



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Extended Learning and Integrated Student
Supports (ELISS) Competitive Grant
Program: Year 2 Evaluation Report 2024-
2025

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Extended Learning and Integrated Student Supports (ELISS) Competitive Grant Program

ELISS Year 2 Evaluation Report 2023-2025

Prepared by:

SERVE Center at UNCG
Gateway University Research Park
Dixon Building
5900 Summit Avenue
Browns Summit, NC 27214

Submitted to:

Office of Federal Programs
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
Raleigh, North Carolina

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Table of Contents

I. ELISS Legislation and Subgrants Awarded.....	1
II. Subgrantee Implementation.....	6
III. Summary of ELISS Program Model Impact	24
Appendix	25

Extended Learning and Integrated Student Supports (ELISS) Competitive Grant Program: ELISS Year 2 Evaluation Report

I. ELISS Legislation and Subgrants Awarded

Legislation Overview

As part of the 2023-2025 biennial budget, the General Assembly of North Carolina appropriated seven million dollars (\$7,000,000) each year from the At-Risk Student Services Alternative School Allotment for the Extended Learning and Integrated Student Supports (ELISS) Competitive Grant Program. The purpose of the ELISS Competitive Grant Program is to fund high-quality, independently validated extended learning and integrated student support service programs for at-risk students that raise standards for student academic outcomes.

According to the legislation, ELISS-funded programs should aim to raise standards for student academic outcomes by focusing on the following:

- a. Use of an evidence-based model with a proven track record of success.
- b. Inclusion of rigorous, quantitative performance measures to confirm effectiveness of the program.
- c. Deployment of multiple tiered supports in schools to address student barriers to achievement, such as strategies to improve chronic absenteeism, antisocial behaviors, academic growth, and enhancement of parent and family engagement.
- d. Alignment with State performance measures, student academic goals, and the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.
- e. Prioritization in programs to integrate clear academic content, in particular, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) learning opportunities or reading development and proficiency instruction.
- f. Minimization of student class size when providing instruction or instructional supports and interventions.
- g. Expansion of student access to high-quality learning activities and academic support that strengthen student engagement and leverage community-based resources, which may include organizations that provide mentoring services and private-sector employer involvement.
- h. Utilization of digital content to expand learning time, when appropriate.

Further, the legislation states that “grants shall be used to award funds for new or existing eligible programs for at-risk students operated by (i) nonprofit corporations and (ii) nonprofit corporations working in collaboration with local school administrative units” and that programs must serve one or more of the following student groups.

- At-risk students not performing at grade level as demonstrated by statewide assessments, or not on-track to meet year-end expectations, as demonstrated by existing indicators, including teacher identification;
- students at-risk of dropout;

- students at-risk of school displacement due to suspension or expulsion as a result of anti-social behaviors.

The legislation required priority consideration be given to:

- applicants demonstrating models that focus services and programs in schools that are identified as low-performing pursuant to G.S. 11C-105.37;
- nonprofit corporations working in partnership with a local school administrative unit resulting in a match utilizing federal funds under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, or Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, and other federal or local funds.¹

In terms of required reporting, the legislation indicates that subgrantees shall:

- report to the Department of Public Instruction for the year in which grant funds were expended on the progress of the Program, including alignment with State academic standards, data collection for reporting student progress, the source and amount of matching funds, and other measures, and
- also submit a final report on key performance data, including statewide test results, attendance rates, graduation rates, and promotion rates, and financial sustainability of the program.

In terms of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) reporting to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee (JLEOC), the legislation specifies the following:

The Department of Public Instruction shall provide a report on the Program to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by September 15 of each year following the year in which grant funds are awarded. The report shall include the results of the Program and recommendations regarding effective program models, standards, and performance measures based on student performance; leveraging of community-based resources to expand student access to learning activities; academic and behavioral support services; and potential opportunities for the State to invest in proven models for future grants programs.

SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (SERVE) contracted with NCDPI to provide support in three areas: (1) the internal grant application/addendum review process, (2) the implementation and outcome data collection by subgrantees, and (3) the development of an annual report for NCDPI due to the JLEOC by September 15 of each year.² Thus, this report was developed under a contract with SERVE to summarize the ELISS program's funded activities implemented during Year 2.

¹ The legislation states, "A nonprofit corporation may act as its own fiscal agent for the purposes of this Program."

² Note. A post 2023-24 school year ELISS evaluation report was submitted to NCDPI by SERVE on August 10, 2024; subsequently, NCDPI submitted the report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by September 15, 2024. While the Year 1 legislative requirement has been met, this report has been updated to include both ELISS school year and summer programming data.

Subgrants Awarded

On December 7, 2023, the NC State Board of Education (SBE) approved the request for proposal (RFP) for the ELISS Program. The following day, the RFP was made publicly available (via mailing lists and the NCDPI website). Then, virtual technical assistance webinars were conducted on December 13 and 14, 2023, and the NCDPI Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) system was activated for ELISS applications to be submitted on December 18, 2023. According to the RFP, the deadline for the final submission of applications was 12:00 p.m. on January 17, 2024.

A total of 34 applications were submitted (uploaded in the CCIP system) and were eligible for the Level I and Level II review processes.

As part of the Level I review process:

- Reviewers (selected by SERVE based on their experience and knowledge) used an application rubric to guide scoring (see Appendix).
- Each application received three reviews (resulting in three individual scores that were averaged for a total Level I score).
- There was a maximum possible application score of 90 points.

As part of the Level II review process:

- Priority points were applied for applications that met priority considerations³ (0-4 points).
- Technical deductions were assigned for applications not addressing various RFP requirements (0-11 points).

Using the results from the Level I and Level II review process, the Office of Federal Programs at NCDPI presented the score results to the SBE for approval.⁴ The SBE approved ELISS awards for a total of 15 subgrantees on March 6, 2024; however, awards could be retroactively used to support ELISS activities that were provided July 1, 2023, and onward.

According to the RFP, during the academic year, all awardees must operate an integrated student supports (ISS) program that provides supplemental support (often called Tier II) and/or intensive support (often called Tier III) services during school-day hours. NCDPI defines supplemental (Tier II) and intensive (Tier III) supports as the following:

- **Supplemental Supports (Tier II):** Provided through small group, standardized academic interventions, or targeted social, emotional, behavioral supports using validated intervention programs. Teams select or design interventions and supports that have demonstrated positive effects for desired outcomes and are aligned with student needs.

³ In 2023, a new aspect of the ELISS Competitive Grant Program was providing additional priority points to applicants proposing to (a) serve students from at least one Alternative Learning Program and/or School (ALPS) and/or (b) run an afterschool or summer learning program in addition to the required integrated student supports program during Year 2 of the ELISS Competitive Grant Program.

⁴ Note. In past ELISS competitions, competitive priority was given to proposals that provided services to at-risk students living in the state's most economically distressed counties designated as Tier I or Tier II by the North Carolina Department of Commerce; however, for the 2023 ELISS competition, no priority consideration was given based on region served, since at least two ELISS grants were eligible to be awarded per each SBE region (pending submission of quality applications following Level I and Level II reviews). After regional awardees were identified, additional organizations were recommended for the award based on total application score and ranking.

- **Intensive Supports (Tier III):** Provided through intensive intervention to help students with severe and persistent learning and/or social, emotional, behavioral needs. It is not a specific program, but a data-driven process that is characterized by increased intensity and individualization of instruction and tailored one-on-one support.

In addition to the required supplemental and intensive services (i.e., Tier II and Tier III), applicants could also choose to implement optional supports/programming including:

- **Core Supports (often called Tier I).** NCDPI defines core support services as providing academic, social, emotional, and behavioral curriculum, instruction, and supports aligned to grade-level standards and student needs.
- **Extended Learning (EL) programming.** Allowable EL programs include afterschool and summer learning programs. (Note. For the grant cycle, applicants cannot use ELISS funds to only run extended learning programs.)

Table 1 shows the awarded funds for subgrantees according to whether they implemented (a) ISS programming only or (b) ISS programming plus optional EL programming (i.e., afterschool and/or summer learning programs) during Year 2. Of the 15 ELISS-funded subgrantees: five subgrantees implemented only ISS programs, and ten subgrantees implemented programming with both ISS and EL components.

Table 1. ELISS Awarded Funds (Year 1 and Year 2)

Type of Grant	Organization Name	SBE Region	County Served	Year 1 Awarded (2023-24)	Year 2 Awarded (2024-25)	Total Awarded (2023-25)
Integrated Student Supports only (ISS)	Communities In Schools of Brunswick County	2	Brunswick	\$222,300	\$340,956	\$563,256
	Communities In Schools of North Carolina	1	Halifax	\$126,732	\$135,732	\$262,464
	Communities In Schools of Rowan	6	Rowan	\$333,141	\$333,141	\$666,282
	RAM Organization	3	Durham, Wake, and Union	\$492,000	\$492,000	\$984,000
	United Way of Pitt County	1	Pitt	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
	Subtotal			\$1,674,173	\$1,801,829	\$3,476,002
Integrated Student Supports and Extended Learning (ISS + EL)	Boys & Girls Club of Cabarrus County	6	Cabarrus	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
	Boys & Girls Club of Greater High Point	5	Guilford	\$158,018	\$409,359	\$567,377
	Boys & Girls of Henderson County	8	Henderson	\$40,372	\$129,130	\$169,502
	Children First/Communities in Schools of Buncombe County	8	Buncombe	\$366,573	\$480,573	\$847,146
	Communities In Schools of Cape Fear	2	New Hanover and Pender	\$183,681	\$499,986	\$683,667
	Communities In Schools of Montgomery County	4	Montgomery	\$499,358	\$499,563	\$998,921

availability, budget/match requirements, application review process, and the final recommendations for ELISS subgrantee awards approved by the SBE.

2. **Subgrantee applications and logic models.** Logic models for each awarded subgrantee were developed by SERVE (based on grant applications) and then revised in collaboration with the subgrantee and NCDPI staff during virtual technical assistance calls in Year 1 of the grant. Information gathered during the subgrantee technical assistance calls provided context for descriptions of the subgrantee program.
3. **Subgrantee-level implementation and outcome reports.** SERVE developed and administered a reporting process for subgrantees to provide data regarding their (a) 2023-24 and Summer 2024 and (b) 2024-25 and Summer 2025 ELISS programming. More specifically, for Year 2, ELISS subgrantees were required to submit an End-of School-Year Implementation and Outcome Report (on or before June 30, 2025).

II. Subgrantee Implementation

Overview of Subgrantee Programs

A total of 15 subgrantees were awarded funds to implement an ELISS program. In terms of timelines, the recommended ELISS subgrantees were approved by the SBE for funding on March 6, 2024. After all approved organizations were notified, in-person on-boarding was conducted on March 18, 2024 to provide new subgrantees with technical assistance regarding budget approvals, vendor verification, ERaCA access, data collection, and evaluation reporting.

It is important to note that some subgrantees used the ELISS award to continue and/or expand programming that was already in place, while other subgrantees used the award to start new programming. Thus, it is not surprising that in Year 1, the subgrantees that used ELISS funds to continue/expand programming began implementation sooner than those that were establishing new programs. Table 2 shows the months that subgrantees implemented ELISS-funded programming during Year 1 (2023-24) and Year 2 (2024-25).

Table 2. ELISS Subgrantees Months of Implementation (Year 1 and Year 2)

Designated Type of Program	Organization Name	Start/End of ELISS-funded Programming for SY 2023-24 (estimated # months)	Start/End of ELISS-funded Programming for SY 2024-25 (estimated # months)	#Diff. Year 1 to Year 2
Integrated Student Supports only (ISS)	Communities In Schools of Brunswick County	August 2023 – June 2024 (11 months)	August 2024 – May 2025 (10 months)	-1 month
	Communities In Schools of Rowan	August 2023 – May 2024 (10 months)	August 2024 – May 2025 (10 months)	same
	Communities In Schools of North Carolina	August 2023 – June 2024 (11 months)	August 2024 – May 2025 (10 months)	-1 month
	RAM Organization*	March 2024 – June 2024 (3 months)	July 2024 – June 2025 (12 months)	+9 months
	United Way of Pitt County	September 2023 – June 2024 (10 months)	August 2024 – June 2025 (11 months)	+1 month

Designated Type of Program	Organization Name	Start/End of ELISS-funded Programming for SY 2023-24 (estimated # months)	Start/End of ELISS-funded Programming for SY 2024-25 (estimated # months)	#Diff. Year 1 to Year 2
Integrated Student Supports and Extended Learning (ISS + EL)	Boys & Girls Club of Cabarrus County	October 2023 – June 2024 (9 months)	August 2024 – June 2025 (11 months)	+2 months
	Boys & Girls Club of Greater High Point	April 2024 – May 2024 (2 months)	September 2024 – June 2025 (10 months)	+8 months
	Boys & Girls of Henderson County**	August 2023 – May 2024 (10 months)	August 2024 – May 2025 (10 months)	same
	Children First/Communities in Schools of Buncombe County*	August 2023 – June 2024 (11 months)	August 2024 – June 2025 (11 months)	same
	Communities In Schools of Cape Fear	January 2024 – June 2024 (6 months)	July 2024 – June 2025 (12 months)	+6 months
	Communities In Schools of Montgomery County	January 2024 – May 2024 (5 months)	September 2024 – June 2025 (10 months)	+5 months
	Hill Learning Center*	April 2024 – May 2024 (2 months)	September 2024 – June 2025 (10 months)	+8 months
	Operation Xcel	April 2024 – May 2024 (2 months)	September 2024 – June 2025 (10 months)	+8 months
	Partners in Ministry	April 2024 – June 2024 (3 months)	September 2024 – June 2025 (10 months)	+7 months
	YMCA of Western North Carolina***	August 2023 – June 2024 (11 months)	August 2024 – May 2025 (10 months)	-1 month

Source: ELISS Subgrantee Implementation Reports (SY 2023-24, SY 2024-25).

Note. Awards could be retroactively used to support EL and ISS activities starting on July 1, 2023. Also, not all subgrantees proposed to implement summer programming; thus, Table 2 provides an overview of the span of school year implementation aligned with fiscal Year 1.

*Changed from Both to ISS Only; **Changed from EL only to both; ***Changed from ISS only to both

Based on school year reporting, Year 1 programmatic implementation ranged from August 2023⁵ through June 2024. Year 2 start dates ranged from July 2024 to July 2025. Thus, ELISS subgrantees were able to implement an estimated average of 10 months of programming in Year 2 compared to an average of seven months of programming in Year 1.

According to the RFP, the ELISS grant was designed to serve at-risk students from grades K-12. Table 3 shows the school-level of students (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) that ELISS subgrantees served during the 2024-25 school year.

Table 3. School-Level of Students Targeted by ELISS Subgrantees in Year 2

Originally Designated Type of Program	Organization Name	School Level of Students Targeted SY 2024-25		
		Elem	Middle	High
Integrated Student Supports only (ISS)	Communities In Schools of Brunswick County	✓	✓	
	Communities In Schools of North Carolina			✓
	Communities In Schools of Rowan	✓	✓	✓
	RAM Organization	✓	✓	
	United Way of Pitt County	✓		

⁵ The 2023 start dates were due to retroactive use of funds by subgrantees for allowable, pre-existing programming.

Originally Designated Type of Program	Organization Name	School Level of Students Targeted SY 2024-25		
		Elem	Middle	High
Integrated Student Supports and Extended Learning (ISS + EL)	Boys & Girls Club of Cabarrus County	✓	✓	
	Boys & Girls Club of Greater High Point		✓	
	Boys & Girls of Henderson County	✓		
	Children First/Communities in Schools of Buncombe County	✓	✓	
	Communities In Schools of Cape Fear	✓	✓	✓
	Communities In Schools of Montgomery County	✓	✓	✓
	Hill Learning Center	✓	✓	✓
	Operation Xcel		✓	
	Partners In Ministry	✓	✓	
	YMCA of Western North Carolina	✓	✓	
Year 2 2024-25 SY Total		12	12	5
Year 1 2023-24 SY Total		12	12	5

Source: ELISS proposal and implementation and outcome reports (SY 2023-24, SY 2024-25).

Subgrantees consistently served the same school-levels across both Year 1 and Year 2. More specifically, 12 subgrantees provided ELISS-funded services to elementary students, 12 served middle school students, and five subgrantees served high schools.

Only five subgrantees targeted their ELISS services to a specific school-level. Two subgrantees focused only on elementary school students; two focused only on middle school students; and one focused on only high school students. The remaining subgrantees (10 of 15) focused on multiple school-levels. For example, six subgrantees focused their school year programming on elementary and middle school students and four subgrantees focused on students that spanned elementary, middle, and high school.

Description of Subgrantees

This section of the report briefly describes subgrantees categorized by the “type” of program (i.e., ISS only and ISS+EL). The descriptions were provided by the subgrantees as part of the implementation reporting process (with minor edits from SERVE to ensure consistency in the length of the descriptions across subgrantees).

More specifically, subgrantees were instructed to provide one paragraph to briefly describe their ELISS-funded program’s: (a) overarching goals for improving outcomes for participants and (b) the services provided that contributed to the intended outcomes.

Integrated Student Supports (ISS) Only

As conveyed in the ELISS legislation, ISS is defined as “a school-based approach to supporting students’ academic success by developing or acquiring and coordinating supports that target

academic and non-academic barriers to achievement.” Of the five subgrantees that provided an “ISS only” model of services, three were Communities In Schools (CIS)⁶ affiliates.

1. **Communities In Schools of Brunswick County.** CIS of Brunswick County implemented the CIS Model of Integrated Student Supports through a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to serve students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Success Coaches, embedded in five high-need schools, collaborated with school teams to assess needs, developed intervention plans, and provided services such as tutoring, mentoring, and addressing basic needs. The Success Coaches employed evidence-based curricula and adapted their services flexibly to cater to individual student needs, ensuring measurable progress. Regular monitoring, collaboration with school staff, and reporting to stakeholders were implemented.
2. **Communities In Schools of North Carolina.** ELISS funds supported the implementation of the CIS Model of integrated student supports in two high schools (one Halifax County School and one Weldon City School). Using the CIS Fidelity Rubric and the CIS Fidelity Walkthrough process, the CIS framework provided the structure for serving high-risk students in ninth through twelfth grades with intensive/targeted Tier II and Tier III supports (including Check & Connect programming), as well as Tier I supports to support the entire student body at both schools.
3. **Communities In Schools of Rowan.** CIS of Rowan County implemented the CIS Model for integrated student supports at 10 high-need schools in Rowan County. Site Coordinators engaged school leadership and conducted school needs assessment and created school support plans. Over the course of the school year, CIS delivered and coordinated Tier II and III supports for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. In addition, Tier I initiatives for the entire school population included school-wide peer support and reading programs for grades K-8 and College and Career Ready programming for grades 6-12.
4. **RAM Organization⁷.** In Year 2, the RAM Organization (RAMO) served students in third through eighth grade in a total of four schools across Durham, Wake, and Union counties. through in-school intensive academic supports (Tier 3) for specifically identified students; Tier II support for all students within identified struggling grade levels. RAMO used the research-based model of co-teaching to implement these supports both within the school day classroom and outside of school learning programs to address the challenges of chronic absenteeism and low student proficiency in reading and math.
5. **United Way Pitt County.** The United Way of Pitt County Early Grades Student Success Academy (EGSSA) ELISS program offered services to second and third grade students in

⁶ According to the CIS website, the cornerstone of the CIS Model is the provision of widely accessible prevention services and resources that are available to entire school populations (“schoolwide prevention services”), which are paired with the coordinated, targeted, and sustained intervention services and resources for that subset of students who are most at risk of dropping out of school (“targeted and sustained student intervention services”). (www.communitiesinschools.org/media/uploads/attachments/CIS_Policy20Brief_09-08-081.pdf)

⁷ Note: In Year 1 RAM was categorized as serving both ISS and EL; however, a program amendment requested ISS-only status starting 9/01/24. Then, in Year 2, another program request was submitted to add an intensive EOG prep afterschool program from May 5- May 30, 2025. So for the purposes of this report, RAM is considered ISS only.

15 targeted schools using the Integrated Student Supports (ISS) model. The program incorporated an existing framework of Academic Support; Safe, Supportive Learning Environment; and Family Engagement assisting in children's academic and non-academic needs. Retired Pitt County School (PCS) teachers were hired to work with struggling students 4.5 hours per day in their regular classrooms focusing on reading, writing, math, and monthly STEAM enrichment. Reducing the student-teacher ratios in these second- and third-grade classrooms was designed to support students in making more rapid educational progress with personalized attention than students in larger classrooms.

Integrated Student Supports + Extended Learning (ISS + EL)

Ten organizations received ELISS funding to provide a combination of ISS and EL services (including three Boys and Girls Club affiliates and three Communities In Schools affiliates).

1. **Boys & Girls Club of Cabarrus County.** The Boys & Girls Club of Cabarrus County, through the ADVANCEMENT program, collaborated with Cabarrus County Schools to provide evidence-based extended learning to high-need students in kindergarten through eighth grade across five schools. The intended goal of the ADVANCEMENT program is to: (1) improve academic outcomes, (2) increase social-emotional supports, and (3) expand family engagement. Key services during the afterschool programming included: academic monitoring and support, tutoring, mentoring, social-emotional interventions, and enrichment activities.
2. **Boys & Girls Club of Greater High Point.** The Boys & Girls Club of Greater High Point (BGCGHP) used ELISS funds to implement Project PASS: Providing Access to Student Supports (PASS) to six local Title I schools, focusing on supporting students in sixth through eighth grade. The program provided academic, behavioral, and mental health supports, hands-on mentoring with BGCGHP staff, and extra-curricular activity opportunities to which youth do not have access. The PASS approach occurred during in-school and after the regular school day.
3. **Boys & Girls Club of Henderson County.** The Boys & Girls Club of Henderson (BGCHC) County provided afterschool programming in Year 1 serving students in kindergarten through fifth grade across four schools. Afterschool programming included evidence-based services including Project Learn, Triple Play, and Power Hour. Then, in Year 2, the BGCHC added ISS support services during the regular school day at three elementary schools.
4. **Children First/Communities In Schools of Buncombe County.** Children First/CIS (CF/CIS) of Buncombe County followed the national CIS Model and placed Student Support Specialists in seven Asheville area schools serving youth in grades kindergarten through sixth grade to improve outcomes related to attendance, behavior, coursework, parent engagement, and social-emotional learning. Student Support Specialists provided 5-10% of students from each school with dedicated case management. Identified students received one-on-one supports and/or small group interventions. In Year 2, the BGCHC

added afterschool support services across five sites (i.e., two community-based and three school-based sites).

5. **Communities In Schools of Cape Fear.** In collaboration with New Hanover and Pender County Schools, CIS Cape Fear Student Support Specialists provided integrated supports to targeted students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. ELISS-funded ISS services were provided in 12 high-need schools across both counties, with the goal of improving attendance, improving academic achievement, decreasing behavior referrals, and increasing parental involvement.
6. **Communities In School of Montgomery County.** ELISS funds were used to implement DRIVE: Dynamic Resources, Integrated Supports, and Validated Extended Learning Services which provide ISS and EL opportunities to increase at-risk students' academic achievement and reduce behavioral issues to prevent eventual school dropout. The program served students kindergarten through twelfth grade across four of Montgomery County School's high-need schools.
7. **Hill Learning Center.** ELISS funds supported the Hill Learning Center's Literacy Intervention Tutoring (LIT) program to provide an intensive (Tier III) reading intervention called 95 RAP during both the school year and summer. The program is an individualized, evidence-based reading intervention that was used across six schools to serve at-risk students in elementary, middle, and high school. More specifically, the program was delivered to students with persistent reading difficulties, including those identified for Tier III intervention, English learners, and students with learning disabilities. In Year 2, the Hill Learning Cener added afterschool support services across two school-based sites.
8. **Operation Xcel.** Operation Xcel used ELISS funds to extend integrated support services into the regular school day. The project served middle school students across four Guilford County Schools (GCS). The ELISS-funded programming used evidence-based models to address antisocial behavior. The program approach included specialized educational and assessment tools for enhancing reading and math skills, and a small group model was used to support English Language Arts (ELA), math, and social emotional learning (SEL).
9. **Partners In Ministry.** Partners In Ministry implemented an evidenced-based Student Support Service Program that provided multi-tiered support to third through eighth grade students across six Scotland County schools. Support was provided through structured academic, supplemental, and intensive services. Youth counselors served as case manager, mentor, tutor, listener, friend, and advocate and implement a Check & Connect model to prevent or reduce the occurrence of high-risk behaviors for dropping out of school.
10. **YMCA of Western North Carolina.** ELISS funds were used to place Student Support Specialists in six McDowell County schools, serving students in kindergarten through eighth grade, to implement integrated student supports within the district's Multi-Tiered System of Supports framework. The YMCA of Western NC program leveraged several

key resources to support implementation (e.g., transportation; technology, YMCA and MCS staff expertise; MCS day treatment services, community partners). In Year 2, the YMCA added afterschool support services across three school-based sites (i.e., two elementary schools and one middle school).

Summary of Types of Academic and Behavioral Support Services Provided by ELISS Participants

As previously indicated, ISS programming can provide targeted Tier II services, intensive Tier III services, and/or more universal Tier I services. In addition, optional EL support can provide afterschool programming and/or summer programming. Thus, Table 4 provides a summary of the number and types of ELISS-funded program components that subgrantees implemented in Year 1 (including Summer 2024 programming).

Table 4. ELISS Subgrantees by Type of ELISS-funded Program Component in Year 2

Subgrantee	Integrated Student Support (ISS)		Extended Learning (EL)	
	Tier II and III Supports	Tier I Supports	Afterschool EL Program SY 2024-25	Summer Programming 2025
Boys & Girls Club of Cabarrus County	✓	✓	✓	✓
Boys & Girls Club of Greater High Point	✓		✓	✓
Boys & Girls of Henderson County	✓		✓	✓
Children First/Communities in Schools of Buncombe County	✓	✓	✓	
Communities In Schools of Brunswick County	✓	✓		
Communities In Schools of Cape Fear	✓	✓	✓	
Communities In Schools of Montgomery County	✓		✓	✓
Communities In Schools of North Carolina	✓	✓		
Communities In Schools of Rowan	✓	✓		
Hill Learning Center	✓		✓	✓
Operation Xcel	✓	✓	✓	✓
Partners In Ministry	✓		✓	✓
RAM Organization	✓			
United Way of Pitt County	✓	✓		
YMCA of Western North Carolina	✓	✓	✓	
Year 2 Total Number of Subgrantees	15	9	10	7
Year 1 Total Number of Subgrantees	14	11	8	9

Source: ELISS implementation and outcome reports (SY 2023-24 and Summer 2024; SY 2024-25 and Summer 2025).

In summary, as indicated in Table 4, during Year 2:

- All 15 subgrantees used ELISS funds to implement an integrated student support case-management approach to assist students identified as at-risk by providing high-intensity, targeted services (i.e., Tier II and III services).
- Nine subgrantees provided Tier I services (e.g., STEAM enrichment, guest speakers, family engagement nights, food distribution, social-emotional curriculum, providing school supplies, and technology support).

- Ten subgrantees used ELISS funds to support afterschool programming.
- Seven subgrantees used ELISS funds to support summer programming.

Students Reported as Served by ELISS-Funded Programs

Of the subgrantees that provided EL programming, the majority indicated that they determined student eligibility by looking at student-level academic data and parent referrals. In addition to academic data, subgrantees providing ISS supports also mentioned the use of coach screening, parent referrals, self-referral, and peer referrals to determine student eligibility for ELISS-funded programming.

As part of the reporting process, subgrantees were asked to provide data on the number of students served via EL programming and/or via ISS programming. Table 5 summarizes the number of students served (by program type) during Year 1 and Year 2.

Table 5. Reported Number of Students Served (Year 1 and Year 2)

Type of Programing	Total # Students Reported Served Year 1	Total # Students Reported Served Year 2	# Difference from Year 1 to Year 2
School Year	2023-24	2024-25	Year 2 Difference
EL	977 students	1,746 students	+769 students
Tier II and III	3,728 students	5,691 students	+1,963 students
Tier I	16,681 students	23,774 students	+7,093 students
Summer	2024	2025	Year 2 Difference
Summer Programming	1,521 students	513 students	-1,008 students

Source: ELISS implementation and outcome reports (SY 2023-24 and Summer 2024).

As indicated in Table 5, in Year 2 subgrantees reported:

- **1,746 students** participated in EL afterschool programming during the school year.
- **5,691 students** received ISS Tier II and/or Tier III services during the school year
- **23,774 students** were provided ISS Tier I services during the school year.
- **513 students** were provided summer programming in 2025

In Year 2, the total number of students served increased for all EL and ISS programming provided—with the exception of summer programming. This drastic decline in the number of students served in summer during Year 2 versus Year 1 was due to the truncated timeline. As described in the RFP, applicants could propose to run an optional summer programming starting after the end of the 2024-25 academic year through June 30, 2025. Thus, this limited timespan resulted in only a third of the subgrantees using ELISS-funds to support summer 2025 programming.

Serving At-Risk Students

Given the legislative intent that subgrantees work to improve outcomes for at-risk students, subgrantees were required to indicate the extent to which they served the types of at-risk students

mentioned in the legislation. Thus, as part of the implementation reporting, subgrantees were required to indicate the percentage of students they served who met certain at-risk criteria.⁸

For the 2024-25 School Year:

- All 15 subgrantees reported that they served at-risk students not performing at grade level or not on-track to meet year-end expectations in the school year. On average, subgrantees estimated that 80% of their ELISS-funded participants met this at-risk criterion.
- 14 of 15 subgrantees indicated that they focused on serving students at risk of dropping out; on average, they estimated that 35% of their ELISS-funded participants met this criterion.
- 13 of 15 subgrantees indicated that they focused on students at risk of school displacement due to suspension or expulsion as a result of anti-social behaviors, and they estimated that on average, 27% of their ELISS-funded participants met this criterion.

Student Enrollment

Subgrantees were asked, “Was it a challenge to enroll the number of at-risk students you proposed to serve in your grant proposal?” Table 6 presents a summary of the extent of challenges subgrantees reported regarding student enrollment.

Table 6. Subgrantee Reported Enrollment Challenges (Year 1 and Year 2)

Programming Timeframe (Type)	# Subgrantees Providing Programming	Reported Extent of Enrollment Challenge
School Year 2023-2024		
SY 2023-2024 (ISS)	14 subgrantees	• 50% reported “not at all challenging” (7 subgrantees) • 44% reported “somewhat challenging” (6 subgrantees) • 7% reported “very challenging” (1 subgrantee)
SY 2023-2024 (EL)	8 subgrantees	• 63% reported “not at all challenging” (5 subgrantees) • 25% reported “somewhat challenging” (2 subgrantees) • 13% reported “very challenging” (1 subgrantee)
School Year 2024-2025		
SY 2024-2025 (ISS)	15 subgrantees	• 87% reported “not at all challenging” (13 subgrantees) • 7% reported “somewhat challenging” (1 subgrantee) • 7% reported “very challenging” (1 subgrantee)
SY 2024-2025 (EL)	10 subgrantees	• 80% reported “not at all challenging” (8 subgrantees) • 10% reported “somewhat challenging” (1 subgrantee) • 10% reported “very challenging” (1 subgrantee)

Source: ELISS implementation and outcome reports (SY 2023-24 and SY 2024-25).

Subgrantees were then asked to describe the enrollment challenges they experienced. During Year 1, the major challenge was the late disbursement of funds due to the announcement of

⁸ The legislation indicated that the target population for these funds should be: at-risk students not performing at grade level as demonstrated by statewide assessments, or not on-track to meet year-end expectations, as demonstrated by existing indicators, including teacher identification, students at-risk of dropout, students at-risk of school displacement due to suspension or expulsion as a result of anti-social behaviors

subgrantees in spring 2024. The following sample quotes provide a descriptive summary of the enrollment challenges various subgrantees faced during Year 1.

We consider enrollment in Afterschool Extended Learning in Year 1 to be ‘somewhat challenging’ given our delay in hiring our three Student Support Specialists at our target sites. This prevented us from serving the number of students originally identified in our grant proposal.

Enrolling ISS students in the ELISS grant program for the 2023-2024 school year proved challenging due to several factors. The timing of the notice of award and the coinciding end of the school year hindered timely staff hiring, along with the reliance on retroactive funding with specific criteria, resulted in only 22 ISS students from [redacted] Elementary School being counted as served. Additionally, the cessation of ESSER grant funding led to the elimination of some positions in our partner LEA, further creating challenges with staffing.

During Year 2, there was an increase of subgrantees indicating student enrollment was “not at all a challenge.” However, in terms of ISS programming, challenges reported included limited staff, staffing changes, and “a disconnect with some schools to support the overall enrollment needed for the program.” In terms of EL programming, challenges reported included lack of transportation services for the full program year, competition with sports and other afterschool activities, and lack of translators to reach out to parents about the program. In addition, the impact of natural disasters were also a reported challenge for programs operating in both Eastern and Western North Carolina.

Hurricane Helene struck our community in September 2024, with devastating effects that necessitated the closure of certain schools and the temporary displacement of their students. As a result, it was difficult to start and host our afterschool programs as planned...This initially created a barrier for families to enroll, which persisted throughout the school year...

Collaboration with Low-Performing and Alternative Learning Schools

As stated in the legislation, “Priority consideration shall be given to applications demonstrating models that focus services and programs in schools that are identified as low-performing pursuant to G.S. 115C-105.37.”⁹ Given the legislative intent that nonprofit organizations that were awarded grants work in close collaboration with low-performing schools in improving outcomes for at-risk students, subgrantees were required to report the number of low-performing schools they served using ELISS funding.

During the 2024-25 school year, ELISS subgrantees reported 62 low-performing schools.¹⁰

- 7 of 15 subgrantees (47%) reported serving 1-3 low-performing schools.
- 7 of 15 subgrantees (47%) reported serving 4-6 low-performing schools.
- 1 of 15 subgrantees (6%) reported serving 7-9 low-performing schools.

⁹ Low-performing schools are those that receive a school performance grade of D or F and a school growth score of met expected growth or not met expected growth.

¹⁰ During the 2023-24 school year, ELISS subgrantees reported serving 75 low-performing schools.

In addition to low-performing schools, subgrantees also served schools identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI),¹¹ Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI),¹² and/or Title I.¹³ The different school types are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Types and Numbers of Schools Subgrantees Served in Year 2

# Schools Served	# Subgrantees that Served CSI Schools	# Subgrantees that Served TSI schools	# Subgrantees that Served Title I Schools
0 Schools Served	9 of 15 (60%)	1 of 15 (7%)	0 of 15 (0%)
1 School Served	3 of 15 (20%)	3 of 15 (20%)	0 of 15 (0%)
2-3 Schools Served	2 of 15 (13%)	5 of 15 (33%)	5 of 15 (33%)
4-5 Schools Served	1 of 15 (7%)	5 of 15 (33%)	4 of 15 (27%)
6-8 Schools Served	0 of 15 (0%)	0 of 15 (0%)	4 of 15 (27%)
9+ Schools Served	0 of 15 (0%)	1 of 15 (7%)	2 of 15 (13%)

Source: ELISS implementation and outcome reports (SY 2024-25).

Furthermore, as indicated in the RFP, priority points were awarded to applicants that proposed to serve students from at least one Alternative Learning Program and/or Schools (ALPS). As a result of this new ELISS focus, subgrantees reported serving six alternative schools in Year 1 and eight in Year 2.

Leveraging of Community-Based Resources

ELISS subgrantees leveraged resources to provide comprehensive, wraparound student and family support services. Subgrantees reported leveraging resources from various community-based organizations, school systems, businesses, food banks, libraries, police departments, county health departments, extension agencies, parks and recreation programs, churches, credit unions, universities/colleges, and museums. Some examples of resources/services provided include volunteers, mentoring, enrichment, mental and behavioral health supports, nutrition programs, employment coaching, instructional supplies, snacks, and field trips.

One subgrantee shared the impact of leveraging partnerships to increase student and family access to essential services.

Through a coordinated approach, [our staff] worked closely with students and families to identify needs and connect them with both in-school services and broader community-based resources. The ELISS funding allowed for deeper community engagement. By strategically leveraging these funds, we were able to build stronger partnerships with local organizations, increase access to essential services—such as basic needs assistance—and maximize the overall impact of the program. As a result, participating students and their families were more effectively supported in areas that directly influence educational outcomes, including

¹¹ Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools (CSI Schools): Schools that are in the bottom 5% of Title I schools for all students or have a graduation rate of 67% or lower. (Source: edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/ESSA_FactSheet__pdf)

¹² Targeted Support and Improvement Schools (TSI Schools): Schools that are “consistently underperforming” for any group of students, as defined by the state. (Source: https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/ESSA_FactSheet_Overview_Hyperlink.pdf)

¹³ Title I Schools: Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA) provides financial assistance to local educational agencies for children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. (Source: <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=158>)

attendance, behavior, academic performance, and social-emotional well-being. This integrated service model not only enhanced the quality and consistency of support provided at each school site but also helped to strengthen trust and collaboration among school personnel, community partners, and the families we serve.

Family Engagement

A requirement of the grant is to host at least two family engagement workshops (over the life of the grant); one on deepening understanding of the connection between consistent school-day attendance and future student success and another on age-appropriate strategies and resources for supporting students' positive academic behaviors and/or social emotional well-being. Over the past two years, all 15 subgrantees (100%) have implemented the required family engagement workshops.

Family Engagement Challenges. In Year 1, eight subgrantees (53%) described successful recruitment and widespread participation as a challenge to their family engagement workshops and highlighted some efforts they have made to overcome the challenge including incorporating student performances to encourage parent attendance, offering drop-in events to better accommodate parents' differing schedules and multiple timeslots for events. The following quotes provide a descriptive summary of the challenges various subgrantees faced while implementing family engagement workshops in Year 1.

The limited notification window of the program provided logistical and scope challenges for the family engagement events. We had trouble, for instance, spreading the word about the events in advance of their implementation, and facilitation uncertainties reduced our ability to handle large turnouts of participants, limiting the number of families we could serve.

It was difficult to arrange a set time for the parents at our [redacted] Elementary site so we elected to host a floating parent engagement event where parents could come throughout the day at a time that worked with their schedule. Making these accommodations at this site improved participation.

In Year 2, subgrantees reported common challenges while implementing family engagement workshops, including low attendance due to scheduling conflicts, childcare needs, limited translator services for non-English speaking family members, and transportation barriers—especially in rural areas. Technology access and digital literacy also hindered participation in virtual events. Additionally, staff capacity was stretched thin, making it difficult to provide individualized follow-up.

With growing family needs and a high interest in services such as emotional wellness and academic support, staff capacity was sometimes stretched thin, limiting our ability to provide personalized follow-up or referrals after significant events.

Coordination across multiple schools and community partners required significant effort, and external disruptions (e.g., flooding in the eastern part of the state and a hurricane in the western part of the state) further complicated service delivery.

As discussed elsewhere, the impact of Hurricane Helene meant a large disruption in services for one month, from late September to late October. While we were not in the same spaces as usual, we still provided check-ins with our case-managed families and helped coordinate supplies during that difficult time.

Family Engagement Impact. Based on the subgrantees' family engagement data collection efforts, several key findings emerged. Overall, families reported high satisfaction with workshops, with those that attended rating them as helpful and effective in providing new strategies and motivating them to support their children. One subgrantee reported,

An average of 90.5% of parents attending the workshops across the fall and spring found the family engagement workshops to be effective in providing new strategies and/or resources, 96.5% indicated we were addressing their questions, and 96.5% found that we were motivating them to support their child in new ways.

Findings from family engagement data collection efforts also indicated that parents expressed a strong desire for continued academic support, mental health resources, and job readiness programming. Subgrantees also reported that events that combined student performances or activities with family programming saw the highest attendance. Additionally, multi-session formats and hands-on, "make and take" activities were particularly well-received.

School administration also responded positively, emphasizing the value of these outreach efforts and expressing interest in continued collaboration to support both family engagement and student attendance initiatives. These findings highlight an ongoing need for creative, flexible strategies to reach families—particularly those facing systemic access challenges. Future plans include exploring transportation partnerships and shared childcare models to reduce barriers and increase participation.

Observations and surveys revealed that families felt more connected to school staff and more confident in supporting their children's learning after attending events. Despite persistent barriers such as childcare, transportation, and scheduling conflicts, families valued the efforts and expressed interest in deeper involvement, highlighting the importance of creative, responsive engagement strategies.

ELISS funding enabled us to expand family engagement efforts across the county, connecting hundreds of families to critical resources through FAFSA nights, job fairs, emotional intelligence workshops, and academic prep events. This strengthened the school-home connection and helped create a more supportive learning environment for students.

Overall, the new ELISS requirement of the 2023-25 grant to host at least two family engagement workshops resulted in 235 ELISS-funded family engagement workshops, totaling 304.5 hours of programming that was attended by the family members and/or guardians of 2,654 program participants.

Table 8. Family Engagement Output Totals

Family Engagement Outputs	Total #
Total # of workshop/sessions provided	235 workshops/sessions
Total # hours of workshops/sessions provided	304.5 hours
Total # of parents/guardians attending at least one mandatory workshop/session	4,243 parents/guardians
Total # of students with at least one parent/guardian attending	2,654 students represented

Source: ELISS implementation and outcome reports (SY 2024-25) and NCDPI Attendance Tracking Template Summary Report (July 2025).

Matching Funds

The ELISS legislation stated,

A grant participant shall provide certification to the Department of Public Instruction that the grants received under the program shall be matched on the basis of three dollars (\$3.00) in grant funds for every one dollar (\$1.00) in non-grant funds. Matching funds shall not include State funds.

All 15 subgrantees provided certification that both cash and in-kind matching funds would be secured. Sources of matching cash funds included: private donors, corporate/nonprofit grants, and school districts. The majority of in-kind matching donations were reported as: (a) facilities, (b) staffing/volunteers, and (c) supplies (e.g., instructional materials, school items for students).

Summary of Subgrantee Outcome Reports

With any grant program, it is essential that subgrantees evaluate and report on program impact. As specified in the legislation, ELISS subgrantees were required to submit an evaluation report at the end of the grant period. Thus, subgrantees were instructed to complete and upload an “Implementation and Outcomes Evaluation Report” in the CCIP system for Year 1 programming¹⁴ and Year 2 programming.¹⁵ All 15 subgrantees met the evaluation requirement and submitted their required reports by the established deadlines.

It is important to note that because of the variation in ELISS-funded programs/services (e.g., grade levels served, academic foci, behavioral goals), SERVE was not contracted to conduct an external program evaluation for each of the subgrantees. Instead, SERVE was contracted to (1) collaborate with each of the 15 subgrantees in co-developing a logic model that clarified/identified their organization’s proposed outputs and short-term outcomes (as a means to ensure their proposed performance measures were feasible and relevant for their unique ELISS-funded initiatives) and (2) provide subgrantees evaluation-focused technical assistance, as needed.

According to the reporting guidance, subgrantees were asked to describe, “To what extent did your ELISS students, parents, or feeder schools report positive academic or behavioral impacts?”

¹⁴ For Year 1, ELISS Implementation and Outcome Reports were required from subgrantees on or before June 30, 2024 for the 2023-24 school year and, if summer programming was provided, on or before September 15, 2024.

¹⁵ For Year 2, ELISS Implementation and Outcome Reports were required from subgrantees on or before June 30, 2025 for both the 2024-25 school year and summer programming, if applicable.

and/or “To what extent did students served by the ELISS program improve in terms of their academic and/or behavioral performance?” Table 9 provides a summary of the various types of performance measures ELISS-funded subgrantees used to measure the quality and impact of their program.

Perception Outcome Measures Reported

Subgrantees were encouraged to collect data on student, parent, and/or feeder school perceptions on the impact of the ELISS-funded program on student academic and/or behavioral outcomes. While some subgrantees collected stakeholder perception data via formal interviews and/or informal communications, the majority reported collecting perception data using surveys. As shown in Table 9, for the 2024-25 school year:

- 10 of 15 subgrantees (67%) provided data regarding student perceptions of the program.
- 4 of 15 subgrantees (27%) provided data regarding teacher perceptions of the program.
- 13 of 15 subgrantees (87%) provided data regarding parent perceptions of the program.

Student Performance Outcome Measures Reported

In terms of reporting student performance outcomes for the 2023-24 school year:

- 11 of 15 subgrantees (73%) provided data based on students’ reading assessments.
- 8 of 15 subgrantees (53%) provided data based on students’ math assessments.
- 10 of 15 subgrantees (73%) provided data based on student behavior outcomes.
- 10 of 15 subgrantees (67%) provided data based on student socio-emotional outcomes.

To measure student performance in terms of reading, subgrantees reported using assessments such as: EOGs/EOCs, mCLASS, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), STAR, iReady, and Achieve 3000. To measure student performance in math, subgrantees reported using assessments such as: EOGs/EOCs and iReady. Behavioral outcomes included data on attendance, in-school suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions. Furthermore, social emotional learning outcomes included data from a variety of assessments: Social Emotional Academic Development Assessment (SEAD), Panorama Student Wellness survey, the Parent Engagement in Early Childhood Education (PEECE) survey, Insight assessment tool, and a modified version of the Mindful Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.

Table 9. Overview of Outcome Measures Reported in Annual Subgrantee Report (Year 2)

Subgrantee	A. Perceived Outcome Measures			B. Student Performance Outcome Measures			
	Student Data	Teacher Data	Parent Data	Reading	Math	Behavior	Socio-Emotional
Boys & Girls Club of Cabarrus County	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Boys & Girls Club of Greater High Point	✓		✓	✓			✓
Boys & Girls Clubs of Henderson County	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Children First/Communities in Schools of Buncombe County	✓		✓	*	*	✓	✓
Communities In Schools of Brunswick County	✓		✓	*	*	✓	✓

Subgrantee	A. Perceived Outcome Measures			B. Student Performance Outcome Measures			
	Student Data	Teacher Data	Parent Data	Reading	Math	Behavior	Socio-Emotional
Communities In Schools of Cape Fear	✓		✓	*	*	✓	✓
Communities In Schools of Montgomery County	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Communities In Schools of NC			✓	*	*	✓	
Communities In Schools of Rowan		✓	✓	✓	*	✓	
Hill Learning Center	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Operation Xcel		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Partners In Ministry	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
RAM Organization				✓	✓		
United Way of Pitt County			✓	✓	✓		
YMCA of Western North Carolina	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year 2 Total Number of Subgrantees	10	4	13	11	8	10	10
Year 1 Total Number of Subgrantees	6	6	4	11	9	11	8

Source: ELISS implementation and outcome reports (SY 2023-24).

*Although academic goal attainment was monitored and reported (e.g., grades, report cards, assessments), no specific outcome data was provided specifically regarding reading or math.

ELISS Impact on Students and Community

While performance data help to demonstrate quality program implementation and progress toward intended outcomes, subgrantees often indicate that the data do not always “tell the whole story.” Thus, this section of the report provides sample quotes that exemplify the impact ELISS funding has had on students and the larger community.

The impact the ELLIS funds had on my participants and/community during the 2024-25 school year has been priceless. There are indicators of growth that can be measured by SEL assessments, but there are indicators that cannot be measured by a scientific instrument. Students expressing how they feel, or that hug as they get off of the bus, on the way to their classroom—were heart felt, social indicators...The ELLIS funding gave us a platform in which to engage our students and hopefully give them coping mechanisms and social skills to enrich their lives generation after generation.

More specifically, subgrantees reported that the ELISS funds impacted: (a) school and teacher support, (b) student academic support and growth, (c) social emotional and behavioral support, (d) family and community engagement, and (e) program expansion and sustainability.

a. School and Teacher Support

ELISS funding allowed schools to add staff who provided targeted academic and emotional support, enabling co-teaching, small-group instruction, and personalized lesson planning that improved student engagement and teacher collaboration. The program also created a comprehensive support system—including counselors, social workers, and community partners—that collaborated to address students’ academic, behavioral, and emotional needs.

One of the biggest benefits was being able to add extra support to classrooms. With ELISS staff in place, teachers could co-teach and better share the load—both academically and emotionally—of reaching every student. This allowed for more targeted instruction, with students getting small-group support that helped fill in gaps and prepare them for upcoming lessons. They had more opportunities to ask questions, get immediate feedback, and build the vocabulary and background knowledge they needed to truly engage with the content. Teachers also benefited from the collaboration. With an extra set of hands and eyes in the classroom, they could co-plan, look at data together, and create lessons that were more personalized and rigorous. It's helped strengthen instruction and lifted the overall quality of teaching across our schools.

The funds enabled staff to focus on helping individual participants meet their specific goals through tailored supports, ensuring each student receives precise interventions needed for meaningful progress. ELISS funding made possible the strategic deployment of specialized staff, including counselors and social workers, to support small groups with targeted focuses...These additional supports represented services that would not have been possible without grant funding...Perhaps most significantly, our ELISS initiative allowed us to focus on a whole-child perspective that extended beyond traditional academic goals. Integration of social workers into Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) frameworks created opportunities for early intervention when students experienced behavioral or attendance challenges. The program's impact extended throughout the entire school, with staff members including librarians even stepping up to lead small groups! During a difficult year for our community, ELISS enabled us to build a comprehensive support ecosystem addressing students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs through individualized, small-group, whole-school, and community-level interventions.

b. Student Academic Support and Growth

Evaluation data provided evidence that students in high-fidelity and high-dosage programs made significant gains. In addition, due to ELISS funding, schools were able to provide customized academic support, expand ESL and tutoring services, and create engaging environments that boosted student engagement.

The evaluation study conducted by our external evaluator demonstrates highly positive perceptions from all groups involved in [our] program. These findings are based on reading achievement data, the SEL Assessment, and educator formative feedback surveys. At our school sites that implemented the program with the highest fidelity...students showed significant growth in their composite scores on the mClass DIBELS assessment. Overall, the reading outcomes analysis showed a significant effect size for composite score growth (BOY to EOY) on the mCLASS DIBELS assessment across elementary schools, and significant effect for oral reading fluency growth from BOY to EOY as well.

The extreme amount of growth that was able to be achieved by our students was the most impactful part of the ELISS grant for the 2024-25 school year. ELISS funds allowed us to support our students in ways that tightening budgets due to lack of previously held COVID funds did not. We were able to create an influx of staff in our feeder schools' classrooms that

(1) helped teachers reach the students better; (2) gave students much needed additional support to understand content; and (3) offered a refreshing way for students to receive information that actually worked for them. These additional supports were a game changer for many students...The flexibility of the this grant also allowed us to add an EOG Reboot afterschool program for the last month of school, something that wasn't part of our original Year 2 plan. With this addition, students received even more support. And it all showed in the data. Our students desperately need instruction delivered to them in a customized format for their best opportunity at success. The ELISS grant gave them that opportunity.

Our ELISS program has benefited our community by providing a safe, academically nurturing environment for our students during the school day, afterschool, and in the summer. Our most at-risk participating students have received intensive support services to include tutoring, counseling, and case management, during the school day and in the extended learning programs. The percentage of participating K-2 ELISS students who scored at or above grade level in reading increased by 16 percentage points in Year 2. Additionally, across all grades, student reported engagement increased by 4 percentage points.

Our partner schools found the ELISS program to be very helpful. Teachers really appreciated having a resource for kids who were struggling in the classroom. We have received interest from other schools about participating in a future iteration of the program, which represents to us a positive community response to the work. Over the course of the year, we assessed one of the most valuable components of the program being ESL support, as many of our schools have substantial needs for ESL tutoring resources.

c. Social Emotional and Behavioral Supports

The ELISS program increased access to social emotional and behavioral support services to enhance students' learning and engagement.

The ELISS program provided our students with expanded access to counseling and Check-In/Check-Out services during the school day and provided our extended learning students with a safe and academically enriching environment afterschool and in the summer. Additionally, this program provided the families of our students with resources and strategies to improve their students' learning and engagement.

d. Family and Community Engagement

ELISS funding helped to expand community partnerships and connect students and families with basic needs assistance and relevant academic resources.

Outside the classroom, ELISS helped us grow our STEAM partnerships and bring in hands-on learning tied to the standards. These activities not only kept students excited about learning but also helped connect what they're doing in school to real-world ideas and future careers. Family engagement also got a big boost. We hosted more than 160 hours of family events that brought communities together around their home schools. Families learned how to support their children at home in reading, math, and social-emotional learning—and our STEAM sessions sparked conversations about energy use, health, and critical thinking that extended into the home and community. Overall, ELISS funding allowed us to do more—

more support for students, more collaboration for teachers, more hands-on learning, and more meaningful connections with families. It's been a powerful investment in student success.

The funding supported outreach efforts that connected families to critical resources such as academic enrichment, basic needs assistance, and community partnerships—ensuring that more households across [the] County were empowered to support student success both in and out of school.

e. Program Expansion and Sustainability

ELISS funding helped address the identified needs of students and families by sustaining ongoing services at existing sites and also supported the establishment of new sites within the community.

ELISS funding allowed [our organization] to sustain programming at five existing school sites while also launching a new site at an elementary school...This expansion significantly increased our capacity to serve more students and families across the county. With additional staffing and program resources, [our organization] was able to provide individualized support to a greater number of students, including those who had not previously had access to integrated student services. By reaching younger students earlier in their academic journey, the new elementary site also opened opportunities for earlier intervention and stronger family engagement.

III. Summary of ELISS Program Model Impact

Summary of Program Models

The purpose of the ELISS Competitive Grant Program is to fund high-quality, independently validated EL and ISS service programs for at-risk students that raise standards for student academic outcomes. As a result of ELISS funding, the 15 awarded subgrantees:

- served a total of 18 North Carolina counties;
- served over 60 low-performing schools across the state;
- provided afterschool academic programming for 977 students in Year 1 and 1,746 students in Year 2;
- provided summer programming for 1,521 students in Year 1 and 513 students in Year 2;
- provided targeted (Tier II) and intensive (Tier III) services for 3,728 students in Year 1 and 5,691 students in Year 2; and
- provided broad-based services (Tier I) to over 16,500 students in Year 1 and 23,774 students in Year 2.

Appendix

ELISS Application Review Rubric

Needs Assessment

(Rate this section from 1-10 using the scoring guide below. **10 is the highest possible score.**)

The applicant clearly describes the use of data (both quantitative <u>and</u> qualitative) to demonstrate the needs of the: a) targeted at-risk students proposed to be served <u>and</u> their underlying risk factors; and b) targeted low-performing schools.				
Dimensions		Leading (10-8 points)	Developing (7-4 points)	Lacking (3-1 points)
Applicant provides:	Use of data to demonstrate identification and needs of targeted group(s) of <u>at-risk students</u> ¹ and risk factors	☐ Well-organized summary of relevant data (including both qualitative and quantitative) that clearly demonstrates the needs of (1) targeted at-risk students and (2) their risk factors.	☐ Somewhat clear summary of relevant data (including both qualitative and quantitative) that clearly demonstrates the needs of (1) targeted at-risk students and (2) their risk factors.	☐ Incomplete summary of data that does not sufficiently demonstrate the needs of the targeted at-risk students and/or their risk factors.
	Use of data to demonstrate the identification and needs of <u>low-performing school(s)</u> ²	☐ Well-organized summary of relevant data (including both qualitative and quantitative) that clearly demonstrates the identification and needs of low-performing school(s) to be served.	☐ Somewhat clear summary of relevant data (including both qualitative and quantitative) that demonstrates identification and the needs of low-performing school(s) to be served.	☐ Incomplete summary of data that does not sufficiently demonstrate the needs of low-performing school(s) to be served.

¹ Programs must serve one or more of the following student groups: 1) at-risk students not performing at grade level as demonstrated by statewide assessments, 2) students at-risk of dropout, 3) students at-risk of school displacement due to suspension or expulsion as a result of anti-social behaviors.

² Low-performing schools are those that receive a school performance grade of D or F and a school growth score of “met expected growth” or “not met expected growth” as defined by § 115C-85.15. (§ 115C-105.37).

Program Design

(Rate this section from 1-25 using the scoring guide below. **25 is the highest possible score.**)

The applicant clearly describes: a) the overall program implementation design/model (ISS [and EL if applicable]) with specific alignment to the unmet needs of targeted at-risk students <u>and</u> low-performing schools; b) the evidence-based rationale of proposed (ISS [and EL if applicable]) interventions/activities/services; c) how the proposed (ISS [and EL if applicable]) interventions/activities/services complement students' regular academic program; d) two required family engagement workshops (including timelines) addressing (1) the importance of consistent school attendance and (2) age-appropriate strategies and resources for supporting students' positive academic behaviors and/ or social-emotional well-being; and e) the specific evidence-based Tier II and/or Tier III interventions/ activities/services students will participate in or receive (including dosage).			
Dimensions	Leading (25-18 points)	Developing (17-9 points)	Lacking (8-1 points)
a. Program implementation of design/model and alignment to the unmet needs of targeted at-risk students and low-performing schools	☐ Very clear summary of the overall program implementation design/model (ISS [and EL if applicable]), with specific alignment to the unmet needs of targeted at-risk students and low-performing schools.	☐ Somewhat clear summary of the overall program implementation design/model (ISS [and EL if applicable]), with only general alignment to the unmet needs of targeted at-risk students and low-performing schools.	☐ Vague, incomplete, or confusing summary of the program implementation design/model (ISS [and EL if applicable]) with little or no alignment to the unmet needs of targeted at-risk students or low-performing schools.
b. Evidence-based rationale of proposed interventions/activities/ services	☐ Clear rationale (using evidence from research, best practices, prior promising experience) for how implementation of proposed (ISS [and EL if applicable]) interventions/activities/services will reduce risk factors and improve student outcomes.	☐ Somewhat clear rationale (using evidence from research, best practices, prior promising experience) for how proposed (ISS [and EL if applicable]) interventions/activities/services will reduce risk factors and improve student outcomes.	☐ Vague or incomplete rationale for how proposed (ISS [and EL if applicable]) interventions/ activities/services will reduce risk factors and improve student outcomes.
c. Proposed interventions/activities/ services complement students' regular academic program	☐ Clear description of how the proposed (ISS [and EL if applicable]) interventions/ activities/services complement students' regular academic program.	☐ Somewhat clear description of how the proposed (ISS [and EL if applicable]) interventions/activities/services complement students' regular academic program.	☐ Incomplete or confusing description of how the proposed (ISS [and EL if applicable]) interventions/activities/services complement students' regular academic program.
d. Family Engagement workshops for families of participating students	☐ Clear description and timeline of workshops for families of participating students that focus on 1) deepening families' understanding of the importance of consistent school attendance, and 2) training on age-appropriate strategies and resources for supporting students' positive academic behaviors and/ or social-emotional well-being.	☐ General description and timeline of workshops for families of participating students that focus on 1) deepening families' understanding of the importance of consistent school attendance, and 2) training on age-appropriate strategies and resources for supporting students' positive academic behaviors and/ or student social-emotional well-being.	☐ Vague or incomplete description and/or timeline of workshops for families of students that focus on 1) deepening families' understanding of importance of consistent school attendance, and 2) training on age-appropriate strategies and resources for supporting students' positive academic behaviors and/ or social-emotional well-being.

e. Evidence-based Tier II and/or Tier III interventions/activities/services proposed	☐ Clear description of specific proposed evidence-based Tier II and/or Tier III interventions/activities/services students will participate in or receive (including dosage).	☐ Somewhat clear description of specific proposed evidence-based Tier II and/or Tier III interventions/activities/services students will participate in or receive (including dosage).	☐ Vague, incomplete, or confusing description of proposed evidence-based Tier II and/or Tier III interventions/activities/services students will participate in or receive.
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Program Schedule

(Rate this section from 1-5 using the scoring guide below. **5 is the highest possible score.**)

The applicant provides detailed sample(s) of schedule(s) for Year 1 and Year 2 that include: a) program implementation of design/model (ISS [and EL if applicable]). ISS Tier II and III and EL (if applicable) interventions/activities/services should be clearly identified. Tier II and III dosages should be clearly indicated. If multiple sites and/or multiple grade spans are planned with various activities, a sample schedule should be provided for each site and/or grade span.			
Dimensions	Leading (5 points)	Developing (4-2 points)	Lacking (1 point)
Sample weekly schedule(s)	☐ Detailed sample schedule(s) of weekly program implementation design/model (ISS [and EL if applicable]) including Tier II and Tier III dosages. (If multiple sites and/or grade spans with varied activities are planned, a schedule must be provided for each).	☐ Somewhat clear sample schedule(s) of weekly program implementation design/model (ISS [and EL if applicable]) including Tier II and Tier III dosages. (If multiple sites and/or grade spans with varied activities are planned, a schedule must be provided for each).	☐ Confusing or incomplete sample schedule(s) that lacks enough detail to distinguish distinction between ISS Tier II and III and/or EL interventions/activities/services, or is missing logistics (i.e., missing time slots, days, site schedules).

Organizational Capacity

(Rate this section from 1-20 using the scoring guide below. **20 is the highest possible score.**)

The applicant clearly describes: a) the prior success or capacity to implement the proposed interventions/activities/services and positive outcome(s) for at-risk students; b) a staffing plan to operate the program with highly qualified, well-trained professionals at sufficient levels (e.g., key personnel, training, recruitment and retention), and expected staff-to-student ration; c) how project staff will interact with school staff in collaborative planning to address students' needs or monitor students' progress; and d) the availability of key resources for program implementation (e.g., space or time in the school day for Integrated Student Support meetings with students, extended learning time facilities, technology in place for student use).			
Dimensions	Leading (20-15 points)	Developing (14-7 points)	Lacking (6-1 points)
a. Prior success or capacity to implement the proposed interventions/services/activities	☐ Clear description of prior success or capacity to implement the proposed interventions/services /activities, including positive outcome(s) for at-risk students.	☐ Somewhat clear description of prior success or capacity to implement the proposed intervention/services/activities, including positive outcome(s) for at-risk students.	☐ Little to no evidence is presented of any prior success or capacity to implement the proposed interventions/services /activities.
b. Staffing plan to operate the program with highly qualified, well-trained professionals	☐ Well-specified staffing plan that includes: description of the roles of key personnel and expected qualifications; planned staff recruitment, training, and retention strategies; and expected staff-to-student ratios.	☐ Staffing plan that includes somewhat clear description of key personnel; staff recruitment, training, and retention strategies; and expected staff-to-student ratio.	☐ Limited or incomplete staffing plan (e.g., missing information on key personnel, recruitment, training, and retention strategies, staff-to-student ratio).
c. Collaborative approach to project staff interaction with school staff	☐ Clear, realistic, and thoughtful approach to project and school staff collaboration around students' needs and progress monitoring.	☐ Somewhat clear approach to project and school staff collaboration around students' needs and progress monitoring.	☐ Vague or confusing approach to project and school staff collaboration around students' needs and/or progress monitoring.
d. Availability of key resources for program implementation	☐ Detailed description of how key resources have been secured to implement the program (e.g., space or time in the school day for meetings with students, extended learning time facilities, technology available) that provide confidence that a fast start up is feasible.	☐ General description of key resources secured to implement the proposed program (e.g., space or time in the school day for meetings with students, extended learning time facilities, technology available), but leaves some doubt about their ability to get off the ground quickly.	☐ Incomplete or confusing description of key resources secured to implement the proposed program.

Evaluation Plan and Use of Data

(Rate this section from 1-15 using the scoring guide below. **15 is the highest possible score.**)

The applicant includes: a) a clear set of student performance measures—aligned to the program goals—that will be used to monitor student outcomes; b) a data collection plan describing the types of data that will be collected/analyzed to monitor students’ progress on the performance measures at the end of each year; and c) a description of how data will be used to inform program improvement and to communicate changes in at-risk student outcomes with stakeholders.			
Dimensions	Leading (15-11)	Developing (10-6)	Lacking (5-1)
a. Student performance measures—aligned with program goals—that will be used to monitor student outcomes	☐ Clear and specific articulation of student performance measures—aligned with program goals—that will be used to monitor student outcomes.	☐ Somewhat clear articulation of student performance measures—aligned with program goals—that will be used to monitor student outcomes.	☐ Incomplete, confusing, or unrealistic description of student performance measures.
b. Data collection plan describing the types of data that will be collected/analyzed to monitor students’ progress on key performance measures	☐ Clear and specific description of the types of data to be collected/analyzed to report on students’ progress on the identified performance measures at the end of each year and convincing assurance that the organization will have access to the data described.	☐ General description of the types of data to be collected/analyzed to report on students’ progress on the identified performance measures at the end of each year and assurance that the organization will have access to the data described.	☐ Incomplete or confusing description of how student data will be collected/analyzed to report on students’ progress on the identified performance measures at the end of each year.
c. How data will be used to improve the program and to communicate changes in at-risk student outcomes with stakeholders	☐ Clear and convincing description of how data will be used to improve the program (including discussion of data with school partners) and to communicate changes in at-risk student outcomes with stakeholders.	☐ Somewhat clear or general description of how data will be used to improve the program and to communicate changes in at-risk student outcomes with stakeholders.	☐ Incomplete or missing description of how data will be used to improve the program and/or to communicate with stakeholders.

Budget Narrative and Alignment

(Rate this section from 1-10 using the scoring guide below. **10 is the highest possible score.**)

The applicant provides a clear and detailed budget narrative that demonstrates: a) costs are reasonable, necessary, and aligned with the proposed programming; and b) how \$1 in nongrant funds will be obtained to match every \$3 of requested grant funds.			
Dimensions	Leading (10-8 points)	Developing (7-4 points)	Lacking (3-1 points)
a. Reasonable and necessary costs aligned with proposed programming and administrative functions	☐ Detailed budget narrative that clearly aligns costs to proposed programming and administrative functions (e.g., staffing, facilities, evaluation), and demonstrates that costs are reasonable and necessary for implementing the grant.	☐ Budget narrative that provides somewhat clear alignment of costs to proposed programming and administrative functions (e.g., staffing, facilities, evaluation), and demonstrates that costs are reasonable and necessary for implementing the grant.	☐ Budget narrative with incomplete cost information or conflicting alignment with the programming purpose or needs.
b. Nongrant funds matched with requested grant funds	☐ Detailed narrative that describes how the applicant will meet the required funding match of \$1 in nongrant funds per \$3 requested in grant funds, including monetary funds and in-kind contributions by contributing source.	☐ General narrative that describes how the applicant will meet the required funding match of \$1 in nongrant funds per \$3 requested in grant funds, including monetary funds and in-kind contributions by contributing source.	☐ Budget narrative is incomplete or confusing in explaining how required funding match of \$1 in nongrant funds per \$3 requested grant funds will be met.

Overall Proposal Alignment (ALL)

(Rate this section from 1-5 using the scoring guide below. **5 is the highest possible score.**)

Applicant provides a proposal that, as a whole, is: a) aligned across all sections of the proposal and makes a compelling case for the need for the program, and its likelihood for positive measurable student success.			
Dimensions	Leading (5 points)	Developing (4-2 points)	Lacking (1 points)
Proposal alignment across all sections that makes a compelling case for program need and the likelihood of positive measurable student outcomes	☐ Well-written proposal that is clearly aligned across all sections of the application and that makes a compelling case for the need and rationale for the program and the likelihood of positive measurable student outcomes.	☐ Somewhat clear proposal that is aligned across most sections of the application and that makes a somewhat sound case for the need and rationale for the program and the likelihood of measurable student success.	☐ Confusing proposal that is limited in alignment and fragmented across several sections and/or does not make a convincing case regarding the need for the program and/or likelihood of measurable student success.

Extended Learning and Integrated Student Supports (ELISS) Competitive Grant Program: ELISS Evaluation Report 2023-2025

Addendum

Recommendations

The ELISS Competitive Grant Program supports the implementation of promising program models of school-community partnerships with the potential for replication across the state. Below are some suggestions for possible ways to improve the utility and impact of this funding opportunity in the future.

- Consider extending the length of the grants awarded to allow for: (1) more extensive collaborative planning between the nonprofit organization and the district/schools on the front end, (2) time to revise and improve the program model based on implementation challenges experienced, (3) time for grantees to conduct well-designed evaluations of the program's impact on student outcomes, and (4) opportunities for grantees to share the program models and lessons learned with others in the state. That is, rather than a one-and-a-half-year funding timeframe, as is currently the case, consider a three- to four-year timeframe for awarding grants. Typically, in education, the implementation of a substantive new program or intervention is a process that takes several years to complete well. If funded over a three- to four-year period, the grantees could be expected to go through a cycle of continuous improvement in partnership with schools and conduct more rigorous studies of their program's impact on at-risk students. With this longer timeframe, grantees could also be expected to share their approach, materials, evidence of success, and expertise with others in the state at the end of their funding cycle.
- Consider requiring subgrantees to use a common data collection system, similar to the 21DC system used by 21st Century Community Learning Centers. This would allow for a statewide evaluation that focuses on the outcomes desired for those students who participate in the ELISS program. In other words, this system would allow evaluators to access and analyze cross-subgrantee student-level data regarding dosage of program services, school-day attendance, student achievement data (e.g. EOG/EOC scores), and behavioral data (e.g., suspensions). Due to the short timeframe of the ELISS grant, these data are often not available until after the grant has ended. Thus, to measure the statewide impact of the ELISS program, it will be important to archive programmatic and student-level data in a safe, secure system across all cohorts of ELISS subgrantees for future longitudinal analysis and evaluation reporting.