

**Throop  
Elementary School**

**Hoosier Uplands**

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers**

**Site Visit Summary**

**Prepared by:**



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## PURPOSE OF THE SITE VISIT

Site visits conducted by Limelight Analytics are intended to provide useful feedback to continually enhance the quality of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programming. Limelight Analytics has identified four key areas that can be observed during afterschool programming and developed key indicators that are aligned with the Planning and Implementation Toolkit and User Guide developed by the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC National Technical Assistance Center, the Indiana Afterschool Standards, and the Michigan Quality Standards of Care for Afterschool Programs.

### Key Area #1: Program Delivery

- There is a planned, daily schedule.
- There are structured activities that are planned and prepared ahead of time.
- The daily schedule includes physical activity, creative activities, and social time.
- Transitions between activities and/or locations in the building are smooth.

### Key Area #2: Academic Enrichment

- There is scheduled time for academic enrichment activities (including homework support if applicable).
- Academic activities support student needs in core subject areas (e.g., math and ELA).
- Activities are appropriate for the grade level and academic abilities of youth.
- Staff use varying approaches to help youth learn.

### Key Area #3: Youth Engagement

- Youth actively participate in activities.
- Activities offered to participants are aligned with their interests.
- Youth follow directions and stay on task.
- Youth ask questions and seek feedback.
- Staff engage with youth throughout the duration of the program.

### Key Area #4: Positive Relationships

- The program provides a welcoming, youth-centered environment.
- The program is intentional about supporting positive relationships and behavior.
- Staff serve as role models, demonstrating positive social skills.
- Staff communicate and teach clear behavioral expectations.
- Staff apply behavioral consequences consistently when needed.

### Program Overview

The Throop Elementary 21st CCLC program site was observed on a Thursday afternoon in early February. This is the first year that a 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC-supported afterschool program has been offered at Throop Elementary. Trinica York is in her first year as the site coordinator, but she has existing ties to the participants as a resident of the community and youth development leader in community-based organizations. Ms. York is assisted by Ms. Gosby and Miss Riley (a local high school student), both of whom work five days a week along with Ms. York.

Student attendance averages around 16-20 students each day. On the day of the site visit, 13 students attended the program, likely due to several illnesses that had been circulating through the school over the past few weeks. The program serves students in 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Students are asked to attend the program for a minimum of three days per week and stay until at least 4:00 pm to ensure they receive homework and academic support. The program takes place primarily in the school's cafeteria. When outdoor play is possible, the program uses the playground. The cafeteria also includes space for movement and games, as many of the tables are moved to the side of the room during afterschool hours. The weather was cold and rainy on the day of the site visit, so students did not play outside.

### Daily Schedule

The afterschool program currently operates Monday-Friday from 3:00 pm-5:45 pm. The schedule followed on the day of the site visit was typical of a Thursday:

**3:00 – 3:30 pm – Arrival and Snack:** Students arrive in the cafeteria and place their belongings along one of the walls. They are offered a snack, and those students who choose not to eat the provided snack can choose a book to read instead. Students who choose the snack can sit at a table of their choice and visit with peers while they eat.

**3:30 – 4:00 pm – Homework and Academic Support:** Students spread out throughout the cafeteria into small groups of their choice and complete homework or grade-level worksheet provided by the program or read independently. Staff circulate to support engagement and at times they work one-on-one with a student who needs additional support.

**4:00 – 5:00 pm – Academic Enrichment:** Staff implement either a literacy or STEM activity, depending on the day of the week. STEM activities take place on Monday and Wednesday, and literacy activities are implemented on Tuesday and Thursday. On the day of the site visit, staff facilitated two literacy activities: a phonic-focused Bingo game and the creation of Valentines Day cards.

**5:00 – 5:45 pm – Free Time and Dismissal:** Indoor free-time was offered during this portion of the afternoon since the weather was cold and rainy.

Key Area #1: Program Delivery				
Indicators of Quality	1. Minimal	2. Good	3. Excellent	Not Observed
There is a planned, daily schedule.			✓	
There are structured activities that are planned and prepared ahead of time.			✓	
The daily schedule includes physical activity, creative activities, and social time.			✓	
Transitions between activities and/or locations in the building are smooth.			✓	
Program Strengths				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programming is provided on a consistent schedule each day that includes homework or reading time, academic enrichment activities focused on STEM or literacy, physical activity, and free time. “Fun Fridays” allow for more flexibility and staff are often able to incorporate more play and free time into the Friday schedule.</li> <li>• Students were familiar with the schedule and transitioned easily from one activity to the next. Students did not complain or protest about any of the activities, and it was clear they were expected to engage in all activities.</li> <li>• The program staff team is well-coordinated. They communicate well with each other, and they have clearly defined roles in facilitating the program activities each afternoon. Activity materials and snack are prepped and quickly available when needed. Tables are quickly cleaned as participants move on to the next activity of the afternoon.</li> </ul>				
Opportunities to Strengthen Programming				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There did not appear to be a daily schedule posted for students to review. Helping students “predict” their afternoon can help them moderate their energy and help them engage in meaningful ways. Program staff should review the schedule verbally and/or post the daily schedule to allow students to know what to expect (and look forward to) throughout the afternoon.</li> </ul>				

<b>Key Area #2: Academic Enrichment</b>				
<b>Indicators of Quality</b>	<b>1. Minimal</b>	<b>2. Good</b>	<b>3. Excellent</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
There is scheduled time for academic enrichment activities (including homework support if applicable).			✓	
Academic activities support student needs in core subject areas (e.g., math and ELA).			✓	
Activities are appropriate for the grade level and academic abilities of youth.		✓		
Staff use a variety of approaches to help youth learn.			✓	
<b>Program Strengths</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are given time to complete homework, although it is typical for only a few of them have schoolwork to complete. Most students worked quietly on their activity packets or read independently during this time.</li> <li>• Staff do an excellent job of identifying those students who need to complete homework assignments and providing additional support and encouragement throughout the dedicated homework time. The program provides all the materials students may need to complete assignments and program activity packets.</li> <li>• On the day of the site visit, literacy enrichment included two activities, a Valentines Day bingo activity and an opportunity to create and cut out Valentines Day cards. Students were able to choose how to construct their Valentines Day cards, and several requested access to additional materials. Staff were able to quickly access those materials, which provided the students with opportunities to be creative and explore their own ideas.</li> </ul>				
<b>Opportunities to Strengthen Programming</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although all students were highly engaged in the Valentines Day card activity, the older students were not as engaged in the phonic-based bingo game that was played early in the session. Because students in grades 2-5 have often developed strong phonics skills, this activity was not as relevant for them (although it was an excellent activity for the younger students). Because there are typically at least three staff present when literacy enrichment activities are facilitated, grade-based groups of students should be considered (e.g., K-2 and 3-5). Instead of a phonics activity, the older students could have played a version of bingo focused on vocabulary words.</li> </ul>				

## Key Area #3: Staff & Youth Engagement

Indicators of Quality	1. Minimal	2. Good	3. Excellent	Not Observed
Youth actively participate in program activities.			✓	
Activities offered to participants are aligned with their interests.			✓	
Youth follow instructions and stay on task.			✓	
Youth ask questions and seek feedback.			✓	
Staff engage with youth throughout the duration of the program.			✓	

## Program Strengths

- Program participants are provided with a balance of pre-planned activities and those they can choose for themselves. During homework time, students also have the choice between several options: reading, homework, or activity sheets. This balance helps differentiate the afterschool program from the school day, when student often have fewer choices.
- Staff are engaged with participants consistently throughout the afternoon. Occasionally, a staff member will clean up or prepare for the next activity, but most are available to support students, answer questions, or encourage engagement throughout the afternoon.
- Staff provide a variety of materials and supplies throughout the afternoon that allow students to engage fully in the scheduled activities. The program offers many books, plenty of drawing and writing supplies, and additional art supplies to allow students to customize their Valentines Day cards. Opportunities to be “hands-on” throughout the afternoon was certainly part of the reason students were highly engaged.
- After homework time and a bathroom break, staff offered a brain break before facilitating the literacy activities. Students (even those who were older) were happy to dance and move along with a few Valentine’s Day themed videos for about 5 minutes. This activity appeared to support overall engagement during the literacy activities, as it allowed students to get up and move before another seated activity.

## Key Area #4: Positive Relationships & Behavioral Supports

Indicators of Quality	1. Minimal	2. Good	3. Excellent	Not Observed
The program provides a welcoming, youth-centered environment.			✓	
The program is intentional about supporting positive relationships and behavior.			✓	
Staff serve as role models, demonstrating positive social skills.			✓	
Staff communicate and teach clear behavioral expectations.			✓	
Staff apply behavioral consequences consistently when needed.		✓		

### Program Strengths

- The program environment was relaxed, positive, and productive. Instructions were clear and effective, and staff never needed to raise their voice to get students' attention.
- All staff demonstrated initiative in supporting students. Students requiring support were given the help they needed quickly and effectively.
- Staff modeled kindness and respect for each other. They communicated with each other throughout the afternoon and shared responsibility for set-up, clean-up, and behavior support.
- Program staff use Class Dojo to incentivize positive behavior. At the end of each week, students can purchase small prizes with their points. When used consistently, this type of behavioral reinforcement system has been shown to help students recognize and repeat positive behaviors.

### Opportunities to Strengthen Programming

- Program staff allow students to sit with peers of their choice during homework time and provide reminders that they need to be productive and talk quietly. However, despite reminders from staff, a group of second graders were noticeably unproductive, and often distracted students were trying to read. Having an opportunity to sit in self-selected groups should be framed as a "privilege" that students can earn. When students have not earned the privilege, staff should separate them for 2-3 days and then slowly let them work again in pairs and then larger groups, if they meet behavioral expectations.