



# Dallas City of Learning – Summer 2021

## Preliminary Data and Feedback Report

March 2022

*Report Prepared By*



*In Collaboration With*



**SMU**

ANNETTE CALDWELL SIMMONS  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
& HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

CENTER ON RESEARCH & EVALUATION



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# Executive Summary

Dallas City of Learning (DCoL), launched in 2014, represents a consortium of organizations that offers programs to students intended to fill the out-of-school time “opportunity gap” many students experience. As the DCoL backbone organization, Big Thought offers support services to program providers. Big Thought’s theory of change targets support services in four main areas to increase the opportunities students have to gain valuable learning experiences outside of school:

- Increase accessibility of programs for students
- Increase the dosage of programs – the rate of participation, engagement level, and variation of enrollment students spend in programs
- Improve the quality of programs and experiences
- Support cultural and community uplift – actively participate in and support outreach events that empower communities to raise up their stories.

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*“The opportunity gap has widened due to living through two years of the global pandemic, setting back learning for all students, but especially for students of color. It will take all resources from the public education system to the nonprofit sector and out-of-school time programming to get American students caught up and excelling.”*

*Byron Sanders, Chief Executive Officer, Big Thought*

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2021 represented a challenging, but optimistic year for DCoL, Big Thought, and the broader OST ecosystem. 2021 was the second year operating DCoL during the Covid-19 pandemic. While the DCoL system has begun to evolve and expand beyond only summer, this preliminary evaluation report highlights key activities and early learnings of the system, with an emphasis on summer 2021 instructional programs. This report aims to provide descriptive look and preliminary analysis on data regarding students, partners, and programs. We will also include responses from surveys and interviews from internal and external stakeholders including students, caregivers, and program staff.

In 2021, Big Thought continued to provide a wide range of support services to DCoL partners. Partners continued to feel that the goals of DCoL were well defined and expressed strong positive satisfaction and feedback with the available resources and supports provided, with supplemental financial support via micro-grants and professional learning leading the way in terms of perceived value and impact.

There were 845 total programs offered, which is fewer than in 2020, however the number and percentage of in-person programs began to rebound and both showed increases year over year. The number of total participants (which includes individual student rosters and head count data and therefore may have duplicates) increased 13.5% and Unique Students increased a sizable 124% from 2020, likely corresponding to the return to in-person for many programs and likewise for youth as 41% of students stated that the program, they attended was the first time they had been with kids outside of their own family in a long time.



## DCoL 2021 BY THE NUMBERS

**845**

Total Programs Offered  
(-9% YOY)

**21,455**

Total Participants (includes duplicates)  
(+13.5% YOY)

**16,406**

Total Unique Students  
(+124% YOY)

**197,858**

Cumulative Participant Learning Days  
(-65% YOY)

**121,957**

Cumulative Participant Learning Hours  
(-64% YOY)

**27.7**

Avg Days of Dosage Per Unique Student  
(+8.7% YOY)

**54.8**

Avg Hours Per Unique Student  
(+3% YOY)





Despite the return to in-person, a majority of programs were still offered virtually, which continues to elevate questions of equitable access to technology as 40% of students indicated they did not have their own person computer or device at home and 12% stated they still don't have easy access to Wi-Fi.

The summer “season” in 2021 was shorter than in previous years as school districts adjusted their calendars in response to the pandemic, which likely contributed to fewer opportunities for youth to participate in multiple programs and accumulate dosage. Cumulative participant learning days and hours were both down as compared to 2020. However, cumulative, and average days and hours of dosage were up for the 16,000+ unique students as compared to the previous summer.

DCoL has recorded the highest survey feedback ratings from both students and Caregivers these past two years, even with the changes occurring due to the onset of Covid-19 in 2020. Program satisfaction and quality continued to be positive overall, with increases in satisfaction being seen for all stakeholder groups (Caregiver, Program Leads, Frontline Staff) except for students. The increase for Program Leads was pronounced and likely indicates that in the second year of the pandemic, while nonetheless still challenging, with more lead time and the lessons learned in 2020, that confidence was improved, and stress was down. For students, while satisfaction ratings on average were down from 2020, they remained at a rate higher than in any year pre-Covid.

The near-term outcomes for youth indicated a mixed message, with student’s attitudes for school having meaningfully improved since 2019. Conversely, Caregiver’s perceptions of student’s social and emotional wellbeing declined from 2019 to 2020 and remained there for 2021. Student and family wellbeing was considered a high need and priority for program providers, and 61% of Program Leads indicated that they adopted new SEL-based programs and activities in response to the stressors they observed due to Covid-19.

In conclusion, the following insights, considerations, and recommendations for future years are offered:

- Covid-19 has presented DCoL partners with numerous challenges and required constant flexibility and agility to continue to serve youth. As we hopefully emerge from the worst of the pandemic, these skills that program providers have developed and strengthened will become greater assets for helping our youth curb the learning loss and delays that have occurred.
- The need for social and emotional supports is greater now than ever. The effects of the pandemic, along with social unrest, have left an impact on youth, families, and program staff. Continuing to build capacity and nurture these practices should remain a priority.
- Visibility into the outcomes, successes, and areas for improvement in the DCoL system is stronger when participation is rostered at the student level. System leadership and partners should continue to focus on this level of data collection in the years to come.
- The evolution of DCoL to a year-round OST ecosystem will significantly change the understanding of what is occurring in our community during out of school time. The benefits of a year-round approach will be strengthened if it results in increased participation in DCoL evaluation activities as well.
- Organizations of all sizes, large city institutions down to small community-based, are all critical to the health of the ecosystem. Continued strategies for engagement at all levels is encouraged.
- The digital divide was a concern or issue highlighted by multiple stakeholders and data points; however, technology kit resources are one of the least utilized. System leadership may consider new or additional methods to communicating the availability of these resources.





# Data Sources & Methodology

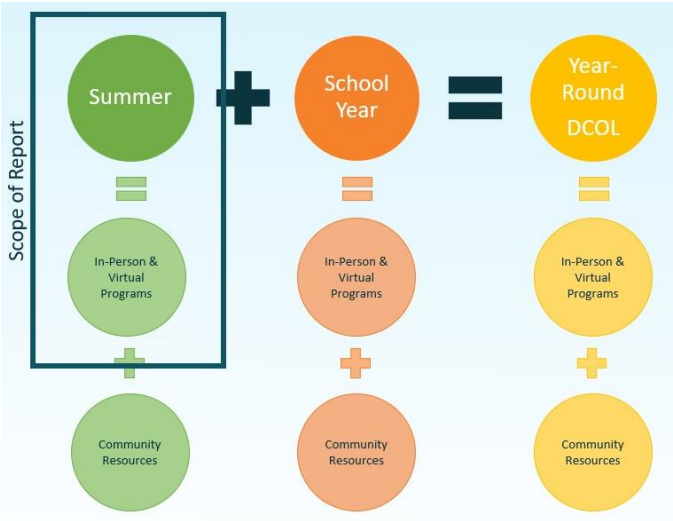
Since 2017, Big Thought and SMU Center on Research and Evaluation have collaborated on the evaluation of Dallas City of Learning. Data utilized in the analyses found within this report comes from multiple activities and sources as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Data Sources	
Data Source	Collected By
Big Thought Activity Log	Big Thought
Stakeholder Surveys (Student, Caregiver, Frontline Staff, Program Leads)	Big Thought
Interviews & Focus Groups (Big Thought staff, Program staff, Family & Student)	CORE
DCoL Platform Data (Programs, Rosters, Attendance)	Big Thought

Data collected for DCoL has traditionally been focused on summer programs and activities only. Starting in 2020, some of the data collected fell outside of the scope of summer programming, reflecting not only programming, but also

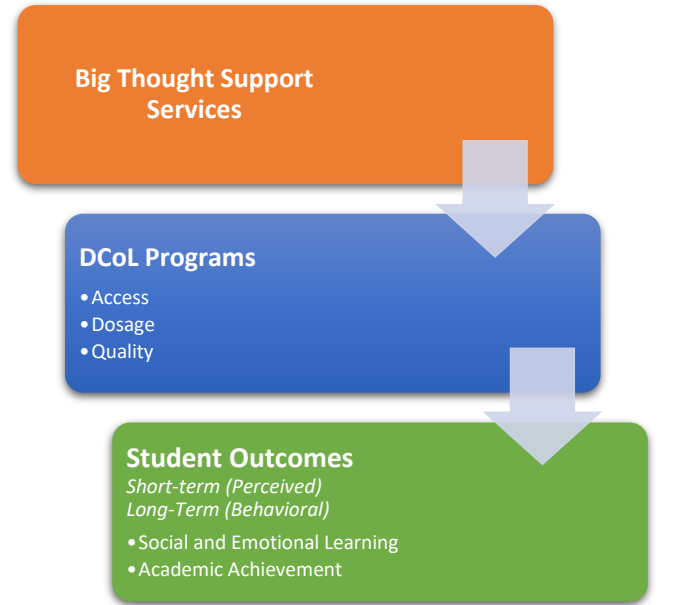
community resources, and not only activities occurring only in summer, but also occurring during the school year (see figure 1). Based on this evolution, data utilized in this report has been cleaned and categorized for analyses with a focus on summer instructional programming. All information shared, unless explicitly noted otherwise, is reflective of summer 2021 and year over year comparisons to summer 2020.

Figure 1: DCoL Whole-Year Framework



This report is structured based on the DCoL logic model and theory of change, highlighting analysis related to Support Services, the Access, Dosage and Quality of DCoL programs, and the short-term (perceived) student outcomes (Figure 2). Additionally, analyses prioritize and addresses six overarching evaluation questions.

Figure 2: DCoL Logic Model & Theory of Change



1. What support services does Big Thought provide to increase and improve program accessibility, quality, and dosage?
2. What perceptions do both Big Thought support staff and DCoL program staff have on the support services that Big Thought provides in terms of increasing program access and dosage and improving quality?
3. How accessible are DCoL programs for learners?
4. What is the rate and level of engagement (dosage) of DCoL programs for learners?
5. What is the quality of DCoL programs?
6. What attitudes and beliefs do learners have about their (1) social-emotional learning and (2) school and career-related interests and opportunities?

- Instructional Partners: Partners developing content, providing content and/or delivering instruction in one or more locations, or online.
- Funding Partners: Individuals, foundations, and corporations providing financial support for DCoL
- Neighborhood Partners: Partners opening their facilities to deliver services to youth.
- Media Partners: Partners supporting the marketing and promotion of DCoL

Figure 3: 2021 DCoL Partner Count



A summary of key support services and capacity building efforts offered by DCoL includes the following:

**Neighborhood Resource Initiative (NRI)** - The Neighborhood Resource Initiative helps support the summer programming needs of DCoL partners. Partners interested apply and are eligible to receive a range of supports and resources including professional learning, technology, curriculum, collective marketing efforts, data evaluation, and micro grants. Proposals are reviewed by an outside Advisory Committee and awards are communicated in May, prior to the start of summer. In 2020-21, a total of 56 organizations received micro-grants, 3 accessed technology, four accessed in-kind transportation support.

**NRI Leadership Cohort** - Over a six-month period, the NRI Leadership Cohort guided a group of 10 individuals from DCoL partner organizations through a series of collaborative capacity-building trainings to support:

- Personal and professional growth of participants through leadership training



## Data & Analysis

### BT Support Services

In 2020-2021, Dallas City of Learning (DCoL) engaged a diverse group of 364 partners within the ecosystem, who enabled, supported, augmented, or directly provided summer learning and other out-of-school time (OST) programs to students and families. As the backbone agency for DCoL, Big Thought, provided a range of support services throughout the year to support program providers, build capacity, and connect resources in the pursuit of DCoL's goals (figure 2) to:

- Increase access
- Increase dosage
- Increase quality
- Community Uplift

The roster of partners engaged with DCoL is comprised of the following (figure 3):

- Strategic Partners: Partners serving/supporting the DCoL system at a strategic and/or advisory capacity.





- Organizational growth through capacity building, community building, marketing & communications, and networking
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for internal and external organizational growth

The monthly topics covered included: Leadership and Vision; Organizational Growth; Youth Development & Engagement; Culture, Identity & Community; Engaging your Leadership; and Overview, Implementation & Application.

**Learning Pathways Fellowship** - The Learning Pathways Fellowship was a three-month pilot effort offered by Big Thought to DCoL partners interested in learning about and utilizing micro-credentials (digital badges) to help identify, measure and elevate youth skill development occurring within their programs. In 2020-21, nine organizations participated in the fellowship training.

**Lunch and Learns** - Throughout the year, DCoL periodically offered these learning sessions on a range of topics. Lunch and Learns often times feature a partner within DCoL sharing on a topic or area of specialty for their respective organization. In the 2020-2021 program year, one session was offered on the topic of activating your space and was led by DCoL partner, The Writer's Garrett.

**KICKS Conference** - The DCoL KICKS Conference is an annual, and free, learning opportunity for DCoL partners. In 2021, KICKS was offered virtually on May 27 and 28. There were 18 sessions offered over the course of the 2 days on topics ranging from SEL, Developmental Relationships, The Power of Our Stories, Engaging Corporate and Foundation Support, Telehealth – Bringing Healthcare to Students, and more. The event featured keynote speaker Dr. Shawn Ginwright whose session was entitled Healing Centered Engagement in a Post-Covid World.

## Stakeholder Feedback

Program Leads understanding of DCoL as a system was strong. On surveys, they indicated that DCoL goals were well defined, with an average rating of 5.09 (out of 6; n=34).

As outlined in Table 2, on end of program surveys, when asked what resources they received from DCoL, Program Leads (n=37) most frequently reported receiving professional learning and/or micro-grants, followed by general technical assistance and social distancing professional development. The resources noted the least were transportation support, curriculum, and one respondent indicated they received no resources from DCoL.

Resource	Count Received
Professional Learning	25
Financial (micro-grant)	24
General Support	13
PD related to in-person programming while socially-distant	12
Training/Resource to address COVID stressors for youth/families	9
PD related to virtual programming	7
Technology	5
Other	4
Transportation	2
Content or Curriculum	1
None	1

Program Leads also reported on the value and impact the resources received (Table 3) had on their programs on a scale of 1 (not valuable or no impact) to 4 (very valuable or very impactful). All resources were highly valued, with average rates spanning 3.20 (curriculum) up to 4.0 (micro-grant, transportation). Similarly, the impact of resources was also

Resource	Average Value Rating (1-4)	Value Cumulative Rating	Value n=	Average Impact Rating (1-4)	Impact Cumulative Rating	Impact n=
Content or Curriculum	3.20	16	5	4.00	24	6
Financial (micro-grant)	4.00	100	25	3.96	99	25
General Support	3.69	59	16	3.60	54	15
Other	4.00	12	3	4.00	12	3
PD related to in-person programming while socially-distant	3.92	47	12	3.92	51	13
PD related to virtual programming	3.82	42	11	4.00	40	10
Professional Learning	3.77	98	26	3.72	93	25
Technology	3.50	14	4	4.00	20	5
Training/Resource to address COVID stressors for youth/families	3.60	54	15	3.79	53	14
Transportation	4.00	8	2	4.00	16	4



very highly rated, ranging from 3.6 (general support) to six different resources with average ratings of 4.0. While all resources were valued and impactful, the micro-grant and professional learning resources were the most valued and impactful overall.

Transportation support was likely utilized less due to the Covid-19 pandemic and fewer field trip options being offered than in previous years. Technology and Content & Curriculum resources were valued and impactful but were utilized significantly less than other resources.

Other resources noted by survey respondents included “Leadership development training,” “Access to a wonderful network of community partners,” and “Social Emotional training.”

Individuals attending professional learning sessions throughout the year also completed feedback surveys, rating the session’s content, execution, and outcome. In 2020-21, overall satisfaction with professional learning services was very high, with a Net Promoter Score of 83.0 (scale of -100 to +100; n=235). The overall composite feedback rating for all indicators was 4.79 (out of 5). Session outcomes had the highest average rating at 4.85, followed by session content at 4.82 and session execution at 4.71. Of the sessions offered throughout the year, the NRI Leadership Cohort series was the highest rated at 4.92. Figure 4 and Table 4 outline results overall, by each category and for each question.

Figure 4: Professional Learning Feedback Survey Composite Ratings

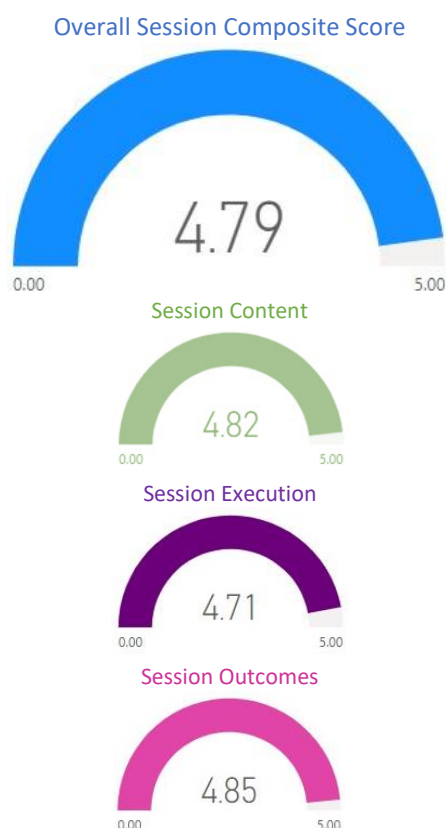


Table 4: Professional Learning Feedback Survey Results		
Indicator (n=235)		% Favorable Responses
CONTENT	The training met my expectations	97.40%
	The training was simple and easy to understand	97.40%
	I found the training content to be relevant to my work	96.20%
	The training effectively addressed the topic	97.90%
EXECUTION	I was kept engaged throughout the session	96.20%
	Activities were fitting to content area and session purpose	94.00%
	Session provided opportunity to learn from colleagues	91.00%
	Facilitator involved participants in the learning process	94.50%
OUTCOMES	I can and will apply strategies and information from this session into my future work	97.10%
	This session is important to my growth as a professional in this field	97.00%
	The time that I invested in this session was worthwhile	97.40%

### Covid-19 Reflections

To properly understand the impact the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic had on program providers preparations for and delivery of programming in summer 2021, and by extension the types of supports that were best aligned to program’s needs, Program Leads, and Frontline Staff reflected on a range of questions regarding the pandemic.

- 31% of Program Leads indicated that adapting program delivery to fit summer 2021 was very challenging. Another 65.71% said it was somewhat challenging.
- 18% of Program Leads when asked if they returned their program to pre-Covid conditions indicated they were still running a completely different program than they had before Covid-19. Another 76.5% indicated they still had to carryover some of the adaptations they made in 2020 to this year.
- 61% of Program Leads indicated they had adopted new SEL programs or activities as an immediate response to the stressors of Covid-19 on youth in their programs
- Over 70% of Program Leads and Frontline Staff indicated that the primary focus of their summer program did not have to change due to Covid-19

Over 51% of Program Leads reported that meeting youth and families’ immediate needs related to Covid-19 was a top priority (5 or 6 out of 6). When asked to rank what they observed those needs to be, access to Wi-Fi or devices was the top need, followed by taking care of younger siblings, and stress or anxiety about Covid-19. The lowest ranked needs





were stress or anxiety about unemployment and food access. Frontline Staff's perspective on needs were similar with taking care of a younger sibling and supervision being the highest ranked, and stress about family unemployment or finances being the lowest ranked.

Caregivers were also asked about a series of fifteen possible stressors they may be experiencing (Table 5). Two of the Caregiver's top noted concerns align with the perceptions of Program Leads and Frontline Staff – related to child activities and supervision and helping the child deal with stress or worry that they may have about coronavirus. Conversely, only 8% of Caregivers expressed that access to Wi-Fi was a stressor. Additionally, 12% of Caregivers expressed that an adult at home looking for a job or recently having lost their job due to coronavirus was a stressor, which is at odds with the perceived needs reported by Program Leads.

versus virtual program opportunities, geography, program type or discipline, age group.

In summer 2021 there were 845 total programs offered by a combined total of 82 organizations. This represents a 9% decrease in programs.

### Covid-19 Reflections

The potentially reduced availability of programming is reinforced by Caregiver's feedback as 60.5% reported that they somewhat to strongly agree that it was hard for them to find programs for their child(ren) this summer.

Program Leads perspective on whether youth and families had significant challenges accessing programs was more closely split with a majority of 57.8% disagreeing as some level (1-3 on 6-points scale) and 42.2% agreeing at some level (4-6 on 6-point scale).

Indicator	N/A	Extremely Stressful	Avg. Rating
Keeping children busy and engaged during the summer	20%	13%	2.35
An adult in the home is looking for a job or has recently lost their job due to coronavirus	31%	12%	2.04
Helping my child(ren) deal with stress or worry that they might have about coronavirus	14%	11%	2.54
Get things done such as cooking, cleaning, and keeping up with the household	20%	10%	2.38
Working from home	58%	10%	1.60
Getting access to WiFi so that people in my household can work from home or complete school assignments	31%	8%	2.05
At-home learning; figuring out websites, log-ins, etc	36%	8%	1.90
Dealing with my own stress and anxiety	42%	8%	1.89
A parent, child, or other person in my home is at high risk for COVID-19 based on CDC guidelines	24%	8%	2.18
Getting devices so that people in my household can work from home or complete school assignments	31%	7%	2.04
Getting enough food and other basic supplies that our family needs	34%	6%	1.97

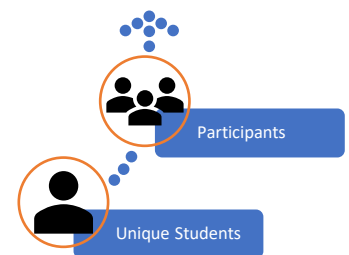
To capture student attendance, two separate metrics are recorded:

- Unique Students**

refers to individual, rostered students tracked by student ID. Individuals tracked through student ID can be followed through multiple programs and accompanied

by more program details. Unique student attendance information is more accurate per student due to this tracking.

- Participants** refers to all sources of attendance, including rostered students. Many programs record head counts rather than keeping track of unique student ID. This can result in multiple counts of attendance from the same students but provides a more complete picture of total program services.



More students attended summer programming in 2021 (Figure 5). In all, 2021 had 2,562 more participants than 2020 (a 13.5% increase) and 9099 more individually rostered students (a 124% increase).

Overall the 16,406 unique students rostered was 76% of the total participants tracked, the highest percentage ever recorded. In all, only 5,049 participants were counted as unregistered head counts, most of these from large programs or events.

## Access

Access generally refers to how accessible DCoL programs are for students, based on a series of variables such as in-person



## Covid-19 Reflections

Covid-19 had a definite impact on program access. 67.6% of Frontline Staff surveyed indicated that their program had to reduce the number of youth served in programming due to Covid-19.

Programs were offered online or face-to-face (Figure 6). Compared to face-to-face programs, setting up for online programs has meant a lot of adjustment for partners, program creators, Caregivers, and students. Partners and program creators continue to learn how to adjust their curriculum to the virtual space. While online programs are accessible for students anywhere, the technology access gap is difficult for some families and demographics.

- Only 60% of youth stated they had their own personal computer at home.
- 12% of youth stated they didn't have easy access to Wi-Fi.

In 2021, many programs transitioned back to in-person. There were nearly 3 times the number of in-person programs in 2021 than the year previous, representing 38% of programs offered. A more even balance of face-to-face to online programs allows a balance of ease of program access for those with easy access to computer and internet while allowing more options, particularly for youth who have a more difficult time getting access. In addition, face-to-face programs were an opportunity for youth to socialize outside of COVID-19 social distancing.

## Covid-19 Reflections

Program 41% of students stated that the program they attended was the first time they had been with kids outside of their own family in a long time.

In summer 2021, 20 DCoL partners offered both online and face-to-face programs (Figure 7). For a small sample size of these partners where attendance was available for both the online and face to face programming:

- There were nearly 5 times the number of online programs being offered than face to face programs
- Despite that amount offered, partners recording both types of programs reported about 10 times the number of face to face hours attended than online.

Understanding the averages of daily program hours and total program hours for online and face to face programs provides further insight (Figure 8).

Average total hours for face-to-face programs was 3.5 times that of summer-only online programs (excludes online programs offered year-round), which ran significantly shorter on average at 2 hours daily compared to 6.7.

Figure 5: DCoL Participant & Unique Student Counts

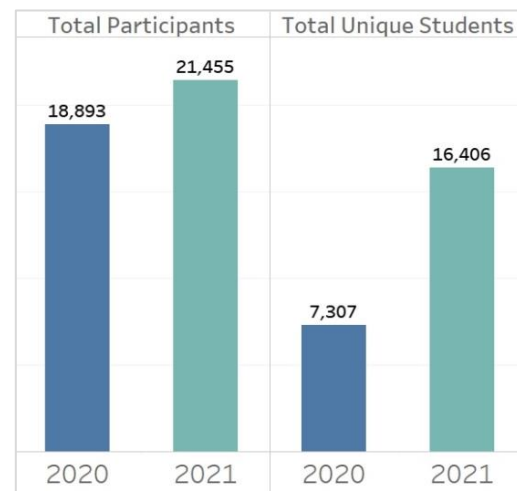


Figure 6: Programs Offered – Online vs. Face to Face

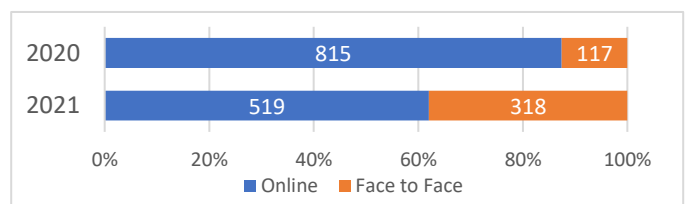


Figure 7: Range of Programs Offered by Organization



Figure 8: Average & Total Program Hours by Modality

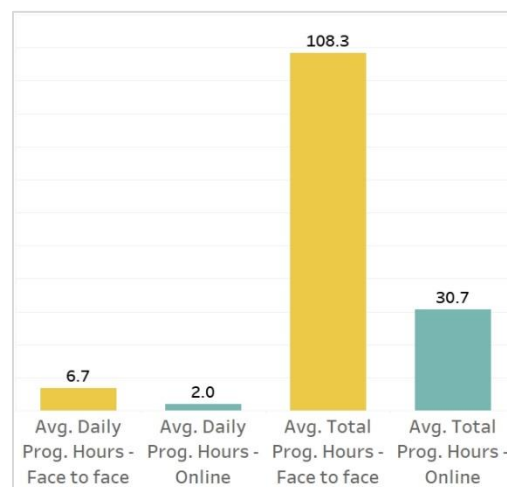


Figure 9: DCoL Program Category Counts and Percentage

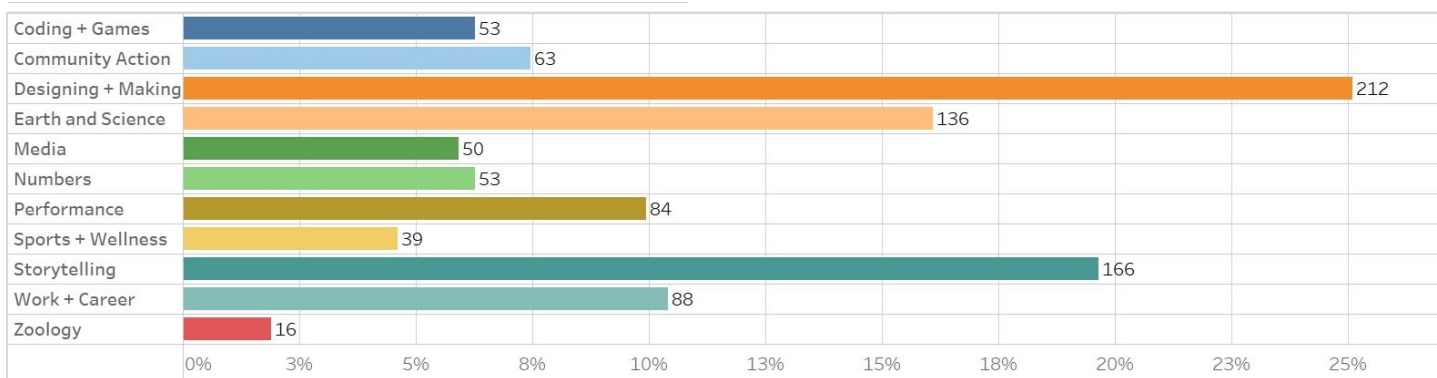
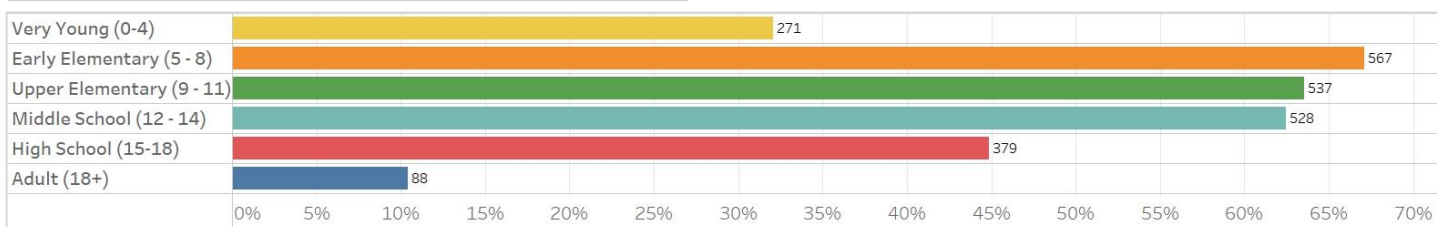


Figure 10: DCoL Programs by Age



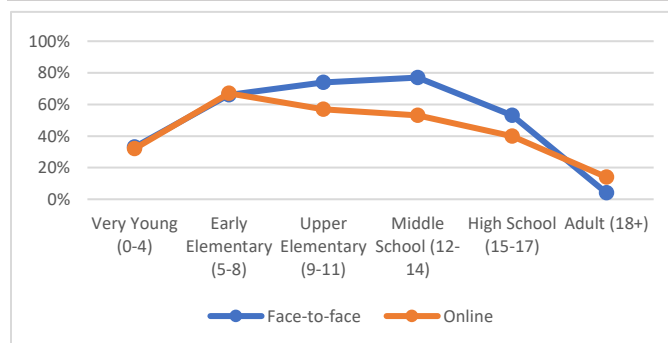
The 845 programs offered were each categorized based on subjects (Figure 9). At least 1 category was chosen per program, up to a total of 2 categories per programs.

- Programs most represented in Summer 2021 included Design + Making, Storytelling, and Earth and Science.
- Compared to prior years, several program categories increased significantly in number and in percentage, particularly Community Action, Design + Making, Earth and Science, Media (5 programs in 2019 to 50 in 2021), Numbers, Zoology (3 in 2019 to 16 in 2021).
- Programs that saw significant percentile decreases were Storytelling (from 57% in 2019 to 20% in 2021) and Work + Career (25% in 2019 to 10% in 2021).

Programs were also categorized by age, represented by inclusion of age group (Figure 10). Each program can be represented by multiple age groups. Elementary through middle school populations of youth (age 5-14) were significantly more represented than other age bands.

Comparing programs by age meeting in-person vs. online shows a difference in intended demographics (Figure 11). Of note, in-person programs emphasized a broader scope of age demographics. Online programs on the other hand, were more inclusive of adults while being less widely available across multiple age ranges. The same trend occurred in the previous year, with 26% of online programs being available for adults compared to only 13% of face-to-face programs.

Figure 11: DCoL Programs by Age and Modality



Beyond designating programs by age and category, Program Leads and Frontline Staff were also asked on surveys to select the main area of focus for their program, as well as what the top benefit(s) of that program is for the students attending (Table 6).

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), Academics, and Mentorship were consistently selected as the top three areas of focus by both Program Leads and Frontline Staff, with SEL being selected at a much higher rate by both groups than the other options (70% and 61% respectively). There was slightly less agreement on the top benefits of the program. Program Leads indicating that developing social skills (56%) was the top benefit, while Frontline Staff indicating it was to provide a fun and safe space (61%).





Table 6: Survey Results – Program Focus & Benefits		
	Program Leads	Frontline Staff
Program Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEL (70%)</li> <li>Academics (38%)</li> <li>Mentorship (32%)</li> <li>Fine Arts (27%)</li> <li>Civics/Citizenship (11%)</li> <li>Sports (5%)</li> <li>Spiritual/Religion (5%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEL (61%)</li> <li>Academics (52%)</li> <li>Mentorship (39%)</li> <li>Fine Arts (31%)</li> <li>Cultural Enrichment (30%)</li> <li>Sports (11%)</li> <li>Spiritual/Religion (8%)</li> </ul>
Benefits of the Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing Social Skills (56%)</li> <li>Developing Character/Leadership Building Skills (47%)</li> <li>Provide fun and safe space (44%)</li> <li>Enhancing Creativity/Personal expression (39%)</li> <li>Academic support (36%)</li> <li>Promoting Healthy Lifestyle (19%)</li> <li>Developing Fine arts skills (14%)</li> <li>Encouraging Spiritual Development (8%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing a fun and safe space (61%)</li> <li>Developing Character/Leadership Skills (61%)</li> <li>Developing Social Skills (52%)</li> <li>Enhancing Creativity/Personal Expression (48%)</li> <li>Motivating to do well in school (44%)</li> <li>Academic Support (33%)</li> <li>Developing Fine arts skills (31%)</li> <li>Promoting Healthy Lifestyle (20%)</li> </ul>

## Dosage

Dosage is a student-level variable and implies three related aspects of student participation including the **rate** of participation in days and hours, the **engagement** in programs; and the **range** of participation across different programs.

*"As we look at this data let's keep in mind an important point of context. Summer 2021 was truncated compared to previous summers, on both the front and back end. School calendars adapted due to Covid and ended further into June than in previous years. Additionally, in many instances, the school year started earlier in August than before."*

*Dylan Farmer, Assistant Director of Strategic Partnerships at SMU Center on Research & Evaluation, State of Summer*

### Dosage Rate

The first aspect of dosage is the rate of participation reflects how much programming in terms of days and hours students attend both cumulatively and on average. This aspect of dosage can be summarized in terms of student attendance – number of days and number of hours.

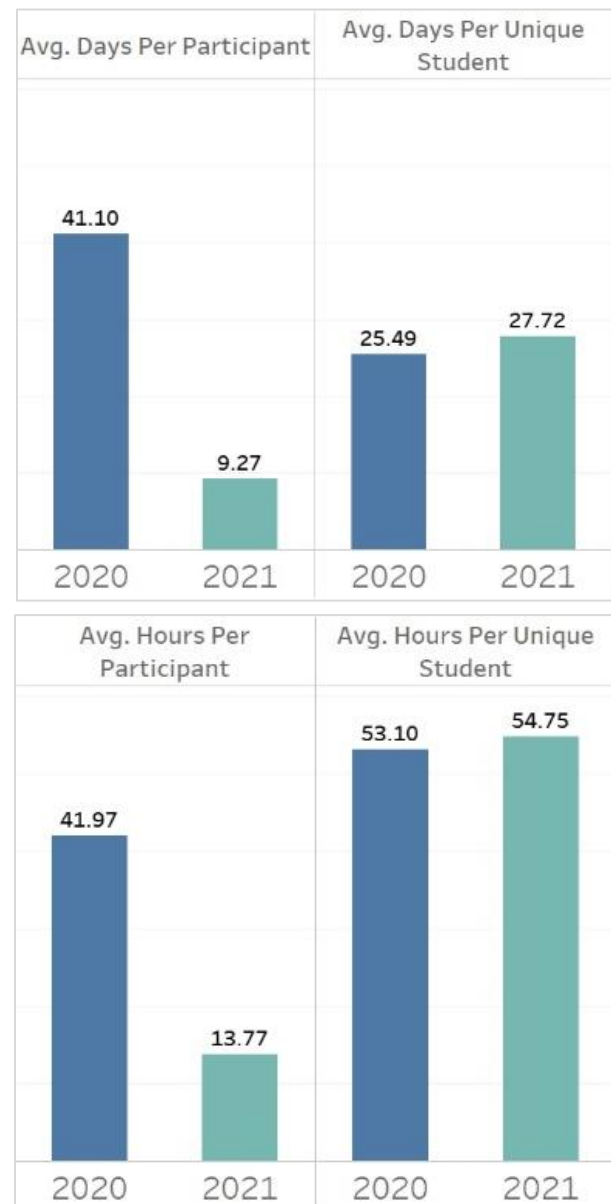
Cumulative learning hours and days participated represents student learning hours logged and days participated by

program providers. 2021's participant learning hours and days represented a significant decrease, while cumulative unique student hours increased slightly (Figure 12).

To measure averages of programming received per student, average days attended, and average hours attended per participant and unique student are accounted for.

- Average days/hours per participant is represented by total head counts and days **at the program level, per program**. These values show how much each **program** is being attended by students.
- Average days/hours per unique student considers programming **at the student ID level, per student**. These values emphasize how much each **student** is attending programming.

Figure 12: DCoL Total and Average Program Dosage by Participant and Unique Student



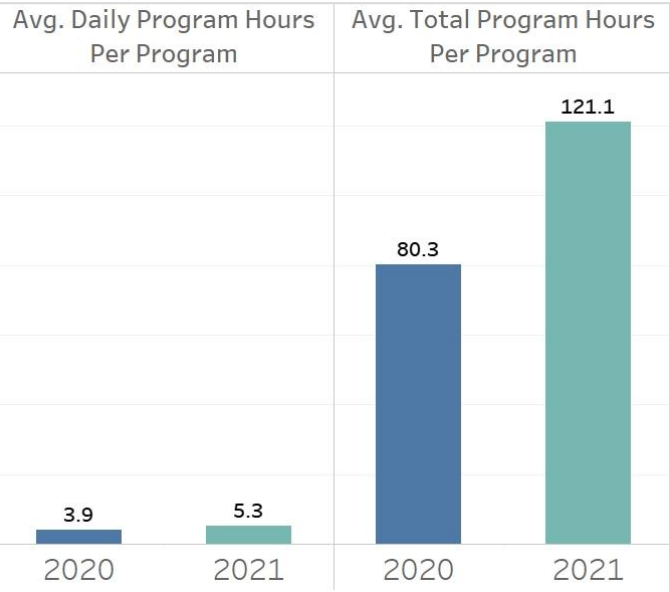
Average days attended per unique student (+8.7%) and average hours (+3.1%) per unique student both increased in 2021.

Average days and hours per participant however declined heavily from 2020 to 2021; Average days per participant decreased from 41.10 in 2020 to 9.27 in 2021, while average hours per participant decreased from 41.97 to 13.77.

- 74 programs totaling 1 day of run time accumulated a head count of 4,686 participants. The average days per participant for these students was 1. These students accounted for 22% of total participants in this measurement, heavily influencing these numbers.

In Summer 2021, programs were longer than Summer 2020 (Figure 13). The average hours a program was offered increased by 50%. This is likely due in part to the shift back to more in-person programs being offered. Interestingly though, Caregivers and program staff still report that programs could be longer.

Figure 13: DCoL Average Daily & Total Program Hours Per Program



Covid-19 Reflections

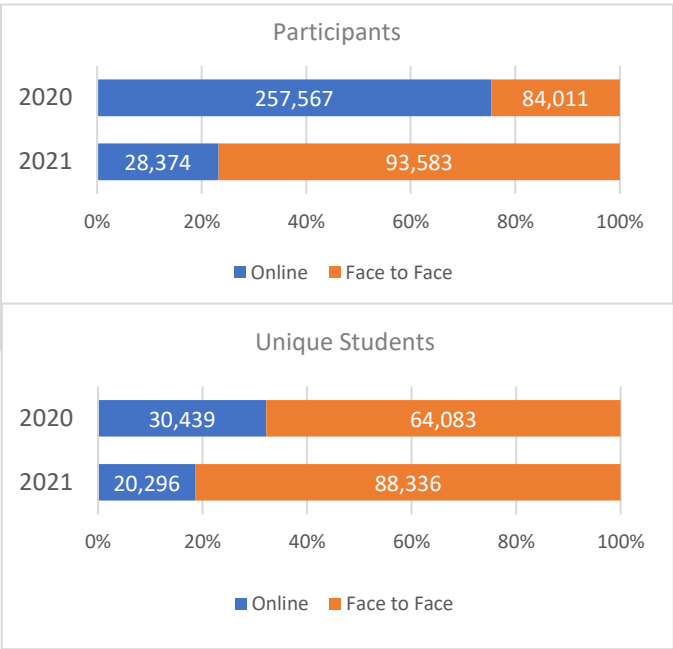
Available program dosage was stunted due to Covid-19, reducing the potential for students to accumulate dosage at the same rates as previous summers. 71.4% of Program Leads and 69.1% of Frontline Staff reported that their programs had to reduce the number of program days they were able to provide in summer 2021.

This reduction was noticed by Caregivers as 81.3% somewhat to strongly agreed on surveys that they wish the program had been offered for more days. 57.2% also somewhat to strongly

agreed that they wished the programs had been offered for more hours per day.

As partners moved back towards in-person programming, the ratio of online vs. face-to-face hours shifted significantly (Figure 14). Online hours attended decreased from 2020 to 2021, both in percentage and in quantity. On the other hand, face-to-face hours attended increased both in percentage and in quantity, though not enough to offset the significant loss in year-to-year online hours.

Figure 14: Total Attended Hours by Modality



Dosage Engagement

The second aspect of dosage is the level of student engagement in programs attended. This includes engaging in all facets of the program in a committed and focused way. Stakeholders were asked two questions related to the student's engagement in programming (Table 7). Overall, student and Frontline Staff ratings decreased slightly as compared to summer 2020, while Caregivers and Program Leads increased slightly. Program Leads had the greatest year over year increase. Like program quality, the percentage of students that answer favorably is less than the adult stakeholders by a sizable amount.

Additionally, 92.6% of students reported favorably that they enjoyed the activities they do within the program and 90.4% of students reported favorably that they look forward to going to this program.

Covid-19 Reflections

Despite the adaptations many programs had to make for Covid-19, an overwhelmingly high percentage, 99.6% of



**Table 7: Survey Results - Engagement**

Indicator	Student		Caregiver		Frontline Staff		Program Lead	
	Avg. Score	% Favorable Responses	Avg. Score	% Favorable Responses	Avg. Score	% Favorable Responses	Avg. Score	% Favorable Responses
<i>scale</i>	<i>4-point</i>		<i>6-point</i>		<i>6-point</i>		<i>6-point</i>	
Average Composite Score	3.35		5.46		5.28		5.49	
Because of this program, the things youth are learning are interesting to them.	3.36	87.7%	5.59	98.9%	5.44	98.9%	5.49	97.3%
Because of this program, youth are trying hard to learn.	3.35	84.1%	5.32	95.1%	5.12	95.6%	5.49	97.3%

Caregivers, agreed at some level that their child was engaged in the program.

### Dosage Range

The third aspect of dosage is range, which is connected to the number and breadth of different programs a student participates in during the summer, throughout the whole year, and across multiple years.

**Table 8: Students Attending Multiple (2+) Programs**

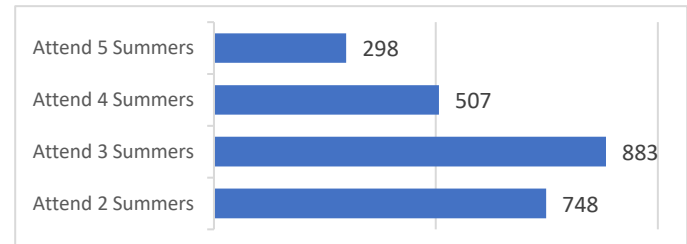
Indicator	2020	2021
Students attending 2+ Programs	403	352
Students attending 3-5+ Programs	166	66
Students attending 6+ Programs	60	0

Overall in 2021, fewer students attended multiple Summer programs (Table 8). Several reasons may have contributed:

- The average hours a program was offered increased 50% This may likely be due in part to the shift back to more in-person programs being offered.
- The summer was compressed as schools stayed open longer into June and went back earlier in August.
- COVID-19 social distancing was still in effect, potentially reducing the capacity of programs and the availability.
- Online programs decreased 36.3% from 2020 to 2021, from 815 programs offered to 519.
- Program duration increased, potentially allowing for fewer opportunities for attending multiple programs together.

Previous research both nationally and for DCoL has indicated that dosage over multiple summers is also important. Of the 16,406 unique students who attended a DCoL program in 2021, there were 2,436 who also attended one or more programs in previous summer between 2017 and 2020. 31% of students had attended one previous summer, with another 36% having attended 2 previous summers (for 3 total). Surprisingly, 12% of the 2,436 students have attended all five summers from 2017 through 2021 (Figure 15).

**Figure 15: Students Attending Multiple (2+) Summers, 2017-2019**



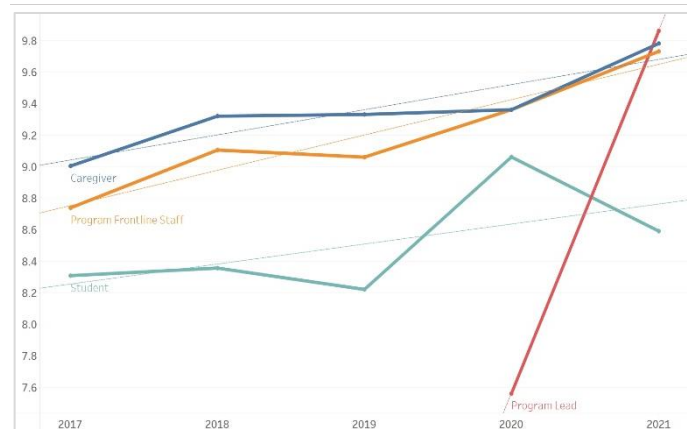
### Quality

Quality refers to the program quality students are receiving in DCoL programming. Quality is measured through the reported perceptions of stakeholders including students, Caregivers, and both Program Leads and Frontline Staff, and finally through quality observations conducted by Big Thought. In summer 2021, due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, quality observations were not conducted.

### Overall Satisfaction

Each stakeholder group report their overall satisfaction with the respective program they are associated with. In summer 2021, satisfaction rates for all groups increased except for students (Figure 16). In the case of student satisfaction, while the average rating decreased versus 2020, the score remained higher than in any previous year prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. What also jumps out is the sizable increase in program satisfaction reported by Program Leads, which jumped from 7.56 to 9.86.

**Figure 16: Overall Program Satisfaction by Stakeholder Group**





## Covid Reflection

The increase in Program Lead ratings raises a hypothesis that in the second year of Covid, with an increased return to in-person programming, and with more lead time to plan Program Leads were likely more comfortable with the program dynamics, and less stressed converting programming to virtual on the fly. This hypothesis is supported as 97% of Program Leads reported that adapting programming delivery for summer 2021 was still very or somewhat challenging, but in turn 97% also reported that they were able to carryover adaptations made in summer 2020 and over 82% disagreed at some level that their programming had declined due to the changes made for Covid-19.

With that in mind, 98.1% of Caregivers still reported that they somewhat to strongly agreed that the program met their family's needs this summer for a socially distanced learning opportunity. Additionally, 99.3% of all Caregivers somewhat to strongly agreed that the way the program was delivered made them feel like their child was safe.

## Program Quality

Stakeholders are asked a series of up to five questions gauging their perceptions on dimensions of program quality (Table 11). Overall, Caregiver and Program Lead program quality scores increases over 2020 results, while Student and Frontline Staff scores slightly decreased.

When looking at individual indicators of quality and the percentage of respondents who answer favorably (3 and 4 on 4-point scale; 5 and 6 on 6-point scale), again we see that perceptions of quality are high for all stakeholder groups; however, student's answer favorably at a much lower percentile than the adult stakeholder groups.

Another component of program quality is student's reflections on their peers and the adults in the program. In summer 2021, students were more likely to rate their experiences with adults more favorably than their experiences with peers.

- 91.4% reported favorably that they enjoy being around the adults in this program, while conversely only 83.5% responded favorably that they enjoy being around the other students in this program and only 81.0% reported favorably that the other students in this program are my friends.
- 93.7% responded favorably that the adults at this program are supportive of me.
- 86.6% responded favorably that the adults in this program are interested in how I am doing.

## Covid-19 Reflections

To further investigate the program quality deliverables in light of the pandemic, let's consider the Caregiver, Program Lead and Frontline Staff's responses for the same.

- About 81% of the of the Caregivers responded positively towards the way the programs were delivered and felt they were as good as it was in the previous summer.
- About 83% of the Program Lead and 74% of the Frontline Staff responded in favor of the Program Quality been maintained despite the changes implemented due to the pandemic.

## Value

Stakeholders responded to a series of four questions related to the value proposition of student's participation in the respective program (Table 12). Overall, student and Caregiver ratings decreased slightly as compared to summer 2020, while Program Leads and Frontline Staff increased slightly. Again, Program Leads had the greatest year over year increase.

When reviewing individual responses, the percentage of student's answering favorably is lower than adult stakeholder groups. Of particular interest, 90% of student's did respond favorably that they want to work harder in school because of this program.

Table 11: Survey Results by Stakeholder – Program Quality

Indicator	Student		Caregiver		Frontline Staff		Program Lead	
	Avg. Score	% Favorable Responses	Avg. Score	% Favorable Responses	Avg. Score	% Favorable Responses	Avg. Score	% Favorable Responses
scale	4-point		6-point		6-point		6-point	
Average Composite Score	3.36		5.61		5.55		5.56	
This program teaches new ways to learn things	3.40	88.6%	5.61	99.6%	5.54	98.4%	5.49	97.3%
This program helps students be successful learners	3.41	88.0%	5.63	99.6%	5.56	97.3%	5.47	94.4%
This program encourages youth to share their own ideas and ask a lot of questions	3.31	83.6%	5.58	99.3%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
This program encourages youth to work closely with other adults and other students	3.33	84.4%	5.69	99.3%	5.68	99.5%	5.89	97.3%
This program gives youth chances to revise and improve their work	3.37	86.5%	5.56	98.5%	5.42	95.6%	5.38	94.4%



Table 12: Survey Results by Stakeholder - Value

Indicator	Student		Caregiver		Frontline Staff		Program Lead	
	Avg. Score	% Favorable Responses	Avg. Score	% Favorable Responses	Avg. Score	% Favorable Responses	Avg. Score	% Favorable Responses
scale	4-point		6-point		6-point		6-point	
Average Composite Score	3.26		5.31		5.37		5.36	
Because of this program youth are going to explore a new interest based on things they learned	3.21	85.9%	5.26	95.5%	5.48	99.5%	5.46	97.3%
Because of this program, youth learned more about something they already had an interest in.	3.18	82.7%	5.26	97.4%				
Because of this program youth learn things that will help them do better in school.	3.28	85.3%	5.46	97.8%	5.48	97.8%	5.49	97.3%
Because of this program, youth want to work harder in school.	3.40	90.0%	5.25	97.7%	5.15	96.7%	5.14	97.3%

### Covid-19 Reflections

Caregivers acknowledged the challenges their children have faced through the pandemic and the impact on their learning.

- About 37% strongly agreed and 23% somewhat agreed that their child lost learning opportunities and fell behind during 2020-21 school years whereas 40% disregarded the claim.

Encouragingly, about 74% Caregivers agreed that the summer program their child is attending is helping to make up some of the learning lost due to coronavirus.

## Outcomes for Youth

Two of the stated desired outcomes for DCoL is for positive student growth relative to their social and emotional development as well as their academic achievement. SMU CORE continues to evaluate these outcomes from a long-term, longitudinal standpoint. However, there are near-term indicators from summer 2021 that are worth noting.

### Attitudes Towards School

Student surveys include four items that measure aspects of a student's attitude towards school and learning (Table 13). Statistical analysis conducted by SMU CORE, concludes that overall, the attitudes toward school have meaningfully improved since 2019 with no meaningful change from 2020 to 2021. In other words, attitudes have improved and stayed there from 2020 to 2021 (Figure 17).

- Improvement observed from 2019 to 2020 is meaningful. Mean difference between 2019 and 2020 is 0.11 (p-value = <0.001). By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.
- Decrease observed from 2020 to 2021 is negligible. Mean difference between 2020 and 2021 is -0.06 (p-

value = 0.0126). By conventional criteria, this difference is considered not to be statistically significant.

- Improvement observed from 2019 to 2021 is meaningful. Mean difference between 2019 and 2021 is 0.06 (p-value = 0.039). By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant.

Figure 17: Survey Results – Student's Attitude Towards School

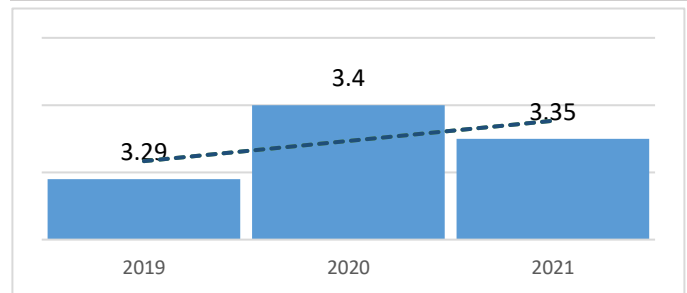


Table 13: Survey Results – Student's Attitude Towards School

Indicator	Student	
	Average Score	% Favorable Responses
scale	4-point	
Average Composite Score	3.34	
School is a waste of time.	3.26	80.3%
I am doing a good job in school.	3.35	85.5%
If I try hard, I believe I can do my schoolwork well.	3.58	88.5%
I don't really care about school anymore.	3.21	79.7%

### Social and Emotional Wellbeing

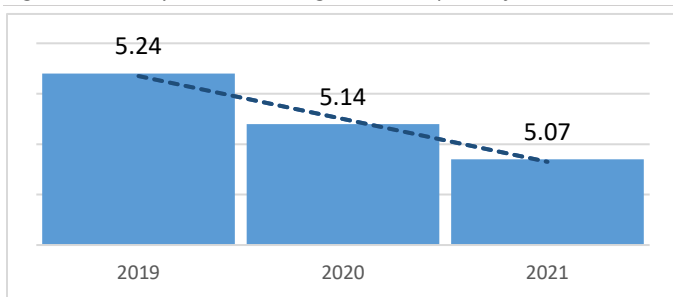
The perceived social and emotional wellbeing (SEL) of students is considered from both the student's own self-perception as well as through the Caregiver's observations. In summer 2021, student's rating of SEL was 3.16 (out of 4), which is slightly down from 2021. More telling is that Caregiver's average ratings on their child's SEL was 5.07 (out of 6), which is a decrease from 5.14 in 2020 and from 5.24 in 2019. A statistical



analysis from SMU CORE (Figure 18) finds that overall, the Caregiver perceptions of student SEL has declined since 2019 with no meaningful change from 2020 to 2021. In other words, perceptions declined from 2019 to 2020 and stayed there from 2020 to 2021.

- Decline observed from 2019 to 2020 is meaningful. Mean difference between 2019 and 2020 is -0.99 (p-value = 0.0102). By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant.
- Decrease observed from 2020 to 2021 is negligible. Mean difference between 2020 and 2021 is -0.07 (p-value = 0.1603). By conventional criteria, this difference is considered not to be statistically significant.
- Decrease observed from 2019 to 2021 is meaningful. Mean difference between 2019 and 2021 is -0.17 (p-value = <0.001). By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Figure 18: Survey Results – Caregiver’s Perception of Child’s SEL



A deeper exploration of the individual SEL items reveals that Caregiver’s perceptions of their child’s SEL is favorable at much greater rates than student’s self-perception (Table 14). In fact, only 52.6% of student’s feel they are good at telling others about their feelings as compared to 83% of Caregiver’s reporting their child is good at this. Similarly, 73.5% of students feel like they have control over things that happen to them, while 91.2% of Caregiver’s report their favorably feels this.

#### Covid-19 Reflections

Program Leads and Frontline Staff were attuned to the needs of their families and students, in light of the pandemic, and specifically on stress and anxiety that may be felt by some due to Covid-19. Programs were actively looking for ways to adapt their program to accommodate these needs.

- Over 51% of Program Leads reported that meeting youth and families’ immediate needs related to Covid-19 was a top priority (5 or 6 out of 6)

61% of Program Leads indicated they had adopted new SEL programs or activities as an immediate response to the stressors of Covid-19 on youth in their programs.

Table 14: Survey Results by Stakeholder - Social and emotional wellbeing

Indicator	Student		Caregiver	
	Avg. Score	% Favorable Responses	Avg. Score	% Favorable Responses
scale	4-point		6-point	
Average Composite Score	3.16		5.07	
I am good at telling others about my feelings.	2.56	52.6%	4.58	83.0%
I am good at listening to other people.	3.21	86.4%	4.96	95.5%
I like to plan ahead and set goals	3.16	80.2%	4.61	85.0%
I make good decisions.	3.14	85.2%	4.98	97.0%
I am good at taking care of problems without violence or fighting.	3.12	80.8%	5.37	96.3%
I care about the feelings of other people.	3.34	90.4%	5.40	97.4%
I am interested in community and world events.	3.21	77.2%	5.20	93.9%
I believe that my actions can have a good impact on other people	3.30	87.7%	5.32	98.1%
I say "no" to things I know are wrong	3.31	87.9%	5.26	97.3%
I feel like I have control over things that happen to me	3.07	73.5%	4.73	91.2%
I feel good about my future	3.43	85.9%	5.26	97.7%

