parent liaison was available for all parents and translated English documents into Spanish.





 Met

 Approached ( $\geq 90\%$  of target)

 Not Met

-- Data Not Available

Objective	Performance Measures
<b>Objective 3: Met</b> Parental involvement and family literacy	 <b>87%</b> of families participated in at least one Family Night hosted by program staff that offered opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles, child development, and team/community-building skills. (n=79) <i>Target=75%</i>
	 <b>78%</b> of families engaged in services and activities that improve literacy and parenting skills. (n=79) <i>Target=65%</i>
	 <b>60%</b> of families for whom English is a second language participated in workshops or services to improve English fluency. (n=35) <i>Target=50%</i>
<b>Objective 4: Met</b> Safe physical space to meet the needs of participants	 Sites were equipped with space and equipment to meet the needs of all participants.
	 Sites offered outdoor spaces that were arranged for a wide variety of activities.
	 The space was arranged so that various activities could take place at the same time without disruption.
	 Indoor alternatives were offered in extreme summer heat.
<b>Objective 5: Met</b> Program relates to participants and responds to individual needs	 BEE SMART Program Director collected yearly updated resumes for all staff.
	 Returning staff were re-interviewed to ensure enthusiasm for and commitment to the program.
	 All staff participated in a week-long training session prior to the start of the program.

 Met     
 Approached ( $\geq 90\%$  of target)     
 Not Met     
 Data Not Available

## Successes

The following successes are grounded in the 2018-19 BEE SMART evaluation findings and are reflective of discussions with program staff. For more detail, please refer to the body of the report.

- **Educational and social benefits for students:** During this program year, BEE SMART participants showed gains in reading level and character education, exceeding targets in each of these areas.
- **Family engagement:** BEE SMART excelled in family engagement during this program year, particularly with strengthened communication abilities through the use of a bilingual parent liaison.
- **Opportunities for group process skills:** During the external program observation, several of the activities included opportunities for youth to build group process skills.

## Challenges

The following challenges are grounded in the 2018-19 BEE SMART evaluation findings and are reflective of discussions with program staff. For more detail, please refer to the body of the report.

- **Family event attendance:** BEE SMART program leadership noted family event attendance as a challenge this program year, as attendance was lower than it has been in previous program years.
- **Participant turnover in Week 1:** Participant turnover in Week 1 of the program was an administrative challenge for coordinating rosters, medical information records, and dismissal protocols for site managers.
- **Provision of ESOL services:** The BEE SMART program did not offer its own ESOL classes but shared with families a list of community resources offering ESOL services.

## Recommendations

Looking ahead to Year 2 of the program, Sharp Insight respectfully proposes the following key recommendations for BEE SMART program leadership to consider. For more detail, please refer to the body of the report.

1. To work towards higher student participation in Family Night events, consider strategies to market each site's event earlier and throughout the program.
2. To strengthen evaluation of Objectives 2, 4, and 5, consider incorporating outcome measures in addition to process measures.
3. To further strengthen student engagement with the program, consider opportunities to incorporate process choices.
4. To strengthen the rigor of the evaluation design, consider working with independent evaluators, and potentially with school partners, to define comparison groups for future analyses.