

Achievement and Excellence at the Village Learning Place

American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Annual Evaluation Report SY 2022: Let's Invest in Neighborhood Kids (LINK) After School and LINK Leaders School Year



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There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning.

Jiddu Krishnamurti

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Acknowledgements

Dr. Amy Desai Graham would like to thank the staff and funders of LINK After School and LINK Leaders School Year at Village Learning Place for the opportunity to serve and support your program and the young people and families you engage.

Acronyms

ARP ESSER: American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief

ELA: English Language Arts

LINK - Let's Invest in Neighborhood Kids

MSDE: Maryland State Department of Education

VLP - Village Learning Place

Executive Summary

Let's Invest in Neighborhood Kids (LINK) After School and LINK Leaders School Year are supported by the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) grant and provide an afterschool enrichment program at the Village Learning Place (VLP). VLP aims to promote literacy, cultural awareness, and lifelong learning through access for all ages to information, resources, and educational programs.

During the three-year cycle, the program seeks to document academic achievement via demonstrated improvements in math and reading/ELA (English language arts); student-reported preparedness for the next school year, and college and career opportunities (including the development of future goals); improved social and emotional skills; engagement in service learning; parental engagement, and successful program implementation via site observations of academic and enrichment programming. Of 30 students who enrolled in the LINK After School program, 20 were tracked for detailed outcomes who attended the program for more than 30 days during the school year. Participants in the LINK Leaders School Year program were not consistently tracked for progress towards milestones, so the number of students tracked varies by indicator. In the first year of the three-year funding cycle, VLP was able to successfully meet eight of its nine indicators for the year.

Of the goals and indicators outlined for the site, the evaluation team considered the following in Table 1:

Table 1. Program Goals, Indicators, and Results SY2022

Goals	Indicators	Year 1 Result
Goal 1: Integrate an educational component that will assist students in meeting academic requirements on grade level.	Indicator 1.1 By May 2022, 50% of students in grades 1-6 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will show an improvement in math performance and skills.	✓ Milestone was met.
	Indicator 1.2 By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades 1-6 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will show an improvement in ELA performance and skills.	✓ Milestone was met.
Goal 2: Provided learning and enrichment activities that assisted students in achieving at or above grade level in the next school year; and exposed students to future learning and life opportunities.	Indicator 2.1 By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades preK-6 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will report feeling prepared to succeed in the following school year.	✓ Milestone was met.
	Indicator 2.2 By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades 7-12 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will report knowledge of career and college options.	✓ Milestone was met.
	Indicator 2.3 By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades 7-12 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will create and achieve academic and life goals.	✓ Milestone was met.
Goal 3: Enhance students' access to physical, social, and emotional support.	Indicator 3.1 By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades preK-6 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will demonstrate strong socio-emotional skills.	✓ Milestone was met.
	Indicator 3.2 By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades 7-12 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will demonstrate strong socio-emotional skills.	✓ Milestone was met.
	Indicator 3.3 By May of 2022, 50% of caregivers with children in grades K-12 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will participate in 2 parental engagement activities during the school year.	✓ Milestone was met.
	Indicator 3.4 By May of 2022, 85% of students in grades 7-12 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will participate in 10 hours of service learning during the school year.	X Milestone was not met.

✓ milestone met X milestone not met N/A cannot determine if milestone was met

Opportunities

- Build upon the strong academic achievements made in math and ELA, and provide focused intervention to students and grade levels that require more academic support, particularly in math, to ensure future academic milestones can be achieved.
- The program has demonstrated a strong record for tracking and assessing LINK After School students, and can leverage this foundation to more closely track and assess students in the LINK Leaders School Year program to assist with the monitoring of program indicators.

Challenges

- The structure of the LINK Leaders School Year program makes monitoring attendance and determining regularly attending students challenging. Consider redefining a "regular" participant in the LINK Leaders School Year program to align with the goal of having students attend at least once a week.

Recommendations

- + More closely track and assess students in the LINK Leaders School Year program so that progress toward indicators can be more accurately assessed and more representative of all students served.
- + Redefine "regular" participants for the LINK Leaders School Year program to more appropriately align with the program structure and nature of programming, so that attendance data accurately represents participation goals.

Introduction

Village Learning Place (VLP) is an independent non-profit library that houses educational programs, enrichment opportunities, and informational resources located in Charles Village. Since 2007, they have worked with young people from pre-K to 8th grade and expanded to serve students in pre-K to 12th grade. They were selected into the 2021-2024 cohort of American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) program, a federally funded initiative managed at the state level through the Maryland State Department of Education. The funding supports VLP's ongoing after school enrichment programs, Let's Invest in Neighborhood Kids (LINK) After School and LINK Leaders School Year. This report summarizes the results from the first year of activities of both programs.



Program Description

LINK After School and LINK Leaders School Year are small community-based after school programs offered at the Village Learning Place in the Charles Village neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland. Both programs are offered free of charge and returned to in-person programming in SY 2021-2022. LINK After School serves Pre-Kindergarten to 6th Grade students every day, Monday-Friday from 2:25-5:30pm. During SY 2021-2022, the program was offered from October 4, 2021 to May 27, 2022. The program provides students with free, dynamic programming and nutritious snacks and supper every weekday throughout the school year. The academic focus of the LINK programs is on reading, mathematics, science, and character education with quality instruction and research-based curricula. Enrichment opportunities include STEM, art, teambuilding, and physical activities. There was no preK, Grade 1 or Grade 4 class during SY 2021-22.

LINK Leaders serves 7th to 12th grade students every day during the school year, Monday-Friday, from 2:30-5:30pm. During SY 2021-2022, the program was offered from October 4, 2021 to June 2, 2022. LINK Leaders supports learning while guiding middle and high school students to graduation and into college, technical training, and/or the workforce. Through their "Leaders Open Doors" curriculum, students are encouraged to seek out opportunities, new experiences, and opportunities. In addition, LINK Leaders aims to provide students access to dynamic learning and networking opportunities. The LINK Leaders program focuses on character-building and leadership training through hands-on education, workshops, and partnerships with community leaders. Community service is emphasized within the college and career-readiness curriculum.

The LINK Leaders program schedule differs from the PreK-6th programming (LINK After School) in that it is less structured and daily attendance is not required. Instead, students can drop-in as their schedule allows or sign-up for the numerous workshops and enrichments that are available throughout the year. It is expected that all enrolled students will attend programming at least once a week throughout the school year. Each day starts with a self-guided period for study and transition time from 2:30-3:30pm. Structured programming takes place from 3:30-5pm each day featuring a variety of activities including enrichment workshops, college & career exploration, leadership development, and service learning. Dinner is served beginning at 5:00pm.

Evaluation Overview

Dr. Amy Desai Graham and her team were engaged to assess descriptive goals and outcomes to satisfy external evaluation requirements during the first year of the current three-year funding cycle. Program planners are interested in the required monitoring and evaluation measures, as well as ensuring that the goals of the project adhere to the core values of the program's framework.



Performance Goals and Indicators

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) identified three performance goals to evaluate the effectiveness of the ARP ESSER grant programs. In the 2022 school year, the LINK After School and LINK Leaders School Year programs aimed to measure success according to the following indicators:

Goal 1 – Integrate an educational component that will assist students in meeting academic requirements on grade level.

Indicator 1.1 By May 2022, 50% of students in grades 1-6 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will show an improvement in math performance and skills.

Indicator 1.2 By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades 1-6 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will show an improvement in ELA performance and skills.

Goal 2 – Provided learning and enrichment activities that assisted students in achieving at or above grade level in the next school year; and exposed students to future learning and life opportunities.

Indicator 2.1 By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades preK-6 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will report feeling prepared to succeed in the following school year.

Indicator 2.2 By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades 7-12 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will report knowledge of career and college options.

Indicator 2.3 By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades 7-12 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will create and achieve academic and life goals.

Goal 3 – Enhance students' access to physical, social, and emotional support.

Indicator 3.1 By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades preK-6 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will demonstrate strong socio-emotional skills.

Indicator 3.2 By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades 7-12 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will demonstrate strong socio-emotional skills.

Indicator 3.3 By May of 2022, 50% of caregivers with children in grades K-12 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will participate in 2 parental engagement activities during the school year.

Indicator 3.4 By May of 2022, 85% of students in grades 7-12 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will participate in 10 hours of service learning during the school year.

Evaluation Questions

For the first year of the cycle, the evaluation team focused on documenting the evaluation questions, which align with the goals identified by MSDE to measure effectiveness of ARP ESSER programs.

- 1) To what extent was the program implemented as designed?
 - See results in the Program Quality section on pages 19-21, which summarizes the findings from the two site visits conducted during SY 2021-22. Also see Goal 2 (Indicators 2.1-2.3) on page 16, which summarizes students' perceptions and Leaders' goal setting achievements, as well as Goal 3 (Indicator 3.4) on pages 17-18, which summarizes Leaders' participation in service learning.

- 2) To what extent was academic success achieved for all students?
 - See results under Goal 1 (Indicators 1.1-1.2) on pages 14-15, which summarize academic achievement.
- 3) To what extent was the program able to engage and support caregivers in family literacy and related educational development?
 - See results under Goal 3 (Indicator 3.3) on pages 17-18, which summarizes caregiver and family engagement achievements and describes the engagement activities offered in SY 2021-22.
- 4) To what extent do students demonstrate social-emotional benefits, as well as positive behavior change over the course of their participation in the program?
 - See results under Goal 3 (Indicators 3.1 and 3.2) on pages 17-18, which summarizes socio-emotional achievements for the year.

Evaluation Design & Methods

This descriptive evaluation, designed to document both program implementation and participant outcome data, utilizes a mixed-method approach. Student outcomes and program implementation data were gathered through custom spreadsheets shared by program staff and assessed using comparative analysis of individual matched data. Quantitative analyses were conducted in Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and some summary and visualization using Google Sheets or MS Excel. Data accuracy was ensured by a central program staff member responsible for data entry and review. After data transfers, the evaluation staff ran the appropriate cross-checks to ensure data quality and notified the program staff of any discrepancies/errors. Data security was ensured by removing participant indicators from the data as soon as possible and maintaining standard data protocols for data management by securing data in password-protected files.

Site observation, the qualitative component, occurred on two occasions in the Spring of 2022. Observable factors for focus via in-classroom observations and a walkthrough of the grounds and facilities typically include the facility, types of activities, classroom management, safety and security, student engagement with activities, teacher-student interaction, and utilization of resources. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these observations were conducted by the evaluation team virtually with the exception of observations regarding the facility.

Analyses and evaluations reflect a focus on program goals and associated indicators.

Evaluation Results – Findings

Participants

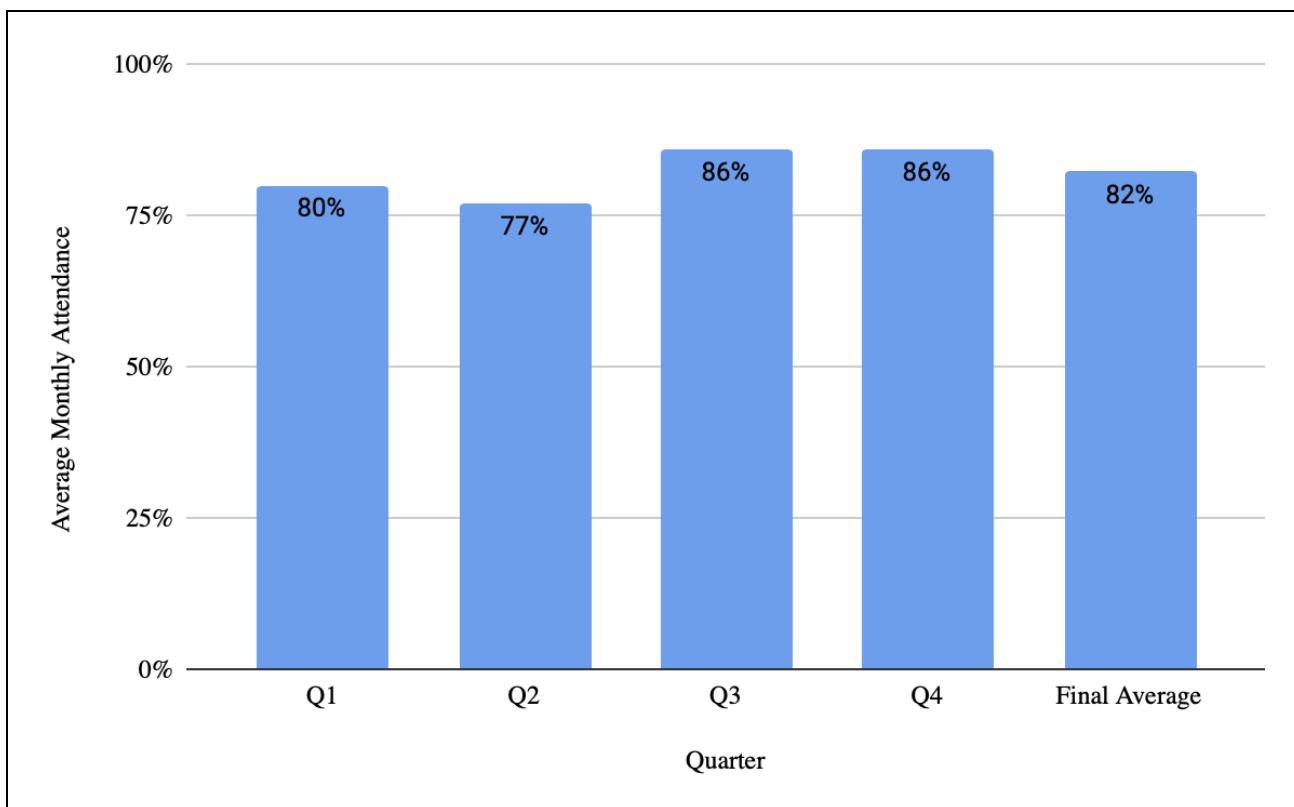
Attendance

Year 1 of programming for cycle 2021-2024 was conducted in-person despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Average daily attendance was only calculated for the LINK After School program. Table 2 summarizes monthly and annual average daily student attendance based upon the data supplied by the program. The program achieved an average annual attendance of 82% for SY 2022. Figure 1 illustrates the average monthly attendance by quarter for SY 2022.

Table 2. Average Program Attendance by Month SY 2022

Month	Monthly and Annual Average Daily Attendance 2021-2022 (average N=19)
Oct-21	78%
Nov-21	88%
Dec-21	74%
Jan-22	74%
Feb-22	85%
Mar-22	86%
Apr-22	85%
May-22	88%
Annual SY 2022	82%

Figure 1. Average Program Attendance by Quarter SY 2022



Program Participation

Program participants are those who enroll in the program; however, the amount of program exposure should lead to better outcomes, thus participants include both enrollees (students who are enrolled in the program and attended at least one day) and regular attendees (those who were in the program for 30 days or more). Table 3 presents the data for LINK After School program participation based on a number of days in the program. During the 2021-2022 school year, 30 students enrolled in and attended at least one day of LINK After School programming. A total of 67% of program participants were regular attendees in SY 2022. While 20 students enrolled in LINK Leaders School Year, there were 8 students that attended 30 or more days and qualified as a regularly attending participant.

Table 3. LINK After School 2021-2022 Program Participation

Program Participation			
Days in Program	# Students	% Students	
Less than 30 days	10	33%	
30 Days or more	20	67%	
Program Attrition Rate			
Withdrawals	2	7%	

Table 4 presents detailed data concerning the LINK After School participant demographics. Among regular attendees, 10% were classified as English language learners. Approximately 40% of regular attendees were female and 60% male. The majority of participants identified as Black or African American.

Table 4. LINK After School 2021-2022 Demographic Information

Demographics	Tracked Program	Attended 30 days or more
	enrollees	N=20
	N=30	
	(%)	(%)
Descriptive Information		
English Language Learners	37%	10%
Special Educational Requirements	7%	10%
Grade Level		
K	20%	25%
1st	7%	0%
2nd	17%	20%
3rd	17%	20%
4th	7%	0%
5th	27%	35%
6th	3%	0%
7th	3%	0%
Gender		
Female	47%	40%
Male	53%	60%

Race/Ethnicity - Identify as:		
Black or African American	43%	65%
Multiracial	7%	10%
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	7%	10%
White	40%	10%
Unknown	3%	5%

Results by Goal

Goal 1 – Integrate an educational component that will assist students in meeting academic requirements on grade level.

Table 5. Summary of Academic Achievements for SY 2021-2022

Indicator	Indicator Description	Year 1 Result
1.1	By May 2022, 50% of students in grades 1-6 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will show an improvement in math performance and skills.	✓ 53% of grade K-5 students showed an improvement in math performance and skills.
1.2	Indicator 1.2 By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades 1-6 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will show an improvement in ELA performance and skills.	✓ 76% of grade K-5 students showed an improvement in ELA performance and skills.

✓ milestone met X milestone not met N/A cannot determine if milestone was met

A total of 17 LINK After School students were assessed in the Spring and Fall of SY 2021-2022 to determine ELA and math achievement, as well as improvements resulting from the program. The milestones for academic achievement for both ELA and MATH were achieved (Table 5, Figure 2) based on pre- and post-assessments conducted for students in grades K-5. In addition, only 35% (6/17) of grade K-5 students assessed were on grade level for ELA at the beginning of the program year, and 76% (13/17) of students ended the program year on grade level (Figure 3). Based on students assessed for MATH achievement, only 41% (7/17) of students started the year on grade level compared to 65% (11/17) of students that ended the program year on grade level (Figure 3).

Figure 2. Academic Improvements for SY 2021-2022

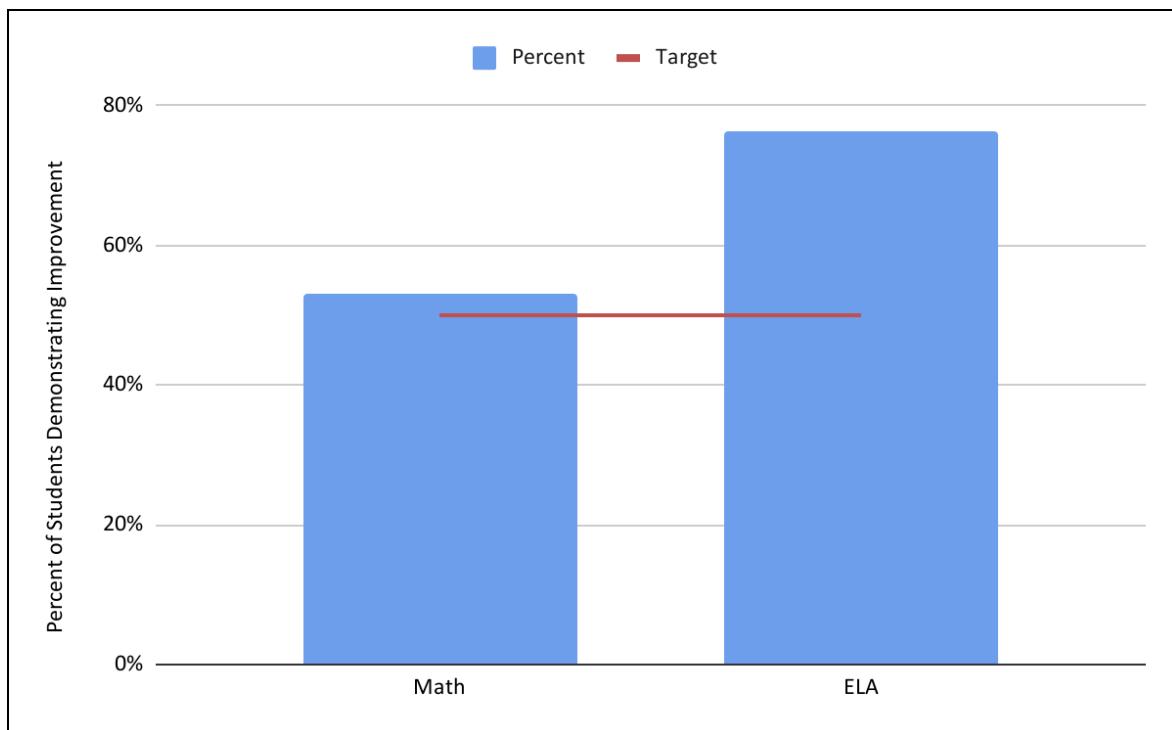
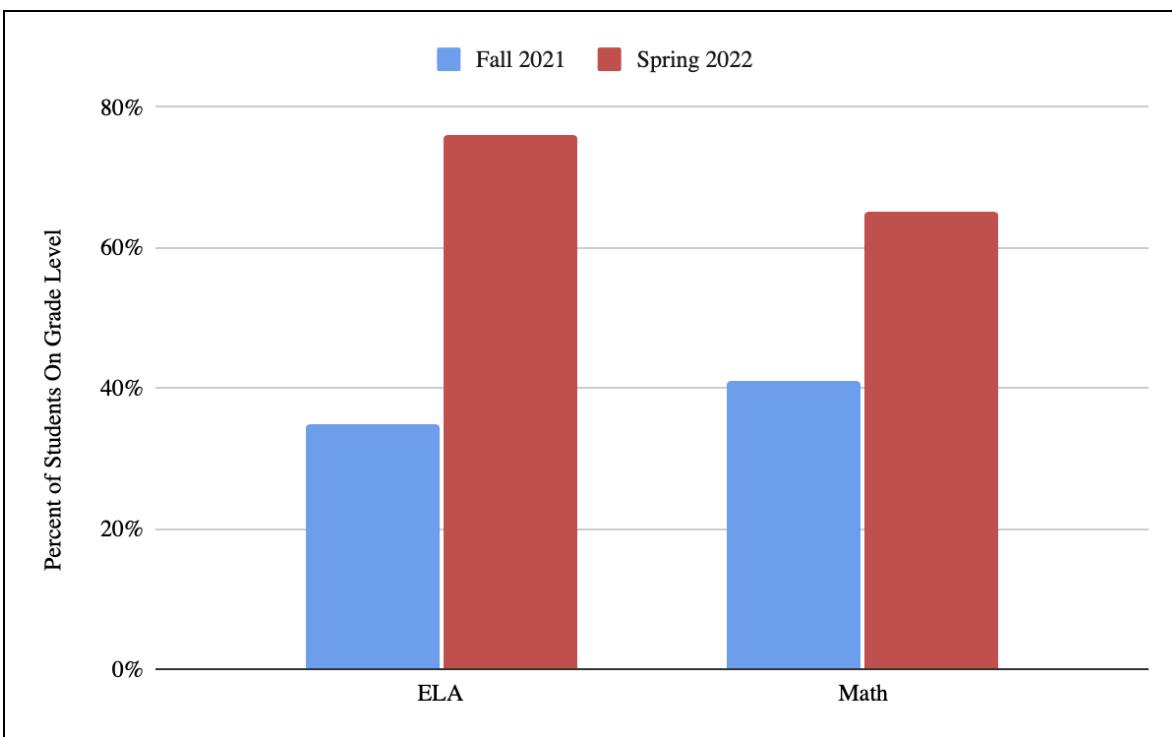


Figure 3. On Grade-level Performance for SY 2021-2022



Goal 2 – Provided learning and enrichment activities that assisted students in achieving at or above grade level in the next school year; and exposed students to future learning and life opportunities.

Table 6. Summary of Preparedness and Goal Achievements for SY 2021-2022

Indicator	Indicator Description	Year 1 Result
2.1	By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades preK-6 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will report feeling prepared to succeed in the following school year.	✓ 75% of grade K-5 students reported feeling prepared to succeed in the following school year.
2.2	By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades 7-12 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will report knowledge of career and college options.	✓ 100% of assessed students reported knowledge of career and college options.
2.3	By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades 7-12 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will create and achieve academic and life goals.	✓ 83% of grade 7-12 students created and achieved academic and life goals.

✓ milestone met X milestone not met N/A cannot determine if milestone was met

An End of Year Survey was administered to Grade K-5 students in the LINK After School program that assessed student's perceptions, including their feelings of preparedness to succeed in the following school year. Among the 16 students assessed, 75% reported feeling prepared to succeed in the following school year.

There was only one regularly attending LINK Leaders School Year student; therefore, this grade 8 student was the only LINK Leader that was administered the End of Year Survey. This student reported having more knowledge (compared to before the program) regarding career and college options.

Among the 12 LINK Leader School Year students that were tracked, 83% created and achieved their academic and life goals. For each goal, program staff tracked actions taken, progress towards the goal, and the follow-up actions required.



Goal 3 – Enhance students' access to physical, social, and emotional support.

Table 7. SEL, Engagement & Service Learning Achievements for SY 2021-2022

Indicator	Indicator Description	Year 1 Result
3.1	By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades preK-6 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will demonstrate strong socio-emotional skills.	✓ 100% of grade K-5 students demonstrated strong socio-emotional skills.
3.2	By May of 2022, 50% of students in grades 7-12 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will demonstrate strong socio-emotional skills.	✓ 100% of assessed students demonstrated strong socio-emotional skills.
3.3	By May of 2022, 50% of caregivers with children in grades K-12 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will participate in 2 parental engagement activities during the school year.	✓ 56% of caregivers with children in grades K-12 participated in 2 parental engagement activities.
3.4	By May of 2022, 85% of students in grades 7-12 attending ARP ESSER programming during the school year will participate in 10 hours of service learning during the school year.	XO% of students in grades 7-12 participated in 10 hours of service learning.

An End of Year Survey was administered to LINK After School and LINK Leaders School Year students to assess their perceptions, including their socio-emotional skills. These programs focused on knowledge of conflict resolution strategies to demonstrate socio-emotional skills. Among the 16 LINK students assessed, 100% were able to recall conflict resolution strategies to solve a problem. There was only one regularly attending LINK Leader that was assessed; this grade 8 student was able to recall a conflict resolution strategy.

There were 18 families that had children in the LINK After School and LINK Leaders School Year programs, and 56% attended 2 or more parental engagement activities during SY 2021-2022; 83% of caregivers attended at least one event. There were a total of 9 engagement activities available to caregivers and families this school year. Village Learning Place hosted three family fun nights, which are celebrations with games and activities for children and families along with the provision of a meal. The family fun nights in SY 2021-22 included the Spooky Harvest, the Spring Family Fun Night, and the End of Year Celebration. Caregivers have the opportunity to serve as a mentor to one of the older students in the LINK Leaders School Year program. VLP also hosted a School Choice Workshop, which was an informative presentation facilitated by the Coalition for Grade Level Reading for families with students approaching middle school and high school choice in Baltimore City. Caregivers can also volunteer to serve as a member of the Board for VLP, or as a member of VLP's PTO. VLP hosted a vaccine clinic and caregivers had the opportunity to participate and bring their child to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Lastly, caregivers and their children has the opportunity to meet with VLP's Teen Programs Coordinator and listen to a presentation about the Maryland 529 college savings plan and sign up to invest in the plan.

The milestone for service learning hours completed by LINK Leaders was not met in SY 2021-2022. There was one regularly attending LINK Leader in Grade 8 that completed 9.5 hours of service learning.

Program Quality: Site Observations

Program quality was assessed using virtual observations as precaution to avoid the risks associated with COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluation team was able to observe the LINK After School and LINK Leaders School Year programs on two different occasions during the spring of SY 2022: once on 3/15/2022 and once on 5/5/21. The classes observed were Grade K, Grade 2-3, Grade 5 and Leaders; there was no preK, Grade 1 or Grade 4 class this school year.

In lieu of the traditional in-person observations, program quality was assessed using a virtual observation conducted by the evaluation team. Data is traditionally collected regarding the following indicators: facility, types of activities, classroom management, safety and security, student engagement with activities, teacher-student interaction, and utilization of resources. However, due to the format of video conferencing necessitated by COVID-19 precautions, some of these indicators were not able to be fully assessed.

Facility

The programming was held virtually via Zoom, so traditional facility observations were not possible.

Activities

The Grade K class was observed in Spanish enrichment where teachers and students were sitting on the floor in a circle listening to a song in Spanish and using flashcards with pictures to practice Spanish phrases. This class had just completed bucket drumming before they were observed in creative play in which students could select "centers" or activities: art/coloring, magnetic tiles for building, 3D marble run building, puppets or geometric blocks. The Grade 2-3 class were working on a geography lesson in which students sorted geography cards using a map to assist their decision making. This class was also observed in circle time where students practiced reading the date, discussing various topics written on a white board: weather, word of the day, multicultural word, and a word jumble. The Grade 5 class was observed in the pottery enrichment where they learned about different glazes and the proper technique to apply them to the clay. This class was also observed in STEM where they were working on a project called Recycled Racers; students built cars and other vehicles from recycled materials. The Leaders class had a drop-in model that allowed them to participate in other after school activities outside of LINK Leaders. As a result, the class had a few students that were playing Uno with the teacher. Leaders were also observed after basketball when they played a history and culture trivia game.

Classroom Management

In the Grade K class, there was one student that was not engaged in the lesson and was throwing his mask and doing flips on the floor, which was distracting to the other students. The teachers addressed this student's behavior when he almost landed on another student while flipping. An attempt was made to re-engage him in the lesson when a teacher asked him if he wanted to sit with the group, and asked him to sit on his bottom and to keep his hands to himself. The student remained disruptive for the remainder of the time the class remained on the floor. In the Grade 2-3 class and the Grade 5 class, students were working independently and teachers circulated the room to provide assistance to students and check on their work. The students raised their hands if they needed assistance and waited until a teacher approached their desk. In addition, during circle time the Grade 2-3 class raised their hands to answer the white board questions and waited to be called on before answering. Students were also very engaged when classmates took their turn to answer questions. The Grade 5 class was actively participating in their assignment, and teachers would redirect students that were finished to cleaning up their station rather than talking.

Safety and Security

The ability to observe safety and security was limited given that the observation was virtual. Students appeared to be well-monitored and teachers kept all students in sight during transitions to different learning spaces and even when activities took place in more unstructured environments like outdoor spaces.

Student Engagement

The Grade K students were engaged in both their activities and with other students (if playing with the same activity). The teachers took interest in the activities the students selected by engaging in conversation with them about what they were building or creating. When students in the Grade 2-3 class finished their assignment early, they could select "centers" in the Imagination Playground that provided a structured choice as they waited for classmates to finish their work. For example, play doh could be used to sculpt different objects, checkers could be played independently using re-imagined rules, and hacky sacks could be used to aim into buckets worth different points. When the class was in circle time, teachers provided encouragement and assistance as students read and answered questions written on the white board. In the Grade 5 class, teachers demonstrated the difference between the appearance of a pottery piece with and without glaze. Teachers also demonstrated proper techniques for applying glaze and let students see what the pottery looked like when pieces were not fully glazed: "See the clay coming through? That means you need to add more glaze." The teachers also ensured that all students could hear and understand the instructions by conducting spot checks with students and answering any questions that arose. In the STEM class, Grade 5 students were engaged and excited to participate in crash testing the cars they built. They seemed to enjoy reflecting on their project and walked around the room answering reflection questions written on large butcher paper posted around the classroom.

Teacher-Student Interaction

The Grade K class transitioned to desk work where students were given supplies to color pictures that accompanied Spanish vocabulary. Teachers provided instructions in Spanish and any needed clarifications in English. The Grade K teachers used a lot of repetition to reinforce Spanish vocabulary and the students seemed to enjoy repeating Spanish phrases after teachers. In the Grade 2-3 class, teachers engaged students in the assignment by asking them to explain their choices. For example, during a sorting activity, teachers asked "are there any choices that you are sure are correct?" Students appeared excited to explain their choices and why they felt their selections were correct. The teachers in the Grade 5 class maintained a positive and fun rapport with students as they conducted the crash tests of the racers they built. As a celebration of the culmination of this STEM project, teachers provided popsicles to students when their crash tests were completed. In the Leaders class, the participants were playing Uno with the teacher and the conversation was focused on the interests of the students. The students and teachers clearly had a comfortable and playful banter, and seemed to have a positive and friendly rapport. The teacher in the Leader class used the answers in the trivia game to relate to social justice issues of relevance to the Leaders. For example, the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests were unknown to students. They looked up the event on their phones and had a conversation about the voice and power of youth to effect change.

Utilization of Resources

The resources available to the program are well utilized. Classrooms and outdoor spaces served as meeting spaces for academics and enrichments. The program provided a vast array of resources for student use including white boards, craft supplies, educational toys, group games, individual desks, building supplies, handouts, and basketballs.

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

- Build upon the strong academic achievements made in math and ELA, and provide focused intervention to students and grade levels that require more academic support, particularly in math, to ensure future academic milestones can be achieved.
- The program has demonstrated a strong record for tracking and assessing LINK After School students, and can leverage this foundation to more closely track and assess students in the LINK Leaders School Year program to assist with the monitoring of program indicators.

Challenges

- The structure of the LINK Leaders School Year program makes monitoring attendance and determining regularly attending students challenging. Consider redefining a "regular" participant in the LINK Leaders School Year program to align with the goal of having students attend at least once a week.

Recommendations

- + More closely track and assess students in the LINK Leaders School Year program so that progress toward indicators can be more accurately assessed and more representative of all students served.
- + Redefine "regular" participants for the LINK Leaders School Year program to more appropriately align with the program structure and nature of programming, so that attendance data accurately represents participation goals.