



Elev8 Baltimore: Cherry Hill Elementary/ Middle

MSDE Report: SY 2020-2021

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Contributors

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Introduction

Elev8 Baltimore is a year-round program that provides Out-of-School Time (OST) programming, school-based healthcare, and other family supports to community schools in Baltimore City. Elev8 Baltimore functions as a Lead Agency and OST provider as part of a full-service Community Schools strategy. The Community Schools strategy is an approach that positions public schools as hubs of integrated service delivery for students, families, and the broader community. OST programming in Baltimore City is intentionally aligned with the Community Schools strategy.

A Community School is both a place and set of strategic partnerships that promote student achievement, positive conditions for learning, and the well-being of families and communities. Through the work of Lead Agencies, each community school leverages unique community resources to meet needs and maintain a core focus on children, while recognizing that children grow up in families, and that families are building blocks of communities. This integrated approach is designed to lead to student success, strong families, and healthy communities.

Meanwhile, OST programs offer young people educational, recreational, and enrichment opportunities during the hours when school is not in session, extending the support services of community schools beyond the school day. They provide academic support and homework help, nutritious meals, high-quality care, and opportunities to explore new interests and experiences. OST programs are designed to promote academic benefits for youth as well as broader, non-academic benefits for youth and their families.

This report focuses on Elev8 Baltimore's programming at Cherry Hill Elementary/Middle School during the 2020-2021 school year, with particular focus on its OST program. The report is prepared by Inciter, a research and evaluation consulting firm that has served as the external evaluator for Elev8 Baltimore since 2010.

Cherry Hill Elementary/Middle

According to the most recent data available from Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS), Cherry Hill Elementary/Middle serves 680 students in grades 3 through 8 in the Cherry Hill neighborhood of South Baltimore. Enrollment is up 49 percent from 2018 when 457 students attended. This significant change is associated with a recent move into a new 21st Century Schools building in 2018-2019. Cherry Hill's student population is 94 percent Black with less than 5 percent representation of any other racial or ethnic group. Eighteen percent of students have disabilities, and less than 5 percent are English language learners. The school's most recent mobility rate is 34 percent. The average teacher tenure is 7 years, the teacher to student ratio is 1:19, and the average class size is 19 students.

Cherry Hill Elementary/Middle school has been a community school since 2015-2016. Particular areas of focus include food security and nutrition (e.g., weekly food packs for weekend food access, weekly produce market, workshops on healthy eating and exercise, food bank open to school and broader community, and healthy cooking workshops); and healthy development education (e.g., workshops on social media and student wellbeing, and a workshop on violence and brain development). Cherry Hill actively reaches out to families using Instagram, TikTok, and via an online "S'more" newsletter.

Cherry Hill Elev8 OST Program

All Elev8 OST programs follow a similar schedule. Programs are open Monday through Thursday from the time school ends until about three hours later. Programs begin with all students and staff gathering for Community Circle, a snack, and homework help, followed by Academic Hour, during which half the students focus on skill mastery using the Exact Path software system and the other half do a character development exercise. This ensures that all participants have the opportunity for academic development two days a week. This time is followed by Enrichment, which can be different for each school and includes cultural and athletic programming, culinary opportunities, and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) programming. At the end of the time, students have dinner before wrapping up and going home.

Once a month the OST programs hold "Fun Fridays" for a shorter period of time to celebrate those meeting attendance and behavioral goals. Special events are also planned and coordinated with school personnel.

In 2020-2021, the Cherry Hill school year OST program was delivered virtually, while the summer OST program took place in person.

Methodology

As in past years, Inciter worked closely with Elev8 program leadership and staff to develop this report.

Three guiding questions orient this work:

- I. What is the student enrollment and attendance at each school's OST program by grade?
- II. How are students using the Exact Path system to improve their skills in reading and math?
- III. What is Elev8, as a Lead Agency and OST program provider, offering in terms of daily programming and special events? How is it engaging students, their families, and the greater community?

Data System

During the 2019-2020 school year, Elev8 transitioned from a traditional data system to a completely web-based one. Staff input data on day-to-day OST attendance (Guiding Question 1) and programming and events (Guiding Question 3) and into custom data collection tools. Data on student learning activities (Guiding Question 2) is downloaded from a separate source. With technical support from Inciter, Elev8 staff are responsible for making sure the student and family data collected by Elev8's OST staff are accurate and complete.

Inciter developed a central web application that aggregates data from disparate sources into one location and built a portal that allows Elev8 staff to access both raw data and data reports. The portal can be customized to clean and transform data, create descriptive statistics based on the raw data, and can produce tables, charts and graphs according to staff needs.

The Elev8 system keeps personally identifiable information (PII) secure by encrypting data at rest and in transit and by housing PII in production environments. Additionally, access to sensitive information is provided by Elev8 to Inciter and any Inciter access is logged in the system. Risk is managed through bi-weekly internal assessments and 48 hour notification in the event of a data breach.

This system supports Elev8 Baltimore's efforts at continuous improvement by enabling the organization to have real-time information on various critical metrics that can then be used to track and potentially improve service delivery.

Data Types

OST Enrollment and Attendance

Elev8 staff collect student enrollment and attendance data and enter it into Excel spreadsheets.

Skill Mastery Using Exact Path

Skill mastery is assessed using Exact Path data. Exact Path is a personalized learning platform that includes assessment-driven math, reading, and language arts instruction. Students begin by taking an adaptive diagnostic assessment and are given an individualized learning plan based on their performance. The Exact Path system tracks logins, activity, usage, and results, which are exported to the portal on a monthly basis throughout the school year.

Events

Elev8 staff enter data on the number and types of family support services and advocacy activities that families receive at all Elev8 Baltimore schools.

To collate events data, Elev8 staff enter event type, attendance, and other data into a Google form, which is uploaded into the portal. These events vary widely, from field trips for students with good attendance, Spooky Math nights, or a High School choice fair for 8th graders, to events geared toward parents and the community, such as self-care and health-oriented events, parenting seminars, and men's support groups. Data are categorized by whether they occurred once or several times; which stakeholder and age groups they supported; and by event type.

Event types include:

- **Barrier removal:** Events that remove barriers to optimal learning, such as vision screening and free glasses, a weekly produce market, and free flu shots and health screenings;

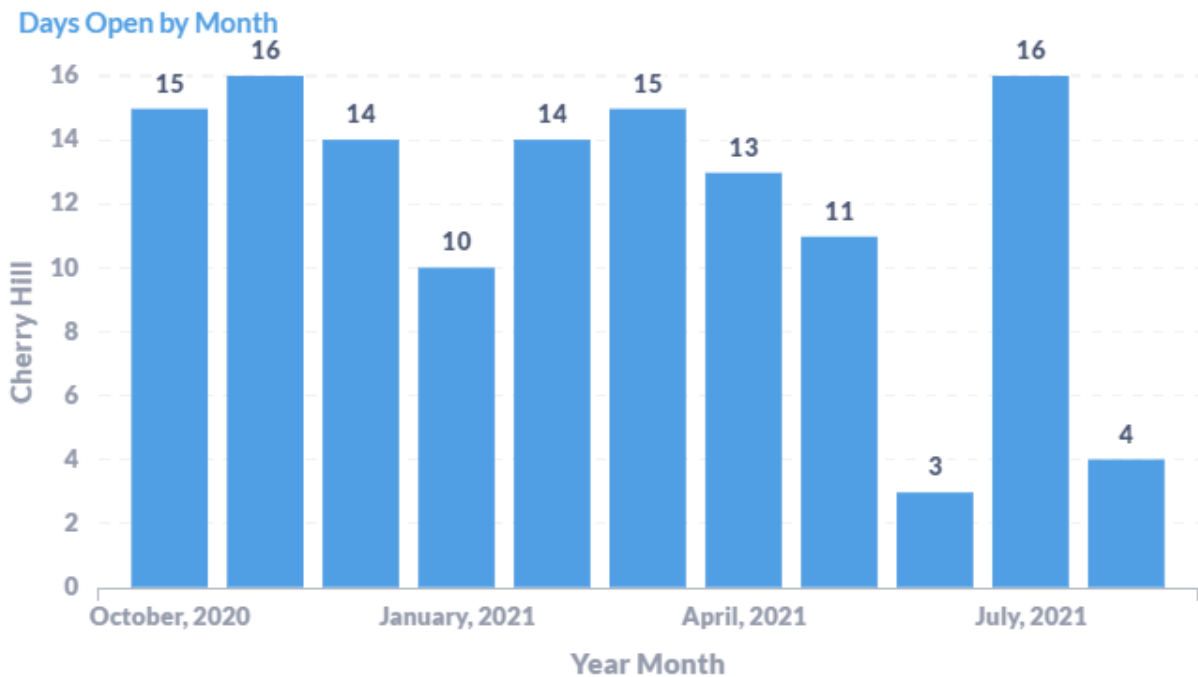
- Educational support: Events that further education in some way, such as Black History Month programming, math and literacy nights, and a trip to a local state college for high school students;
- General meeting: Events that range from one-time student assemblies or sessions to help interested students to find a job or sign up for driver's education classes, to recurring working meetings for all stakeholders to coordinate school initiatives or monthly parent breakfasts with a focus on engagement;
- Leadership development: Events that focus on student and/or parent/community leadership, such as quarterly awards for students who excelled during that time, a seminar for parents and staff on conflict mediation, and a training session for students to be grant proposal reviewers for summer funding;
- Out-of-school time: Special events that take place after school, such as a gardening club, a fashion enrichment club, and assisting the Student Government in organizing and preparing for a Winter Formal.

Findings

Out-of School Time Enrollment and Attendance

The 2020-2021 school year OST program at Cherry Hill began October 1, 2020 and ended on May 19, 2021. The Elev8 program operated 108 days during the regular school year, and 23 days during the summer. Figure 1 shows the number of days the program was open by month.

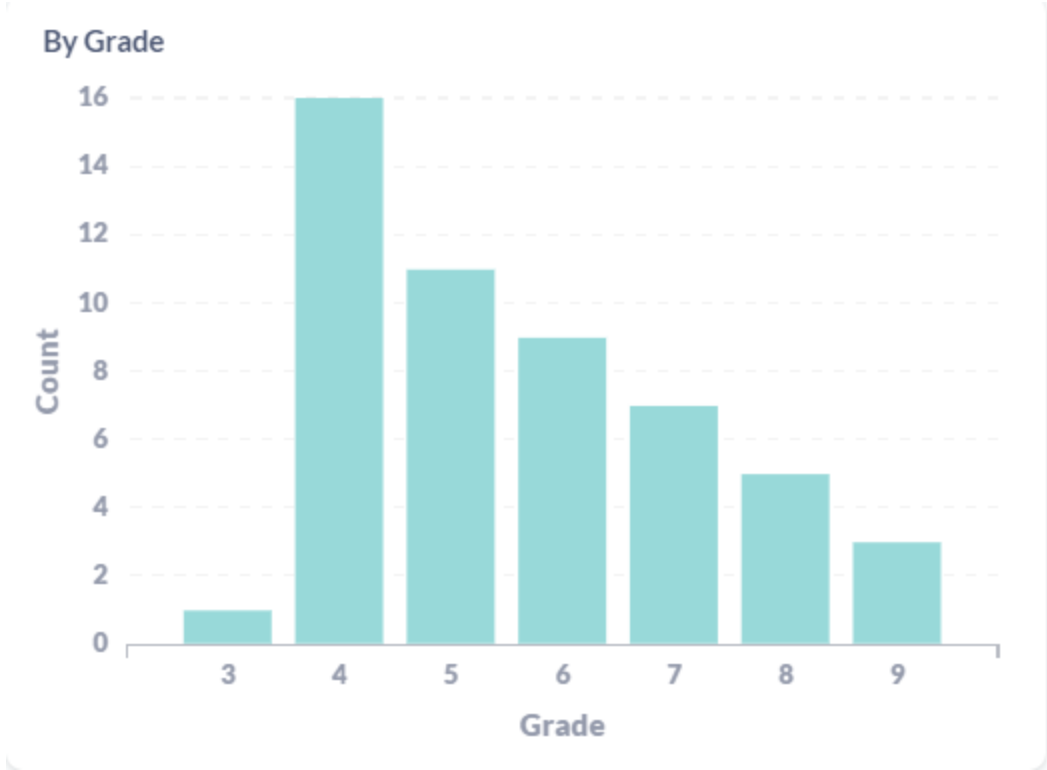
Figure 1: OST Days Open, by Month



The OST program served 52 students at Cherry Hill during 2020-2021.

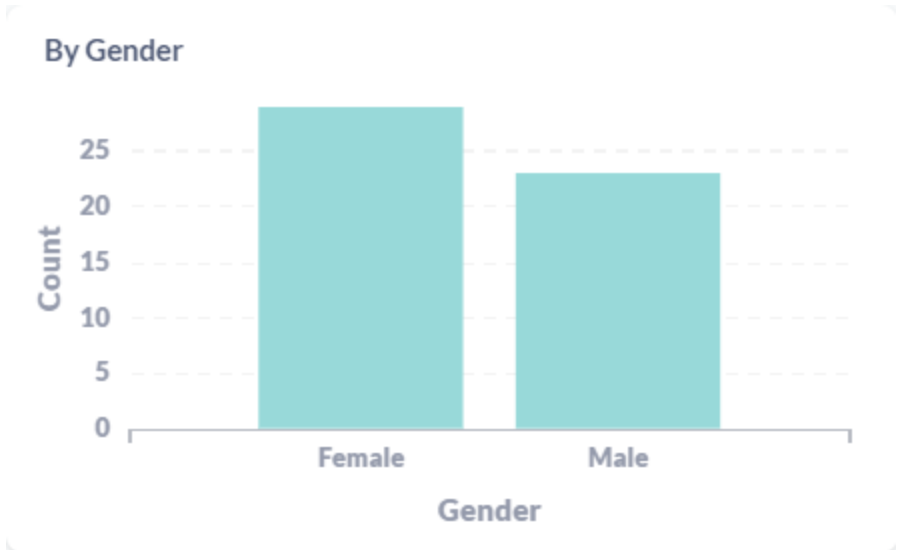
As shown in Figure 2, this included three (n=3) third graders, 16 fourth graders, 11 fifth graders, nine (n=9) sixth graders, seven (n=7) seventh graders, five (n=5) eighth graders, and three (n=3) ninth graders.

Figure 2: OST Enrollment by Grade



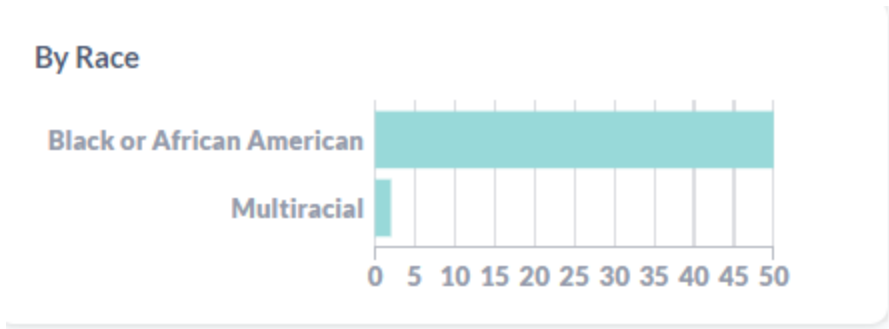
As shown in Figure 3, girls comprised 56 percent of enrolled students (29 of 52), and boys 44 percent (23 of 52).

Figure 3: OST Enrollment by Gender



None of the enrolled students identify as Hispanic. A large majority identify as Black or African American (50 of 52), with the remaining two students identifying as multiracial.

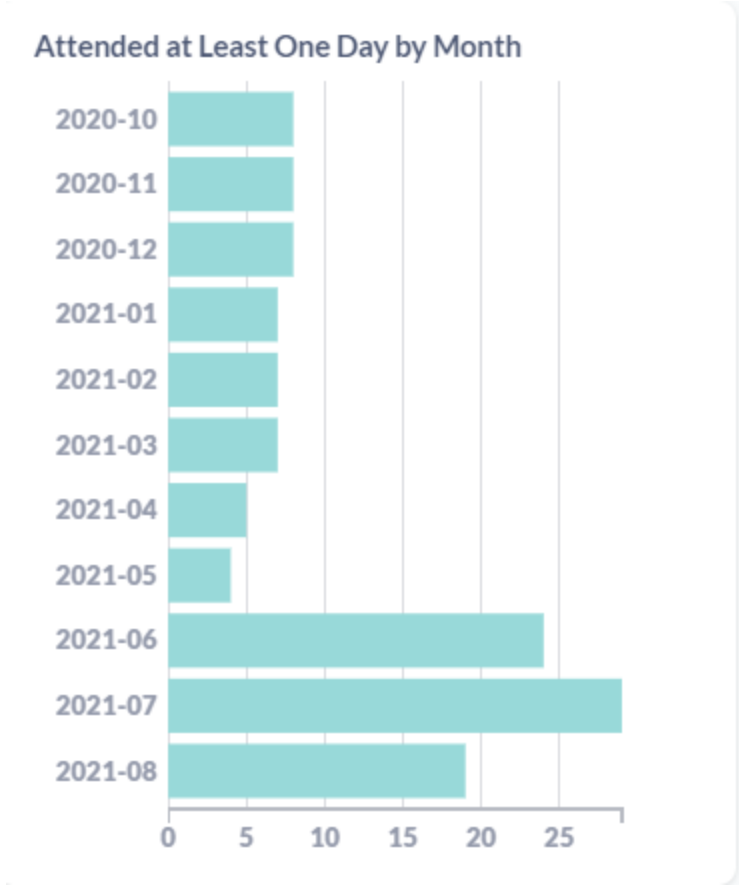
Figure 4: OST Enrollment by Race



Attendance was generally lower during the school year than in the summer. This is likely related to the virtual mode of programming delivery and associated screen fatigue. Eight (n=8) students attended at least one day a month in October, November, and December, dropping to seven (n=7) in January, February, and March, five (n=5) in April, and four (n=4) in May.

During the summer, by contrast, 24 students attended at least one day in June, 29 attended at least one day in July, and 19 attended at least one day in August.

Figure 5: Attended at Least One Day by Month



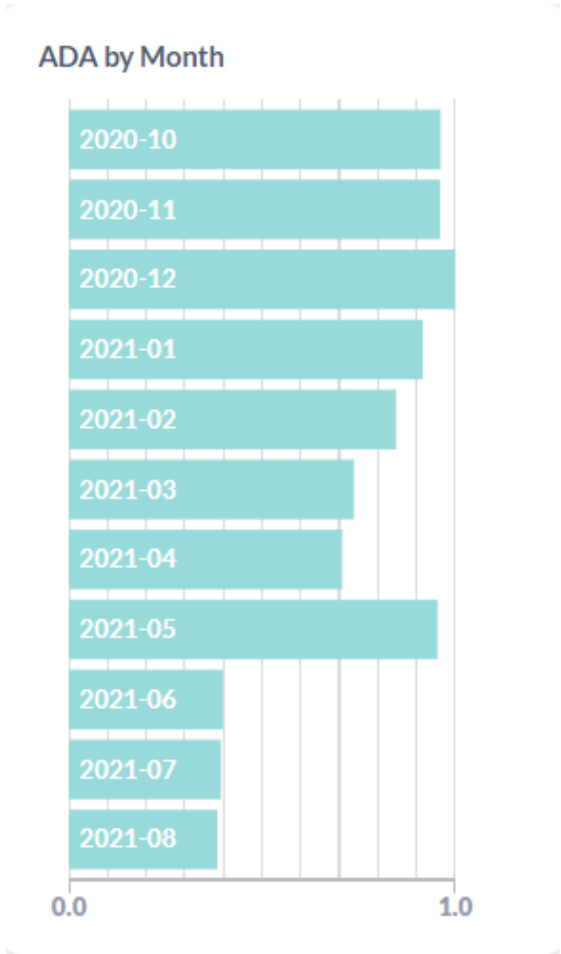
Despite the relatively low numbers of students attending OST programming between October 2020 and May 2021, average daily attendance rates were quite high during this time period. In other words, while fewer students attended the school year program, they attended more days.

Average daily attendance was 89 percent during the school year, and 39 percent during the summer.

Average daily attendance refers to the average daily attendance rate of retained students each day the program was open. Average daily attendance is calculated as the sum of the number of days attended divided by the sum of the number of days a program was open.

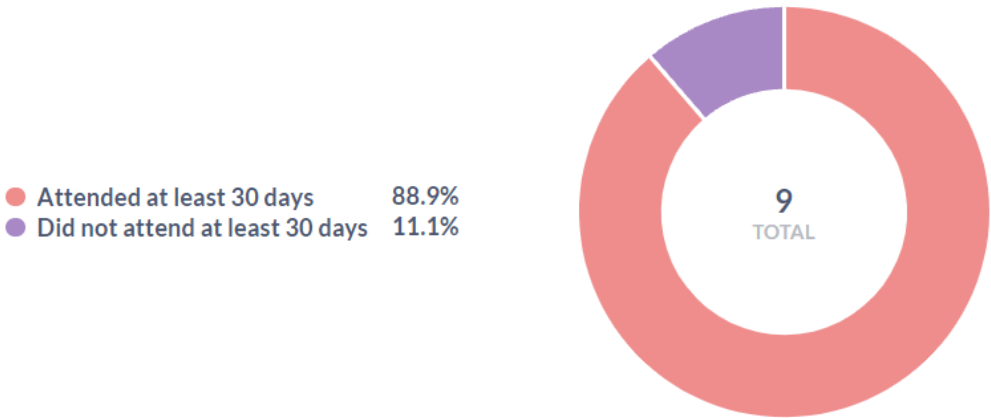
Overall average daily attendance in the Cherry Hill OST program was 61 percent.

Figure 6: Average Daily Attendance by Month



Focusing on the subset of students attending school year OST programming, approximately 89 percent of students attended 30 or more days of programming. By comparison, nearly 88 percent of students attended 30 or more days of programming in 2019-2020.

Figure 8: OST Enrollment by 30 Day Benchmark



Exact Path

During the 2020-2021 academic year, 88 students at Cherry Hill logged in to Exact Path.

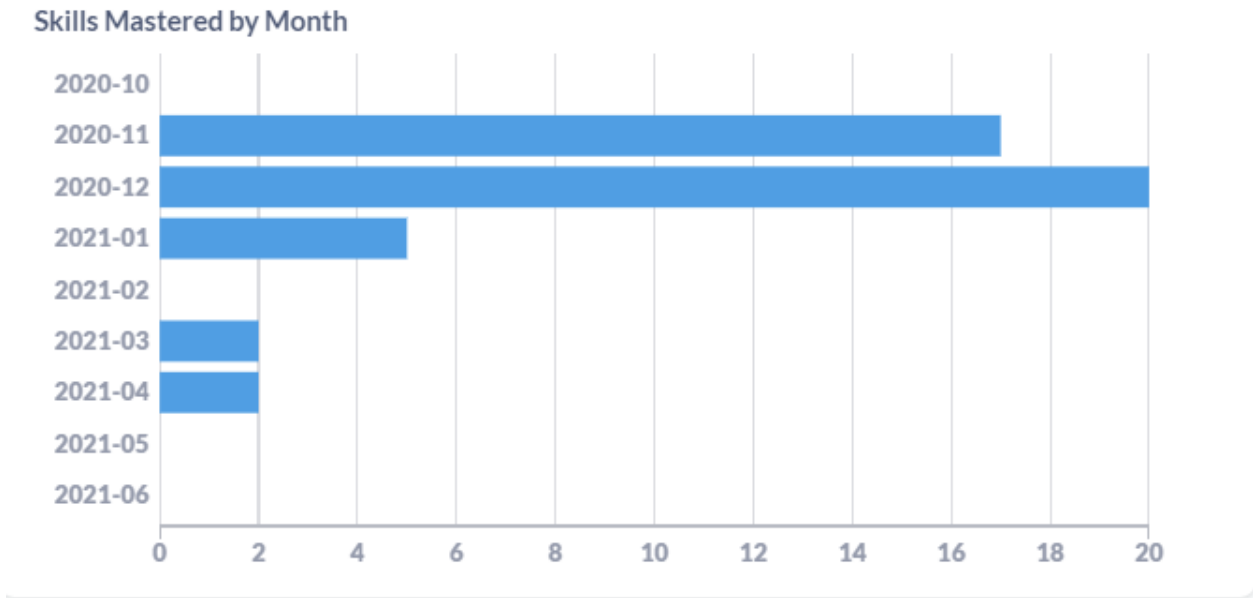
It is worth noting, however, that approximately 37 percent of all Elev8 Exact Path data from school year 2020-2021 was not associated with a particular school name and had to be excluded from reporting. As a result, the actual number of Cherry Hill students who used the Exact Path platform could be higher.

Of these 88 students associated with Cherry Hill, four (n=4) students mastered 46 skills: one (n=1) third grader who mastered 11 skills, two (n=2) fifth graders who together mastered 21 skills, and one (n=1) sixth grader who mastered 14 skills.

All skills mastered were in the domain of mathematics.

By month, most skill mastery was accomplished in December (20 skills) and November (17 skills).

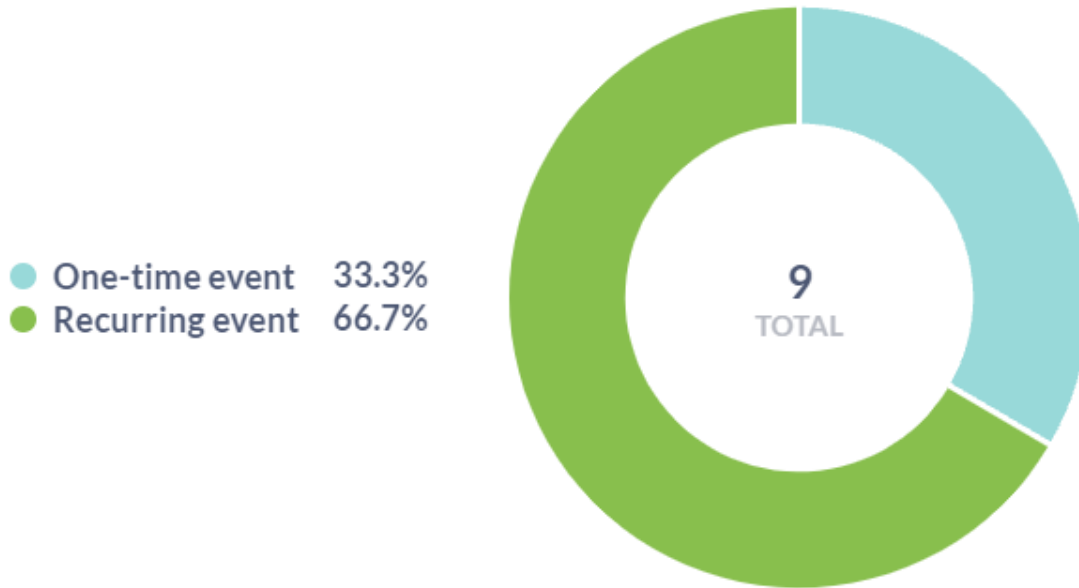
Figure 9: Skills Mastered by Month



Events

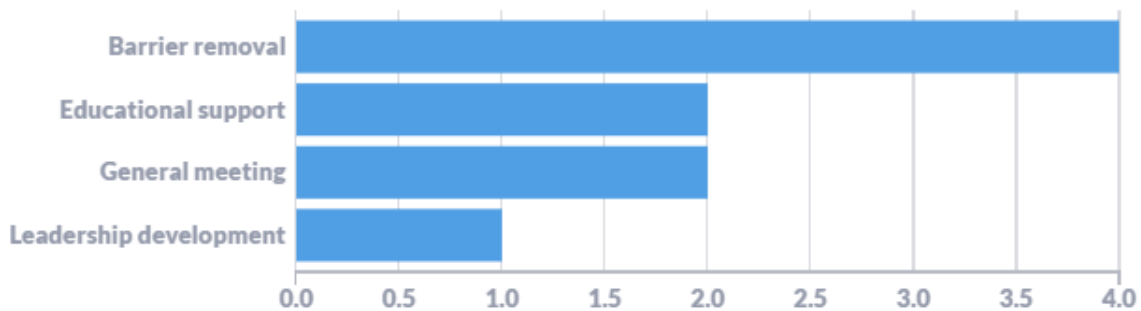
Elev8 at Cherry Hill organized and hosted 9 events between September 1, 2020 and August 31, 2021. Two-thirds of these, or 6, were recurring events. The remaining three (n=3) were one-time events. (For this calculation, a set of recurring events is counted as one or more recurring events.)

Figure 10: Event Recurrence



By type, four (n=4) were barrier removal events, two (n=2) each were educational support events and general meetings, eight (n=8) were general meetings, and one (n=1) was a leadership development event.

Figure 11: Events by Event Type



One-time events occurred toward the end of the year and included an April 2021 creative mask contest, a May 2021 dinner-style “Chat and Chew” with parents and staff to discuss the development of Cherry Hill’s School Family Compact, as well as a TikTok challenge -- also in May -- encouraging students and families to create videos showcasing self-care methods and activities.

Recurring events included Covid-19 Emergency Grant-Funded Assistance, in which the Community School Coordinator met weekly with families and community members to support applications for \$400 emergency cash assistance to be used for household supplies, food, medications, and other needed items. Additional recurring events included housing support for families experiencing domestic violence and housing safety challenges, monthly meetings of the School Family Council, and production of the bi-monthly Eagle’s Nest Newsletter.

Conclusions

Broadly speaking, the 2020-2021 school year was an unusual, unprecedented one, characterized by substantial disruptions to service delivery, and to a lesser extent, data collection.

The school year began with virtual instruction, and shifted to optional, in-person learning in March. The OST program operated virtually during the school year, and in-person over the summer. Despite the challenges presented by Covid-19 restrictions, approximately the same percentage of students attended 30 or more days of OST programming as they did during the prior school year.

Raw numbers around enrollment and attendance in the OST program were greater during the summer than during the school year. This is not surprising as virtual participation and engagement are especially challenging to maintain. However, those students who did attend the virtual OST program during the school year had very regular attendance.

Exact Path data for Cherry Hill students were not available to report on in the same degree of detail as in past years. This is likely due to a variety of overlapping challenges posed by the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite these challenges, Elev8 Baltimore at Cherry Hill continued to offer a robust suite of daily programming and special events to students, families, and the greater community. In particular, two-thirds of its event programming was recurring, which provides for greater access by community members.

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