
Final Report: Beacon Community School Evaluation

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Social Policy Research Associates

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Executive Summary

In the summer of 2019, Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) was hired by the Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) in San Francisco to conduct an implementation and outcomes evaluation of the expansion of the Beacon Community School model. The evaluation was significantly altered by the COVID-19 pandemic, which closed San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) schools from March 16, 2020, until April 10, 2021, and restricted SPR's in-person access to schools and programs for the entirety of the study period. In consultation with DCYF staff, the evaluation design evolved to become developmental and responsive, rather than outcomes oriented.

This Final Report draws on qualitative and quantitative data over a five-year period (2018-2023), including surveys, over 200 in-depth interviews, and data on program enrollment, attendance, and participant characteristics.

Beacon Expansion and the Beacon Ecosystem

The San Francisco Beacon Initiative (SFBI) was launched in 1994, in partnership with SFUSD and the City of San Francisco. The [Beacon Program Model](#) aims to promote the development of community schools that provide comprehensive supports to children and families during the school day, after school, and in the summer.

In the spring of 2016, DCYF, SFBI and SFUSD went through a comprehensive planning and community engagement process, with the goal of expanding the program to bring about more equitable outcomes for the highest-need students in San Francisco. The collaborative process led to an ambitious plan for rapid expansion, from 9 to 27 schools. As core system partners, DCYF and SFUSD provide funding, coordination and professional development, while SFBI acts as the primary technical assistance provider for Beacon Programs.

Beacon Programs are located at 11 elementary schools, three K-8 schools, and 13 middle schools, and are operated by 13 Lead Agencies. Each Beacon Program is led by a full-time Beacon Director, who is responsible for managing budgets, fundraising, program development, staff supervision, and engaging partners. In School Year (SY) 22-23, staffing levels varied significantly across Beacon Programs, ranging from a low of one full-time staff member to a high of 15 full-time staff members, as well as varying levels of part-time staff. K-8 schools and middle schools generally had a higher number of staff compared to elementary schools, corresponding to the higher number of students that they serve.

Most programs and schools reported higher than average turnover and difficulty recruiting and retaining staff in SY21-22 and SY22-23, though staff shortages slowly improved in SY22-23. Respondents indicated that low pay makes it challenging to recruit staff with the right skill sets and that Beacon staff leave for jobs that offer more pay and opportunities for advancement. Programs have taken a multi-prong approach to addressing hiring and retention challenges. In addition to using word-of-mouth recruitment strategies, they have worked on creating an inclusive team environment by holding staff appreciation events and expanding professional

development. Starting in SY21-22, programs shifted towards having more full-time and fewer part-time staff, which supports the increased focus on providing school day services.

Despite challenges with recruitment and retention, school staff stressed the quality of Beacon staff, saying that their racial and linguistic diversity, youthfulness, and knowledge of San Francisco neighborhoods help them to connect with and support youth in ways that are distinct from school staff. In keeping with this feedback, 2023 survey results show that almost all programs (92%) have staff that speak Spanish, over a fifth (21%) have staff who speak Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin), and programs also have staff that speak Tagalog, Arabic, and Samoan. At the time of our 2020 survey, 85% of Beacon staff members identified as BIPOC and 68% lived in San Francisco.

Community-based partners play an important role in ensuring Beacon Programs are able to provide robust services to meet the needs of students and their families. In SY22-23, most programs had at least one partner that provides enrichment programming (91%) and academic support (89%). Moreover, the percentage of programs partnering with mental and behavioral health providers nearly doubled from 44% in SY19-20 to 83% in SY22-23, likely in response to the increased behavioral health needs of students and families associated with the pandemic. Overall, survey respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their partnerships.

Beacon Participants

Annual enrollment in Beacon programming hovered around 7,000 students in both Fiscal Year (FY) 18-19 and FY21-22. In FY21-22, 5,841 students received services during the school year and 2,764 attended summer 2021 programs.¹ Below are some key findings about Beacon participants:

- The majority of FY21-22 Beacon participants identified as Hispanic/Latino or Asian.
- Slightly more males than females participated in Beacon activities tracked in CMS, DCYF's client management system.
- Close to one-third of Beacon participants were English Learners (ELs).
- In both FY18-19 and FY21-22, close to half of students in Beacon Schools had attendance records in CMS.
- Students in grades 1-6 were the most likely to participate in Beacon programming.

¹ This does not include students who attended services that were entered as "events" in Cityspan (SFUSD's data management system) or students who received direct services that were not tracked in CMS. Most programs did not track all direct services they provided into CMS; therefore, the data presented is not inclusive of all participating students. Specifically, the tracking and recording of school day activities and family services differs across sites, and sometimes, across years within the same site. Programs consistently tracked expanded learning programs, while behavioral health services were the least likely to be tracked in CMS.

- African American students were the most likely to participate in Beacon programming, followed by Hispanic/Latino and Pacific Islander students. White and Filipino students were the least likely to attend Beacon programming.

School Partnerships

Coordination and alignment between Beacon Programs and their school sites is the foundation for the services and supports that they offer to students and families. Beacon Programs coordinate with school leadership through meetings and informal communication between the Beacon Director and school administrators, and through the Beacon Director's participation in key leadership committees. About 80% of Beacon Programs communicate with the principal or assistant principal at least weekly. Beacon staff also collaborate with teachers, family liaisons, social workers, instructional coaches, and academic liaisons to support specific school activities.

Beacon and school staff identified regular standing meetings between Beacon Programs and school sites as the primary coordinating structure for their partnership. Meetings commonly focus on the vision and goals of the program, logistics around events, and the needs of specific students. These meetings commonly include student support and behavioral wellness meetings and standing one-on-one meetings with principals or assistant principals. Other common meetings include school staff meetings, family engagement committees, grade level meetings, and the school site council. Beacon and school staff from about two-thirds of the school sites highlighted the importance of informal check-ins that occur over text, in the hallways, and when staff stop into each other's offices. Most Beacon Directors reported that they were satisfied with their level of communication with their school's leadership and teachers.

School staff from about one-third of sites that were interviewed in fall 2022 identified having shared goals as a key component of their relationship with the Beacon Program. The degree to which Beacon Programs and their host schools collaborate around shared goals and strategies, however, varied. While some Beacon Programs fully participate in discussions around goal setting and planning school-wide strategies, others focus more on embracing the goals set by the school. In other cases, the school and the Beacon Program largely operate as two entities and there are few intentional efforts at aligning higher-level goals or strategies.

There are a variety of factors that facilitate or inhibit strong communication, alignment, and collaboration between Beacon Programs and schools. Partnership facilitators include the flexibility and responsiveness of Beacon Programs, strong relationships between Beacon staff and students, strong personal relationships between school and Beacon staff, co-location of Beacon and school offices, and collaboration between both leadership and line staff. Partnership inhibitors include Beacon and school staff turnover, school staff shortages, scheduling difficulties and competing priorities.

Beacon Services

The Beacon Program Model is comprised of five pillars – (1) school day services, (2) behavioral health and wellness, (3) expanded learning, (4) family engagement, and (5) transition services. Beacon Programs offer a range of activities within each service area that are tailored to the context and needs of each school site. SPR rated pillar development for 25 programs in 2020

and in 2023, pulling from all available data, to understand how program services within each of the pillars developed over time. Key findings include the following:

- **Overall, there was growth in all pillars between 2020 and 2023 except for expanded learning, which was already well developed.** The progress that programs made in the development of services needs to be considered within the context of the pandemic and staffing crises, as these created a significant “head wind” for programs.
- **The pillar that experienced the most growth in services was behavioral health and wellness.** This is consistent with the finding that programs nearly doubled their behavioral health partnerships between 2020 and 2023 and with interviews highlighting the importance of behavioral wellness services for students after the pandemic.
- **School day services saw the second highest level of growth.** Interview respondents consistently spoke about the increased reliance of school staff on Beacon Program support during the school day. Programs also hired more full-time staff, which expanded the number of people who could push into classrooms and support lunchtime activities.
- **Transition services were the least developed pillar in 2020 and remained so in 2023, despite deepening of services.** Although transition services were not the highest priority for programs, Beacon Programs provided substantial transition services but in a way that was more time-limited and periodic than the services in other Beacon pillars.
- **Although strategies for family engagement changed during the pandemic, the overall depth and extensiveness of family engagement services did not change significantly.** Interview respondents said that programs were very successful at supporting families during the shelter-in-place period and providing them with resources, such as food baskets and assistance filing for COVID-19 relief support. They also had success with virtual engagement of families. Once COVID-19 protocols relaxed in SY22-23, programs worked to re-establish in-person events and activities.

While there was progress in the development of pillars, there was tremendous cross-site variation in pillar development based on the size and needs of the school; the Lead Agencies’ strengths, resources, and partnerships; and program staffing and capacity. SPR also documented variations in services by grade level. Elementary and K-8 schools were more likely than middle schools to follow-up with families to support student success during the school day; offer parent workshops; use a social emotional curriculum to engage students; and provide individual tutoring after school. Middle schools, on the other hand, were more likely to provide support for special education classes; offer identity-based affinity groups and leadership opportunities; and provide support groups, individual therapy, and case management.

SPR also found some common challenges related to pillar development. Both Beacon Directors and school staff indicated that Beacon staff were providing academic and behavioral support that was not aligned with their training or experience level. Another common challenge was that programs had difficulty finding partners with culturally responsive and bilingual staff. The stresses of the pandemic also made it harder to reach certain families within certain demographic groups. Finally, some expanded learning programs had challenges with enrollment. Some programs had waiting lists and did not have the staffing to serve all of the

students that wanted to enroll. Others, particularly middle schools, experienced lower enrollment and attendance than they had prior to the pandemic.

Preliminary Outcomes

Given the pandemic and subsequent staffing crises, the expansion to 18 new sites and the Beacon Programs' ability to continue serving children and families with creative programming is a tremendous achievement. Due to the pandemic, the evaluation lacks the quantitative data, program observations, and interviews with students and families needed to present concrete outcomes. The preliminary outcomes documented here can hopefully inform future research and evaluation efforts.

- **School Outcomes.** School staff who were interviewed said that having a Beacon Program at their site helped teachers feel more supported and less burned out, better aligned after school programs with school day instruction, strengthened school staff members connections with students and families, and improved the school climate.
- **Student Outcomes.** Interview respondents described that the rich array of Beacon services led to improved academic skills, communication and social emotional skills, exposure to new activities and ideas, enhanced peer relationships, a sense of safety and belonging, leadership, connection to caring adults, and improved attendance.
- **Family Outcomes.** Beacon Programs provide families with a safe space for their children to go after school for no or low cost. In addition to this overarching benefit, interview respondents indicated that because of Beacon Programs, families developed stronger connections to their child's school; access to resources, support, and skill development opportunities; and stronger relationships with their children.

Lessons Learned and Considerations

The evaluation yielded the following key lessons learned and strategies for Beacon partners to consider as they seek to strengthen Beacon Programs moving forward.

Lessons Learned on Program Expansion

- It is important for funders to invest in an intermediary organization, like SFBI, to support program expansion and development.
- Although all stakeholders said that the expansion was a success, in the future it would be less stressful for SFBI and Beacon Lead Agencies to scale up the number of programs gradually over the course of several years and to build in more time for planning.
- In addition to expanding services at schools, it is important to prioritize thoughtful planning and systems of support for program expansion, including resources for staffing and recruitment.

Lessons Learned on Program and School Partnerships

- Responsiveness to school requests helps to build and deepen trust.

- Once trust has been developed, there is room for Beacon staff to draw boundaries in order to increase fidelity to the Beacon Program Model.
- Beacon and school partnerships are more resilient to turnover when Beacon staff have built relationships with school staff at multiple levels, particularly with teachers.

Lessons Learned on Program Implementation

- Programs take time and consistent leadership to fully mature and develop.
- By providing vital support to schools, Beacon Programs can make them more resilient during times of great need, such as the pandemic.

Considerations to Strengthen Programs and Services

- Strive to create more clarity and consistency in the set of services offered by Beacon Programs across school sites.
- Promote promising approaches by providing opportunities for Beacon and school staff to observe and talk to staff from strong programs.
- Promote resource and information sharing to support higher quality and more consistent programming across sites.
- Clarify role of the Lead Agency and their oversight of the Beacon Program.

Considerations to Strengthen Partnerships

- Deepen buy-in and understanding of the Beacon Program Model across all SFUSD departments, including departments that oversee school principals.
- Improve processes for systems alignment with DCYF, SFBI, and SFUSD.
- Create more joint opportunities for training and professional development for Beacon and school staff.
- Make sure all programs have access to student data.

Considerations to Improve Data Quality

- Align ExCEL and DCYF quality and reporting requirements to reduce burden on Beacon staff.
- Provide more guidance to programs around how data on attendance and activities should be entered into CMS.

Conclusion

Over the last five years, Beacon Programs have expanded to 18 new schools, deepened their school partnerships, and significantly expanded their school day and behavioral health supports. Having successfully navigated through a period of upheaval and crises, Beacon Programs are well positioned to deepen their impact moving forward.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2018, the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF) in San Francisco partnered with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and the San Francisco Beacon Initiative (SFBI) to create more full-service Beacon Community Schools. Beacon Community Schools provide services and resources to students and families that promote school success, health, and wellness. To reach all SFUSD middle schools and the highest-need elementary and K-8 schools, the Beacon Program was expanded from 9 to 27 schools.

In the summer of 2019, Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) was hired by DCYF to conduct an implementation and outcomes evaluation of the expansion of the Beacon Community School model. The evaluation was significantly altered by the COVID-19 pandemic, which closed SFUSD schools from March 16, 2020, until April 10, 2021, and restricted SPR's in-person access to schools and programs for the entirety of the study period.² In consultation with DCYF staff, the evaluation design evolved to become developmental and responsive, rather than outcomes-oriented. In addition to describing the evolving services offered by Beacon Programs, the evaluation documented how programs responded to the needs of schools, students, and families during and after the pandemic.

Beacon Model and Expansion

The San Francisco Beacon Initiative (SFBI) was launched in 1994 in partnership with SFUSD and the City of San Francisco. The [Beacon Program Model](#) aims to promote the development of community schools that provide comprehensive supports to children and families during the school day, afterschool, and in the summer. Through the provision of enrichment, academic support, recreational opportunities, leadership development, and health and wellness services, Beacon Programs strive to achieve the following goals³:

- Through consistent participation in Beacon Programs, youth will feel safe, gain skills, develop supportive relationships, and show growth on youth development and academic measures.
- Beacon Programs will help parents and caregivers connect with school and community resources, build stronger relationships with their children and other family members, and gain skills to navigate school and life more effectively.
- Beacon Programs and their school sites will collaborate and share data to develop and implement coherent strategies that reflect their complementary goals.
- SFBI and its Beacon Programs will be integral partners in education reform and youth development efforts across the city.

² During the 2020-2021 school year, SPR's evaluation focused exclusively on the implementation of the Community Hub Initiative. SPR prepared a [Mid-Year Synthesis](#) (April 2021) and a [Final Report](#) (November 2021) for the evaluation of the Community Hubs Initiative.

³ Goals are excerpted verbatim from the [2018 Revised SFBI Program Model](#).

After launching its initial site in 1996, SFBI expanded to include eight more Beacon Centers.⁴ Prior to expansion, the Beacon Centers were neighborhood-based, with the goal of serving the broader neighborhood rather than just the school population. They consisted of a “hub” site, which was at a school or neighborhood center, and a series of “satellite sites,” which were schools and community partners.

In the spring of 2016, SFBI, DCYF and SFUSD went through a comprehensive planning and community engagement process, with the goal of expanding the program to bring about more equitable outcomes for the highest-need students in San Francisco. The collaborative process led to an ambitious plan for rapid expansion of the program, from 9 to 27 schools in the 2018-2019 school year, in order to reach all middle schools and the highest-need elementary and K-8 schools.

DCYF’s 2018-2023 Request for Proposals (RFP) for providers of Beacon Community School services identified multiple priority student populations, including African American; Latinx; Pacific Islander and low-income Asian youth; youth from low-income neighborhoods; English Learners; foster youth; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning (LGBTQQ) youth; youth with special needs; teen parents; homeless or under-housed youth; undocumented youth; children of incarcerated parents; youth who are under performing or disconnected from school; youth exposed to violence, abuse, or trauma; justice-involved youth; and/or youth with mild to severe mental and behavioral health service needs. DCYF also outlined five core pillars of services to be developed and/or expanded through the initiative:

- **School-Day Activities.** These activities include student clubs, assisting teachers in classes, academic support (tutoring, homework support, literacy programs), recreation (sports, interactive games), and skill-building activities in areas such as science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM).
- **Expanded Learning.** These activities parallel those that occur during the school day, but they are offered in the morning, afterschool and in the summer.
- **Behavioral Health and Wellness.** In collaboration with the school site, programs work to create a positive climate and promote student wellness. In all settings, programs aim to promote students’ and families’ social and emotional learning, including the promotion of positive relationships, growth mindset, self-efficacy, and social awareness.
- **Transition Supports.** These activities include transition support for students entering kindergarten and the 6th and 9th grade. They aim to support school readiness and life skills, and to provide navigational support for families.
- **Family Engagement.** In collaboration with the school, programs aim to support capacity building for parents so that they can support their child’s learning. These efforts also aim to integrate families into the school community through family orientations, parent affinity groups, workshops, and events.

⁴ Willie Brown Middle School became the ninth site in SY2015-2016, serving as a “pilot site” for the subsequent expansion.

Exhibit 1 lists the 27 Beacon Community School sites, which include 11 elementary schools, three K-8 schools, and 13 middle schools. More details about the Beacon ecosystem, including Beacon Schools, Beacon Lead Agencies, and Beacon Programs are presented in Chapter 2.

Exhibit 1: Beacon Community Schools

Elementary Schools	K-8 Schools	Middle Schools
Bret Harte Elementary School	Bessie Carmichael K-8	Aptos Middle School
Bryant Elementary School	Buena Vista/Horace Mann K-8	AP Giannini Middle School
César Chávez Elementary School	Paul Revere K-8	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School
Dr. Charles Drew Elementary School		Everett Middle School
Dr. George Washington Carver Elementary School		Francisco Middle School
Dr. William Cobb Elementary School		Herbert Hoover Middle School
El Dorado Elementary School		James Denman Middle School
John Muir Elementary School		James Lick Middle School
Leonard Flynn Elementary School		Marina Middle School
Malcom X Academy Elementary School		Presidio Middle School
Sanchez Elementary School		Roosevelt Middle School
		Visitacion Valley Middle School
		Willie Brown Middle School

Data Sources

This report draws on qualitative and quantitative data from the 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 school years. It draws on three years of program survey data, which allowed us to understand how staffing, services, and partnerships changed over time. It also draws on an analysis of over 200 in-depth interviews with Beacon systems partners, Beacon staff, and school staff, which we used to describe promising practices, challenges, and preliminary outcomes. We also present data on program enrollment, attendance, and participant characteristics over time.

Due to the pandemic, however, there are limitations to the data drawn on for this report. Restrictions on in-person data collection activities prevented program observations, as well as interviews with students and parents.⁴ The pandemic also resulted in limited standardized quantitative data, as schools and programs did not administer standardized tests or annual surveys of students and parents for several years. Additionally, school and Beacon staffing

challenges in the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years made it difficult to conduct virtual interviews and obtain program survey responses from Beacon Directors at some sites. As such, there are varying amounts and types of data collected across sites and academic years. For more detail on data collection by site, see Appendix A. Exhibit 2 summarizes the data analyzed for this report.

Exhibit 2: Evaluation Data Sources

Data Source	Description
Virtual individual and focus group interviews. Over the course of the project, SPR conducted over 200 individual and focus group interviews with a range of different stakeholders. Interviews were transcribed and then synthesized by SPR staff into site summaries.	<p>Systems Partners. We conducted three rounds of interviews with staff from DCYF and SFBI, and two focus groups with staff from SFUSD.</p> <p>Beacon Program Directors and Beacon staff. We completed interviews with 25 Beacon Directors in spring of 2020, 24 in spring of 2022, and five in spring of 2023 (54 individual interviews). In 2020, we completed interviews with 20 Beacon staff responsible for collecting data and inputting it into the database used to track student demographics, attendance and activities. In 2022, we also conducted three additional interviews with Beacon staff at one program.</p> <p>School staff. We completed 69 interviews with school staff in the spring of 2020 and 54 interviews with school staff in the fall of 2022 (123 in all). Specifically, we conducted 28 interviews with school administrators, 30 with family engagement staff, and at least 35 interviews with teachers. Other school staff interviewed include school social workers, instructional coaches, counselors, and site coordinators.</p>
Program Surveys. The report draws on program surveys administered in spring 2020, winter 2022, and spring 2023.	<p>Program Survey. SPR administered program surveys in three separate school years (SY19-20, SY21-22, SY22-23). The program survey was administered to Beacon Directors at each of the 27 programs and included questions on services, staffing, professional development, partnerships, and use of data. The response rate for surveys was 26 (96%), 21 (78%), and 24 (89%), respectively.</p>
Quantitative data. The report draws on contract management system (CMS) data and student-level records from SFUSD.	<p>CMS Data. Beacon Programs track student enrollment and attendance in its Contract Management System (CMS). SPR received CMS files from three fiscal years (FY18-19, FY19-20⁵, FY21-22) that included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual-level attendance records for group and individual activities. • Demographic information for each youth and family member that was entered into CMS. • Duration and number of individuals in attendance for all events entered into CMS. <p>SFUSD Data. SPR received student-level records from SFUSD for all students enrolled in SFUSD in SY18-19 and all students enrolled in SY21-22 in order to calculate the percentage of students at Beacon Schools participating in Beacon</p>

⁵ Due to the school closures in March 2020, SPR only received data for the first three quarters of FY19-20.

Data Source	Description
	programming and to compare student characteristics of Beacon participants and students who did not participate. Student-level records included student demographics, standardized test scores, number of days attended, days enrolled, and number of suspensions and expulsions, as well as the identifier of their school of enrollment.

Overview of Report

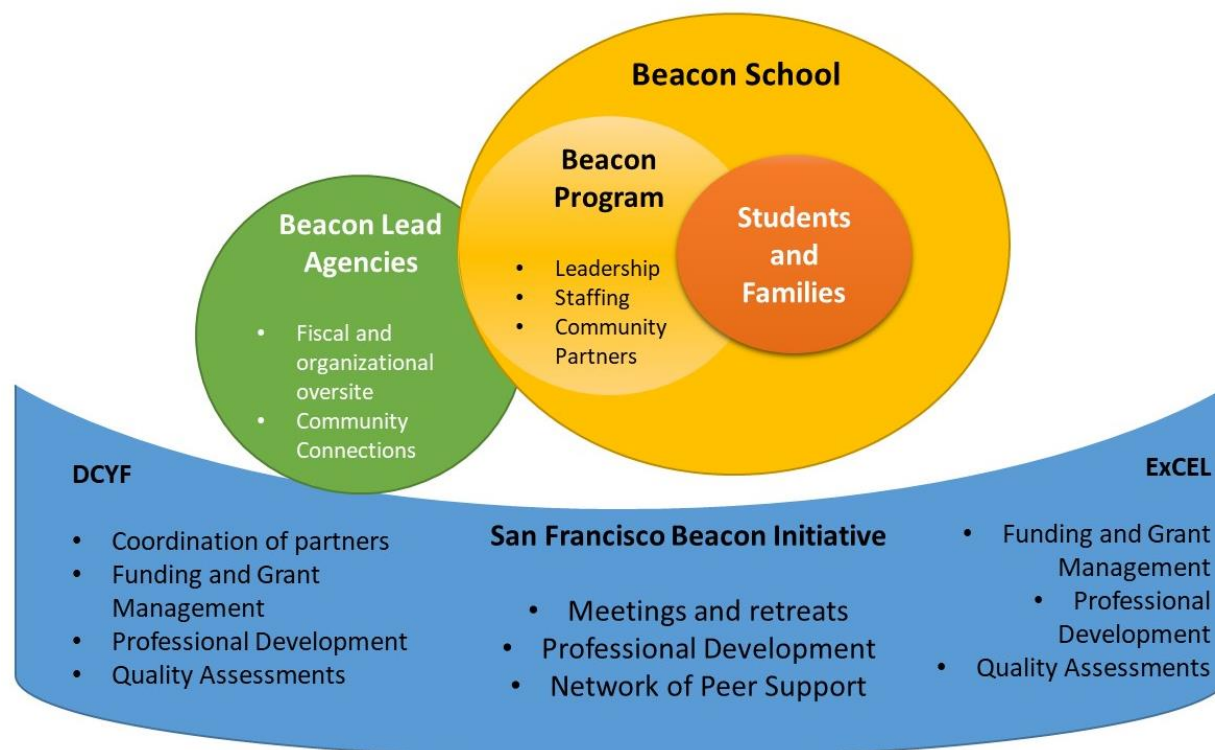
This report consists of five chapters. Below is a description of each chapter.

- **Chapter 2: Beacon Ecosystem** is an overview of the citywide support system for Beacon Schools, Beacon Lead Agencies, and Beacon Programs. The chapter goes into detail about leadership, staffing, and community partnerships. It concludes with an overview of the demographics, enrollment, and attendance of Beacon participants.
- **Chapter 3: School and Beacon Partnerships** takes an in-depth look at the formal and informal strategies that Beacon Programs and Beacon schools use to align student services and supports. The chapter concludes with a discussion of emerging school outcomes, and factors that have facilitated and inhibited strong partnerships.
- **Chapter 4: Beacon Services** delves into detail about each of the Beacon service pillars, highlighting core activities, the extensiveness of implementation across sites, and challenges that programs have faced in implementing services.
- **Chapter 5: Preliminary Outcomes, Lessons Learned and Considerations** wraps up the report with preliminary student and family outcomes, lessons learned, and strategies for Beacon partners to consider as they seek to strengthen Beacon services, partnerships, programs, and data quality moving forward.

Chapter 2: The Beacon Ecosystem

In this chapter, we provide an overview of the Beacon ecosystem, which include citywide Beacon supports (DCYF, SFBI, and ExCEL), Beacon Schools, Beacon Lead Agencies, and Beacon Programs. We end the chapter with a description of Beacon Program enrollment and the demographics of students served. Exhibit 3 is an overview of ecosystem partners that will be discussed further in this chapter.

Exhibit 3: Beacon Ecosystem



Citywide Beacon Supports

One of the core features of the Beacon model is the strategic partnership between SFBI, DCYF, and SFUSD, all of which are focused on supporting the well-being of the students and families of San Francisco who are most in need. Each of these partners provide valuable resources, such as funding, professional development, youth development expertise, and knowledge of the community. Communication, collaboration, and relationship building between these varied partners both within schools and at the systems level is an important aspect of effective program implementation.

DCYF

DCYF provides vital funding for Beacon Programs and coordinates closely with SFBI and the SFUSD ExCEL office to support programs. DCYF's oversight of Beacons is grounded in their

commitment to bring together government agencies, schools, and community-based agencies to create and facilitate projects in support of children, youth, and families in San Francisco. DCYF initiated the expansion of the Beacon Community School model and has been an integral partner throughout the planning and implementation phases of the initiative. DCYF staff co-lead the Beacon Director meetings with SFBI and DCYF Specialists work closely with programs to address budget questions, negotiate workplans, and visit programs to conduct program quality assessments using the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) tool.

Beacon Directors frequently expressed appreciation for the support and flexibility of DCYF Specialists, particularly during the pandemic when they needed to repeatedly adjust their workplans and budgets. Beacon Directors also complimented the professional development workshops offered through DCYF, which over the last several years have included online workshops on a variety of topics, including budget management, cohort training opportunities focused on Healing-Centered Engagement, leadership for newly promoted leaders, a womxn in leadership series, and proposal writing.

SFBI

In collaboration with DCYF, SFBI coordinates public and private partnerships to support Beacon Programs, describing themselves as the “connective tissue” that bridges and supports the 27 Beacon Programs. As the primary convener and technical assistance provider for Beacon Programs, their goals are to strengthen the network, build leadership, and ensure fidelity to the Beacon model, and support cross-sector collaborations. They do this through:

- **Beacon meetings and retreats.** In partnership with DCYF, SFBI facilitates an annual conference, Beacon Director meetings, Beacon Lead Agency meetings, Beacon Leadership Team meetings, and Beacon all-staff meetings. Many respondents shared an appreciation for these meetings, noting that these opportunities help them to understand what is happening across schools in San Francisco and provide access to helpful presentations focused on promising practices.
- **Professional development.** SFBI provides Beacon staff with Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), a leadership summit, and individualized coaching for Beacon Directors. In our 2020 survey, almost all programs indicated that their staff participated in SFBI trainings. In interviews in 2020 and 2022, Beacon Directors spoke about the usefulness of staff training in building the knowledge and skills of Beacon staff. A few offered appreciation for the coaching support they received, which they noted was especially helpful because of the depth of experience held by SFBI leaders.
- **Network of peer support.** One of the most cited benefits of SFBI’s support was the peer support and exchange that was provided through SFBI meetings and professional development. Meetings provided a venue for Beacon Directors to hear from one another about strategies to address common challenges and build community.

SFUSD ExCEL

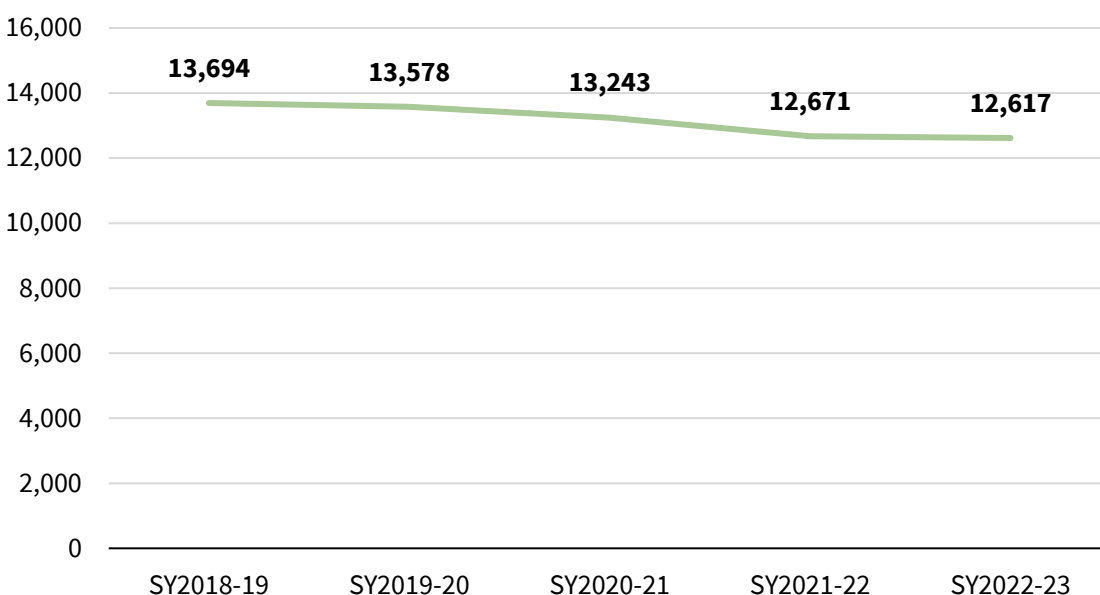
San Francisco ExCEL is the Afterschool programs office of SFUSD. The ExCEL Programs Office is responsible for administering and monitoring federal and state funding for school-based afterschool programs in San Francisco. They are a funder of the expanded learning component of the Beacon Programs and they also fund and administer programs at many other schools across the district (89 in SY21-22). ExCEL coordinates closely with DCYF and SFBI to support the Beacon Programs, provide professional development to afterschool program staff, and conduct their own quality assessment of programs. For example, in the 2022-2023 school year ExCEL supported a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) community of practice, provided trainings in restorative practices, and shared resources for programs on how to teach about race and anti-racism.

Beacon Schools

The size of Beacon Schools greatly varies. In the 2022-2023 school year, the smallest school had just over 100 students enrolled while the largest school had about 1,200 in its student body. Beacon Schools serving elementary students also tend to be significantly smaller in size compared to K-8 and middle schools.

In recent years, the challenging context has had a significant impact on SFUSD schools and Beacon Programs. Although there was declining enrollment at Beacon Schools prior to the pandemic, this trend accelerated in the 2021-2022 school year, when students returned to in-person instruction. Overall, as illustrated in Exhibit 4 and 5, there was an 8% drop in enrollment at Beacon Schools, with much of this happening at the middle school level.

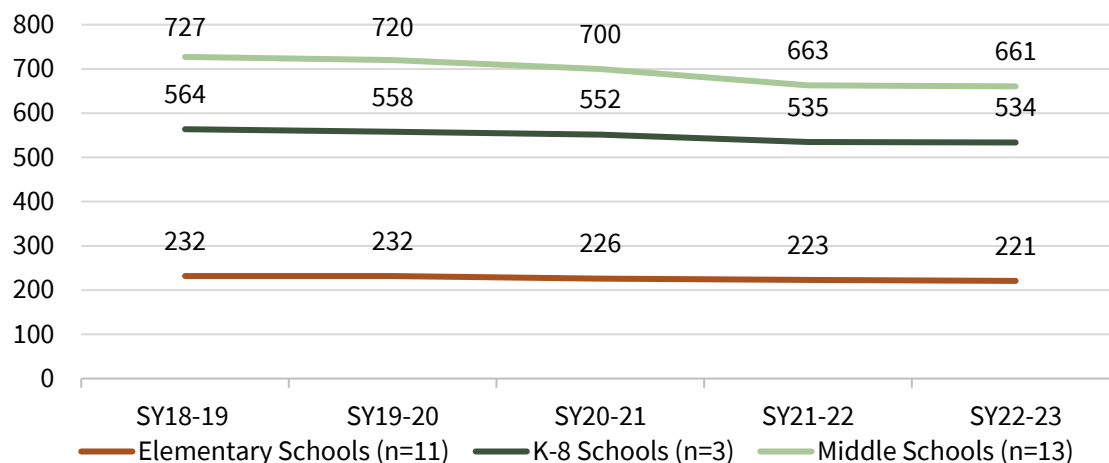
Exhibit 4. Total Number of Students Enrolled at a Beacon School by School Year⁶



⁶ Data retrieved from DataQuest: <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

There were some slight differences in changes in enrollment by grade level. For instance, there was a 9% decrease in average number of students enrolled at Beacon middle schools compared to a 4.5% drop among elementary schools and 5.2% among K-8 schools (see Exhibit 5 below).

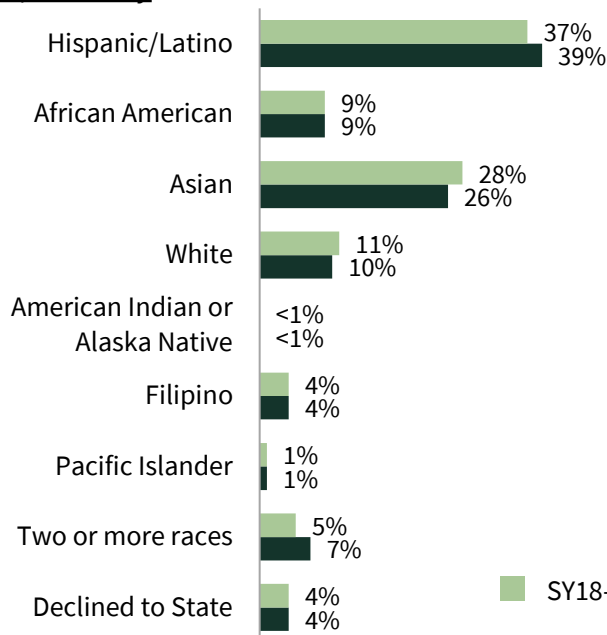
Exhibit 5. Average Number of Students Per Beacon School by School Year⁷



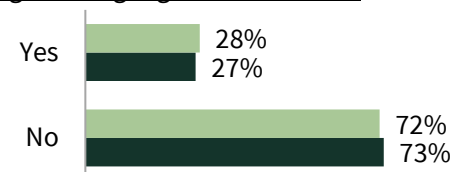
As shown in Exhibit 6, there have been minimal changes in student demographics over the last few school years.

Exhibit 6. Beacon School Student Demographics⁸

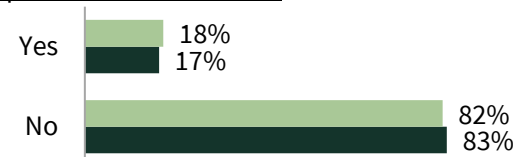
Race/Ethnicity



English Language Learner Status



Special Education Status



SY18-19 (n=14,179) SY21-22 (n=13,092)

⁷ Ibid

⁸ SFUSD data were not available for SY22-23. Data reflect SFUSD race/ethnicity classifications.

Overall, a majority of students enrolled at Beacon Schools identify as Hispanic/Latino or Asian. Furthermore, about a quarter of students are English language learners and almost 20% are in a special education program. Three Beacon middle schools (Visitacion Valley Middle School, Francisco Middle School, and Everett Middle School) are designated newcomer schools. Two Beacon schools (Presidio Middle School and César Chávez Elementary School) have a special education program to support students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

In addition to declining enrollment, Beacon Schools have been experiencing high turnover and staffing shortages in the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years. Interview respondents across several schools noted a high level of school staff turnover, especially during the pandemic and following the transition back to in-person instruction. In addition to a shortage of teachers and other key staff (such as school social workers and family engagement liaisons), a few schools have experienced multiple principal changes over recent years. For instance, one school had one-third of its teaching staff turnover and at least four different principals over the course of this evaluation. Due to the staffing shortage, many Beacon Programs have had to step in to support and help fill in gaps in student services. A respondent at one middle school said,

“I think this year has been really tough on this school because of everything that has been happening, especially around the teacher shortage, where we had stepped in to support. They're constantly seeking for our support and then we're always willing to support them. This year, I think we got a lot closer than previous years because of what's happening now with the teacher or staff shortage.”

Additionally, school and neighborhood contexts often influence program implementation and progress. The following are key findings related to school and neighborhood contexts which are important to keep in mind when considering implementation progress.

- **Neighborhood factors such as perceptions of safety influence some schools.** Several programs noted that participation in afterschool programming typically drops in the winter because of the shorter daylight hours and parents’ concern about students walking home in the dark. At the same time, the programs that reported safety concerns in their neighborhoods noted that these neighborhoods also have a strong sense of community and are filled with families that have lived in the area for a long time (and have sent multiple generations of students to the school) and trusted neighborhood organizations that have long served the community.
- **Students that attend Beacon Schools outside of their neighborhood face transportation challenges that sometimes limit their participation in programs.** At least five Beacon Programs noted that many of their students live outside of the school neighborhood, creating challenges around transportation, tardiness, and parent participation. Additionally, two of these schools are located in neighborhoods whose residents tend to be White and wealthy, yet many of the students who travel to their schools are students of color, which creates challenges around fostering a sense of belonging.

Beacon Agencies

Lead Agencies provide fiscal and personnel oversight of the Beacon Programs and mobilize resources and partnerships to support programming. Exhibit 7 highlights the 13 Lead Agencies that operated Beacon programming at the 27 Beacon Community Schools in the 2022-2023 school year, highlighting the neighborhoods where they are based and whether the sites are “new” (added with the 2018 expansion) or “original” (pre-date expansion).

Exhibit 7: Beacon Agencies, Schools and Neighborhoods

Lead Agency	Beacon Centers	Neighborhood	Original or new ⁹
Bay Area Community Resources (BACR)	AP Giannini Middle School	Sunset	Original Site
	Bret Harte Elementary School	Bayview	New
	Herbert Hoover Middle School	Twin Peaks	New
	Paul Revere K-8	Bernal Heights	New
Boys and Girls Club of San Francisco	George Washington Carver Elementary	Bayview	New
	Malcolm X Elementary* (originally Urban Ed Academy)	Bayview	New
Community Youth Center of SF	Aptos Middle School	Twin Peaks	New
Good Samaritan Family Resource Center	Willie Brown Middle School	Bayview	Original Site: New Provider ¹⁰
Jamestown Youth Center	Buena Vista/Horace Mann K-8	Mission	New
	César Chávez Elementary School	Mission	New
	James Lick Middle	Noe Valley	New
Mission Graduates	Bryant Elementary	Mission	New
	Everett Middle School	Mission/Castro	Original Site

⁹ “Original sites” were Beacon Centers prior to the 2018 expansion. “New sites” were added with the 2018 expansion.

¹⁰ Willie Brown was launched as a pilot site in SY15-16. Good Samaritan took over as Lead Agency in 2018.

Lead Agency	Beacon Centers	Neighborhood	Original or new ⁹
	Leonard Flynn Elementary	Mission/Bernal Heights	New
	Sanchez Elementary	Mission/Castro	New
	Bessie Carmichael K-8	SOMA	New
Real Options for City Kids (R.O.C.K.)	El Dorado Elementary School	Visitacion Valley	Original Provider Prior to expansion, the school was a satellite site of Visitacion Valley Middle school
	Visitacion Valley Middle School	Visitacion Valley	Original Site
Richmond Neighborhood Center	Presidio Middle School	Outer Richmond	Original Provider Prior to expansion, the school was satellite site of HS Beacon
	Roosevelt Middle School	Richmond	Original Provider Prior to expansion, the school was satellite site of HS Beacon
Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center (Tel-Hi)	Francisco Middle School	Chinatown/North Beach	Original Site
YMCA of San Francisco			
Bayview YMCA	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School	Portola	Original Provider Prior to expansion, the school was satellite site of HS Beacon
Buchanan YMCA	Dr. William Cobb Elementary	Pacific Heights/Western Addition	New
	John Muir Elementary	Lower Haight/Western Addition	Original Site
Presidio YMCA	Marina Middle School	Marina	New
Urban Services YMCA	Dr. Charles Drew Elementary	Bayview	New
	James Denman Middle School	Outer Mission	Original Site

Beacon Lead Agencies have a wealth of experience in youth and community development, and most have been serving San Francisco communities for decades. These agencies draw on their experience and connections to deepen services for students and families at Beacon Schools. Below we highlight core findings on the role and expertise of Lead Agencies in supporting Beacon Programs.

- **Differences in the size of Lead Agencies did not significantly influence their ability to support programs.** Lead Agencies differed significantly in size and revenue. The largest agency (BACR) has an annual revenue of over \$60 million, while the smallest (R.O.C.K.) has an annual revenue of less than \$2.5 million. These differences did not correlate with the extensiveness of program services¹¹ or staffing levels. Some of the most developed programs, with the biggest staff teams, were offered by small agencies with previous experience supporting Beacon Programs, such as R.O.C.K., Tel-Hi and Richmond Neighborhood Center.
- **Lead Agencies often concentrated their efforts in individual neighborhoods, leveraging their deep understanding of the community and established partnerships.** Most agencies with multiple Beacon Programs are based in particular neighborhoods. For instance, Mission Graduates operates five Beacon programs exclusively in the Mission District and its surrounding areas, including SOMA and Castro. As a result of its longstanding presence in the Mission District, Mission Graduates collaborates with partners like the Mission Economic Agency to deliver dedicated resources and support to families in the community. An SFBI staff member described that those agencies that operated multiple Beacon Programs in the same neighborhood “have shared positions, so they are saving on budget ...They work really tightly and strategically.” Another example is Tel-Hi, which has worked in the Chinatown and North Beach communities for over 130 years. Their enduring commitment to these neighborhoods has made Tel-Hi a trusted long-term partner at Francisco Middle School.
- **Lead Agencies have extensive experience with youth programming.** As community-based youth-serving organizations, Beacon Lead Agencies were well positioned to provide support in arenas where schools have limited capacity (e.g., enrichment, family support, etc.) and to serve as a trusted resource for both the schools and the families they serve. Agencies also brought their unique network of partners to their Beacon partnerships. Some agencies had particularly strong connections to community resources, such as employment or housing support, which proved particularly helpful when connecting families to resources during the pandemic.
- **Agencies that had not previously operated Beacon Programs had a steep learning curve.** Seven of the Lead Agencies funded in 2018 had not operated a Beacon Program prior to the expansion. These agencies included Boys and Girls Club of San Francisco, Community Youth Center of San Francisco, Good Samaritan Family Resource Center, Jamestown Youth Center, Embarcadero YMCA, Presidio YMCA, and Urban Education

¹¹ See Chapter 4 for more detail on the framework used by SPR to assess implementation of program services.

Academy.¹² Although many of these Lead Agencies operated afterschool programs at their schools prior to the Beacon expansion, to operate a Beacon Program they needed to ramp up quickly on the Beacon Program Model, expand their staff, form new partnerships, and develop new strands of work. A few Lead Agencies that were new to the Beacon model adapted quickly, capitalizing on their existing relationships with their schools, while it took more time for others to expand their programming beyond their afterschool programs. In part because of these challenges, two of these Lead Agencies (Embarcadero YMCA and Urban Education Academy) transitioned out as providers by spring 2022.

Beacon Programs

Services offered by Beacon Programs vary significantly from site to site depending on the strength and continuity of leadership, staffing level, and the number and types of partners that they have. In this section, we explore these differences and how these aspects of the programs have changed over the course of the evaluation.

Leadership

The Beacon Director position requires a sophisticated set of skills, which a DCYF staff member likened to the skills needed by principals and executive directors. In addition to understanding youth development within the context of a school environment, Beacon Directors are responsible for managing budgets, fundraising, program development, staff supervision, delegation, and working with an array of partners. Beacon Directors also juggle competing demands, as they are accountable to multiple stakeholders, including their agency, school principal, SFBI, DCYF, ExCEL, students, and families, which contributes to stress and burnout.

In part because of the challenging nature of the position, there has been high turnover in the role over the last five years. Although the evaluation does not have information on exactly how much turnover there has been, we know that most programs have had at least one transition in the Beacon Director position and some programs have had multiple transitions over the last five years. A SFUSD staff in the ExCEL office said, “This year, I’ve never seen so many Beacon Directors leave. Some people are hired today and in a month and a half, they’re gone.” Changes in Beacon Program leadership have often slowed program development and made it more challenging for programs to develop strong relationships with school staff at some schools. Turnover was less challenging at sites that have a long history and/or where the program was able to promote someone from within, who already knew the program and school well.

Staffing

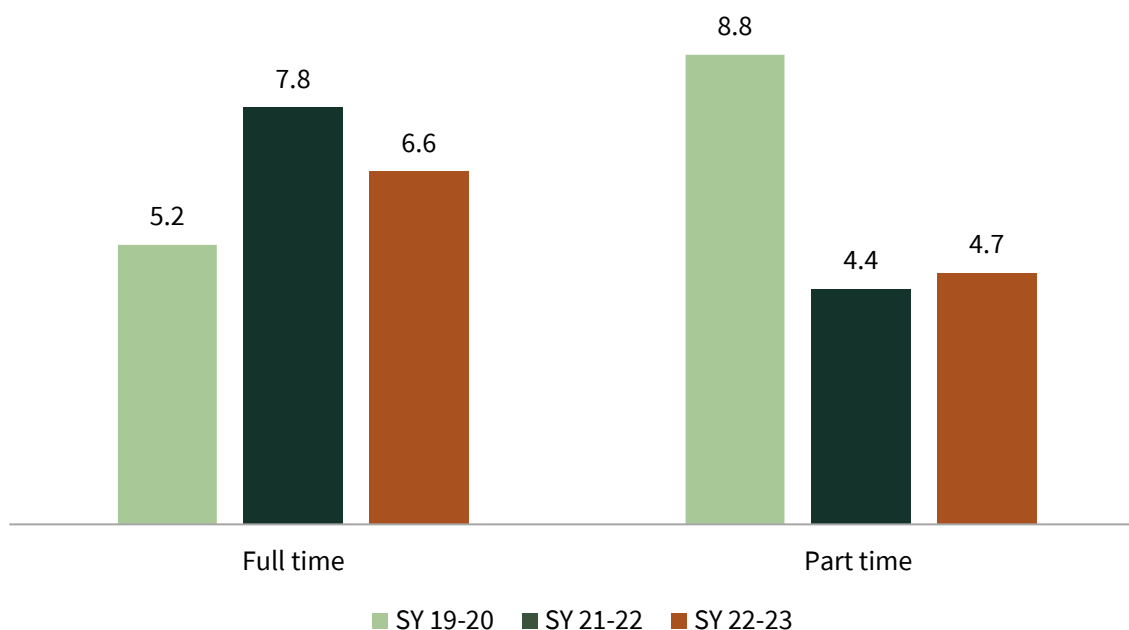
Staffing level is a proxy for program capacity, as programs with more staff can serve more students and provide a broader array of services. In the 2022-2023 school year, staffing levels varied significantly across Beacon Programs, ranging from a low of one full-time staff member

¹² Good Samaritan Resource Center became a new Lead Agency in 2018 but they took over the leadership of Willie Brown Middle School, which had been a Beacon since 2015-2016.

to a high of 15 full-time staff members. Similarly, the number of part-time staff ranged from a low of one to a high of 10. K-8 schools and middle schools generally had a higher number of full-time and part-time staff than did elementary schools, corresponding to the higher number of students that they serve.

Starting in 2021-2022 school year, programs shifted towards having more full-time staff and fewer part-time staff. Exhibit 8 highlights the average full-time and part-time staffing for the 18 programs for which we have three years of survey data. It shows that the average number of full-time staff increased among these programs from 5.2 in 2020 to 7.8 in 2022, coming back down to 6.6 in 2023. Meanwhile, the average number of part-time staff decreased from 8.8 in 2022 to 4.4 in 2023, remaining about the same in 2023 (4.7).

**Exhibit 8: Average Full-Time and Part-Time Staffing
(Program Survey SY19-20, SY21-22, SY22-23. N=18)**



The shift towards programs having more full-time staff corresponded with a greater emphasis on providing school day services. Instead of hiring part-time staff for the afterschool hours, Beacon Programs increasingly hired full-time staff who could work during the school day and after school. The shift in staffing also corresponds to a statewide shift in middle school hours that shortened afterschool program hours, which several Beacon Directors said had reduced attendance in their afterschool programs.¹³ Staffing levels also may have been highest in the 2021-2022 school year because of additional funding from the COVID-19 Relief and School

¹³ In 2019, the California Legislature passed a first-of-its-kind law requiring that middle schools start no earlier than 8 am. San Francisco set the start time for their middle and K-8 schools at 9:30 am.

Reopening Grants designed to help support students transition back to in-person instruction.¹⁴ Finally, some Beacon Directors reported that they had created more full-time positions as a strategy for retaining staff.

In interviews, most programs and schools reported higher than average turnover and difficulty recruiting and retaining staff in the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, though things did improve somewhat moving into the 2022-2023 school year. In the 2021-2022 school year, 81% of programs reported that they were not fully staffed at the beginning of the year, compared to 67% in the 2022-2023 school year. Similarly, in the 2021-2022 school year, 81% indicated that they were not fully staffed at the time they took the survey, compared to 54% in the 2022-2023 school year.¹⁵ In the 2021-2022 school year, nearly half (48%) of programs indicated that they had difficulty retaining staff, compared to a third (33%) in the 2022-2023 school year.

Interviews and open-ended survey responses repeatedly point to the challenges that programs faced in hiring over the last several years. Respondents indicated that low pay makes it challenging to recruit staff with the right skill sets and that Beacon staff leave because they are attracted by jobs that offer more pay and opportunities for advancement. A Beacon Director at a middle school said, “There are jobs that are less emotionally and mentally taxing that pay higher, give more hours, and have better benefits. That is just the reality of how we are funded.” Because it has been hard to recruit staff with the right skills, program leaders spend a lot of time training and onboarding new staff and have sometimes needed to let staff go because they did not have the right skill sets for working with children. The same Beacon Director quoted above said, “We had a brand-new team of staff starting summer. Almost every single activity leader, direct service staff was new and we had to start training all those folks.” It has been particularly difficult to find staff with the language skills that programs and schools need to communicate with English Learner students and families.

Programs have taken a multi-prong approach to addressing hiring and retention challenges. They have tapped into their networks by using word-of-mouth recruitment, drawing on staff recommendations, actively recruiting at schools, and reaching out to program alumni. Online recruitment using job boards has also been successful. To retain staff, they have worked on creating an inclusive team environment, held staff appreciation events, developed pathways for promotion and advancement, defined staff roles more clearly, created more full-time positions, and expanded access to professional development and training.

Despite challenges with recruitment and retention, interviews with school staff stressed the quality of Beacon staff, saying that their racial and linguistic diversity, youthfulness, and knowledge of San Francisco neighborhoods help them to connect with and support youth in ways that are distinct from school staff. A social worker at a middle school said,

¹⁴ In 2021, the California Legislature provided \$6.6 billion in the Assembly Bill 86 COVID-19 relief package, including \$2 billion for In-Person Instruction (IPI) Grants and \$4.6 billion for Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Grants. The ELO grants could only be expended for extending instructional learning time and providing support for social and emotional well-being.

¹⁵ The surveys were taken at slightly different times of year. The SY21-22 survey was launched in February 2022, whereas the SY22-23 survey was launched in April 2023.

*“When a student feels like they can be seen and heard by someone that looks like them or has been through something similar to what they may be going through, I think that makes all the difference. And as a White woman, I can't really do that. And even the language barrier sometimes is an issue ... even just because of the age difference. **A lot of the staff in Beacon really connect with kids in a way that I can't replicate.**”*

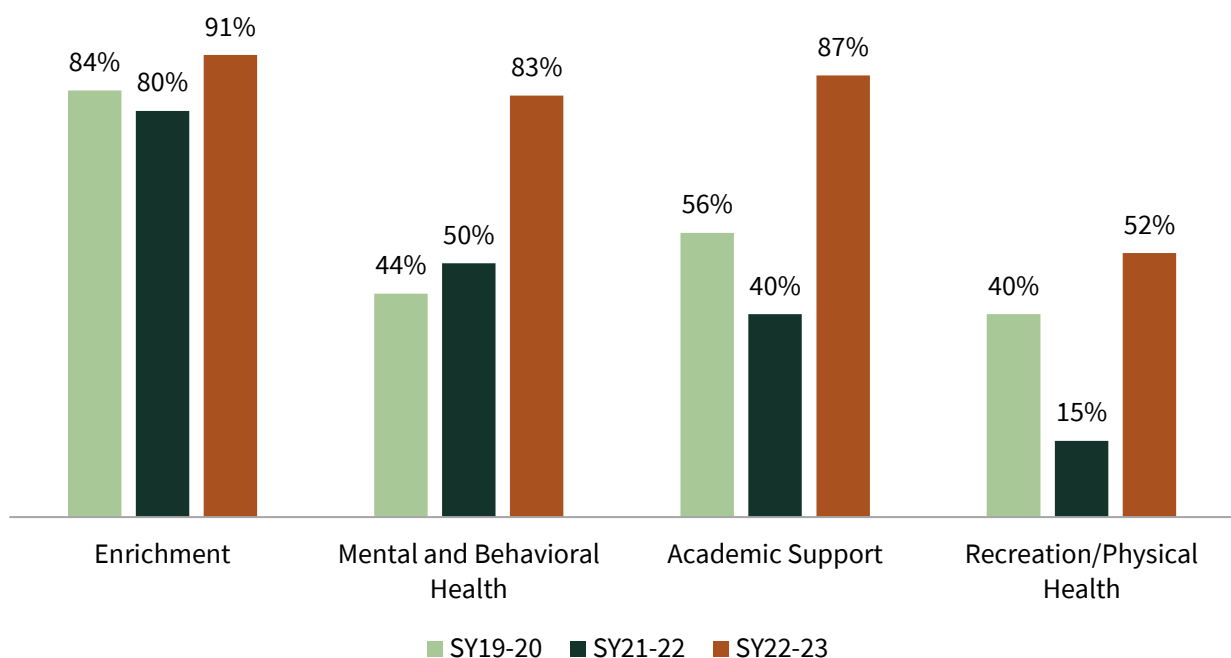
In keeping with this feedback, 2023 program survey results show that almost all programs (92%) have staff that speak Spanish, over a fifth (21%) have staff who speak Chinese, and programs also have staff that speak Tagalog, Arabic, Samoan and American Sign Language. In our 2020 program survey, Beacon Directors indicated that 85% of their staff members identify as BIPOC and 68% live in San Francisco.

In addition to valuing the ability of Beacon staff to connect with students, school staff said that they found their support invaluable. As will be discussed in the next chapter, many school staff appreciated the flexibility that Beacon staff showed as they stepped in to fill gaps in services, particularly given the staffing shortages at schools in the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years.

Community-Based Partners

Community-based partners play an important role in ensuring Beacon Programs are able to provide robust services to meet the needs of students and their families. Exhibit 9 shows the percent of programs that engage community-based organizations to provide specific types of services.

Exhibit 9: Percent of Programs with Community Partners in Key Service Areas
(Program Survey SY19-20, SY21-22, SY22-23. N=18)



The following are key findings related to the services offered by these partners.

- **Almost all programs (91% in 2023) have at least one partner that provides enrichment programming.** Enrichment programming often includes a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM), including visual and performing arts. Many programs also had partners that engaged students in cooking and gardening. In 2023, 14 programs (61%) partnered with three or more partners to provide an array of different types of enrichment programming. Although the percentage of programs with enrichment partners did not change much in the 2021-2022 school year (when compared to other types of partners), the average number of enrichment partners per program did decline.
- **The percentage of programs partnering with mental and behavioral health providers increased from 44% in SY19-20 to 83% in SY22-23.** The pandemic brought to light the need for behavioral and mental health supports. Beacons Programs always emphasized behavioral health, but this focus became more well-developed in the post-pandemic context. An open-ended comment in the spring 2023 program survey described, “Our partnership with mental health services has been much better in the last year.” Another program highlighted a partner that provides one-on-one therapy for 22 of their students. Despite the marked increase in the percentage of programs working with behavioral health partners, many interview respondents mentioned the difficulty they faced in identifying mental health providers with the linguistic capability and cultural responsiveness needed to engage with their students and families. Several survey respondents indicated that they wanted to expand their partnerships in this area to include more therapists and “mental health support for students and families.”
- **The percentage of programs partnering with academic support partnerships increased significantly in SY22-23.** In the 2019-2020 school year, 56% of programs had a partner providing academic support: this dropped to 40% in the 2021-2022 school year but increased to 87% in the 2022-2023 school year. Academic support partners provide tutoring, instruction in math and literacy, and exposure to college and careers. Some programs provide culturally focused academic programs. One survey respondent said, “Academic support before, during, and after [school] has helped improve students academically especially with their reading level.”
- **The percentage of programs with partners dipped in SY21-22, due to the effects of the pandemic, but rebounded in SY22-23.** With the exception of behavioral health services, the percentage of programs with partners decreased in the 2021-2022 school year. This was particularly true for recreation partners, with only 15% of programs maintaining these types of partnerships in the 2021-2022 school year. A spring 2023 program survey respondent described, “Partnerships post-pandemic have been less consistent due to staffing turnover and shortages on the partner's end. Additionally, many partners were slow to return to in-person support due to strict covid protocols.” In 2022 interviews, Beacon Directors said that some valued pre-pandemic partners had to close their doors and that most of the partners that they continued to work with were facing staffing shortages. Other interviewees said that the pandemic helped them prioritize which of

their partnerships were most important. Spring 2023 program survey respondents alluded to this by saying that their partnerships were “more intentionally structured and tailored to the needs of students,” and “some [partners] are very imbedded in our program and are practically equivalent of staff ... it has been easier to let others go when they are not aligned.”

- **Nearly 80% of programs (78%) partner with providers who specialize in providing family resources.** Unfortunately, we don’t have multi-year data on these types of partnerships because we only asked about them in the 2022-2023 school year. These partnerships, however, were described frequently in our interviews, particularly during the pandemic when programs were mobilizing to assist families with food, housing assistance, and other types of supports. Other programs have partners that provide workshops for parents or that pair them with bilingual advocates. One survey respondent remarked, “I have seen a change in family partnerships. There is a bigger emphasis on making sure families are connected to resources outside the school to make sure their basic needs are met.” Although most programs provide these services, survey respondents frequently identified this as an area where more partners and resources are needed.
- **Finally, 43% of programs partner with mentorship programs.** We don’t have a lot of detail on the mentorship programs offered and we only asked about them in the spring 2023 program survey. In our qualitative data collection, we learned about a partner for one program that takes 13 8th grade students to meet with mentors at a local technology company, so they can learn about technology related careers. One survey respondent said, “Mentoring is huge for us, our social worker leads our mentoring program. We have a total of 35 students that are now participating. Last five years, we were only able to have 20 students due to not having enough mentors. Now we have at least 20 mentors ... It's growing every year!”

In addition to asking about the types of partners that programs have, in the 2019-2020 and 2021-2022 school years, we asked about their satisfaction with their partners. Survey respondents indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with all their partnerships. In the spring 2023 program survey and in interviews, respondents shared that they are engaged in an ongoing process of identifying partners that align with their goals and priorities. This sometimes requires them to actively seek out new partners and to let other partnerships go. One middle school Beacon Director we interviewed said,

“There are some partners that just don't work out, and we don't have to do it just to do it ... Really being a little more discerning about what partners really fit with our goals, who are really going to serve our student population. And then being okay with saying no to the ones, maybe we've worked with them for years but we're not working with them anymore ... It takes some experience to really understand the difference between a partner who's really, really sharing your vision and goals and a partner who does something that will take up some time after school.”

Thus, overall, the partnerships that Beacon sites developed, expanded and deepened over the course of the last five years, which has, in turn, expanded the overall capacity and diversity of services offered by programs. One survey respondent said, “Without partnerships we would go insane (to be honest)” and another said, “Having community partners has been amazing.”

Beacon Participants

As described in the San Francisco Community Schools Toolkit, the “community schools approach aims to strategically coordinate and align these valuable resources to support the shared vision, goals and outcomes of each school community.” As such, all students who attend a Beacon School should benefit from improvements in the school climate and overall school functioning. However, Beacon Programs also provide direct services to students through their enrichment programs, behavioral health and wellness services, and academic supports. This section draws on data from DCYF’s client management system (CMS) and SFUSD academic records to provide more information about the students who receive these direct services and patterns in attendance.

We draw mostly on data from the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the last year of complete data available at the time of the writing of this report. We also include data from the 2018-2019 fiscal year, when relevant, to note any changes over time.¹⁶ This report includes all participants and attendance records that were entered by programs, but because most programs did not track all direct services they provided into CMS, the data presented is not inclusive of all participating students. Specifically, the tracking and recording of school day activities and family services differs across sites, and sometimes, across years within the same site. Programs consistently tracked expanded learnings programs, while behavioral health services were the least likely to be tracked in CMS. For more information about what was tracked in CMS, see Appendix B.

Student Characteristics

Annual enrollment in Beacon programming hovered around 7,000 students in both the 2018-2019 and 2021-22 fiscal year.¹⁷ As Exhibit 10 shows, 5,841 students received services during the 2021-2022 school year and 2,764 attended summer programs. The number of students attending summer programs increased by 35% between summer 2018 (FY18-19) and summer 2021 (FY21-22).

¹⁶ We did not include data from years that were impacted by remote learning (FY19-20 and FY20-21).

¹⁷ As explained above, this does not include students who attended services that were entered as “events” in Cityspan or students who received direct services that were not tracked in CMS. It includes participants in afterschool and summer programming, as well as school-day participants from the programs that tracked school-day participation as activities in CMS (ten programs in SY18-19 and five programs in SY21-22).

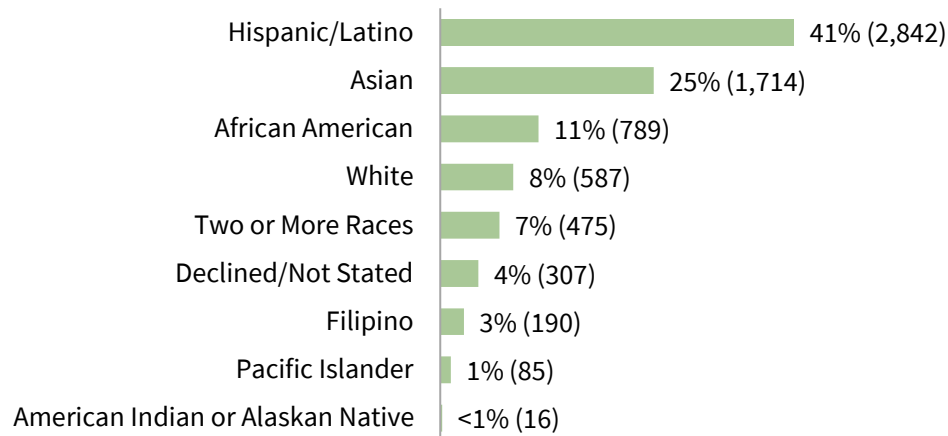
Exhibit 10: Annual Enrollment (Students with Beacon Attendance Records in CMS)

	FY18-19	FY21-22
Total students in Beacon programming	6,966	7,005
All students in Beacon programming during the school year <i>(including overlapping summer students)</i>	6,147 (88%)	5,841 (83%)
All SFUSD students in Beacon programming during summer	2,042 (29%)	2,764 (39%)
SFUSD students in Beacon programming only during the school year	4,924 (71%)	4,241 (61%)
SFUSD students enrolled in Beacon programming only during the summer	819 (12%)	1,164 (17%)

The following bullets describe the students enrolled in Beacon programming.

- **The majority of FY21-22 Beacon participants identified as Hispanic/Latino and Asian.** In the 2021-2022 fiscal year, Hispanic/Latino students comprised 41% of Beacon participants and Asian students comprised 24%. The racial composition of Beacon participants was similar in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

Exhibit 11: Race/Ethnicity of Beacon Participants (N=7,005)¹⁸



- **Slightly more males than females participated in Beacon activities tracked in CMS.** In the 2021-2022 fiscal year, 52% of participants identified as male and 48% identified as female. In the 2018-2019 fiscal year, 53% of participants identified as male.

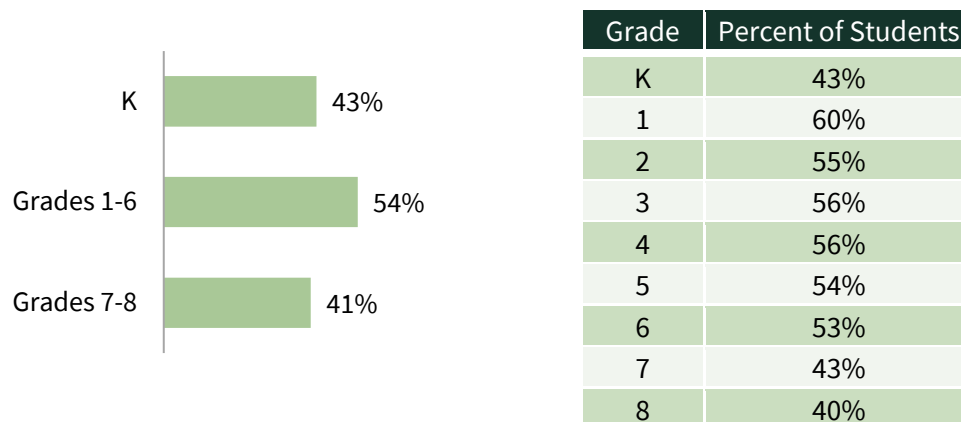
¹⁸ We used student characteristics from CMS and supplemented missing CMS data with SFUSD records when possible. For example, if gender was marked as “Declined to State” in CMS but was identified in SFUSD records, we used the SFUSD records.

- **Close to one-third of Beacon participants were English Learners (ELs).** In both the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 fiscal years, 30% of participants were classified as EL. In comparison, 26% of students at SFUSD were classified as EL in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Enrollment and Attendance

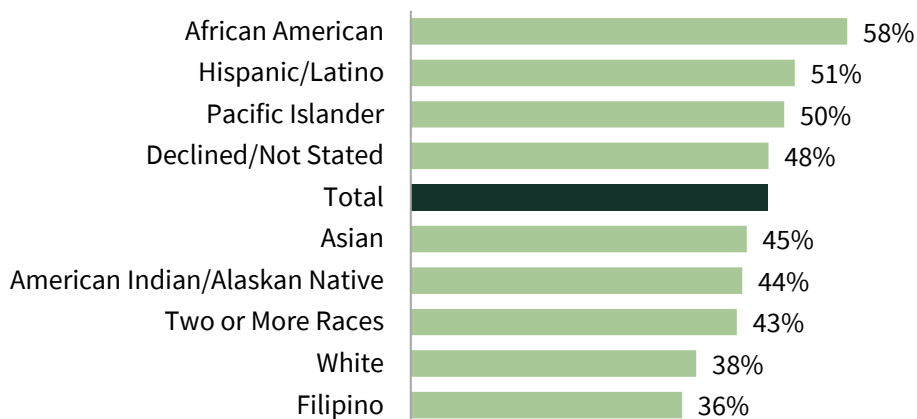
- **In both FY18-19 and FY21-22, close to half of students in Beacon Schools had attendance records in CMS.** In the 2018-2019 fiscal year, 44% of students (6,966) had at least one instance of attendance in a Beacon activity entered into CMS. In the 2021-2022 fiscal year, that number rose slightly to 47% (7,005 students).
- **Students in grades first through sixth were the most likely to participate in Beacon programming.** Kindergarteners were less likely than other elementary students to participate in Beacon programming, and seventh and eighth graders were the least likely to participate. As shown in Exhibit 12, 54% of students in first through sixth grade participated in programming, compared to 41% of seventh and eighth graders.

Exhibit 12: Percent of Students Attending Beacon Programming by Grade



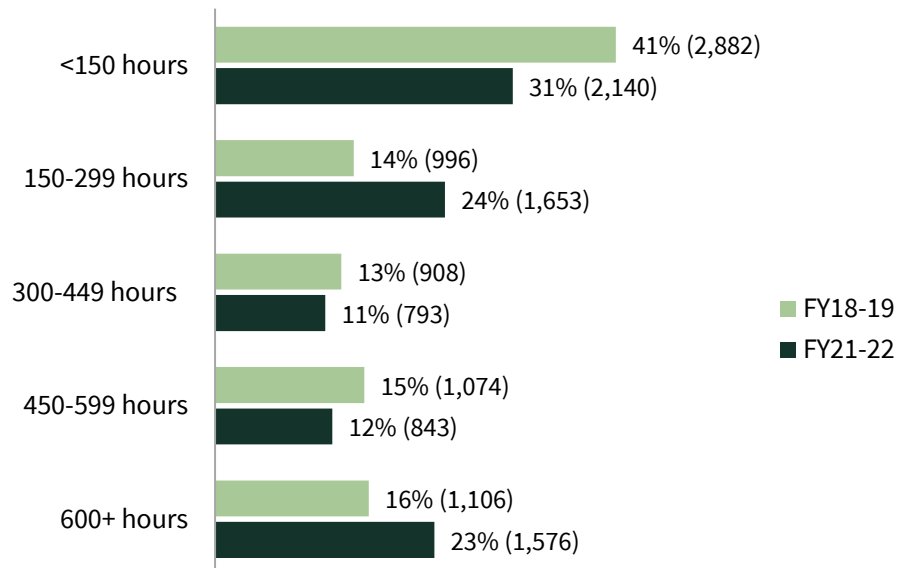
- **African American students were the most likely to participate in Beacon programming, followed by Hispanic/Latino and Pacific Islander students.** White and Filipino students were the least likely to attend Beacon programming.

Exhibit 13: Percent of Students Attending Beacon Programming by Race



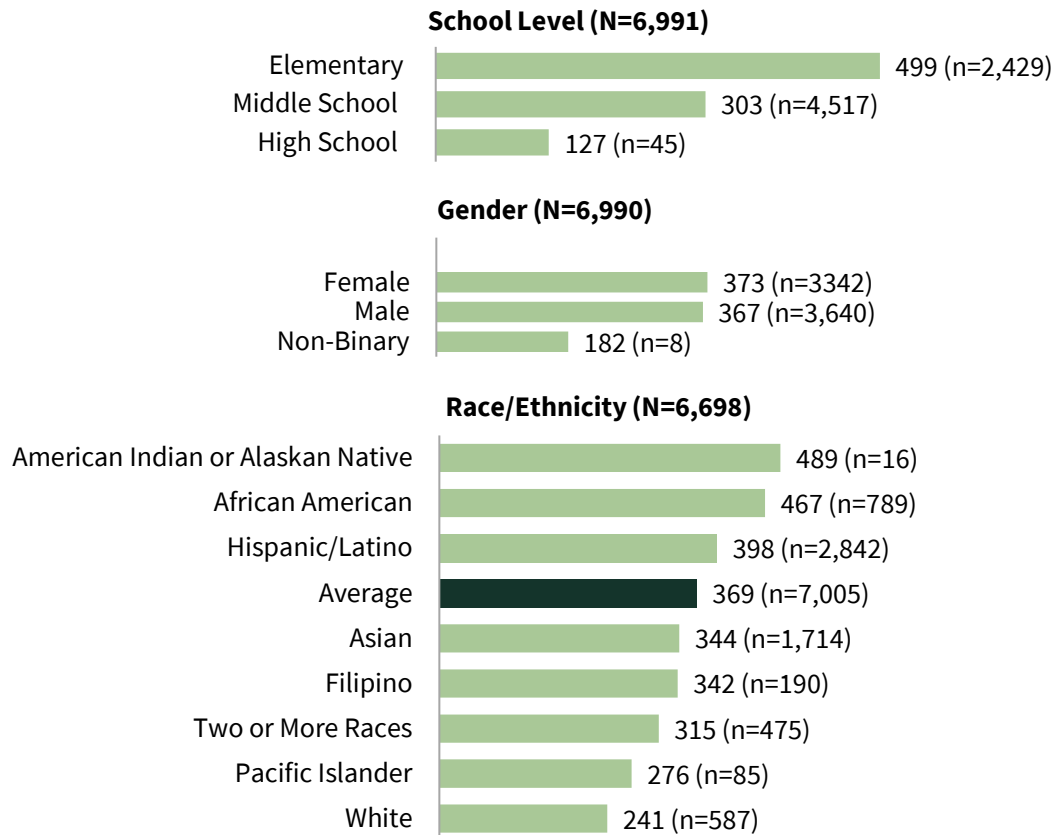
- **Female, male, and non-binary students participated in Beacon programming at similar rates.** In the 2021-2022 fiscal year, 48% of females, 47% of males, and 50% of non-binary students participated in programming.
- **Students who speak Spanish at home were more likely than others to participate in Beacon programming.** Overall, 54% of students who speak Spanish at home participated in Beacon programming, compared to 47% overall.
- **Hours of attendance increased between FY18-19 and FY21-22.** On average, the 7,005 students tracked in CMS in the 2021-2022 fiscal year received 369 hours of Beacon services, an increase from 303 in the 2018-2019 fiscal year. As shown in Exhibit 14, 23% of students spent more than 600 hours in programming in the 2021-2022 fiscal year, compared to 16% in 2018-2019 fiscal year. Average hours of attendance were higher in afterschool, summer, and school-day programming.

Exhibit 14: Overall Attendance in Beacon Programming (N=7,005)



- **Average hours of attendance varied by student characteristics.** Average hours declined with age. Among racial/ethnic groups that had at least 20 participants, African American students had the highest average hours of attendance. These findings were consistent in 2018-2019 fiscal year. Males and females attended at similar rates.

Exhibit 15: Average Hours by Student Characteristics¹⁹



Conclusion

The Beacon ecosystem is comprised of a rich array of partners, each of which plays an integral role in helping to support children and youth in San Francisco. As described in this chapter, despite falling enrollment at Beacon Schools, Beacon Programs increased their enrollment numbers, particularly in their summer programs. In part to expand school day and behavioral health services, Beacon Programs also hired more full-time staff and engaged more behavioral health and academic support partners. Although staffing remained a challenge for programs, there is also evidence that the staffing crises that followed the pandemic were beginning to improve by the end of the 2022-2023 school year. In the next chapter, we delve more deeply

¹⁹ We did not have school level for 14 students, gender identification for 15 students and racial/ethnic identification for 307 students. Rising 9th graders who attended summer programming prior to starting high school are counted as middle school students.

into the partnerships between Beacon Programs and their host schools, which are foundational to the Beacon Program Model.

Chapter 3: School Partnerships

As noted in the San Francisco Community Schools Toolkit, the community school model is predicated on the belief that “strong collaborative relationships and coordinated efforts among adults will yield desired results for youth.” The partnership between Beacon Programs and their school sites forms the foundation of the services and supports that programs offer to students and families. According to the Beacon Program Model, Beacons Programs and their school sites should collaborate and share data to develop and implement coherent strategies that reflect their complementary goals. The progress Beacon Programs have made in developing these partnerships varies. Drawing on survey data and interviews with Beacon and school staff to describe the Beacon Programs’ collective progress toward this goal, this chapter reports on Beacon structures that support intentional coordination and alignment, related school outcomes, facilitating factors, and challenges. Unless otherwise noted, survey results come from the spring 2023 program survey.

Intentional Coordination and Alignment

Supporting the shared vision, goals, and outcomes of a school community requires that Beacon Programs and schools strategically coordinate and align resources. Generally, Beacon Programs coordinate with school staff at three different levels:

- **School leadership.** Collaboration at this level occurs through meetings and informal communication between the Beacon Director and/or Assistant Directors and school administrators and through the Beacon Director’s participation in key leadership committees. This collaboration often involves setting high-level goals and strategies to support the school, as will be discussed further on page 32. At a couple of sites, communication with school leadership is still more characterized by coordination than collaboration. In these cases, most communication involves Beacon and school leaders informing each other about upcoming events and initiatives that they are independently pursuing. According to the spring 2023 program survey, about 80% of programs communicate with the principal or assistant principal at least weekly.
- **School support staff.** Beacon staff collaborate with family liaisons, social workers, instructional coaches, and academic liaisons to support specific school activities, such as family engagement events, wellness activities, climate and culture initiatives, and cultural events. Collaboration at this level also includes strategies to support the behavioral health and/or academic growth of specific students, as well as the wellbeing of individual families. At most sites, the Beacon Director leads collaboration with school support staff. At many sites, other Beacon staff, such as the Afterschool Coordinator or wellness staff, also take part in these conversations.
- **Teachers.** Collaboration often occurs between teachers and the Beacon school day staff who push into their classrooms, Beacon Directors, and Beacon afterschool staff. At some schools, the Beacon Director or line staff also attend grade level meetings. According to the spring 2023 program survey, afterschool staff at three-quarters of

programs (75%) communicate directly with teachers. Generally, they communicate about homework and assignments that need to be completed, but some also discuss the best ways to support the academic, behavioral health, and social emotional growth of students. Notably, communication with teachers seems to have increased at some schools since the 2021-2022 school year, when 14% of schools reported that they did not have regular communication with teachers.

Communication was most likely to occur between school staff and the Beacon Director. The one exception was school day teachers, with whom communication was distributed more or less equally among Beacon staff. (See Appendix C for more details about the frequency of communication between Beacon and school staff and who among Beacon staff primarily communicated with school staff.)

Below, we identify the specific structures and practices that programs and schools have drawn on to create and sustain these relationships between adults at school sites.

Collaborative Meetings and Communication

Beacon and school staff from all sites that we interviewed in 2022 identified regular standing meetings between Beacon Programs and school sites as the primary coordinating structure that holds together their partnership. Meetings most commonly focus on the vision and goals of the program, logistics around specific events and programs, and the needs of specific students.

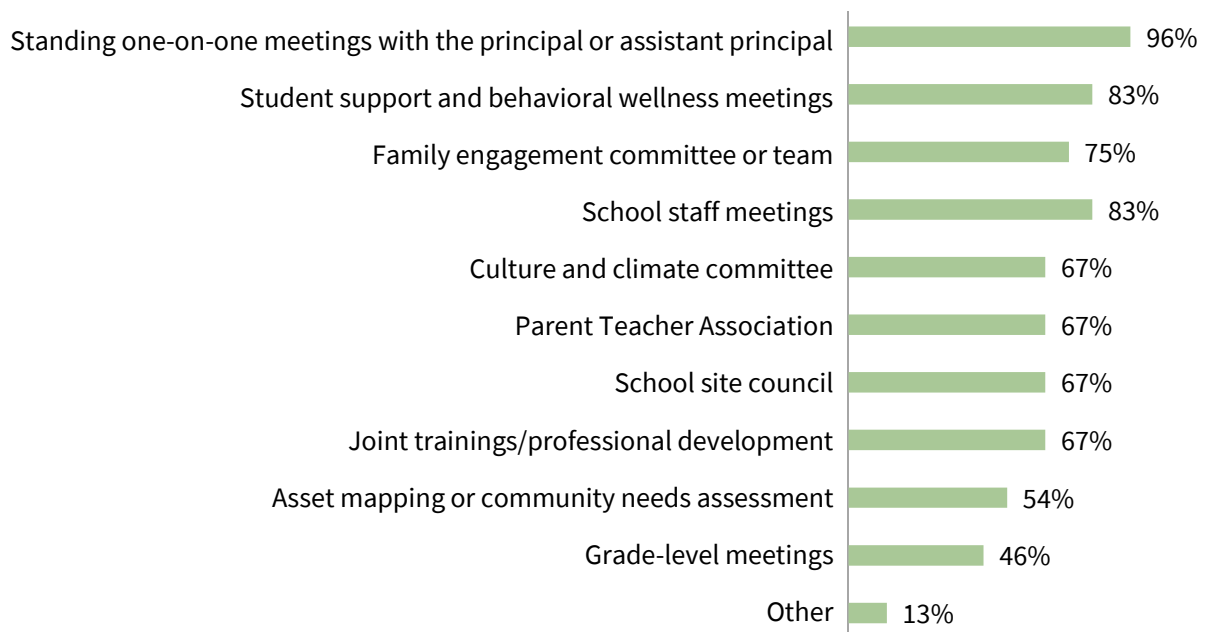
Two middle school principals described how their regular meetings with the Beacon Director helped align their organizations:

“Through the regular meetings that we have, (we) identify what we hope to achieve, and find out systems that could work for both organizations. I feel like over the last seven years, we’ve been able to do that.” – Principal, Middle School

“[The Beacon agency] had figured out some really great things that worked at the elementary school level [to support literacy], but those things don’t necessarily always translate to the middle school level. So [finding the right way for our Beacon to support literacy] has actually taken some years, but I think that having Beacon Leadership on the instructional leadership team has helped build some success in that area as well.” – Principal, Middle School

As shown in Exhibit 16, these meetings most commonly include student support and behavioral wellness meetings (such as CARE team or Student Assistance Program meetings) and standing one-on-one meetings with principals or assistant principals. Other common meetings attended by both school and Beacon staff include school staff meetings, family engagement committees, grade level meetings, and the school site council. Although not included on the survey, many programs also sit on the administrative leadership teams, instructional leadership teams, and school operations teams. Beacon staff from all programs attend at least one of these meetings and 96% (n=23) attend at least three.

Exhibit 16: Collaborative Meetings Between School and Beacon Staff (N=24)

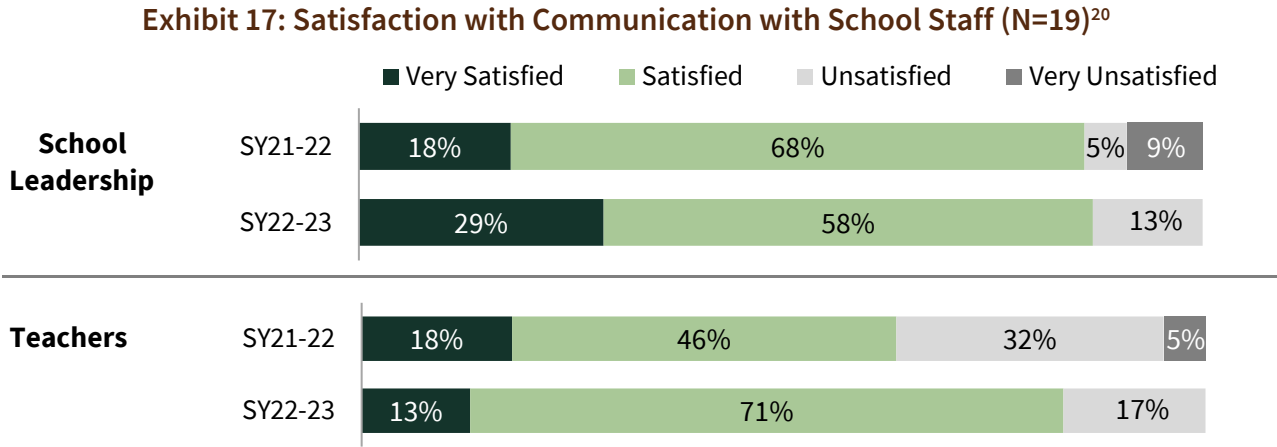


Beacon and school staff from about two-thirds of the school sites that we interviewed in 2022 also highlighted the importance of the informal check-ins that occur over text, in the hallways, and when staff stop into each other's offices. As a middle school Beacon Director explained, "Formally (we meet) at least every two weeks, but informally, practically every day, we're consulting about something." Similarly, an academic liaison at a different middle school explained that they check in with their Beacon Director over email or informal in-person meetings three to four times a week. These check-ins help day-to-day operations run smoothly and allow school staff to let Beacon staff know what has been happening in a child's day, and vice versa. For example, a social worker at an elementary school frequently checks with the Beacon Director when they think school staff could use Beacon help with small projects, like creating a poster for a school event, while teachers at a K-8 school text the Beacon Director regularly to request that Beacon staff check in with specific students who seem like they need to talk to someone.

At many sites, this informal communication also happens between school staff and Beacon line staff. For example, at some schools, Beacon staff are assigned to support specific teachers during the school day. A middle school teacher at one of these schools described how they meet with their assigned Beacon staff to discuss who in the classroom needs additional assistance and how the Beacon staff can best support the class as a whole. Another middle school teacher shared that they reach out over email to the Beacon Director and Beacon line staff to request that they all can "dig deeper" into how they can further support specific families and students." At some sites, social workers frequently check in with Beacon staff to discuss how they can best support the school during recess or classroom time.

Notably, most Beacon Directors (at least 80%) reported in spring 2023 that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their level of communication with their school's leadership and with

school day teachers. Beacon Directors were more likely to say that they were very satisfied with their communication with school leadership than they were with school day teachers. This may be explained by reports from Beacon and school staff from several schools who find it difficult to schedule time for Beacon staff and teachers to communicate, particularly due to the school staff shortages experienced since the start of the pandemic, which is described more in the last section of this chapter. However, communication with school day teachers appears to be improving, as shown by the increased frequency of communication described above. In addition, Beacon Directors were more likely to report being satisfied with their communication with school day teachers in spring 2023 than they were in spring 2022, as shown in Exhibit 17.



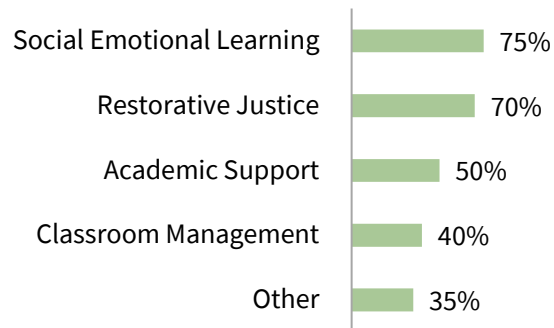
Shared Trainings

According to the spring 2023 program survey, staff from two-thirds (67%) of Beacon Programs attended joint trainings and professional development opportunities with school staff. In these cases, Beacon Leadership generally attend the school’s pre-service training at the start of the school year and regular professional development occurring throughout the year. Beacon leaders then train their own staff to use the same language as school staff and set the same norms as school day teachers, which helps support school culture. As a teacher from one middle school explained, “It seems like those conversations that we’re having as SFUSD staff are also then being brought to Beacon staff. So I think a lot of times, there’s just really nice flow happening.” In a few cases, school staff reported leading trainings specifically for Beacon staff on topics such as literacy. School staff reported that these joint trainings promote consistent expectations across school settings and help Beacon staff provide academic and socioemotional support.

As shown in the winter 2022 program survey results displayed in Exhibit 18, programs were most likely to join school staff for professional development related to social emotional learning, followed by restorative justice and academic support.

²⁰ The chart includes responses from 19 programs that completed the survey in both SY22-23 and SY21-22.

Exhibit 18: Types of Trainings Attended by Beacon and School Staff (N=21)

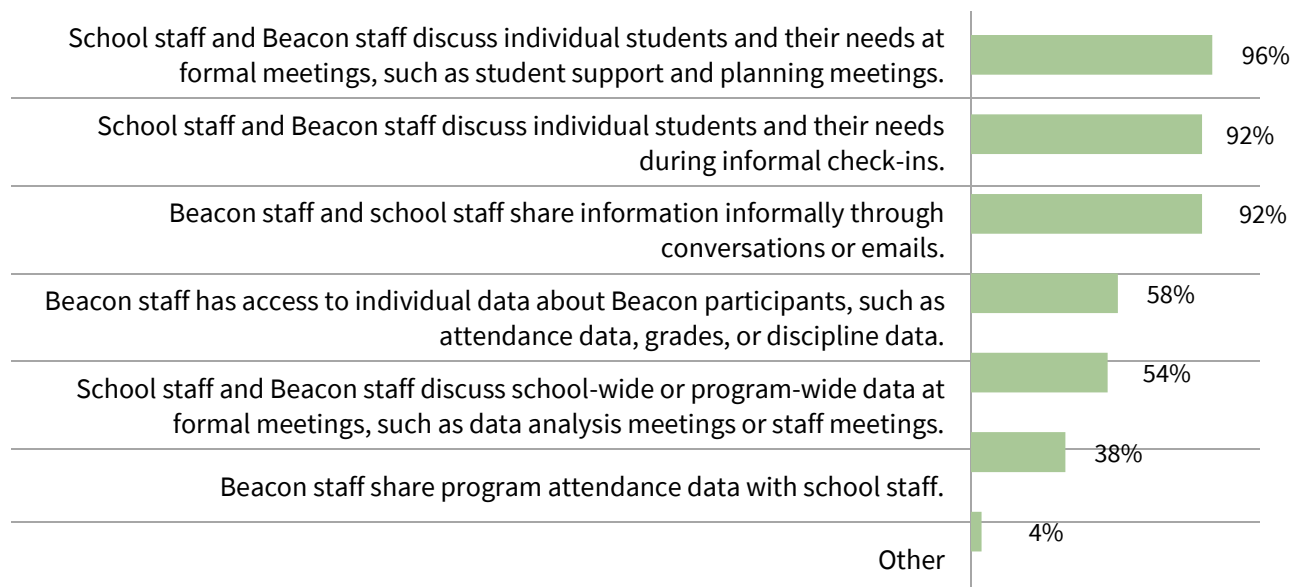


Shared Data

As described in the San Francisco Community School Toolkit, “community school staff, families and partners [should] regularly talk about school and student data to ensure that together, the school and partners provide appropriate services and programs to meet student needs.” In Exhibit 19, we present the processes and structures that programs and schools use to share information about students and families, as reported in the spring 2023 program survey.

- **Discussing the needs of individual students.** The most common processes included discussing individual students at formal meetings, discussing individual students during informal check-ins, and sharing information informally through conversations or emails. In interviews, both Beacon and school staff at many schools repeatedly stressed the importance of the informal check-ins about individual students to allow both school and Beacon staff to better support the social emotional needs of students.
- **Accessing individual student data.** Beacon staff at a little more than half of programs (58%) have access to individual data about participants, such as attendance data, literacy levels, homework assignments, and grades. Access to this data helps Beacon staff tailor academic support to the needs of individual students both during and after school.
- **Sharing school-wide data.** About half of programs (54%) participated in formal discussions about school- or program-wide data with school staff. At one middle school, for example, school and Beacon staff discussed data related to disparities in academic progress to determine the types of students that the Beacon Program would focus on and how to target those groups. At a few schools, Beacon Programs gather data from students and families to support school-wide strategic planning. As a middle school principal explained, “[Beacon staff] were able to share that data back with me, and we were able to come up with a plan around how to collaborate and support what families are saying is most important to them.” At one program, Beacon and school staff are partnering to assess if changes in Beacon programming during recess will have an impact on student conflicts.

Exhibit 19: Processes and Structures to Share Student and Family Information (N=24)



Shared Leadership

As noted above, Beacon Programs are sometimes included on key leadership teams, which affords them more timely access to information, input into decision-making, and opportunities to develop and align programming toward shared goals. School staff spoke about the importance of shared leadership at their sites, as illustrated by the quotes below.

“The Beacon Director is really seen as an instrumental leader of the school beyond just being this nebulous coordinator of out-of-school programming ... Every major spot where there's decision making or critical academic or social emotional programming [happening], I'm trying to think of an area where they're not involved. They really are involved in most of the decision making that happens as a site.” – Principal, K-8 School

“Whenever there are opportunities to have shared leadership and different voices participating, we include the Beacon staff and [when possible given] their capacity, they do take every opportunity to be a part of leadership opportunities with us.” – Principal, Elementary School

Conversely, some Beacon Directors that were not included on these teams described how that affects their ability to operate their program. One Beacon Director shared that under a previous principal, they were considered part of the school’s administrator team. Under the new leadership, they still sit in key meetings, but without being an official administrator, they do not receive information in as timely a way as they had in the past, causing some lack of alignment, as described in the quote below.

“When you’re not in the original conversations about [school-wide decisions], it’s harder to make that [alignment] happen in a really integrated way ... I need to be in the spaces where the decisions are made around the future course of the

school and how we are going to meet the crises or the issues that are coming up. I think we need to be in those spaces.” – Beacon Director, Middle School

Integrated Goals and Strategies

School staff from about one-third of sites that were interviewed in fall 2022 explicitly identified having shared goals as a key component of their relationship with the Beacon Program.²¹ These school staff stressed how important this was for their relationship as it creates a solid foundation for building the partnership and ensures that everyone is swimming in the same direction, as described in the quote below.

“In working with DCYF to [launch the] new Beacon [Program], one of my biggest requests was alignment with our school vision and our priorities. Our Beacon team knew that that was one of our biggest needs as a community school – for there to be alignment in our vision. And they’ve worked really hard to maintain that and to really work together versus it being two separate programs.” – Principal, K-8 School

The degree to which Beacon Programs and their host schools collaborate around shared goals and strategies varied. Among the programs that participated in interviews in 2022, we identified four categories that describe the depth of goal sharing and integration, starting with the deepest integration:

- **Some Beacon Programs fully participate in discussions around goal setting and planning school-wide strategies.** These programs tended to have representation on their school’s leadership or administrative teams. For example, at a middle school, the Beacon Program drew on teacher survey data to identify a specific need: helping students and teachers develop better relationships with each other. Examples of school-wide goals that were co-developed by Beacon Programs and their school include a school-wide process to update the dress code that was led by the Beacon staff, completing a school-wide needs assessment, and planning for the school’s pandemic response.
- **Some programs fully embrace the goals set by the school and strategize with school staff to find ways to support them.** One elementary principal explained that their Beacon director may be the least experienced member of the operations team, but she is a “doer” and will offer to “jump in and help when the [school] needs help pushing through their own initiatives.” Others at this school described the Beacon Program’s willingness to help others at the school as a sign of their alignment. This relationship is exemplified in the Beacon Director quote below:

“If my principal is like, ‘This is what we should focus on,’ I’m on board with her and we just create the plan for it. She sees school from the daytime perspective, and I see school from the afterschool perspective, so we’re able to collaborate and work on what we can improve to make sure that

²¹ Note that the other two-thirds did not report that they *do not* have shared goals, but they did not highlight it as a key component of their relationship.

*our plan seems seamless through daytime and into afterschool.” —
Beacon Director, Elementary School*

- **A couple of programs are given freedom to make leadership decisions around a narrow set of common goals, but the school and the Beacon Program are still largely operating as two entities.** For instance, at one elementary school, the Beacon Director has a clear understanding of the school’s goals and feels empowered and trusted by the school leadership to make decisions directly related to the afterschool program to support those goals.
- **Other programs collaborate with schools around supporting individual students or events, but there were few intentional efforts at aligning higher-level goals or strategies.** For example, at two middle schools, Beacon staff meet regularly with wellness staff at schools, but do not participate collaborate with school leadership on school-wide initiatives.

Emerging School Outcomes

Several Beacon and school staff reflected on how their partnership and collaboration has evolved since the expansion. One Beacon Director stated, “The first year was so much of Beacon Directors trying to figure out how to get their principals’ attention and now that is just well behind us ... Everyone is doing work around [the Beacon pillars] and those have totally flourished.” As an elementary principal explained, “[The Beacon Program] is absolutely vital at this point. We would be vastly reducing what we could do without them, and we would be heavily reconfiguring the way that work looks across our school.”

Several programs spoke about how the pandemic encouraged increased collaboration because school stakeholders were forced to find new ways to support students and because the support programs provided built a foundation of trust and goodwill. As described by a middle school Beacon Director, “[Collaboration] was growing prior to the pandemic. The pandemic definitely helped to solidify it ... Just hearing [our program described by school staff with] the word indispensable, it has gotten deeper for sure. We have no problem accessing information. We have no problem getting support with ideas or things we want to do.” An elementary Beacon Director also explained that “prior to [the pandemic], [schools] really only saw Beacon as an afterschool program. They weren't integrated into the school at all ... But from March of 2020 through July of 2020, that had transitioned in the mind of the administration and school personnel so much that all of those things were able to seamlessly carry over into the 2021-2022 school year as well.”

Below, we highlight emerging school-level outcomes that resulted from the partnership with Beacon Programs, as identified by Beacon and school staff.

- **Teachers feel more supported and less burned out.** Many school staff members reflected on how having extra adults on campus has supported teacher morale and effectiveness, particularly while school staff was stretched thin in the 2021-2022 school year. According to school staff, Beacon staff support in the classroom and during recess frees up teachers to focus on instruction. Several Beacon Programs have worked with

school staff to identify additional ways to lighten the load for teachers. The impact of Beacon presence on teachers is illustrated by the following quotes:

"We couldn't do lunch supervision without them. Having them in some of the classrooms helping support some of the kids with high needs, just being here to help around the school, we couldn't do it [without them] ... Without [Beacon], we would be drowning. I don't think I could do my job without [them]." – Teacher, Elementary School

"I think our school staff feels supported. It also allows our school staff to not be pulled in multiple directions, because there's more people to help and support in other areas. Like, pushing in to provide support in the classroom ... Also, building community among teachers and really helping support a positive morale." – Principal, K-8 School

"[The Beacon Program] basically helps run our school ... For literally anything that we need support, they're like, 'Okay, how can we support ... We would be lost without them. We would literally fall apart.'" – School Counselor, Middle School

- **Afterschool programs and school day instruction are better aligned.** Through increased communication between school day and afterschool staff, many programs reported that they were better able to support homework completion, reinforce school day instruction, and utilize behavioral management strategies that support students during the school day. Moreover, afterschool and school day staff from some programs shared that when the Beacon Program shares information about what is going on with individual students with teachers and school support staff, students are better supported during the school day as well.
- **School staff have deeper connections to students and families.** Teachers at several schools have begun relying on Beacon staff and the strong relationships they hold to learn more about individual students and families. They also report engaging in thought partnership with Beacon staff around the best way to support individual students or connect with families that teachers struggle to communicate with. One teacher described this as having an ability "to see the whole picture of the students they work with" through their partnership with Beacon's school day and afterschool staff, as exemplified in the quotes below:

"I'm able to [know the] story behind the students' names. [Beacon staff] tell me what is working. We talk about needs, some things that are working, some things that are not working and we troubleshoot things." – Teacher, Elementary School

"We call [our school] the village. And it really is everybody working together in our village to make sure that our students are thriving and learning. And I feel like Beacon is certainly one of the most integral members of our village, specifically that home-to-school connection ... By being able to have these fun experiences where we're playing the games

or eating the food or whatever, it just adds a spark of joy. And helps teachers to see their parents in a different way.” – Teacher, Elementary School

- **School climate has improved.** Some school staff members highlighted that the enrichment programming and events offered at the school, the social emotional support offered during class time and recess supervision, and the connections students make to caring adults has improved the school climate.

“Our Beacon Program has absolutely helped make a more positive climate for our students and families. And the program has also helped our staff. We have more fun events thanks to Beacon staff. And, we have better communication with our administration thanks to Beacon staff working one-on-one with principals, teachers, and staff. Having Beacon has given us a huge boost in our community.” – Parent Teacher Association President, Middle School

“There is a positive contribution to our school culture, especially [as] they try to bring more fun to the school, supporting different clubs, [and] events. They are able to focus in on some of the things [while] we're dealing with a lot of the academics. To hold both of those things sometimes is challenging for us as a school organization so they do bring the spirit to the school, which I appreciate.” – Principal, Middle School

Factors Influencing Partnership Development

Beacon Programs are at different points in their relationship with their schools. Although all programs have established many of the collaborative structures described in this chapter, only some programs have reached the point where the Beacon Director is an integral member of school leadership teams, Beacon Leadership collaborates closely with the school to identify shared goals and aligned strategies, and Beacon staff coordinate closely with multiple school staff on issues related to school climate and family engagement. Interviews with Beacon and school staff surfaced various factors that encouraged or hindered strong communication, alignment, and collaboration between Beacon Programs and schools.

Facilitators

- **Flexibility/responsiveness.** Staff from several schools described how Beacon Programs’ responsiveness to their needs as a school built the trust and goodwill necessary to foster deeper coordination and collaboration. In some cases, this goodwill was created when programs were ready to shift as the needs of the school have shifted, particularly during the closure and subsequent re-opening of schools. In other cases, school staff highlighted how Beacon Programs listened to the goals of the school and figured out how programs can best support that goal. This flexibility was really valued by school staff and in many cases built the trust necessary for stronger collaboration and shared leadership.

- **Strong relationships between Beacon staff and students.** School staff know that the relationships that Beacon staff build with students is different than the relationships that they have. Beacon staff are more likely to come from the community where the school is located, are younger and “cooler,” and have more time and flexibility to get to know students as people. Not only do they value the benefit of those relationships for students, it also builds a sense of trust in the program and a motivation to invest the time to foster the partnership.
- **Strong personal relationships between school and Beacon staff.** School staff in various roles mentioned how it is easy to just pop over and talk to the Beacon Director or other relevant Beacon staff to address an issue when they have an established relationship, a sense of familiarity, trust and comfort. At one school that partnered with a new Lead Agency during the expansion, the principal noted that the new Beacon Program staff “led with their heart and took the time to meet with us, to ask us questions and to gain clarity on how to better support specific students.”
- **Co-location.** A few school staff mentioned that having key staff located in the same office or in offices next to each other really helps, as it creates opportunities to build personal relationships and encourages more informal communication and coordination.
- **Collaboration at multiple levels.** We also observed that collaboration between Beacon Programs and schools was strongest when it occurred between both leadership and line staff. For example, a middle school social worker described how she has “regular meetings with the [Beacon] Director to talk about the larger vision and there are smaller check-ins between counselors, the [Beacon] Director, and [Beacon line] staff to work on student interventions.” As she further explained, “There is a lot of microplanning that goes on as well as the bigger picture, visioning, and implementation of scope and sequence for the year.”

Inhibitors

- **Staff turnover.** When Beacon staff or critical school staff turnover, relationships need to be rebuilt and shared goals may need to be reidentified. These efforts take time and slow the momentum of partnership development. About one-third of programs reported challenges related to teacher turnover, and a similar percentage reported challenges related to Beacon staff turnover. As one new assistant principal explained, “I think [the Beacon program is] an asset to our school and I think as a leader I need to better understand their program to better understand how to integrate them more into the during the day activities of the school.” Similarly, a Beacon Director at a middle school with significant turnover at the administrative level reported that their program has been able to coordinate around support for individual students through activities like the coordinate care team, but they have made less progress toward shared leadership with the administration.
- **School staff shortages.** Several schools discussed how they were short-staffed and stretched thin. When teachers and administrators are covering classes, they lack the

time to invest in supporting the partnership and communicating as effectively as they would like, as described by a Beacon Director in the quote below.

“In an idealized world, part of the role of the Beacon Director is to work in hand with the principal to figure out how the school can be more strategic in the way it works with young folks. The challenge is that the school site budgets are so impacted that you don’t have flexibility ... We’ve seen this year so many days where the majority of admin were subbing classes, filling in gaps within the academic day, because there are just not enough bodies to supervise students ... You can’t really be strategic if [school staff] don’t have the ability to step out of the direct service role.” — Beacon Director, Middle School

- **Scheduling difficulties and limited time.** A couple of schools mentioned that finding time for communication can be hard because of conflicting schedules, especially for afterschool and school day staff. Additionally, sometimes teachers or other staff do not know who from Beacon staff they should turn to for support. Beacon and school staff at a few schools reported that it is simply hard to find time for coordination and collaboration in a busy school environment and they would be more intentional with how they are collaborating with the Beacon Program if they had more hours in the day.

“It was easier to be online. After the first initial difficulties of transitioning to online, it was easier because we were removed from the students’ everyday lives. But when we’re in person, things like student behavior, stress because of the pandemic, just a lot of things rise to the surface which make it difficult for that consistency that we’re trying to build and those partnerships we tried to build, because while everyone would show up for a meeting we had online, in person, someone can’t come because a student is having a crisis.” — Beacon Director, Middle School

Some school staff identified recommendations for programs to strengthen their partnership, including providing more communication and information about Beacon events and activities and finding ways to allow afterschool staff to participate in schools’ professional development. School staff also acknowledged that they should provide more guidance to align instructional practices and behavioral support and meet with Beacon staff to explicitly define shared goals.

Conclusion

The development of integrated Beacon services relies on a strong, collaborative partnership between programs and their host schools. As described in this chapter, programs draw on several strategies to ensure alignment with schools. Through activities like collaborative meetings and data sharing, programs can tailor their services to the needs of students and schools, align their programming to support school initiatives, and provide a unique perspective to inform school-wide goals. In the next chapter, we describe the services that Beacon Programs provide within the five Beacon pillars.

Chapter 4: Beacon Services

Guided by SFBI’s Beacon Program Model, Beacon Programs provide comprehensive and integrated services to their school community with the goal of creating “pathways to lifelong learning and transformative experiences for youth and the adults who support them.”²² The Beacon Program Model is comprised of five pillars – (1) school day services, (2) behavioral health and wellness, (3) expanded learning, (4) family engagement, and (5) transition services. Working in collaboration with school administrators and staff, Beacon Programs offer a range of activities within each service area that are tailored to the context and needs of each school site. This chapter provides an overview of services that fall within each Beacon pillar, specifically highlighting the range of activities, quality and extensiveness of implementation, and key challenges. Data were drawn from the spring 2023 program survey and interviews/focus groups with Beacon Directors, Beacon staff, school administrators, and school staff across 27 Beacon sites in spring 2020, spring 2022, and/or fall 2022.

The Development of Beacon Pillars

In 2020, we developed a rubric to rate individual Beacon Programs’ development of each pillar on a 3-point scale to better define the quality of pillar implementation and track changes in the depth of implementation of time. The detailed rubric we used to rate program development is included as Appendix D. Below is a definition of each point in the scale we used to rate programs.

1. **Developing:** Program is in the beginning stages of developing services or structures for this pillar.
2. **Established:** Pillar service and structures are up and running and functioning effectively.
3. **Advanced:** Pillar services and structures are strong and can serve as a model for other programs.

We rated pillars for 25 programs in 2020 and in 2023, pulling from all available data.²³ These ratings provide a picture of how program services have developed over the last three years. Exhibit 20 shows the percentage of programs who were rated as having developing, established, or advanced services for each pillar in 2020 and 2023. The “average score” is based on a scoring system, where developing=1, established=2, and advanced=3. The “change” column shows changes in the average score over time.

²² Revised SFBI Program Model (2018). Retrieved from <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OkgNDeFDFsPC-BppqvMR0TIUnSinwQ/view>

²³ There are only 25 sites because two sites (Malcolm X Elementary and Buena Vista/Horace Mann K-8) were unresponsive to requests for interviews in 2020 and, thus, we did not have enough information to rate their pillars. Because we lacked 2020 data, we excluded them from the 2023 analysis.

Exhibit 20: Development of Pillar Services
(Rating conducted spring 2020 and spring 2023, N=25)

	Developing		Established		Advanced		Average Score		Change
	2020	2023	2020	2023	2020	2023	2020	2023	
School-Day	36%	27%	52%	40%	12%	33%	1.68	2.04	+.36
Behavioral Health	52%	24%	40%	44%	8%	33%	1.60	2.08	+.38
Expanded Learning	0%	0%	64%	72%	36%	28%	2.36	2.28	-.08
Family Engagement	44%	44%	36%	32%	20%	24%	1.76	1.80	+.04
Transition Services	60%	56%	28%	24%	12%	20%	1.52	1.64	+.12
Rubric: Developing =1; Established = 2; Advanced=3									

The data that we drew on for this analysis was limited and uneven across sites. As a result, some sites may be rated lower than they should be, but it is less likely that programs are rated higher than they should be (though possible, because we did not verify qualitative information through observation). Despite these limitations, the analysis shows some interesting findings, all of which are congruent with findings from our other data sources.

- Expanded learning was the most established pillar in 2020 and it remained so in 2023.** All the schools had existing afterschool programming prior to the expansion, which formed the foundation for strong services in this area. In 2023, there was a very slight decrease in the development of this pillar when compared to 2020. While all programs had “established” or “advanced” expanded learning programs in 2020 and 2023, challenges with attendance, staffing, and partners resulted in two less programs being rated as advanced in 2023. Still, this remained the most highly developed pillar.
- The pillar that experienced the most growth in services was behavioral health and wellness.** This is consistent with findings, highlighted in Chapter 2, that programs expanded their behavioral health partnerships. Interview respondents emphasized the importance placed on behavioral wellness by school partners after the pandemic in the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years. Respondents said that many students had difficulty adjusting to school when returning to in-person instruction and the Beacon Programs were vital partners to schools in helping to give students the support the needed.
- School day services also became much more developed, seeing the second highest level of growth.** This finding is also congruent with our other data sources, as interview

respondents consistently spoke about the increased reliance of school staff on Beacon Program support during the school day. As described in Chapter 2, programs also hired more full-time staff, which expanded the number of people who could push into classrooms and support lunchtime activities.

- **Transition services were the least developed pillar in 2020 and remained so in 2023, despite deepening of services.** As will be described later in this chapter, transition services were not the highest priority for programs, because so much work needed to be done to expand school day and behavioral health services. Yet, when compared to 2020, there were a few more programs in 2023 who developed innovative and robust services in this area and, thus, were rated as “advanced.”
- **Although strategies for family engagement changed during the pandemic, the overall depth and extensiveness of family engagement services did not change significantly.** The COVID-19 protocols prohibited programs from in-person engagement, which was the cornerstone of most family engagement prior to the pandemic. Interview respondents said that programs were very successful at reaching out and supporting families during the shelter-in-place period, providing them with resources, such as food baskets and assistance filing for COVID-19 relief support. They also had success with virtual engagement of families. Once COVID-19 protocols relaxed in the 2022-2023 school year, programs worked to re-establish in-person events and activities.
- **Overall, there was growth in all pillars between 2020 and 2023 except for expanded learning.** While all but one of the pillars were rated between developing (1) and established (2) in 2020, three of the pillars were rated between established (2) and advanced (3) in 2023. By spring 2023, most programs had established all their pillars, except for transition services. One-fifth (20%) to one-third (33%) of programs had developed “advanced” services in each service area. The progress that programs made in the development of services between 2020 and 2023 needs to be considered within the context of the pandemic and staffing crises, as these created a significant “head wind” for programs.

Having provided this overview of changes in pillar services over time, the subsequent sections provide an in-depth view of the services offered in each pillar.

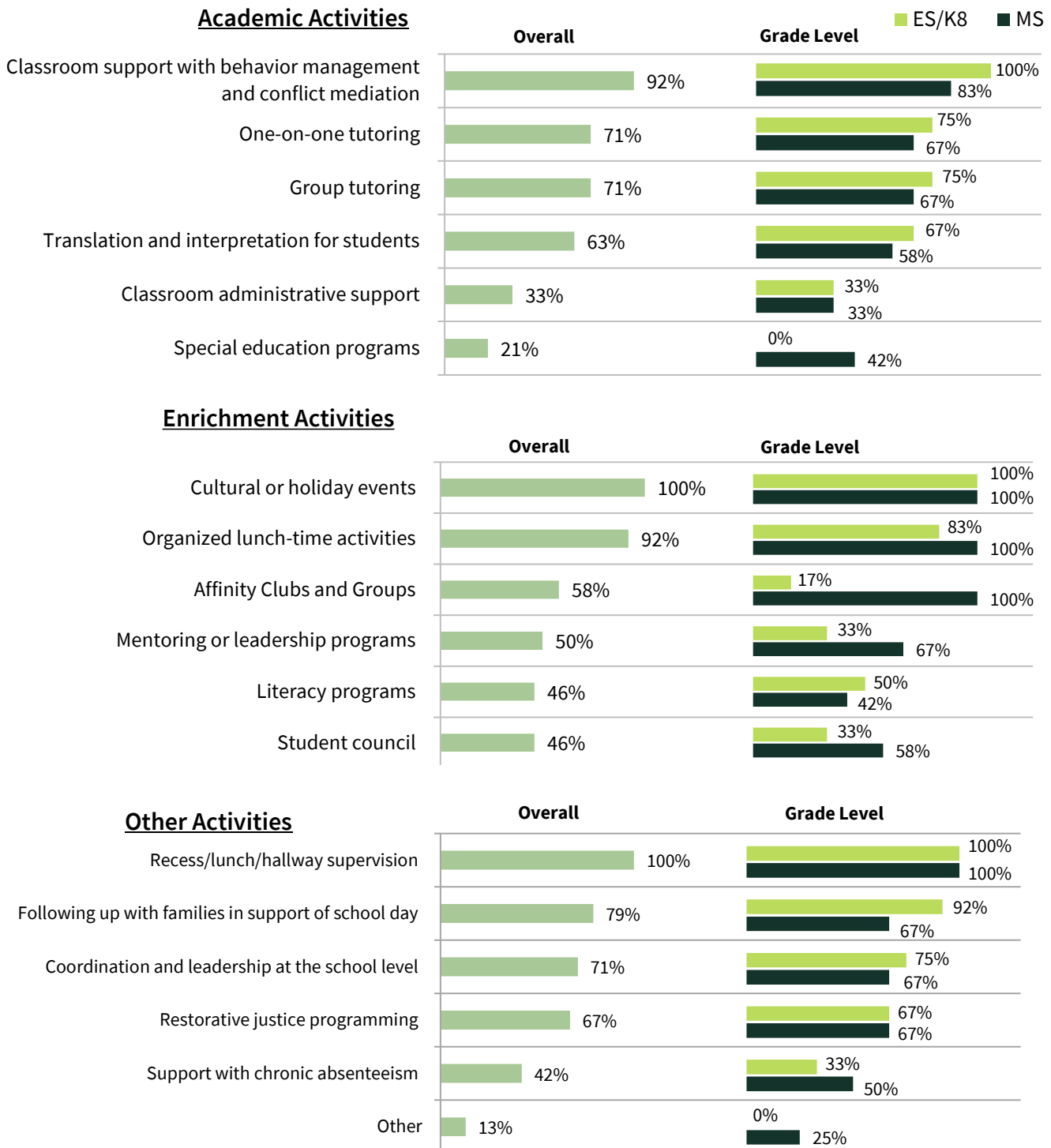
School Day Services

Beacon Programs aim to support all students through school day services, including those that do not participate in the expanded learning program. Staffing ranged across Beacon sites, with varying levels of implementation that often depended on the strength of the relationship between Beacon staff, school administrators, and other school staff. Additionally, Beacon staff tend to have diverse titles and differing roles that specifically meet the needs and unique context of each school community. In collaboration with school administrators and staff, Beacon Programs offer an array of activities that promote school engagement, continuous learning, and academic success among students, as well as positive school climate. Overall, interviewees appreciated the critical supports that Beacon Programs provide during the day.

Activities

As shown in Exhibit 21 below, Beacon Programs support students and school staff in numerous ways during the day.

Exhibit 21. School Day Services (N=24)



Findings from the spring 2023 program survey indicate that the most common school day activities offered by Beacon Programs include hosting cultural or holiday events, recess/lunch/hallway supervision, organized lunch-time activities, and classroom support with behavior management and conflict mediation. Less frequently offered services include special education programs, classroom administrative support, support with chronic absenteeism, and student council.

Grade level findings show that elementary and K-8 schools are more likely to provide academic/classroom support and follow up with families in support of school day compared to middle schools. However, more middle schools offer enrichment activities such as organized lunch-time activities, affinity groups, and mentoring and leadership programs. The following section offers descriptions of the different types of key school day activities offered by Beacon Programs, as highlighted by interview respondents.

Academic/Classroom Support

- **Tutoring.** Almost 75% of Beacon Programs offer individual and group tutoring, depending on the needs of students. Beacon staff work with teachers and other school staff to identify students who may benefit from academic support during class time or advisory periods, such as newcomer students, English Learners, students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), students reading below grade level, and students who need extra support. Activities include one-on-one or small group tutoring for math, bilingual reading, phonics activities, reading circles, letter tracing and matching activities, and writing practice. A few Beacon Programs also provide homework support during lunchtime or advisory period. Beacon staff assist students on completing homework assignments for different subjects, such as math and science.
- **Literacy programs.** At a few schools, Beacon Programs operate literacy programs to help students improve their vocabulary, reading, and writing fluency. Beacon staff work with school staff to identify students who may benefit from one-on-one or small group literacy instruction and activities. Beacon Programs push into accelerated literacy classes, newcomer classes, special education classes, and general English Language Arts (ELA) classes to provide extra literacy support. Beacon staff at two schools are also trained to administer Fountas & Pinnell assessments to track students' reading levels and progress.
- **Classroom support with behavioral management and conflict mediation.** Over 90% of Beacon Programs offer behavioral support to students during the school day. At some schools, Beacon staff are assigned to specific classrooms to support teachers with classroom management. Other sites have Beacon staff provide "on call" support when teachers need additional classroom management and behavioral support for students. This includes taking students out of class for a quick break to deescalate and regulate, holding one-on-one conversations to talk about issues so that they are connecting with a caring adult, and stepping in to keep classroom norms and activities going while the teacher steps outside the classroom to resolve an issue with a student.

- **Translation and interpretation for students.** More than half of Beacon Programs provide in-class language support for newcomer and English Learner students across subjects, such as math, science, social studies, and English. A few Beacon Programs have multilingual staff who help their schools conduct advisories in students' primary language. Beacon staff provide translation and interpretation support in Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Spanish.
- **Classroom support.** In addition to classroom support with behavioral management and tutoring, almost one-third of Beacon Programs help teachers implement their classroom curriculum. For example, a few Beacon Programs support teachers that are interested in conducting blended learning in the classroom and assign Beacon staff to help run activity centers.
- **Special education programs.** At a couple schools, Beacon staff coordinate with school staff and district staff to provide support to students with IEPs or 504 plans. One Beacon Program provides specific behavioral supports for these students while district staff provide academic support. Other programs offer more direct academic support to students with IEPs.

Enrichment Activities

- **Organized lunch-time activities.** Survey findings indicate that more than 90% of Beacon Programs reported running organized lunchtime activities for students. Lunchtime activities are diverse and informed by student interests. Examples of clubs include flag football, Dungeons & Dragons, Marvel Universe, Harry Potter, magic, art, soccer, dance, baseball, rocketry, anime, basketball, Lunch Buddies, board games club, graphic novels, cooking, self-care and self-love, a coloring area for kindergarten students, gardening, origami, music, and Makerspace. Beacon Programs give students the option to self-select lunchtime activities.
- **Mentoring or leadership programs.** One Beacon Program facilitates a peer tutoring group during advisory period where 8th graders tutor younger students at the school. Another runs a lunchtime leadership club that provides opportunities for 7th and 8th graders to mentor 6th graders on establishing SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) goals and created a safe space for students to discuss challenges related to online/hybrid learning.
- **Cultural or holiday events.** Beacon Programs often lead or support with school-wide cultural and holiday events throughout the year. This includes Latinx Heritage Month, Black History Month, Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Spring Festival, Dia de Los Muertos celebrations, toy and book giveaways during the holiday season, and Halloween.
- **Affinity clubs and groups.** Nearly two-thirds of Beacon Programs and all middle school programs facilitate affinity clubs and groups at their schools that contribute to positive school culture. Examples include Black Student Union, Black Girl Magic Club, Girls Club, Boys Club, Pride Club, Jaguars for Justice, Queer and Ally Club, and La Raza Club. These

groups provide students with a safe space to talk about their lived experience and issues that they face as well as support their development of advocacy and leadership skills.

- **Student council.** A little less than half (46%) of Beacon Programs support students with running student government.

Other Activities

- **Recess, lunch, and hallway supervision.** Many Beacon Programs assist with recess and lunchtime supervision as well as transitions to and from the classroom. Beacon staff often informally check in with students during these periods, which contributes to positive school climate.

Quality and Extensiveness of Implementation

The extensiveness of school day services and activities varies by Beacon site. As noted by interviewees, the degree to which Beacon Programs and staff are imbedded in the school day correlates with the state of school alignment and relationships between Beacon staff (particularly the Beacon Director), and teachers and school administrators. For instance, as described in the previous chapter, many Beacon staff are invited to participate in meetings (e.g., coordinated care team meetings, school event planning meetings, and grade-level planning meetings) with school day staff to collaboratively identify, discuss, and determine supportive school day services for students as well as the larger school community.

Beacon Programs also often have a dedicated office and rooms at their school sites, which contributes to a sense that these Beacon Programs are well imbedded within their school. However, some schools have Beacon staffing challenges and/or experienced numerous transitions at the school administrator level, which limited the scope and implementation of Beacon programming during the school day. A couple Beacon Programs described instances of being “pulled into many directions” and into roles to fill in gaps during the school day, making it difficult for Beacon staff to focus on providing specialized school day services, like academic support. Additionally, a few schools view their Beacon Program as more of an afterschool program that provides more ancillary school day support because they are still “figuring out” the relationship between the school and Beacon Program. While a few schools would like to see their Beacon Programs expand their school day offerings, there is a general sense across many schools that Beacon Programs provide a lot of added value through their connection with students and school day services that help foster positive school climate and provide additional support to students and school staff.

Challenges

Interview respondents highlighted key challenges related to the implementation of school day services across Beacon sites. As described in the previous two chapters, some Beacon Programs have experienced staffing challenges that hindered their ability to offer or expand school day services, such as classroom push in support and leading lunchtime activities. School administrator and teacher turnover has influenced Beacon school day services at several sites. For instance, at one school, Beacon staff have been stepping in to cover and run classes due to teacher

shortages. In general, understaffing has had an effect on coordination and communication between Beacon Programs and school day staff, as often times Beacon staff are stretched thin and “fill in” where they can even if certain responsibilities do not fall within their role.

Behavioral Health and Wellness

Another key component of the Beacon Program Model is behavioral health and wellness. The goal is to “ensure SFUSD students are safe, healthy, and ready to learn.”²⁴ In collaboration with their school site, Beacon Programs offer behavioral and social emotional supports and curriculum to all students that is trauma-informed and grounded in restorative practices. Behavioral health and wellness services also play a key role in helping to foster positive school climate at their sites.

Since the start of the pandemic, there has been an increased need for social emotional support among students. Some Beacon Programs reported receiving COVID-19 funds from the district in order to hire staff who could provide additional services during the shelter-in-place order and support the transition back to in-person learning. Furthermore, as described in Chapter 2, programs greatly expanded the number of behavioral health partners they have worked with over the course of the last several years. Services, however, still varied widely across Beacon Programs due to school needs, funding, training, Beacon and school staffing as well as partnerships.

The next section offers an overview of key behavioral health and wellness activities that Beacon Programs lead or support at their schools.

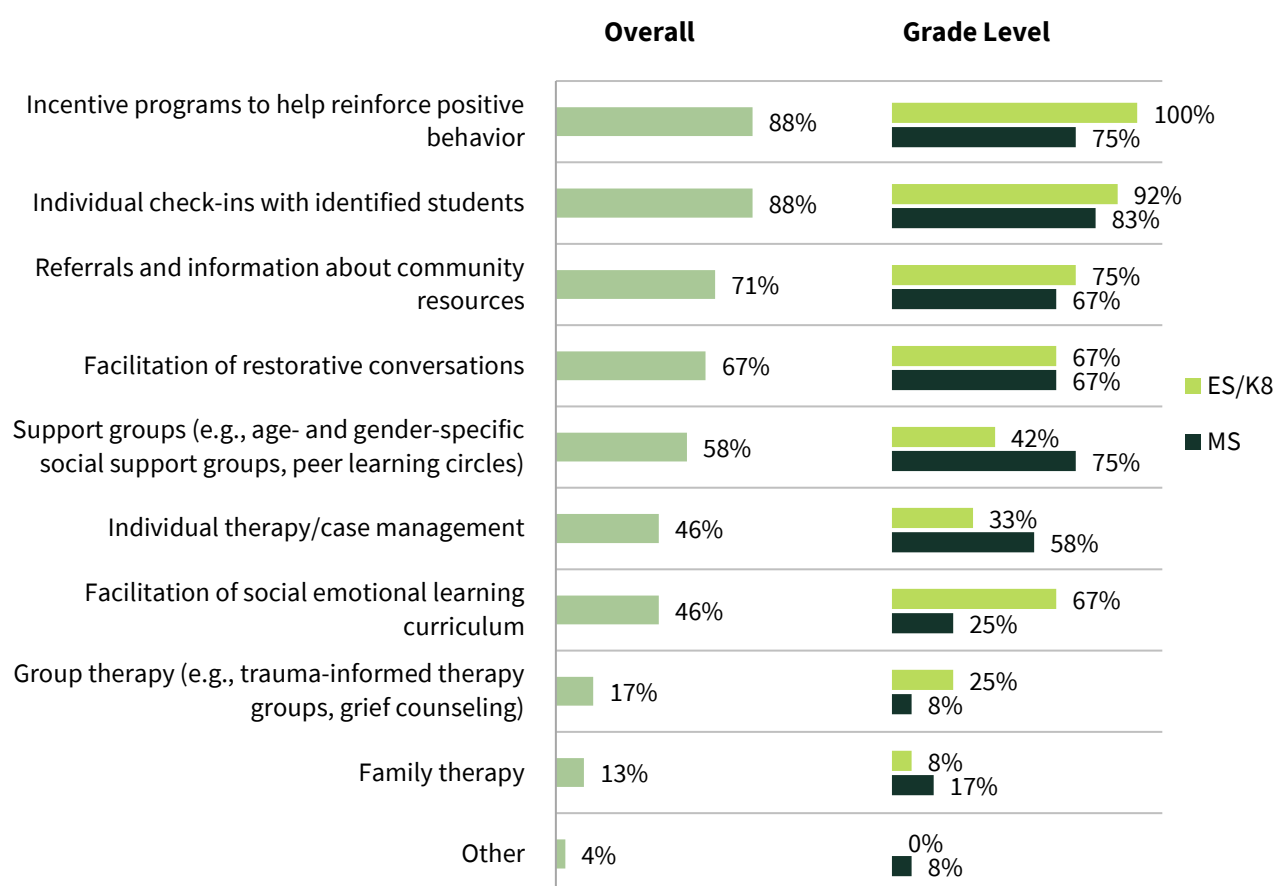
Activities

Beacon Programs offer a range of behavioral health and wellness services to students. For behavioral health supports, Exhibit 22 shows that a majority of programs run incentive programs to help reinforce positive behavior, hold individual check-ins with identified students, provide referrals and information about community resources, facilitate restorative conversations, and hold support groups. Less than 20% of programs offer group therapy and family therapy.

There are interesting grade level differences for behavioral health services. Compared to middle schools, more elementary and K-8 schools facilitate social emotional learning curriculum and run incentive programs to reinforce positive behavior. At middle schools, 75% run support groups compared to 42% of elementary and K-8 schools. Similarly, 25% more middle schools offer individual therapy and case management to students. Interview respondents offered details and insight into the different activities, which are described on the following page.

²⁴ San Francisco Community Schools Toolkit. Retrieved from:
<https://www.sfbeacon.org/sfcommunityschoolstoolkit>

Exhibit 22. Behavioral Health Supports (N=24)



Behavioral Health Supports

- Individual therapy and case management.** Some schools have dedicated case managers, mental health consultants, or behavioral specialists that are sometimes funded by the Beacon Program. They collaborate with Beacon staff, teachers, school counselors, and school social workers to help identified students move toward goals on their individualized plan as well as advocate for students at school suspension and/or expulsion hearings. Some Beacon Case Managers are trained to work with youth who are involved or at risk of being involved in gangs and the juvenile justice system. Schools that have a trained behavioral health staff on site are able to offer one-on-one therapy sessions.
- Support groups.** Several Beacon Programs either provide translation/interpretation services or help facilitate support groups for students with specific identities and/or lived experiences. Some support groups focus on helping students develop SEL skills. Examples include girls club, boys club, 6th grade transition group, anxiety group, and newcomer students group.

- **Group therapy.** A few Beacon programs that have a Mental Health Consultant or Behavioral Specialist on site at the school offer group therapy for students experiencing trauma and grief.
- **Facilitation of restorative conversations.** A key strategy among several Beacon Programs is engaging students and school staff in restorative practices following conflict. One Beacon Program holds restorative conversations with families at the school site. When issues between students escalate, Beacon staff bring families into the intervention process. As an alternative to punitive approaches, two Beacon Programs contribute to funding a full-time Restorative Practices Coach who supports reflection among students who engage in harmful behavior, facilitates restorative conversations, and runs restorative circles with small groups of students. One Beacon Program also trains teachers on how to resolve issues in their classroom.
- **Facilitation of social emotional learning curriculum.** Several Beacon Programs implement social emotional learning curriculum at their school site. For example, two Beacon Programs facilitate a referral-based club for students that have been involved in conflict with peers and teachers. The club teaches social emotional skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, navigating peer relationships, and communication to prevent behavioral incidents from occurring. A couple Beacon Programs help school staff incorporate social emotional learning with students during the day. This includes implementing Second Step (a social emotional learning curriculum) twice per week during homeroom as well as social emotional learning prompts during class and advisory periods to engage students in reflection exercises.
- **Incentive programs to help reinforce positive behavior.** Several Beacon Programs help run their school's behavior incentive program. Students earn "Beacon Bucks" for demonstrating good behavior, promoting school values, and contributing to positive school climate, which they can cash in for prizes such as a toy, school supplies, or healthy snacks.
- **Individual check-ins with identified students.** Many Beacon Programs work closely with their school's coordinated care team to identify and support students who may benefit from individual check-ins. Schools often engage Beacon staff in conducting formal and informal meetings with students to discuss challenges that they are facing at school and/or at home because they have strong rapport and trust with students. Beacon staff push into classrooms at the request of teachers or students as well as pull out students for breaks, conversations and support when needed.
- **School-wide behavioral health activities.** One Beacon Program coordinates Behavioral Health week at their school site. This includes coordinating school-wide assemblies that focus on various behavioral health topics such as harassment, consent, and bullying. Another Beacon Program facilitates fishbowl discussions with students about their sense of belonging at the school and how to improve the school climate.

Wellness Activities

- **Referrals and information about community resources.** One Beacon Program partners with the Stanford Medical Team to bring a medical van to the school every month to provide health services to students and their families, including vision exams, sports physicals, and vaccinations. Another Beacon Program coordinates with a partner organization to refer Spanish-speaking students to other mental health services in the community.
- **Yoga and meditation activities.** A few Beacon Programs run yoga classes and daily mindfulness activities for students. One program facilitates mindfulness exercises to help students transition from outdoor activities and after meals. Another Beacon Program uses a meditation app geared for students in their daily afterschool program.
- **Nutrition presentations and activities.** A couple Beacon Programs teach students about the importance of healthy eating and providing more nutritious snack options in the afterschool program. These programs engage a group of students in juicing and making smoothies for other students and learning about the vitamins in different fruits and vegetables, which helps increase students' interest in trying unfamiliar foods.
- **Alcohol and drug prevention program.** One Beacon Program runs an alcohol and drug prevention program for 6th graders, in partnership with the San Francisco Department of Public Health. Participants receive gift cards and snacks, which helps support engagement.
- **Family Wellness Visits.** One Beacon Program has their African American Family Engagement Coordinator conduct wellness visits with families during school or afterschool, depending on the family's availability.

Quality and Extensiveness of Implementation

School staff generally reported that Beacon Programs provide valuable support in this area because of the trust and relationships they hold with students. In many instances, students prefer to interact with Beacon staff when they need behavioral health support. Teachers also appreciate the additional classroom push in services that Beacon staff provide to students in need of social emotional support, which helps teachers manage their classes and carry out their lesson plans.

The breadth of behavioral health and wellness services varies significantly across Beacon Programs. This is due to several factors including staffing, training, resources and funding, and needs at the school. For instance, some schools have a Wellness Center that is either funded by the school and/or Beacon Program. It provides a space for students to take a break and connect with a caring adult throughout the day when they need social emotional support. Schools with Wellness Centers often have more robust behavioral health and wellness services that are provided by a mix of Beacon and school staff (and sometimes community partners), such as therapy, support groups, case management, classroom push in, and restorative conversations.

While many programs have Beacon staff that are a part of their school's coordinated care team, a couple Beacon Programs have minimal roles in behavioral health and wellness services beyond supporting with deescalating conflict during lunchtime supervision and the afterschool program. In several of these cases, the school already has robust behavioral health staffing and services. In other cases, Beacon Programs have more limited capacity and training to provide behavioral health and wellness support to students despite needs for services at their school site. Beacon staff mainly provide "on call" behavioral health support during the school day through classroom push in or pull out.

Challenges

Across schools, respondents named two primary challenges in this area. First, they noted that the pandemic highlighted the importance of and increased the need for more social emotional support and services. Beacon Programs and school staff have noted increased disruptive behaviors among students following the transition back to in-person learning. However, some have lost critical funding for behavioral health and wellness services and have had to reduce previously available support such as mental health consultations and therapy sessions. A couple Beacon Programs have lost community partners that previously provided behavioral health services to students at their school as a result of reduced funding. Further, the increase in disruptive behaviors without scaled behavioral health and wellness support for students also has been taking a toll on teachers and Beacon staff carrying out lesson plans and programming.

Another key challenge is related to staffing. A few Beacon Programs have been experiencing staff turnover, which affects relationship building with students and limits program capacity to provide behavioral health support. Some schools have struggled with staffing as well, including hiring and retaining behavioral health specialists, mental health clinicians, and school social workers to support students during the school day and after school. At least one Beacon Program shared that their staff do not have the required training or certification to provide mental health services despite student need at the school. Furthermore, the need for culturally relevant behavioral health services was noted by a couple Beacon Programs. There is generally a limited pool of therapists and even fewer who are able to provide therapy in languages other than English and match the cultural background of students. A couple Beacon Programs and their schools have been struggling to hire mental health clinicians that are fluent in Spanish, Cantonese, and Mandarin to support students who are English Learners.

Expanded Learning

A core component of the Beacon Program Model is expanded learning, which features before school and after school, summer, and intersession learning opportunities that meet the academic, social emotional, and physical needs of students and develop their interests.²⁵ The Beacon Program Model describes that expanded learning opportunities should be hands-on, engaging, and involve community partners.

²⁵ San Francisco Community Schools Toolkit. Retrieved from:
<https://www.sfbeacon.org/sfcommunityschoolstoolkit>

The Beacon Program's expanded learning services are co-funded by SFUSD's ExCEL office, which is a recipient of federal 21st Century funds and California After School Education and Safety (ASES) funds. These resources stipulate that programs offer academic, enrichment, and recreational services. For this reason, Beacon expanded learning services tend to be similar across sites, relative to other aspects of Beacon programming. Most programs have an extensive set of staff and partners that provide these services. In fact, several programs hire school day teachers to provide programming support after school, a practice that reportedly helps deepen relationships with teachers and the alignment of expanded learning activities with school day academic and behavioral standards. In addition, community partners enhance the ability of Beacon Programs to provide diverse enrichment activities that reflect students' interests or backgrounds, including sports, arts, field trips, and STEM activities.

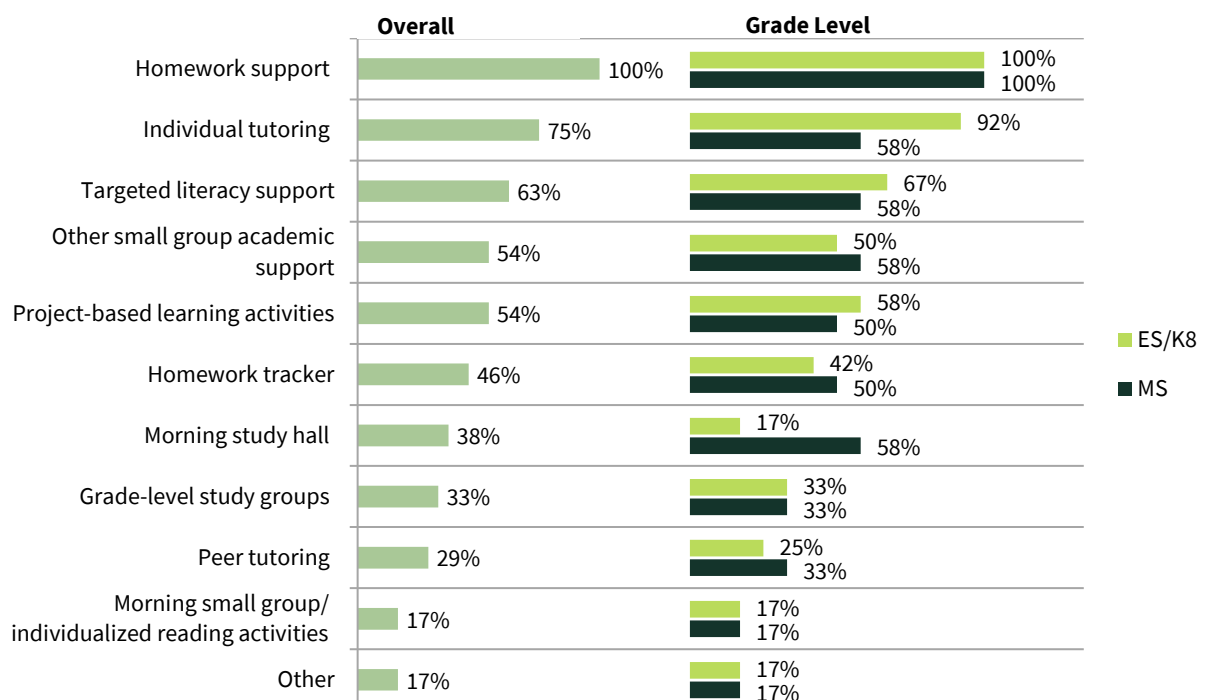
Activities

While all programs offer homework help or academic support, in addition to physical activities or recreation, the specific types of resources and opportunities within these two sets of offerings greatly varies across sites, as well as within and across academic years. Alongside the COVID-19 pandemic, these programmatic aspects have shifted due to changes in site resources, partners' availability, Beacon staff and school leaders' vision for the Beacon Program, and students' interests. This section describes academic and enrichment expanded learning components that were documented over the course of the evaluation.

Academic

As shown in Exhibit 23 on the following page, there are several ways in which Beacon Programs supported students after school and/or before school.

Exhibit 23. Academic Support Offered Before and After School (N=24)



Most activities do not differ significantly by grade-level, but elementary and K-8 schools are more likely than middle schools to offer individual tutoring and less likely to offer morning study hall. The following section provides descriptions of the different types of academic supports offered as part of Beacon Programs' expanded learning activities, as highlighted by interview respondents:

- **Individualized and small group support.** These supports help students with their homework and receive individualized or small group academic support from Beacon staff, community partners (e.g., Aspire), and/or school day teachers. In some instances, students use program laptops to access their homework and related materials during designated periods. This form of support is sometimes available through Zoom or other online platforms.
- **Targeted literacy support.** One example of this type of activity that is utilized by Beacon Programs is SpringBoard Literacy Program, which places students in reading groups for 90-minutes on two days a week. Students practice sight words and do reading activities, and they are also allowed to explore the content that interests them by choosing books to take home. Through this program, parents are also encouraged to read regularly to their children. Some sites similarly offer access to web-based applications, audiobooks, read-aloud periods, or electronic books to students, so students can continue to develop literacy skills after homework completion.
- **Project-based learning activities.** These offerings generally align with school day curriculum through activities in health and anatomy, poetry, storytelling, and more.
- **Homework tracker.** Some Beacon Programs use a tracker or Synergy, the online platform used by SFUSD, to check on students' academic performance. More specifically, they identify and provide targeted support to students who have uncompleted assignments or whose grades are falling.
- **Peer tutoring and study groups.** In some instances, high school students are hired or volunteer to support those in earlier grades. Similarly, middle schoolers are made available to younger students to provide individual or small group assistance with homework and learning support.
- **Academically focused workshops.** These offerings allow students to attend academically focused sessions that cover a variety of topics, including classroom engagement strategies.

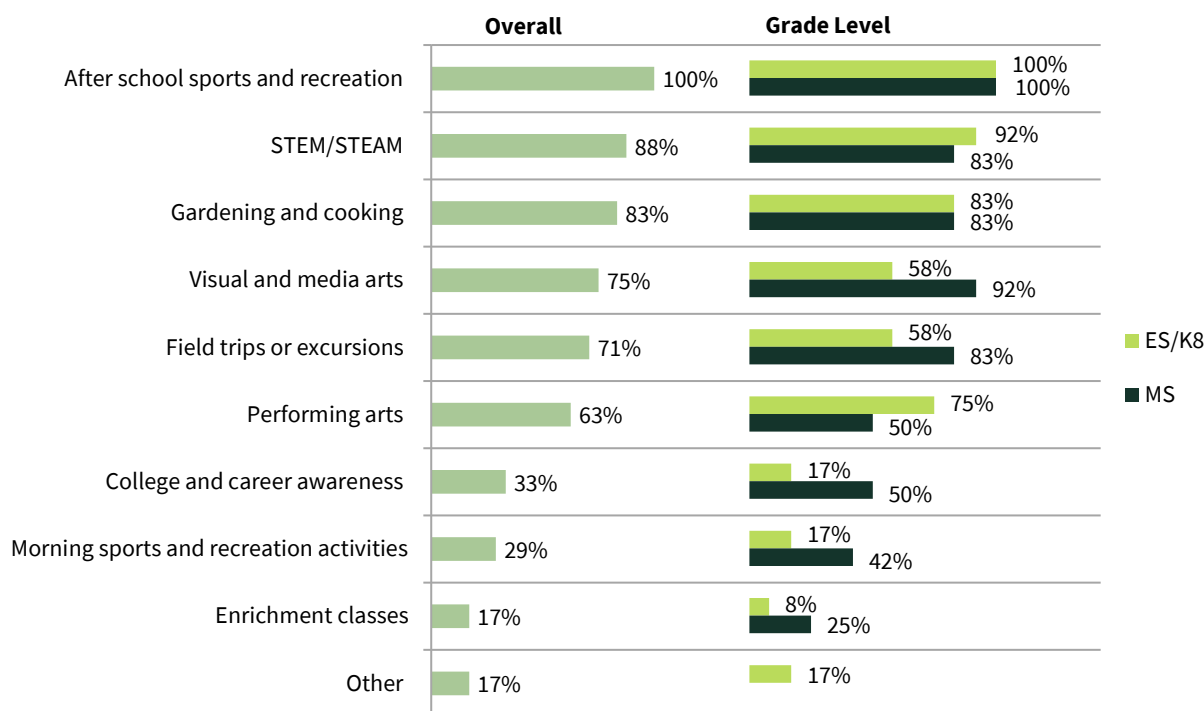
In addition to school year supports, Beacon Programs provide academic support over the summer, which typically focuses on students in need of assistance or on supporting students with retaining content from the preceding academic year. These opportunities are offered in partnership with school staff or other credentialed teachers with a focus on literacy. Summer academic offerings also include a range of foci, such as math, science, social emotional learning, and social justice related topics. For example, one middle school offers a Power Scholars Program over the summer. To address summer learning loss, students work with credentialed

teachers to review curriculum in math and language arts from the previous academic year, from Monday through Friday for six weeks.

Enrichment

As shown in Exhibit 24 below, there are many enrichment offerings made available through Beacon Programs before school, after school, and during the summer.

Exhibit 24. Enrichment Offered Before School, After School, & Summer (N=24)



Findings from the spring 2023 program survey indicate that the five most common enrichment programs offered by Beacon Programs include sports and recreation, STEM/STEAM, gardening and cooking, visual and media arts, and field trips or excursions. Less frequently offered services include enrichment classes, morning sports and recreation activities, and college and career awareness. Middle schools are more likely than elementary and K-8 schools to provide visual and media arts, field trips, college and career readiness, and enrichment classes. Elementary and K-8 schools, however, are more likely to offer performing arts. The following section offers descriptions of the different types of enrichment programs offered, as highlighted by interview respondents.

- Sports and recreation.** Sports and recreation activities support students' physical wellbeing, help strengthen their interpersonal skills, and foster teamwork. The most common activities offered across Beacon Programs are soccer and basketball. Other types of activities include volleyball, gymnastics and tumbling, ultimate frisbee, flag football, wrestling, dragon boat, yoga, swimming, surfing, track, and cheerleading.

- **STEM/STEAM.** STEM/STEAM curriculum-based programs provide expanded learning opportunities for students who are interested in science, technology, engineering, math, and integrated arts. Examples of STEM/STEAM program topics include environmental justice, robotics, and computer programming.
- **Gardening and cooking.** These activities can help students learn about healthy eating and nutrition. Beacon Programs with access to outdoor education space at the school campus offer gardening as an enrichment activity to teach students about growing food and sustainability. Some programs offer cooking club, which was a space for students to learn different recipes and culinary techniques.
- **Visual and media arts.** Students who are interested in expressing their creativity can access a variety of Beacon Program activities, such as podcasting, screen printing, painting, digital media, animation, drawing, VSCO, and sound and audio engineering. Some programs also offer opportunities to engage in tactile arts and crafts, such as jewelry making and woodwork.
- **Field trips or excursions.** These events are sometimes tied to specific enrichment activities that allow students to connect what they learn to real world settings. In some instances, these opportunities are offered on the weekend to create space for students to experience something new and have fun.
- **Performing arts.** Students who participate in these activities often perform at showcase events for students and families that were organized by Beacon staff. The most common activities offered by Beacon Programs include theater, drama, music, and dance. More unique offerings include African drumming, guitar, spoken word poetry, hip hop dance, breakdancing, folklorico, Polynesian dance, and line dancing.
- **College and career awareness.** Half of middle schools and 17% of elementary and K-8 schools offer programming designed to increase college and career awareness. Students in one program learn about college and take field trips to college campuses. Another program have career awareness activities, such as guest speaker presentations and field trips, to help students learn about different career paths.
- **Enrichment classes.** In at least one instance, afterschool instructors lead lessons covering topics, such as identity exploration, empathy and kindness, and college learning.

Students are often exposed to new activities and sports after school and during the summer, and programs also seek to align these activities with students' passions and interests by conducting surveys of students or providing students with several activities to choose from. As one Beacon Director explained, they try to offer "things that normally have a high cost of access to families, that the general demographic [...] wouldn't be able to access due to the cost or location." Relatedly, Beacon staff are often thought to have both an understanding of students' backgrounds and connections to community partners.

While academic offerings vary along school leaders' vision and broader needs over the summer, enrichment offerings are greatly influenced by the availability of external partnerships,

resources, and students' interests. As such, specific enrichment activities and their availability can considerably shift.

Quality and Extensiveness of Implementation

The quality of expanded learning activities varies across sites and also differs for academic and enrichment offerings. Some school staff reflected that their Beacon Program's academic services provide deliberate assistance, with either intentional supports for improving student literacy or by connecting students to community partners or school personnel who are better positioned to assist students. At the same time, there were interviewees who noted that Beacon staff are not necessarily trained on pedagogy or conceptual math, making it difficult for these staff to significantly accelerate student learning. Some also said that it can be difficult to engage students in coursework outside of school hours, which can influence the efficacy of Beacon's academic support. By contrast, when asked to describe the quality of Beacon Program enrichment offerings, school staff who felt comfortable commenting on expanded learning activities said that the activities and/or events are well-received by students.

It is worth noting, however, that school staff at a few sites feel limited in their ability to share insights on the Beacon Programs' expanded learning services. This is because they are often not on campus before school, after school, or during the summer to observe offerings.

Challenges

First and foremost, interviewees explained that expanded learning programs do not always have the capacity to serve all students who could benefit from programming. This is typically due to staffing and other resource limitations that prevent them from providing quality care to a larger set of youth. Some school staff wished that programs could serve a greater percentage of students at the school. However, there were also interviewees who pointed to an interest in serving youth in the school's surrounding community and – among some elementary school sites – those in transitional kindergarten.

At the same time, for some Beacon Programs, low student enrollment is a key area of concern. This is particularly true of programs hosted at middle schools, which underwent a schedule shift that entailed later hours in the 2021-2022 school year, as a result of a new state law.²⁶ Because of these changes, enrollment was considered particularly low in the winter, when there was less sunlight after school hours. This prompted families and students to consider ways of getting youth home earlier and before sundown.

Family Engagement

Preparing students for success in college, career, and life requires strong relationships and partnership with families. Parents and caregivers hold a “rich fund of knowledge about their children and community” that the larger school community can draw upon to create an

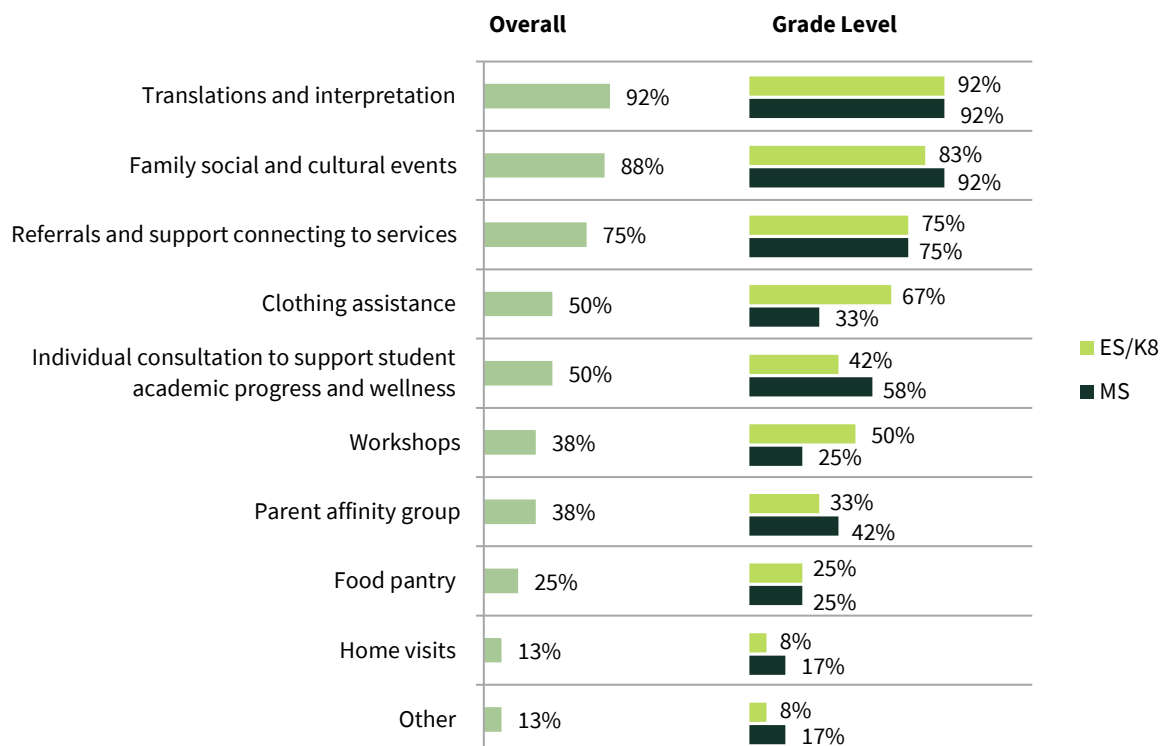
²⁶ In 2019, the California Legislature passed a first-of-its-kind law requiring that middle schools start no earlier than 8 am. San Francisco set the start time for their middle and K-8 schools at 9:30 am.

educational environment and experience that supports student learning and growth.²⁷ Therefore, family engagement is a core part of the Beacon Program Model. Some Beacon Programs help fund staff positions or engage community-based partners who primarily focus on integrating families within the school culture and community to support student learning and help foster a sense of belonging. These staff and partners are often part of a team within the school that coordinates outreach, services, and activities for families. Across sites, Beacon Programs highlighted the importance of family engagement and hope to continue strengthening its efforts to build strong relationships with all families that are part of the school community.

Activities

Beacon Programs offer a variety of family engagement activities. As shown in Exhibit 25, the most common activities include translation and interpretation services, family social and cultural events, and referrals and support connecting families to services. Grade-level differences show that elementary and K-8 schools are twice as likely to include clothing assistance and workshops in their family engagement activities compared to middle schools. A description of key family engagement activities that Beacon Programs provide to their school community are described on the next page.

Exhibit 25. Family Engagement Activities (N=24)



²⁷ San Francisco Community Schools Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://www.sfbeacon.org/sfcommunityschoolstoolkit>

Supportive Services

- **Referrals and support connecting families to services.** Beacon Programs utilize different strategies to connect families to supportive services in the community, such as therapy, COVID-19 vaccines, housing/shelter, food access, internet access, and household items. This happens through informal conversations during afterschool sign out to understand what families are going through as well as wellness checks by phone and in person. One Beacon Program wrote a grant to create a Family Resource Center at their school to connect families to resources, such as school supplies and financial assistance (e.g., for utilities or rent).
- **Individual consultation to support student academic progress and wellness.** This includes Beacon staff sitting in on parent-teacher conferences and helping families with the application process for free/reduced lunch, afterschool programming, middle school and high school enrollment. One Beacon Program also holds weekly office hours so families can drop in to get support for things such as referrals to services and filling out the high school application. Beacon Programs often have staff that participate in their school's coordinated care team. Several programs help the school and parents relay their concerns about student attendance, academic progress, and behavioral issues and facilitate the process for creating a support plan. At least one program walks parents through how to use Google Classrooms and other tools to monitor their students' academic progress and the degree to which they are finishing assignments.
- **Translation and interpretation.** To support diverse families, many Beacon Programs are intentional about hiring staff who reflect the cultural backgrounds as well as speak the primary languages of students and families at their school. A few Beacon Programs created family engagement coordination positions to specifically reach and support African American/Black families, Spanish-speaking families, Cantonese- and Mandarin-speaking families, and Arabic-speaking families. Examples of ways that multilingual Beacon staff help families include preparing for court dates, completing housing applications, and attending parent-teacher meetings.
- **Food pantry.** Some Beacon Programs operate a food pantry at their school and distribute food to families in need. A couple Beacon Programs work with school staff to identify families in need of grocery vouchers. One program partners with SF New Deal, which works with restaurants to provide hot meals for families every week. During the pandemic, programs also recruited partners and teachers to deliver food to family homes.
- **Dedicated family space on school campus.** A couple Beacon Programs worked with their schools to create a welcoming space that is dedicated for families. One Beacon Program created a family room to try to bring families into the school. The space includes a bulletin board for families to post information, a food pantry fridge, resource tables, and Pack 'n Plays for families with young children. The school and Beacon Program also uses the space to hold monthly workshops; families are also encouraged to work or hold their own meetings in the space. Another designated the first floor of

the school as the Family Welcome Center so parent volunteers can have a space to relax and families can meet up to talk about their interests, concerns, and volunteer opportunities.

Outreach, Workshops, and Events

- **Communication and outreach.** Several Beacon Programs create and distribute a monthly family newsletter to advertise events, share school updates and volunteer opportunities, and spotlight families, teachers, staff, and community members. Some also use email blasts, texts, and auto dialers to share information with families. Additionally, a few hold monthly parent social events to help the Beacon Program build relationships with families and gather input and feedback on family engagement activities and supportive services. One program organizes raffles as a way to engage families.
- **Parent affinity groups.** Some Beacon Programs partner with various parent groups at the school, such as the English Learners Advisory Committee (ELAC), African American Parent Advisory Council (AAPAC), Latino Task Force, the School Site Council (SSC), and Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Types of support that programs offer include organizing and hosting meetings and affinity dinners, sharing resources, holding parent leadership development workshops, and recruiting staff or volunteers for events. One Beacon Program combines ELAC meetings with its Arabic-speaking parent group meetings as well as its Spanish-speaking parent group meetings to encourage participation among diverse families at the school.
- **Family social and cultural events.** Beacon Programs host different events throughout the year that help promote family engagement. These include student performances, sports banquets, “Student of the Month” events, math and science night, game night, high school night, spring carnival, painting workshop for moms, Black History Month Assembly, African American Honor Roll, Día de Los Muertos and Lunar New Year celebration. Families come together at these events to build community through games, activities, and food. Some programs hold a mix of in-person and virtual events to encourage participation.
- **Family workshops.** Many Beacon Programs organize in-person and/or virtual workshops for parents and caregivers that support student success, family wellbeing, and relationship building. Some offer workshops in non-English languages that are predominantly spoken by families at the school, such as Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic. Examples of topics include social emotional communication, bullying, self-care, de-escalation, teenagers and social media, nutrition, financial health, stress management, high school application, and how to use Synergy (SFUSD’s grade tracking system). Several run the Strengthening Families Program, which aims to help parents and youth develop healthier relationships and build life skills. One Beacon Program recruits parents and community members to facilitate workshops.

Quality and Extensiveness of Implementation

Many Beacon Programs serve as an important point of connection between families and schools. Schools and Beacon Programs with more robust staffing have been implementing structures and processes to specifically reach African American/Black families, Latinx families, Chinese families, and Arabic-speaking families. Strategies include hiring multilingual staff who also reflect the demographic and cultural backgrounds of students and families at the school; organizing raffles; hosting diverse parent affinity groups; and putting on organizing social and cultural events to bring families together. Interview respondents at some sites share that Beacon staff hold stronger relationships and trust with families compared to school staff, which has been helpful for fostering family engagement. Beacon staff often contribute to a school-wide family engagement strategy and work with a team of school staff, including social workers, counselors, wellness coordinators, and family liaisons. They work in collaboration to tailor services and activities to the school context and families' needs. This includes hosting family events, holding workshops on a variety of topics, supporting parent leadership at the school, connecting families to services through referrals or offering direct support on site, and facilitating communication between families and school staff.

Challenges

Interview respondents across Beacon Programs noted several factors that have made it challenging to engage families. A primary challenge is related to staffing. As noted in the previous section, some schools and Beacon Programs do not have staff onsite who speak the home language of students and families. This impacts their ability to provide translation and interpretation services, which effects outreach, engagement, and support for families of color. One Beacon Program shared that it relies on engaged parents to provide translation support. A few also noted at the time of their interview that their school did not have a family liaison or family engagement coordinator who could dedicate time to coordinating efforts at the school to connect with and support families.

It was noted across several schools that it has been difficult engaging African American/Black families and other families of color, especially during the pandemic and following the transition back to in-person learning. Challenges included ongoing COVID-19 infection waves, parents experiencing financial stress and working multiple jobs, lack of geographic proximity between school and families' homes, Zoom burnout, and limited translation/interpretation support at the school. Sites without dedicated family engagement staff, either funded by the school and/or Beacon Program, often provide more ad hoc services and activities due to limited capacity and resources.

More generally, several Beacon Programs shared that it has been difficult engaging families the last few years, particularly new families at the school. Programs pivoted to virtual engagements during the COVID-19 shelter-in-place order and leaned into forms of communication such as emails, phone calls, auto dialers, and texts. However, family engagement was not as strong compared to in-person interactions and Beacon events prior to the pandemic. At the time of interviews (spring 2022), several Beacon Programs were in the process of planning and resuming in-person family engagement activities and supportive services. One Beacon Program

reflected, “Our parents still crave that interaction, but they don’t want that interaction to just solely be by a phone call or a text message.” Another barrier to engagement has been competing family priorities. Some Beacon Programs shared that families are experiencing stress of meeting their basic needs and some parents are working multiple jobs, which limits their ability to be responsive to the school and participate in activities. Lastly, one Beacon Program highlighted that many families at their school do not live close by, thus making it difficult for parents and caregivers to attend in-person family engagement events.

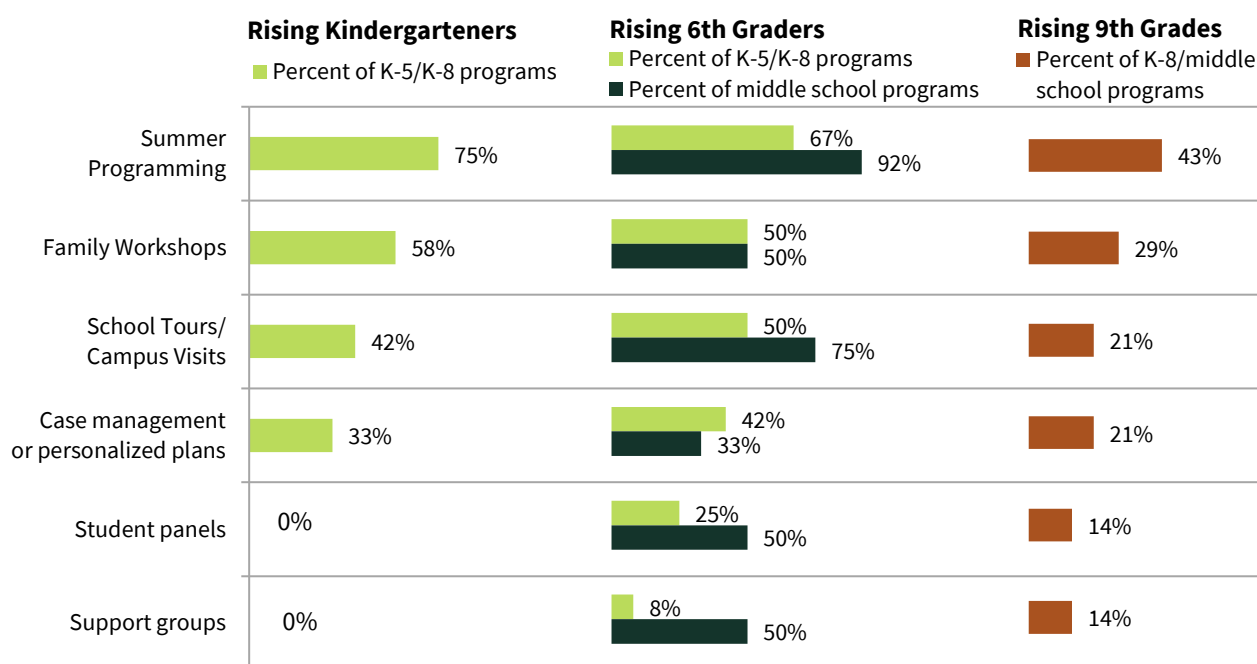
Transition Services

Finally, Beacon Programs aim to support students and their families through different transitions, including changing grades and schools as well as life events that may affect student engagement at school. To that end, Beacon Programs focus on providing services to rising kindergarteners, 6th graders, and 9th graders. The goals are to “enhance success during transitions and prevent transition problems” so that students develop positive attitudes towards school, engage in learning, and feel a sense of belonging.²⁸ Overall, many programs and schools viewed this as an area for growth and improvement. The range of transition services offered across Beacon Programs are described in the following section.

Activities

Exhibit 26 provides a snapshot of transition services that Beacon Programs provide to rising and current kindergarteners, 6th graders, and rising 9th graders.

Exhibit 26. Transition Services (N=24)



²⁸ San Francisco Community Schools Toolkit. Retrieved from:
<https://www.sfbeacon.org/sfcommunityschoolstoolkit>

Spring 2023 program survey findings indicate that Beacon Programs primarily offer summer programming, family workshops, and school tours and campus visits to support students who are changing grades and schools. For rising kindergarteners, a majority of elementary and K-8 programs run summer programming and offer family workshops. Less than half of programs offer school tours and case management to these students and their families. Beacon Programs also provide support to rising 6th graders, but transition services generally vary by school level. For example, at least half of elementary and K-8 schools offer summer programming, family workshops, and school tours. However, a quarter or less of programs at these schools host student panels and facilitate support groups for rising 6th graders. Among middle schools, a majority organize summer programming, school tours, family workshops, student panels, and support groups. One-third provide case management to rising 6th graders. Some K-8 and middle school programs offer transition services to rising 9th graders, primarily summer programming. Far fewer offer family workshops, school tours, case management, student panels, and support groups.

The next section describes the key activities by student group, as noted by interview respondents. Data for this Beacon pillar is more limited compared to the data available for other Beacon pillars.

Rising and/or Current Kindergarteners

- **Outreach and information sessions.** Some Beacon Programs engage in direct outreach to “generate buzz and excitement” about their school among prospective families. This includes regular communication with families that have expressed interest or with children assigned by the district to attend the school; conducting outreach to local preschools, daycares, and TK programs; holding information sessions for parents and caregivers; and supporting families with the school application process.
- **School tours and campus visits.** Some Beacon Programs field calls from parents of incoming kindergarteners requesting more information and offer school tours.
- **Summer programming.** One Beacon Program runs a month-long summer program for rising kindergarteners. Incoming students focus on topics and themes with their teachers to help acclimate them to the school year curriculum.

Rising and/or Current 6th Graders

- **Social events.** A couple Beacon Programs host ice cream socials for rising 6th graders.
- **Outreach and information sessions.** This includes middle school presentations at feeder elementary schools, sharing information about summer programming as part of transition supports, reaching out to parents at feeder schools to share more information about the middle school, and helping families complete the school application form.
- **School tours and campus visits.** Some Beacon Programs hold open houses to give rising 6th grade students a tour of the middle school and an opportunity to meet teachers and school staff. One program hosts Sixth Grade Day in the spring where they invite all incoming 6th grade families to shadow a student at the school and participate in fun activities to welcome them. Another invites incoming students onto the middle school

campus once a week over a six-week period in the spring to participate in community-building activities, a scavenger hunt to help them get to know the school campus, a carnival, a flag football game, and social emotional learning activities as part of the Zones of Regulation social emotional learning curriculum.

- **Student panels.** To help rising 6th graders understand what middle school will be like, some Beacon Programs partner with the feeder schools to host a student panel where middle school students are invited to share their experiences.
- **Family workshops.** Some Beacon Programs hold family workshops as part of their transition service offerings. Topics include social media independence, relationships, and the structure of middle school classes. A few Beacon Programs run the Strengthening Families Program, which is designed to engage parents and students with the goal of developing healthier relationships and life skills. Additionally, one Beacon Program is creating family workshops that will be facilitated in non-English languages such as Spanish, Tagalog, and Arabic.
- **Summer programming.** Activities vary across Beacon Programs that offer transition programming during the summer. A few Beacon Programs run a well-established summer Step Up program at their school for rising 6th graders that are led by 6th grade teachers. One Beacon Program runs a summer program for incoming 6th graders that focuses on STEAM and social emotional learning to help prepare students for success in middle school. Another brings rising 6th graders on a field trip to tour a middle school every week, runs community building activities, and hosts student panels while a different Beacon Program utilizes a youth-led, project-based learning curriculum.
- **Support groups.** Beacon Programs offer different types of transition support groups for rising and current 6th graders. This includes the Life Skills program, which invites guest speakers to talk to 5th grade students about the transition to middle school and other that push into 5th grade classrooms to talk about social emotional learning; hosts weekly middle school transition groups that go over different topics, such as middle school class schedules, relationships with parents, teachers and peers, and social media usage; holds a lunchtime group for 6th grade boys who are struggling with the transition; and provides health and wellness support through Project Arrive to support student transition to middle school.
- **Case management or individualized plans.** A few Beacon Programs partner with their feeder school's Beacon Program to create a transition plan or conduct a "warm handoff" through sharing documents and having conversations about incoming students. This helps staff at the new school get to know and understand how to support rising 6th graders who may need more individualized transition services.

Rising 9th Graders

- **School tours and campus visits.** A few Beacon Programs bring rising 9th grade students to tour high schools and speak with high schoolers about their experience.

- **Outreach and information sessions.** Activities include presentations on the different high schools that students will be attending and reaching out to families to offer support with completing the high school application form and share more information about their students' assigned school. At least one Beacon Program engages multilingual staff to call and follow up with families and students.
- **Summer programming.** Some schools offer summer programming to rising 9th graders to engage students in year-long learning, enrichment activities, and social emotional skill development to help prepare students for their transition to high school. Examples of established programs includes Power Scholar Academy, summer Step Up, and High School and Beyond, which offers a High School 101 summer program.
- **Case management or individualized plans.** A few Beacon Programs work closely with rising 9th graders to place them at their sister high schools. The programs give “warm handoffs” to staff at the new school by sharing information about the students who need extra support with the counseling department. This allows staff at the new school to begin building a relationship with individual rising 9th graders prior to school starting. At least one Beacon Program also conducts individual check-ins with students about high school to identify needs for transition services.
- **Work and leadership opportunities.** A few programs are offering or planning to offer work and leadership opportunities to rising 9th graders. One Beacon Program offers students an opportunity to work for the Beacon Lead Agency after they transition to high school. Another is planning to offer “quasi-internships”, which provide small stipends to students for engaging in community service projects and participating in workshops focused on study skills, resume building, and career awareness.

Quality and Extensiveness of Implementation

In general, transition services are not as robust as other areas of Beacon programming. Many Beacon Programs have held off on developing these services due to limited staff capacity and other priorities that need attention and resources. For example, one Beacon Program noted that their school struggles with the enrollment process because school staff are stretched in terms of capacity. As a result, the Beacon Program has taken over communications and providing school tours to interested families to support their school in this area.

However, a few have well-established transition supports and activities due in part to their strong relationships with feeder schools and the Beacon Programs at those sites. These Beacon Programs leverage their partnerships to conduct more effective outreach to students and families and provide support throughout the school application process; share information between schools to facilitate “warm handoffs” for students that need additional transition support; and host school tours and events that include engaging activities to help welcome incoming students and their families.

Furthermore, the structure in which transition services are carried out varies considerably across Beacon Programs. A couple integrate transition support activities as part of their afterschool programming while others offer more ad hoc services and activities that are

optional or tailored for specific groups of students. Overall, many Beacon Programs acknowledge the importance of transition services and hope to expand their offerings in the future.

Challenges

For transition services, the primary challenges that Beacon Programs face are limited staffing capacity and competing priorities at their school. This hinders programs' ability to be more intentional about transition services at their school. Some Beacon Programs have experienced turnover among their own staff as well as school staff, which affects the types and level of support offered to students and families. At other sites, school staff are not as interested in transition services and may prefer Beacon Programs focus their attention and resources on other areas. While the challenges in this pillar are similar to those in other Beacon pillars, transition services seem to be more impacted.

Conclusion

The Beacon Program Model is intentional about providing comprehensive wrap-around services that support student success and wellness. Beacon activities and supportive services fall within five main areas – school day, behavioral health and wellness, expanded learning, family engagement, and transition services. Across these domains, the quality and extensiveness of implementation of services often depends on numerous factors, such as school context, staff capacity, partnerships, and funding. In keeping with school priorities, many Beacon Programs reported deepening their school day and behavioral health services to support students following the transition back to in-person instruction. Overall, Beacon Programs are committed to contributing to efforts at their schools to support student success and wellness and continue to look for opportunities to develop and grow their services.

Chapter 5: Emerging Outcomes, Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Given the pandemic and subsequent staffing crises, the Beacon Programs' expansion to 18 new sites and their ability to continue serving children and families with creative programming is a tremendous achievement in and of itself. As documented throughout this report, however, over the last five years and while facing many challenges, Beacon Programs have also managed to develop and strengthen their programming in significant ways. They have strengthened their alignment with their schools, increased enrollment even while enrollment at their schools was declining, and increased the average hours of service they provide to participants. They have also increased their partnerships and shifted towards more full-time staffing in order to prioritize school-day and behavioral health services.

In this chapter, we highlight emerging outcomes for youth and families and core lessons learned from the expansion period, which have as much to do with steering programs through a period of crises as they do with scaling services effectively. We also highlight recommendations for DCYF to consider in order to strengthen services, partnerships, programs, and data quality as it moves into the next funding cycle.

Preliminary Outcomes

The lack of good quality quantitative data and our inability to conduct family and student interviews during the study period means that outcomes are based entirely on interviews with program and school staff. Because of our inability to triangulate these data with other data sources we are highlighting these as preliminary outcomes, with the hope that they can inform future research and evaluation efforts.

Preliminary Student Outcomes

Students are at the center of the rich array of Beacon services provided in the previous chapter, which they receive at no or low cost to their families. The opportunity for students to participate in a range of services and activities naturally leads to a host of diverse outcomes that we are not able to track. With that understanding, interview respondents said that students are benefiting from services in the following ways:

- **Improved academic skills.** School staff emphasized that students benefited from literacy support as well as the one-on-one and small group tutoring provided by Beacon Programs. A middle school administrator said that they have “seen [targeted homework support] make a really big difference for specific students ... I’ve seen students who really needed that targeted homework support and started getting it and actually started getting some work done and building some confidence in the classroom.” In describing the perceived impact of these supports, another school staff member explained, “You start to have students turning things in that have been missing or their effort or their confidence changes, and then they start to see their grades go up and then they’re a little more joyful at school.”

- **Improved communication and social emotional skills.** Nearly all interviewees described the positive influence that the Beacon Program has on students' socioemotional skills, which were vital given the influences of the pandemic. Interviewees mentioned that Beacon Program offerings have helped to support students' confidence levels, communication skills, conflict resolution skills, and grit. A teacher said, "Kids who come to Beacon are much more [well] rounded, in a way. [They are] knowing the rules, being very respectful, outgoing, good communicators, [and] they develop all that [in Beacon]. In general, they're very pleasant to work with."
- **Exposure to new activities and ideas.** Interviewees explained that students benefited from the additional resources and opportunities that Beacon Programs provide, through exposure to new activities, sports, and events. These experiences were said to introduce students to new hobbies or outlets they may not have access to otherwise and support them with developing or showcasing existing skills. As one interviewee recounted, "One of the quietest girls we have in the middle school hosted the showcase last night, her dad was just surprised that she was even conceiving [hosting] the event. She never really talked [...] So I think she benefited from us having them present in small groups or in a safe environment that has benefited her."
- **Enhanced peer relationships and social skills.** Many Beacon Programs have been intentional about creating opportunities for community building and social interaction, which has been a significant need since the pandemic. One teacher liaison explained, "It makes our community stronger to have more kids going to Beacon and building our community in casual ways, because those casual friendships lead to better collaboration everywhere." A Beacon staff member described that students in afterschool programming are "learning how to read social cues and how to interact with someone else, to be a good teammate or to be a good person in the world ... [they are also] kicking it together, they're laughing together, they're building friendships that bleed into the school day."
- **Sense of safety and belonging.** The identity-based clubs and community building that Beacon Programs support contribute to an overall sense of safety and belonging. A Beacon Director said, "We're trying to make sure that our kids feel connected here. We're trying to make sure that they feel safe. We also want to make sure that they feel appreciated for where they come from and their background and their culture." A school staff member from another school said, "I think our Beacon staff are doing such a great job providing safe place for our students. We have so many Beacon staff who can provide cultural support [and] language services, Spanish, Chinese, and also Arabic. They are helping our school to create school climate that respects different cultures."
- **Enhanced leadership.** Staff at some schools said that Beacon Programs have helped them elevate student voice and leadership. One principal said, "I would say just really helping elevate student voice and student leadership. There are a couple different groups, whether it's through our BSU (Black Student Union) or we have another student leadership group who does our whole school store. Those are elements that we have not been able to fit through our regular class schedule ... The Beacons held that."

- Connection to caring adults.** One of the most common themes emerging from school staff interviews was the unique relationships that Beacon staff form with students. School staff reported that Beacon staff are more racially and linguistically diverse than the school staff and that they also tend to be younger, all of which helps them to connect with students in a unique and valuable way. At one school, the social worker said of Beacon staff, “Their staff tends to be pretty young and cool, so the kids talk to them.” A teacher liaison at another school said, “[Beacon] provides really, really amazing adults that are awesome mentors. Just the Beacon staff that are hired at our school are awesome ... These are people that when a kid is having a hard time, I'm like, ‘Who at our school do you want to talk to?’ And my brain is going to the counselor. They'll be like, ‘I want to talk to [a Beacon staff member].’” At yet another school, a teacher said, “[Beacon staff] built friendships with not just the students themselves, but the students feel comfortable enough those adults that are helping them out after school, that they're a trusted adult and they can go to them whenever they want.”
- Improved attendance.** In our first-year analysis for the 2018-2019 fiscal year, we found that students who attended Beacon Programs had better attendance than students at the same schools that did not attend the program. This did not hold true in subsequent years, but it is difficult to know to what extent this was influenced by the pandemic and lower rates of attendance overall. That said, some school staff did perceive that Beacon Programs help to increase student attendance. An interviewee explained, “Students know that if they don't show up three days in a row for their afterschool program, their spot is going to go away. It's going to be given to someone on the waitlist. It ensures a level of accountability in terms of attendance [...] there's some leverage that participating in the afterschool program gets us that we wouldn't have otherwise.”

Preliminary Family Outcomes

One of the foremost benefits that Beacon Programs provide to families is for them to have a safe space for their children to go after school for no or low cost. After remarking about the value to families of having stable childcare, the principal at one elementary school described, “They don't have to worry about where their student is going to be after school. They're in a safe, productive program where there's activities. They have classes where students go and get help with their homework. I think that it's a tremendous asset, and this is something that we need to continue because it's helpful for the families. They don't have to worry.” In addition to this overarching benefit of Beacon programming for families, interview respondents indicated that because of Beacon Programs, families benefited in the follow ways:

- Stronger connections to their child's school.** As a whole, interviewees stated that the Beacon Program provides additional opportunities for families to engage with the school through regular events, informal check-ins during pick up and drop off periods, and by liaising between teachers and guardians. In many instances, these opportunities for engagement are supported by the linguistic diversity among Beacon staff. Further, the amount of time Beacon staff spend in schools allows them to bond with students and provide informed services. One middle school educator reflected, “[Families are] working several jobs ... to have a program that is supporting them for free beyond the

school day ... not just babysitting them, but supporting them with academic support ... with food, with meals ... and making sure that they're safe, I feel like makes that family feel like, 'We really care about your kid beyond the school day.'" Another school staff member said, "We have more parents onsite than ever before, but fewer complaints than ever before ... and Beacon is a real important part of it."

- **Access to resources, support, and skill development opportunities.** As described in Chapter 4, Beacon Programs offer a variety of resources to families, ranging from interpersonal support and food access to assistance with signing up for college savings accounts and completing middle school enrollment processes. A Beacon Director described, "I can't even tell you how emotionally impactful it was to be able to give families \$200, \$300, \$400 and \$500 gift cards with no strings attached and then just have them share with you what they were going to do with it, have them share with you the joy of being able to go to the grocery store, to be able to take their kids on a trip, to be able to buy clothing or shoes."
- **Stronger relationships with their children.** Beacon Directors spoke to the ways in which their programs facilitated greater communication within and between families. For example, one interviewee stated, "[Families] express that they're very grateful to have something like this at the school site [...] they're not only getting educated on tools that they can use with their student, but their students also are learning the same topic and the same tools that they need to have a better communication with their parents." Another Beacon Director similarly relayed comments from families in stating, "Parents have come back and helped us recruit families and said 'This program has just been really helpful. We learned how to talk about sex in our household. We learned to talk about drugs.'"

Lessons Learned

The following lessons arose from our final set of interviews with systems partners, including staff from DCYF, ExCEL and SFBI, and from our analysis of data from this report.

Lessons Learned on Program Expansion

- **It is important for funders to invest in an intermediary organization like SFBI to support program expansion and development.** SFBI provided vital support for onboarding, professional development, and coaching. Without this type of support, programs would have been unable to make the progress that they have made. One Beacon Director said, "It's great to just help with the coaching. I think the coaching thing is the best thing that they have ever come up with ... [They] have really helped me grow because of the way they have coached me and supervised me and supported me."
- **For the sake of SFBI and Beacon Lead Agencies, it might have been better to scale up the number of programs gradually over the course of several years and to have built in more time for planning.** Systems partners agreed that the expansion was a success, and it was timely given the important role that Beacons Programs played in supporting schools during and after the pandemic. Still, tripling the number of programs in one year

was very challenging. SFBI had to triple the number of people that they were supporting, at a time when they had not yet fully scaled up their own staffing. An SFBI staff member said,

“It's difficult, if you're going to scale up, to make your scale up number be triple the number [you had to begin with]. Especially because we, in terms of SFBI's support, we were still a very lean team and then we added folks ... I would recommend, really, really being thoughtful about what the resources are for supporting a scale up no matter what it is. Not like it can't be done, because it can, but it could definitely be done with less stress if you really, really think out and plan out all of the pieces. Not just the expansion of the schools, but also the support.”

- **In addition to expanding services at schools, it is important to prioritize thoughtful planning and systems of support for program expansion, including staffing recruitment resources.** There is increased funding for community school models to expand over the coming years. The California Community School Partnership Program (CCSPP) grants and San Francisco's Measure G in 2022, which established a [Student Success Fund](#), will funnel increasing resources into strengthening support services for SFUSD students.²⁹ Interviewees shared hope and optimism about the potential of these funds for improving outcomes for SFUSD students, while also stressing the importance of thoughtful planning in order to make sure that resources are being coordinated and leveraged as effectively as possible. Respondents stressed the value of time for staff recruitment, planning with school partners, and coordinating structures. One ExCEL respondent said, “We're at the place where the problem is not money, it's we can't find the staff. And we can't create the systems to organize ourselves to use the resources in the best [way].”

Lessons Learned on Program and School Partnerships

- **Responsiveness to school requests helped to build and deepen trust.** In order to build trusting relationships with school staff and demonstrate value, most programs have been extraordinarily flexible and responsive to the requests made by school leaders and staff since the expansion. Responsiveness has been particularly high since the pandemic, when programs stepped in to support schools in numerous ways. A middle school Beacon Director described,

“It's probably just in the last couple years that we've maybe, just in terms of our own capacity, been more strategic about what we've collaborated on. But for the first couple years it was just, yes, yes, yes, yes, we can do that. We can help, we can collaborate. Because that just built the leverage and relationships that we ... needed to grow how we wanted to grow.”

²⁹ Measure G allocates \$11 million in FY2023-24; \$35 million in FY 2024-2025; \$45 million in FY2025-2026. For more details see <https://www.dcyf.org/ssf>.

- **Once trust has been developed, there is room to draw boundaries in order to increase fidelity to the Beacon Program Model.** Although vital for building trust, the responsiveness of programs has contributed to wide variation in the services provided by Beacon Programs, particularly during the school day. In some cases, this also led programs to become stretched thin. As such, some interview respondents noted the importance of reasserting boundaries with school staff, to stay true to the Beacon Program Model. One example of this is the degree that schools started relying on Beacon Programs to provide behavioral support in the classroom. A middle school Beacon Director explained, “We are really clear about establishing some boundaries more and more now [with school staff] about what we don't do. We're not doing discipline per se. We're there to support the students and we can step in and hold them accountable. But we're not doing discipline and classroom management ... It's more helping students to access the material and get focused, and that kind of thing. But it's not like what a teacher might call a counselor for or security for.”
- **Beacon and school partnerships are more resilient to turnover when they had built relationships with staff at multiple levels, particularly with teachers.** Schools and youth-serving organizations across the nation experienced high turnover in 2021 and 2022, and this was also a challenge at many of the Beacon Community Schools. Our evaluation found that programs that had built relationships between teachers and Beacon staff, as well as at other levels, were less vulnerable to institutional memory loss and had more robust partnerships overall. In the systems partner focus group, an SFBF staff member echoed this by saying, “I think what I feel like I found is that your teachers are going to be there a long time and maybe longer than your principal, and then they're going to move up also. So build capacity at the teacher level to know about Beacons and [what] community schools work is. I think that's one of the things that's really important to do.”

Lessons Learned on Program Implementation

- **Programs take time and consistent leadership to fully mature and develop.** Although not universally true, most programs that existed prior to the expansion were able to develop deeper partnerships and more expansive programming than those that were new because they had already laid the groundwork for that work to develop. It takes a lot of time to build trust with school staff at multiple levels. Furthermore, only a few programs had the same Beacon Director and the same principal for the last five years. An SFBF staff member said that the programs that had consistent leadership were able to go farther: “Those programs, you can just see that the work gets deeper and broader every year. They're more creative and they meet more needs. So, I just feel had the pandemic not happened and the staffing issues not happened, you would have seen those examples all over the place.”
- **Programs provided vital support to schools and helped make them more resilient during a time of great need.** As described in Chapter 3, school staff repeatedly remarked on the vital role that Beacon Programs play at their schools. In addition to

having the additional staffing, many Beacon Programs have diverse staff with vital bilingual skills and a culturally responsive lens that strengthens the culture of the school. An elementary principal said, “[Beacons] is absolutely vital at this point. We would be vastly reducing what we could do without them,” while a middle school principal said, “They do a ton for us. We love them dearly.”

Considerations

The following are suggestions for Beacon partners to consider as they seek to strengthen Beacon services, partnerships, programs, and data quality.

Strengthening Services

- **Strive to create more clarity and consistency in the set of services offered by Beacon Programs across school sites.** As described in Chapters 2 and 4, there is a high degree of variability in staffing and services offered at Beacon sites. There are many reasons for this variability, including the school size, robustness of non-Beacon services provided at the school, the strengths of the Beacon Lead Agency, level of the collaboration between programs and schools, and the ability of programs to hire and retain staff. In some respects, variability is a feature of the Beacon model, as programs are designed to complement, rather than duplicate, services that already exist at the school and to respond to their school’s needs. Such a high level of variability, however, creates challenges for stakeholders (such as SFUSD) to understand what to expect from a Beacon Program and it also makes it challenging to evaluate program quality or outcomes. A respondent for ExCEL said it has been hard for them to understand “what services were being offered by each individual Beacon Center. Like what did they share and then what did they do differently?” This individual argued that it would be helpful if there were a “menu” of services that schools could use to better understand what can be asked of their Beacon Program.
- **Promote promising approaches by providing opportunities for Beacon and school staff to observe and talk to staff from strong programs.** Given the variation and silos across program sites, both Beacon and school staff expressed interest in touring high quality or innovative community schools. Touring strong programs could inspire staff to adopt promising practices or at least begin thinking and talking about what is possible at their school. Beacon Directors shared how valuable it was for them to have SFBI-supported networking spaces where they could hear from one another about promising approaches or common challenges. SFBI staff also spoke about how one of the best ways to promote principal buy-in is to have a principal who is collaborating closely with their Beacon Program do a presentation on the value of the partnership. These platforms could be leveraged further to highlight particularly strong programs.
- **Promote resource and information sharing to support higher quality and more consistent programming across sites.** Programs often operate as “islands,” in that they independently identify their partners, coordinate their own services, and develop their own resources and marketing materials. Although this can lead to innovation, there is

opportunity to leverage the strengths of different Beacon Lead Agencies and amplify successful practices or models. Centralizing resources enables shared expertise across programs. One area where programs need additional support is in identifying partners with staff that reflect the racial and linguistic diversity of the SFUSD students. This is particularly true of behavioral health partners who can provide culturally responsive therapy to students and families in their home language.

Strengthening Partnerships

- **Deepen SFUSD buy-in and understanding of the Beacon Program Model.** Like all large school districts, SFUSD is a complex agency with many different departments that influence the operation of a full-service community school model. For instance, while some departments, such as ExCEL, understand the added value of community partners, others do not. This lack of consistency contributes to the perception that SFUSD is not “bought into” the Beacon model. For instance, one Beacon Director noted that, although there is increased funding at SFUSD to support community schools, it is unclear how much support there is for the model within SFUSD. This Beacon Director said, “The main thing is, if we're going to be in the schools, SFUSD itself needs to embrace this model. And I don't think it's happened yet. So that's my biggest complaint.” Because there doesn't appear to be consistent buy-in at SFUSD for partnering closely with community organizations, programs need to win the buy-in of their school's principal in order to fully implement the model. This contributes to the variation in services across programs and, given high principal turnover, requires Beacon Directors to reorient, educate, and sell the value of their program to incoming administrators repeatedly. Rather than burdening the program with having to get buy-in from each new principal, it would be *valuable for principals to be screened, onboarded, and trained with a lens that takes into account that they will be running a community school*. It would be useful if there were a distinct set of expectations for principals of community schools that they are evaluated on, such as their inclusion of the Beacon Directors on the core school leadership team.
- **Improve processes for systems alignment with SFUSD.** Although DCYF and SFBI are well aligned, interviews with system partners indicate that some of the processes and regular meetings that were put in place to support ongoing collaboration with SFUSD and ExCEL prior to the pandemic stopped happening because of staffing shortages and competing demands. For instance, ExCEL staff noted that they no longer regularly attend Beacon Director meetings or meetings that SFBI is having with school principals. A Beacon Director pointed out what they perceived as lack of alignment between DCYF and SFUSD, saying, “I don't blame DCYF. I don't blame the district, but I think that there needs to be some level of accountability on both ends that they have a joint plan and that it really takes into consideration and loops in stakeholders.” Furthermore, stakeholders said that, although vital, it is not enough for ExCEL, DCYF, and SFBI to be collaborating closely. It is important for different departments within SFUSD, including the department that oversees principals, to be engaged partners and to understand

how the Beacon Community Schools model complements and strengthens other change initiatives within the district.

- **Create more joint opportunities for training and professional development for Beacon and school staff.** Beacon Directors and school staff reported that they value opportunities to learn from one another and would appreciate shared trainings on how to manage student behavior, support social emotional development, promote a growth mindset, and address student trauma. By participating in joint professional development, Beacon and school staff can develop a common language and approach to these critical issues, which will enhance their ability to collaborate and provide high-quality support to students.
- **Make sure all programs have access to student data.** Our survey results show that only 58% of programs have access to individual student data. Programs that have access to this data can use it to provide targeted support to students that they work with and are also better equipped when communicating with families. One Beacon Director shared that in order for the Beacon Program to be a real partner with the school, more needs to be done to decrease barriers to student information. They said, “If it has to be some type of vetting process, then that’s fine ... The leaders of a community school program [should] have access to [student information]. I mean, we have SFUSD emails, which is huge. But beyond that, the access to the student information system is big.”

Strengthening Programs

- **Clarify role of the Lead Agency.** Some interview respondents stated that there is significant variation in how Beacon Lead Agencies support programs and the Beacon Director. For example, there are differences across Lead Agencies in whether the Beacon Director is responsible for budgets and all aspects of program management. This, in turn, influences the degree of decision-making authority that Beacon Directors have over their programs. A middle school Beacon Director said that an ideal Lead Agency has a “strong systems for payroll, accounting, human resources. A supportive senior director, executive director, who will let you be creative with funding and monies and innovate, let you really make decisions based on community need and not agency need ... Just trusting the leadership at the site.” At the same time, a SFBI staff member said that it is helpful for the Beacon Director’s supervisor to be involved enough with the details of the site that they can support and potentially step in if the Beacon Director leaves. A SFBI interviewee said, “We need a CBO (Community-Based Organization) framework, leadership framework ... that will give folks both a map and also a reality check around what means to be a CBO that has a Beacon or multiple Beacons.”

Improving Data Quality

- **Align ExCEL and DCYF quality and reporting requirements to reduce burden on Beacon staff.** DCYF and ExCEL have altered some data reporting requirements to reduce burden; for instance, regular programmatic data (e.g., attendance data) are reported to DCYF,

which is then transferred to ExCEL. Still, some respondents stated that the lack of alignment in DCYF and ExCEL's data entry, reporting, and program quality processes is burdensome. While DCYF and ExCEL are different agencies and accountable to different funders, they could work towards a more cohesive reporting system that would benefit both agencies and programs. Doing so would reduce burden on Beacon staff and provide them with more time to focus on their core mission of supporting students and families.

- **Provide more guidance to programs around how data on attendance and activities should be entered into CMS.** We have several core suggestions that DCYF might consider:
 - If DCYF wants to assess program implementation across Beacon Program components, programs should receive more guidance on which activities should be entered into CMS. This should include standardized names for many or most common services and guidelines regarding which should be entered as individual-level records versus events.
 - Similarly, if DCYF wants to understand how family engagement varies across sub-groups, programs would need to enroll family members as participants in CMS and track event attendance at the individual-level for smaller or recurring events.
 - Provide guidance on how programs should label activities so that activities can be clearly tied to the Beacon pillars to the extent possible. It might be helpful to create categories of services, such as "School Day Academic," "School Day Enrichment," "School Day Behavioral," with the understanding that behavioral health services may be included in both academic and enrichment.
- **Administer student, family, and school staff surveys across all programs.** Many programs already administer their own surveys, but future evaluation efforts would benefit from systematic feedback from students, families, and school staff about program strengths and areas for growth and their perspective on student-, family- and school-level outcomes consistent with the Beacon Program Model.

Conclusion

Over the last five years, Beacon Programs have deepened their partnerships with schools and expanded their services to 18 additional schools. They have provided vital resources to students and families, engaged youth in a diverse array of activities, helped students keep up with their schoolwork, and supported students with their social emotional development. Heading into the next funding cycle, there is an opportunity to increase the consistency and quality of programming across schools. Having successfully navigated through a period of upheaval and crises, Beacon Programs are well positioned to deepen their impact moving forward.

Appendix A: Available Data Sources

	Program Survey Data			Interviews		
School	Survey 19-20	Survey 21-22	Survey 22-23	Spring 2020	Spring 2022	Fall 2022
Bret Harte Elementary School	X		X	X		
Paul Revere K-8	X		X	X		
Sanchez Elementary School		X	X	X		
AP Giannini Middle School	X	X	X	X	X	X
Aptos Middle School	X	X	X	X	X	
Bessie Carmichael K-8	X	X		X	X	X
Cesar Chavez Elementary School	X	X	X	X	X	
Dr. William Cobb Elementary School	X		X	X	X	
Everett Middle School	X	X	X	X	X	
John Muir Elementary School	X			X	X	
Marina Middle School	X	X	X	X	X	
Roosevelt Middle School	X	X	X	X	X	
Dr. George Washington Carver Elementary School	X	X	X	X		X
Bryant Elementary School	X		X	X	X	X
Buena Vista/Horace Mann K-8	X	X	X		X	X
Dr. Charles Drew Elementary School	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Middle School	X	X	X	X	X	X
El Dorado Elementary School	X	X	X	X	X	X
Francisco Middle School	X	X	X	X	X	X

Herbert Hoover Middle School	X	X	X	X	X	X
James Denman Middle School	X	X	X	X	X	X
James Lick Middle School	X	X	X	X	X	X
Leonard Flynn Elementary School	X	X	X	X	X	X
Malcom X Academy Elementary School	X	X	X		X	X
Presidio Middle School	X	X		X	X	X
Visitation Valley Middle School	X	X	X	X	X	X
Willie Brown Middle School	X	X	X	X	X	X

Appendix B: Tracking of Attendance Data

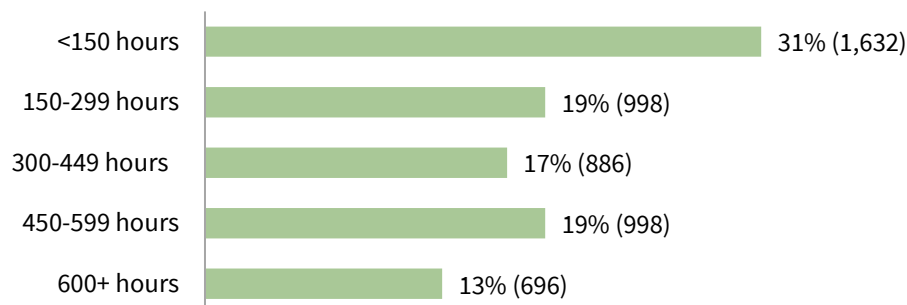
Attendance data is drawn from the Contract Management System (CMS) that Beacon’s uses to track enrollment. The data is inconsistent and difficult to aggregate across programs because programs tracked attendance in Beacon programming differently. Notably, many programs did not track individual activities or school-day activities in CMS or they tracked school-day activities as group events. Programs were least likely to track behavioral health services. During interviews, several program staff reported challenges obtaining consent forms for students who only received services during the school day. For this reason, the data collected on extended learning programming is likely more accurate than the hours reported for school-day services or behavioral health services. Because programs can create their own activities in CMS and they are not categorized by the Beacon Model components, we re-categorized each activity entered by programs into the Beacon Model components to the best of our ability and some activities may be miscategorized. For example, according to a program survey that we administered to Beacon Directors, six programs offer weekend services, but we only identified weekend activities for two programs in CMS. Below we summarize CMS data collected for expanded learning programming and school-day services for those programs that entered consistent information.

Expanded Learning

Expanded learning activities were more consistently tracked than school-day activities, likely because programs track these services for other funders, such as the California Department of Education. Every program tracked attendance in afterschool and summer programming, but only 13 programs tracked attendance for before school programs. (On the SY22-23 survey, 16 programs reported offering enrichment or academic support before school.)

In FY21-22, 5,210 students attended afterschool programming, comprising 39% of all students at Beacon host schools. On average, students spent 339 hours in afterschool programming; total hours ranged from one to 3,020. As shown in Exhibit B-1, about one-third of students spent less than 150 hours in afterschool programming, translating to less than one hour per school day, while 13% spent more than 600 hours in afterschool programming, translating to at least three hours per school day.

Exhibit B-1: Afterschool Program Attendance (N=5,210)



African American students were the most likely to attend afterschool programming, followed by American Indian/Alaska Native. As shown in Exhibit B-2 below, elementary students spent more time in afterschool programs than middle school students, females and males had similar afterschool attendance, and African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Hispanic/Latinx students spent the most time in programming.

Exhibit B-2: Afterschool Attendance by Student Characteristics

By Grade Level

	Percent Attending ³⁰	Average Hours
TK	n/a	722 (n=27)
Elementary	47%	527 (n=1,764)
Middle School	35%	239 (n=3,401)
High School	n/a	81 (n=15)

By Gender

Female	39%	341 (n=2,535)
Male	38%	338 (n=2,667)
Non-Binary	44%	103 (n=7)

By Race

African American	52%	465 (n=639)
Hispanic/Latino	43%	360 (n=2,249)
Total	39%	339 (n=5,210)
Declined/Not Stated	39%	370 (n=205)
American Indian or Alaskan Native	38%	457 (n=13)
Pacific Islander	37%	320 (n=57)
Two or More Races	36%	293 (n=345)
Asian	34%	281 (n=1,147)
White	30%	217 (n=417)
Filipino	28%	325 (n=138)

School-Day Services

In FY21-22, ten programs tracked attendance during school-day hours. Attendance was most likely to be tracked as events, where programs track the number of attendees but not the specific students who attended.

³⁰ The percent attending reflects the percent of students at a Beacon host school who attended afterschool programming.

Event Attendance: Eight programs tracked attendance for school-day events. These programs tracked attendance for 920 academic events, with an average of 22 students attending. The average event lasted for 48 minutes. (These events may include behavioral wellness support, which was also provided through classroom push-ins.) Programs tracked 524 enrichment events with an average of 15 students that lasted for 50 minutes on average. Only one program tracked drop-in wellness services. This program held 271 drop-in events that were attended by 26 students on average.

Individual-Level Attendance: Five programs tracked individual-level attendance, meaning that attendance can be connected to a student ID, for 580 students in total.³¹ Average attendance was high at 339 hours.³² If we exclude students from Francisco Middle School, where many students seemed to attend activities that lasted the full school day, the remaining 267 students had an average attendance of 58 hours.

Although African American students tended to have higher than average attendance overall, African American students had fewer average hours of attendance in school-day activities than other students (177 hours versus 339 hours for all students).³³

³¹ Four of the five programs were at middle schools (Francisco, Marina, Presidio, and Roosevelt. John Muir was the only elementary program that tracked individual attendance for activities during school.

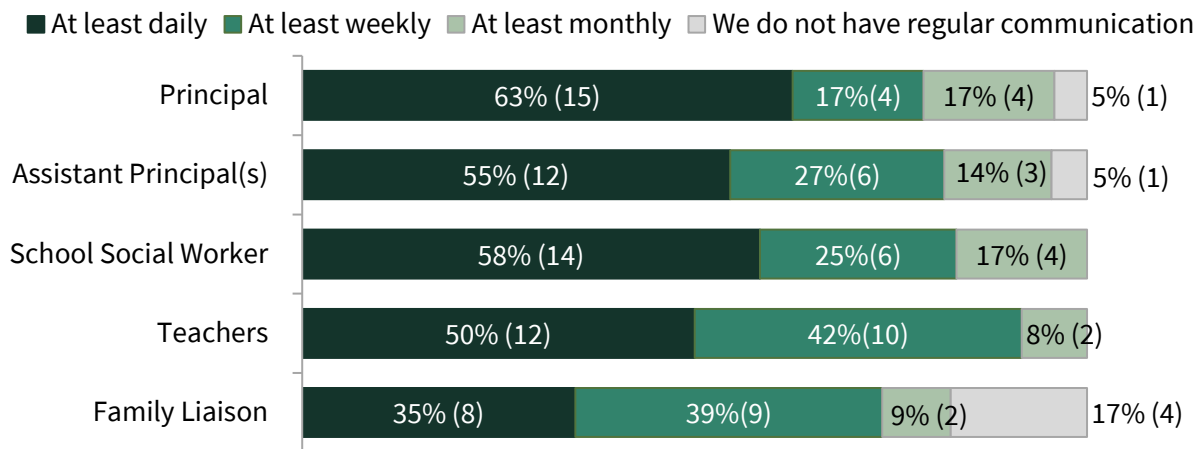
³² Coincidentally, the average hours students spent in afterschool programming was also 339.

³³ Statistically significant at $p < .01$ when controlling for program.

Appendix C: Beacon and School Staff Communication

Through the program surveys, Beacon Directors shared information about communication channels and the frequency of communication between their program and school staff. As shown in Exhibit C-1, which shows the frequency of communication with various school staff as reported in the SY22-23 Survey, most Beacon Programs communicated least weekly with key school staff. About 80% of programs communicate with the principal or assistant principal at least weekly. Communication with teachers increased at some schools since SY21-22, when 14% of schools reported that they did not have regular communication with teachers.

Exhibit C-1: Frequency of Communication with School Staff



Beacon Directors indicated who among Beacon staff primarily communicated with each of these school staff members. The grid in Exhibit C-2 indicates who among Beacon staff primarily communicates with key school staff. The darker green shade represents the most common responses and the light gray represents the least common. Communication was most likely to occur between school staff and the Beacon Director. The one exception was school-day teachers, with whom communication was distributed more or less equally among Beacon staff.

Exhibit C-2: Beacon Staff Who Primarily Communicate with School Staff

	Beacon Director	Assistant Director	Afterschool coordinator	Afterschool Staff	School-Day Staff
Principal	92%	21%	46%	29%	42%
Assistant Principal(s)	71%	25%	50%	21%	25%
School Social Worker	100%	25%	58%	38%	46%
Teachers	75%	38%	71%	75%	67%
Family Liaison	75%	13%	46%	25%	42%

Appendix D: Rubric to Assess Program Development

	Developing	Established	Advanced
Definitions	<i>They are at the beginning stages of developing this component</i>	<i>The component appears to be up and running and functioning effectively</i>	<i>This component is strong and can serve as model for others</i>
School Alignment/ Coordinating Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively working towards shared vision (or just beginning to implement); sense of shared goals has been articulated. Inconsistent level of involvement of BD in school decision making bodies They have some partners in place but not enough to address needs around academic/socio-emotional support and alignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BD sits on school site council. Good relationship between BD and school leadership (principal or VPs) BD (or other key Beacon staff) regularly attend (and have voice in) staff meetings, behavioral health team meetings, and/or other key school team meetings. Roles and responsibilities between school, Beacon, and partner staff are clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BD sits on site leadership team and other decision-making bodies at the school—Beacons seen as integral partner. Beacon’s staff coordinate closely with multiple school staff on issues related to school climate and family engagement. Very strong principal and BD relationship Cross-training and consistency of structures from school day to afterschool (e.g., behavioral guidelines) They have a network of partners and volunteers to enrich academic learning and socioemotional wellness
School day activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daytime involvement primarily limited to lunchtime supervision. Some Beacon afterschool staff may also support school day activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple school clubs and activities are present. Some push effort to push into classrooms. Staff specifically tasked with academic and/or behavioral health alignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-developed school clubs and activities, some of which seem innovative or unique. Staff push into classrooms to provide individualized supports to students. Teachers view Beacon’s staff as vital partners. Innovated programs, such as advisory-based programs
Expanded Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded learning activities with inconsistent enrollment or limited services due to challenges with staffing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse expanded learning activities that are well attended by students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse afterschool activities, that are well attended by students. Strong academic support, aligned to the school day academic standards. Innovative and/or unique programs

	Developing	Established	Advanced
Definitions	<i>They are at the beginning stages of developing this component</i>	<i>The component appears to be up and running and functioning effectively</i>	<i>This component is strong and can serve as model for others</i>
Behavioral Health Component	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program offers some services focused on behavioral health but mostly informal SEL support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-developed specialized behavioral health services for historically underserved students or families Trained staff or partners are available to support behavioral health and wellness. Program coordinates with school behavioral health staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal behavioral health and social emotional supports for all students (Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 services) Specialized behavioral health support and training for staff. Program has a dedicated behavioral health staff member, such as a wellness coordinator. Beacon staff are part of school behavioral health team.
Transitional support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs for transitioning students, but focus is not explicitly on transitions, or they are primarily informal or for few students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured activities with an explicit and intentional focus on easing transitions for rising Kindergarteners, rising sixth graders and/or rising 9th graders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established and structured activities to ease transitions for rising Kindergarteners, rising sixth graders and/or rising 9th graders and other students transitioning into school, including family engagement. Well-developed outreach strategies to feeder schools, particularly for underserved communities
Family engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination with the school family outreach efforts Low parent engagement and attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family engagement activities are diverse and actively seek to engage underserved parent groups. Collaboration with school family outreach efforts Good engagement with at least some families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family engagement activities are well developed and diverse, with some innovative strategies or approaches. Family workshops, classes, and/or strategies to actively connect families to resources, such as home visits. Beacon staff are an integral partner in the school's family engagement efforts. Families of diverse backgrounds are seen as strong integrated partners in the program and actively participate.