

Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Newsletter

May 2009



Welcome

It is with pride and enthusiasm that I welcome you to the inaugural issue of the Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) newsletter.

There is great excitement and high expectations surrounding the Texas 21st CCLC program. TEA has placed a focus on research-based assistance to Texas 21st CCLC that will further the quality and outcomes of centers, specifically to positively impact student achievement through extended learning programming that complements the school day instruction.

Through this incorporation of research and best practices, and offering training and hands-on experience, our goal is to offer students an enriched afterschool program, which we expect will contribute to improved graduation rates in all Texas communities.

You play a vital role in this effort, and as you support the children of Texas, we want to support you. This newsletter is intended to be a source of quality information as well as an avenue to highlight successes and keep you informed of upcoming training and events.

We have a committed staff dedicated to ensuring the success of all Texas 21st CCLC Centers. Together with you, we can make a difference in the lives of the children we serve.

Sincerely,
Robert Scott
Commissioner of Education
Texas Education Agency

Texas Education Agency Awards Texas 21st CCLC Contract to Edvance Research

If you haven't already heard the news, leading educational research company Edvance Research, Inc. has been awarded a contract to be the provider for the Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC): Program Enhancement & Quality Assurance program.

The contract, awarded by TEA through TEA's competitive bidding process, commenced September 30, 2008 and will extend through August 31, 2009. The contract provides funding at approximately \$2 million.

Edvance Research, Inc. is a women and minority owned business, specializing in rigorous product and market research, in the education market. Edvance is staffed with experienced professionals who bring together an extensive and deep background in both education and business. The company specializes in educational policy and market research disciplines, project management, and process and quality improvement.

TEA has placed a focus on assisting Texas 21st CCLC Grantees. Edvance will work closely with TEA to offer support to the Grantees and Centers by working with the Technical Assistance Coordinators, providing opportunities for professional collaboration among the Grantees and meeting program reporting goals. Some of the services Edvance will provide to the Texas 21st CCLC program include:

- Training development and implementation
- Technical assistance with planning and reporting to measure results
- Meeting planning and implementation
- Program outreach
- Support for Grantees and Centers in collaboration with schools
- Access to research-based strategies aligned to TEKS for after-school instruction.

Edvance CEO Dr. Dean Nafziger is excited about the partnership with TEA. "We are pleased that the Texas Education Agency has selected Edvance Research to lead this program. This is a great opportunity to apply our expertise in needs assessment, technical assistance and rigorous research to strengthen the Texas 21st CCLC program. The centers are a vital part of Texas communities, providing students a high quality extended learning environment, with the goal to contribute to success in the classroom."

An Enhanced Look for Texas 21st CCLC

**COMING
SOON!**

Texas 21st CCLC is getting a makeover. A new brand is being developed for the program that will emulate the values and goals of our program. This will include a new name, logo, tagline, and redesigned Web site all reflecting the new brand.

Keep an eye out for more exciting new things to come soon!

Webinars Simplify Term Reporting

It might have been fear, dread or even confusion. Regardless, the words, “term reporting” or “tracking system” seemed to evoke a variety of feelings from 21st CCLC Grantees and program staff. But thanks to a recent series of Webinars, term reporting in the Texas 21st CCLC Tracking and Reporting System is a lot less intimidating.

The 21st CCLC Tracking and Reporting System Webinar series was designed to provide support for those who utilized the system to enter data, as well as to help ensure data accuracy and integrity. Feedback from a number of sources including a needs assessment and Technical Assistance Coordinator (TAC) focus group confirmed the need for training in the area of term reporting and the tracking system.

The webinar series consisted of four, two-and-a-half hour sessions delivered via Microsoft Live Meeting, a web-based program that allows people to participate in online meetings in an easy-to-use environment from virtually anywhere with a phone and Internet connection. Each webinar session focused on a specific group of topics and offered participants hands-on instruction in using the system .

“Our goal is to offer excellent training opportunities in a variety of platforms so that we can support the needs of all our grantees and program staff.” —Kathy Brown, Edvance Research

According to Instructional Designer and Webinar Facilitator Kathy Brown, reaction to this new training platform has been great. “People loved it. So much, in fact, that one of the first-time webinar participants wrote ‘Webinars Rock!’ on the slide at the end of the webinar using the writing tool in Live Meeting.”

The decision to try a webinar training platform was easy, according to Brown. “Because funding for travel and face-to-face training can be limited, webinars provide an accessible, interactive platform at little to no cost. Webinars also allow us to schedule the sessions during times convenient for most participants. More people are able to participate because they don’t have to worry about center staffing issues or travel budgets.”

Since the Tracking and Reporting System series was well-received, plans are already in the works to include additional webinars in the 21st CCLC training curriculum. Brown encourages others to jump on the bandwagon and give webinars a try. “Given the chance, webinar technology can be a powerful tool for bringing people together for new learning experiences.”

If you weren’t able to participate in the recent webinar series, you don’t have to worry. You can still learn all you need to know about term reporting because the webinars were recorded and they are archived on the Texas 21st CCLC Web site. Just go to <http://www.texas21afterschool.org/07/?q=node/269> and click on the “Archived Webinar Session” that you wish to download.

Additional resources are also available to assist you with term reporting. “Show Me Tutorials” are step by step presentations available on the Web site training page. Topics include, “Importing and Exporting Student Data”. A Question Forum was also established to allow users to post training-related questions and to receive answers from TEA. To post a question or comment, you must first register with the Web site (simply provide a user name, password, and your e-mail address) and agree to the site terms and conditions. Once you have registered you can access the Question Forum on the site under “Training.” Other tutorials for help with Microsoft Excel are available, as well as a number of tracking tools that you can utilize for support with your center activities and students.

Session 1: “Data 101—An Overview of the 21st CCLC Tracking System and Entering Basic Information”

Date: January 15, 2009

Topics: The purpose of tracking data; How to enter basic information about your program into the system.

Attendance: 62

Session 2: “Everything You Need: Activity and Student Data” was held on January 21.

Date: January 21, 2009

Topics: Effective strategies/tools for tracking students and activities; Efficient methods for entering data.

Attendance: 45

Session 3: “Program Information, Reports and Approvals”

Date: January 29, 2009

Topics: Features of an exemplar report; Correcting errors and inconsistent data.

Attendance: 54

Session Four: “Preparing for Spring: Looking Ahead,”

Date: February 27, 2009

Topics: The spring data requirements; Building program sustainability.

Attendance: 50

67 percent of participants had never participated in a webinar prior to this series.

Brown hopes that excitement will ultimately replace any fear, dread or confusion that might have been. She encourages your feedback on the webinars, the online tutorials and other 21st CCLC training curriculum. “Our goal is to offer excellent training opportunities in a variety of platforms so that we can support the needs of all our grantees and program staff. Since our training curriculum is designed in response to your needs, we encourage you to let us know how we can best support you.”

Needs Assessment Survey Helps Identify Training Opportunities

The best way to determine what people want and need is to ask them.

A needs assessment process typically analyzes a current situation, defines the ideal situation and determines the “gap,” between the current and the ideal situation. Once you figure out what the “gap” is, you can determine your purpose, your priorities, your objectives and any potential solutions for a given situation.

In an effort to accurately determine the needs of the current Texas 21st CCLC Grantees (project directors) and Centers (site coordinators), TEA and Edvance Research set out to collect information and experiences regarding the training, professional development and technical assistance that Grantees and Centers have received. The needs assessment was performed via an online survey during the period of December 12, 2008 and January 9, 2009.

We received a very strong response.

Of the total 492 Grantees and Centers contacted for the assessment, 243 surveys were completed for a total response rate of 49 percent. Here are some of the key findings from the recent needs assessment survey:

- Many similarities were found across Grantees and Center cycles 2-4, except for cycle 5 centers as they are new to the program.
- Overall, Grantees and Centers are “satisfied” with the training/professional development they have received (based on a scale from “not satisfied at all” to “very satisfied”).
- The top five training programs groups wish to receive overall are:
 - Building a sustainable program
 - Strategic planning for afterschool programs
 - 21st CCLC policies and guidance
 - 21st CCLC grant management and financial overview
 - Academic enrichment or content specific activities.

Your opinions matter.

Based on these key findings and others, here are some of the recommendations that TEA and Edvance Research are considering regarding training:

- Evaluate the specific needs required for cycle 5 and cycle 6 Grantees and customize training courses based on these specific needs.
- There is a strong dedication to raise the level of satisfaction with training and professional development from “satisfied” to “very satisfied” by TEA and Edvance.



- Offer training on the top five requested courses.
- Offer online training options and emphasize the benefits of these training options (personal convenience, saving time, saving money and the ability to reach a broader audience).

A comprehensive training curriculum is being tailored based on these stated needs. Some of these issues have recently been addressed (see the Webinar article on page 3) and others are planned for the very near future.

We encourage you to continue to share your thoughts and opinions with us. Your willingness to do so can lead to positive change and ultimately, a better program.

Save the Dates!

You won't want to miss the upcoming 2009 Texas 21st CCLC Annual Conference.

An impressive agenda is being planned and some exciting activities are in the works. Not to mention the wonderful opportunity to network with your fellow Texas 21st CCLC program directors and staff, TACs, TEA staff, Edvance Research staff, and others!

This two-day conference will be held on August 4 – 5, 2009 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel North Dallas-Addison in Addison, Texas. The hotel is centrally located in the heart of the North Dallas Addison business district featuring over 170 restaurants, entertainment venues and some of the most prestigious shopping in the Dallas area including Galleria Dallas.

So mark your calendars and look for more detailed information to come. We look forward to seeing you there!

Keep Your Information Current and Don't Miss a Thing

Has any of your contact information changed recently? Be sure to keep your information current in The Texas 21st CCLC Tracking and Reporting System so you won't miss out on important information like alerts from TEA, information about upcoming training and other events, as well as other Texas 21st CCLC communication (such as the e-version of this newsletter). We direct all communication to the contact information we have in the system, so if this information has recently changed or is incorrect, chances are you won't receive these important updates.

Updating your contact information is quick and easy. Simply go log into the system and select the appropriate contact level (either "Grantee" level or "Center" level). Make sure a primary contact has been selected and that information is current. Save your information.

Now you will be sure to get all the information you need.

Grantee Spotlight: Showcase Your Successes

Do you consider your afterschool program a success? Are you sustaining participation for middle and high school students? Are you having an impact on improving attendance during the school day? Is student achievement increasing in math and science? Could others learn from your successes?

If so, we want to hear about it. Tell us about the impact you are making and share lessons you have learned. We may choose to showcase your program in an upcoming issue of this newsletter. Send a note to jward@edvanceresearch.com with some details about your successful afterschool program.

Upcoming Events

June 11: 3rd Texas 21st CCLC Communication Network Meeting, Corpus Christi, Texas (Omni Corpus Christi, Bayfront Marina Towers)

August 4 – 5: Texas 21st CCLC Annual Conference, Addison, Texas (Crowne Plaza Hotel North Dallas-Addison)

August 5: 4th Texas 21st CCLC Communication Network Meeting, Addison, Texas (Crowne Plaza Hotel North Dallas-Addison)

Training Curriculum in the Works

The following Texas 21st CCLC training courses are currently in development:

- Building Sustainability
- Creating Engaging Lessons and Experiences for Students
- Technical Assistance Coordinator Training
- Participation in Adult and Family Activities

Specific dates, times and delivery method (Webinar, face-to-face, etc.) will be determined in the coming months. Let us know how we can support you!

Contact Kathy Brown at kbrown@edvanceresearch.com with additional training topic suggestions.

TEA Texas 21st CCLC Contacts

Lizzette Reynolds—Deputy Commissioner

Barbara Knaggs—Associate Commissioner

Gina Day—Deputy Associate Commissioner

Nellie Reyes—Senior Director, State Initiatives, Division of Programs for At-Risk Youth

Candace M. Ferguson—State Coordinator/Manager, State Initiatives, Division of Programs for At-Risk Youth

A Call to Action

Does it seem like your 21st CCLC task list is growing faster than you can keep up with? Are you often too busy to remember why you work so hard doing what you do?

Sometimes it's hard to see the big picture and feel good about the work you do, especially if you feel overwhelmed, stressed out or overworked.

Every now and then it's important to take a step back and think about the real reasons we work as hard as we do.

Whether you spent your day in route to a remote center or entering piles of data into the tracking system, your time and energy helped enrich the life of a child. Without you and your growing to-do list, none of this would be possible.

Feel good about what you do and the impact that you make each day. We do, and we thank you!



Texas 21st Century Community
Learning Centers



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