

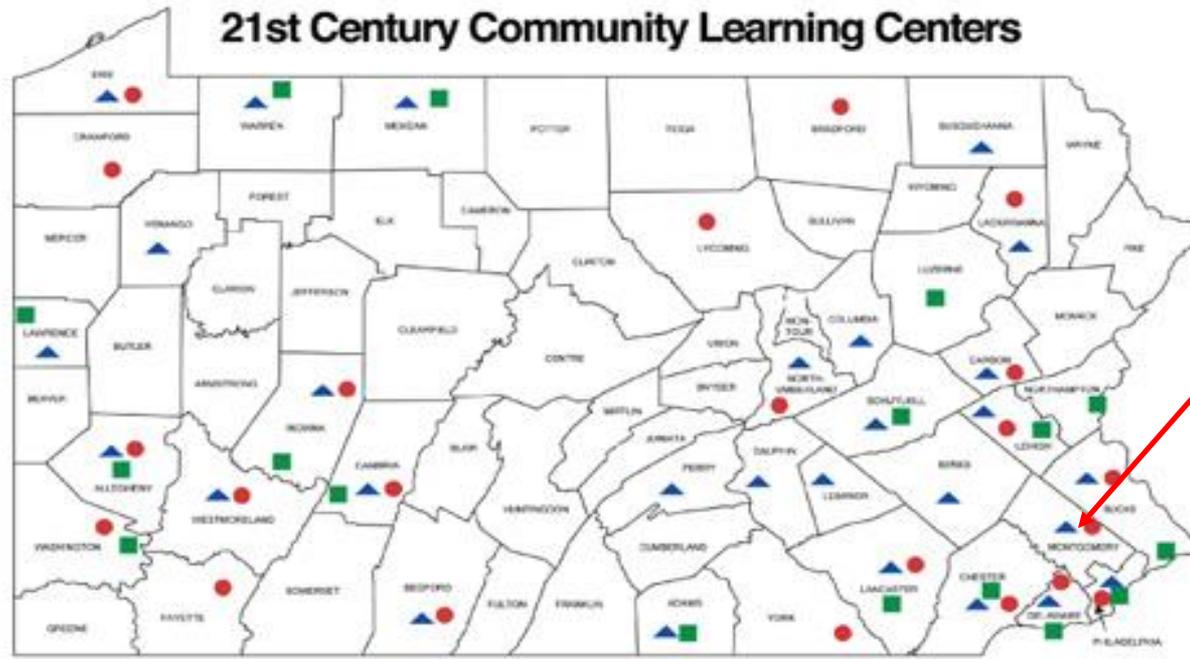
# An Evaluation of the Pottstown 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers' Grant

Cohort 7  
**2015-2016**

Pennsylvania  
**21st Century  
Community Learning Centers**



# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers in Pennsylvania



Pottstown:  
Cohorts 6A  
and 7



● COHORT 6A ▲ COHORT 7 ■ COHORT 8

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CLCs)

- Provide academic enrichment opportunities during out of school time for middle and high school students:
  1. Helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math;
  2. Offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and
  3. Offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children.
- Target students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools.

# Program Design

- **Elementary Schools: Summer Reading Program**
  - Teachers recommend students that they feel would benefit from the extra help.
    - This six week program is held during the morning only.
- **Middle School: Afterschool Program**
  - The middle school afterschool program provides teachers to tutor students in reading, writing, math, social studies, science, and give homework help.
  - Enrichment activities are offered several times a week and include:
    - Nutrition and cooking, art, educational activities related to musical and dramatic arts, reading activities at the Pottstown Regional Public Library, science instruction and an end of the year canoe trip by the Great Valley Nature Center;
    - The Mindworks Curriculum, which offers instruction and activities in math, reading, social studies, and science.
    - Parents can also attend workshops at the YWCA TriCounty Area and Pottstown Family Center in the fall and spring.

# Program Design

- **Middle School: Summer Program**

- The summer middle school program runs for 6 weeks, or 28 days.
- Middle school teachers hold classes in Math and Reading and Language Arts for one and a half hours each morning.
- Class size is usually smaller than the students have during the school year, allowing the teacher to focus more on each student.

- **High School Afterschool Program**

- There were only 14 students who participated in the high school afterschool program for 30 days or more during the academic year.
- The High School afterschool program was based on preparing students for life after high school which included college.
- Last year the State prohibited students from going out of state or overnight to visit colleges, and the program lost its appeal for many

# Program Design

- High School Summer Credit Recover Program
  - For students who have failed a course during the school year.
  - Students are required to attend every day and must pass a test at the end of the program.
  - One hundred six students attended the program from July 1 through August 4, 2016.
  - Many students attended more than one class, and 137 passing and 24 failing grades were earned.

# Pottstown Cohort 7 Attendance

K-4

- 64 in summer

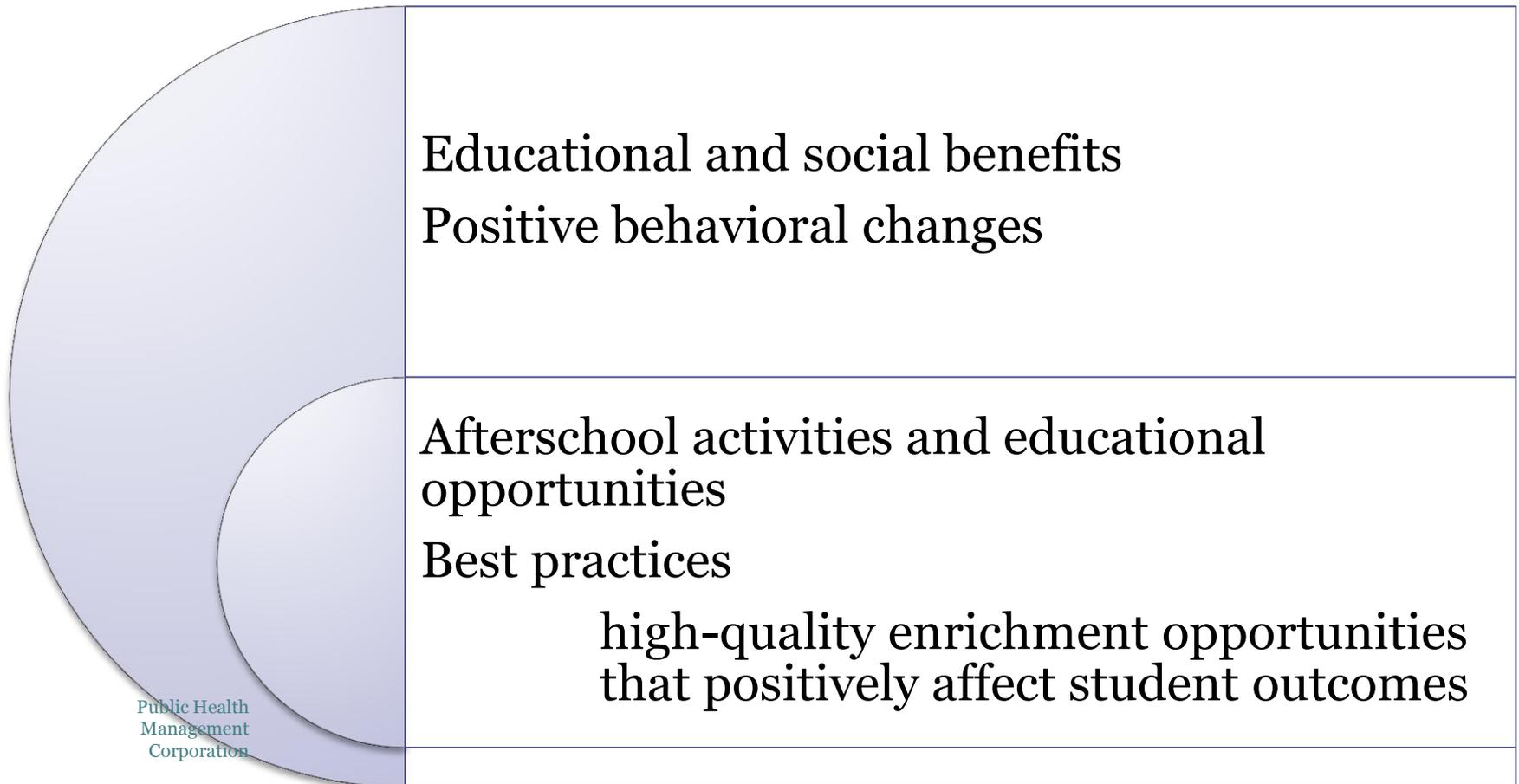
Middle  
School

- 194 in afterschool

High  
School

- 93 in afterschool

# Program Goals



# Program Objectives

**48.5%** of middle or high school regular program participants' **MATH GRADES** will improve from fall to spring;

**48.5%** of program participants' **READING AND ENGLISH ARTS GRADES** will improve from fall to spring;

**25%** of program participants' state assessment **MATH SCORES** will improve from **not proficient to proficient or above**; and

**70%** of students' **ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE** will improve as measured by the Teacher Survey.

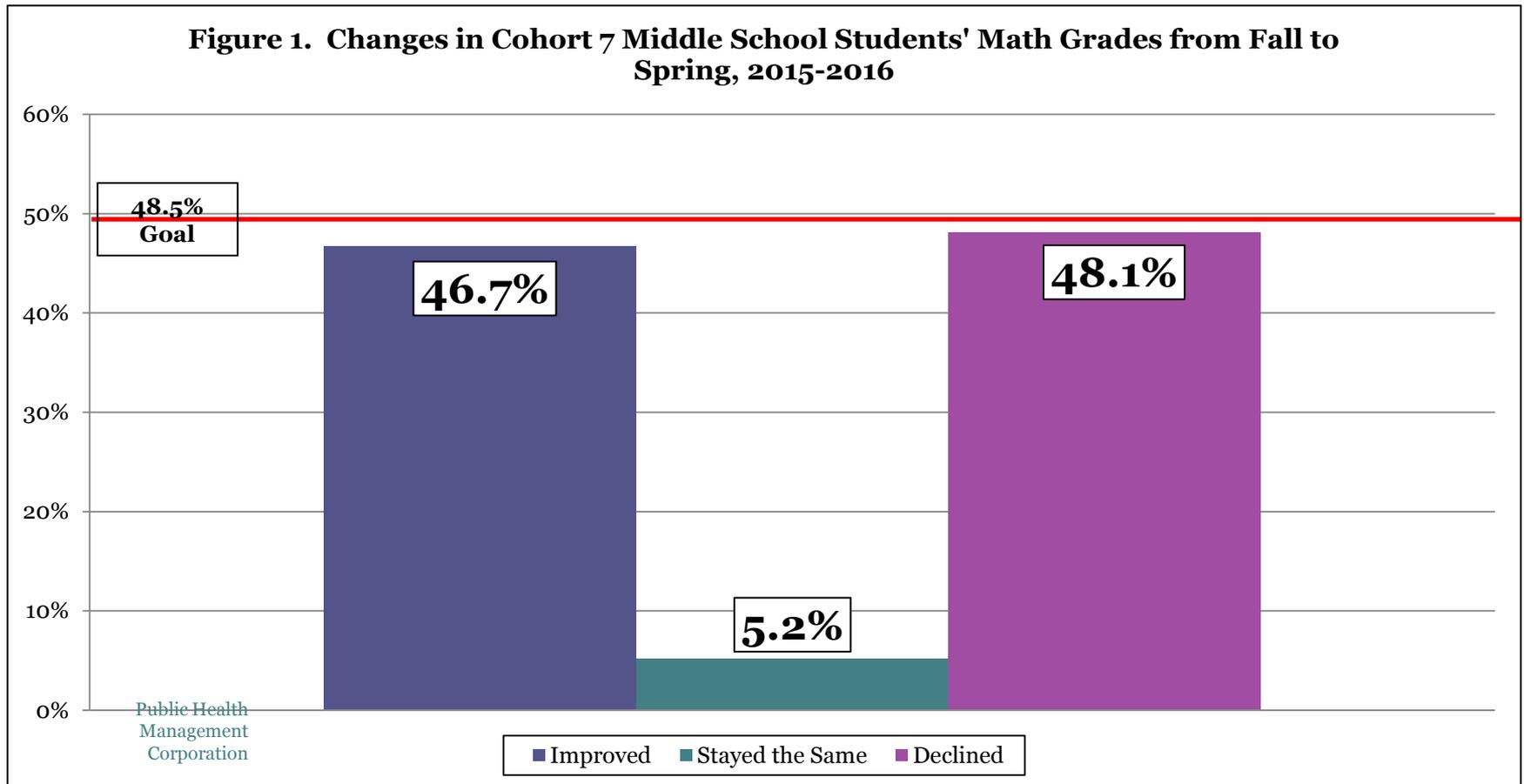
# Middle School Program Results

Program targets for academic improvements were substantially met in two areas:

- Mathematics grades, which improved for 46.7% of the MS students, compared to the target of 48.5%, a difference of 1.8%, which is minimal;
- Reading and Language Arts grades, which improved for 48.2% of the MS students, only a minimal 0.3% less than the target of 48.5%.
- Length of time in the program did not appear to have an impact on grades.

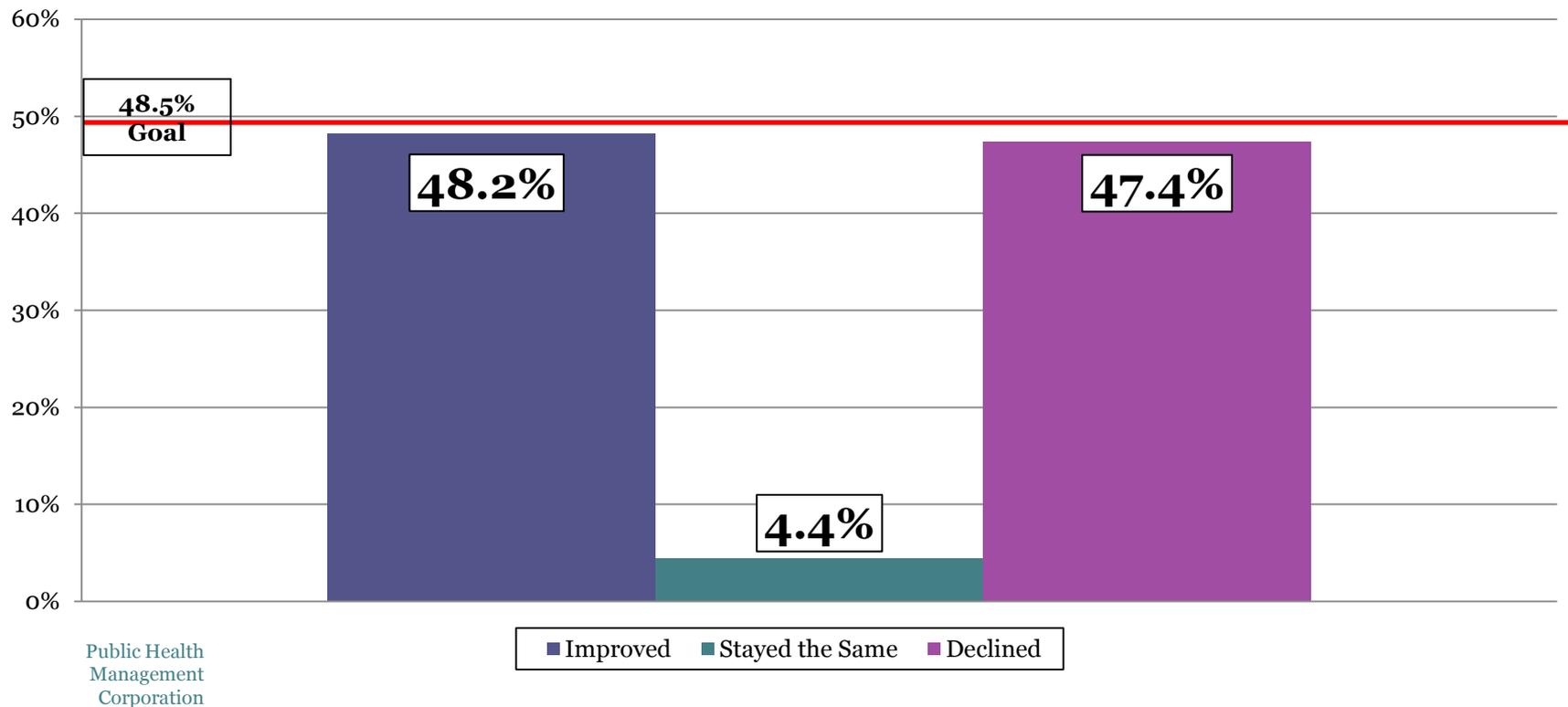
# Changes in Middle School Mathematics Grades

**Figure 1. Changes in Cohort 7 Middle School Students' Math Grades from Fall to Spring, 2015-2016**



# Changes in Middle School Reading/English Language Arts Grades

**Figure 2. Changes in Cohort 7 Middle School Students' Reading/Language Arts Grades from Spring to Fall, 2015-2016**



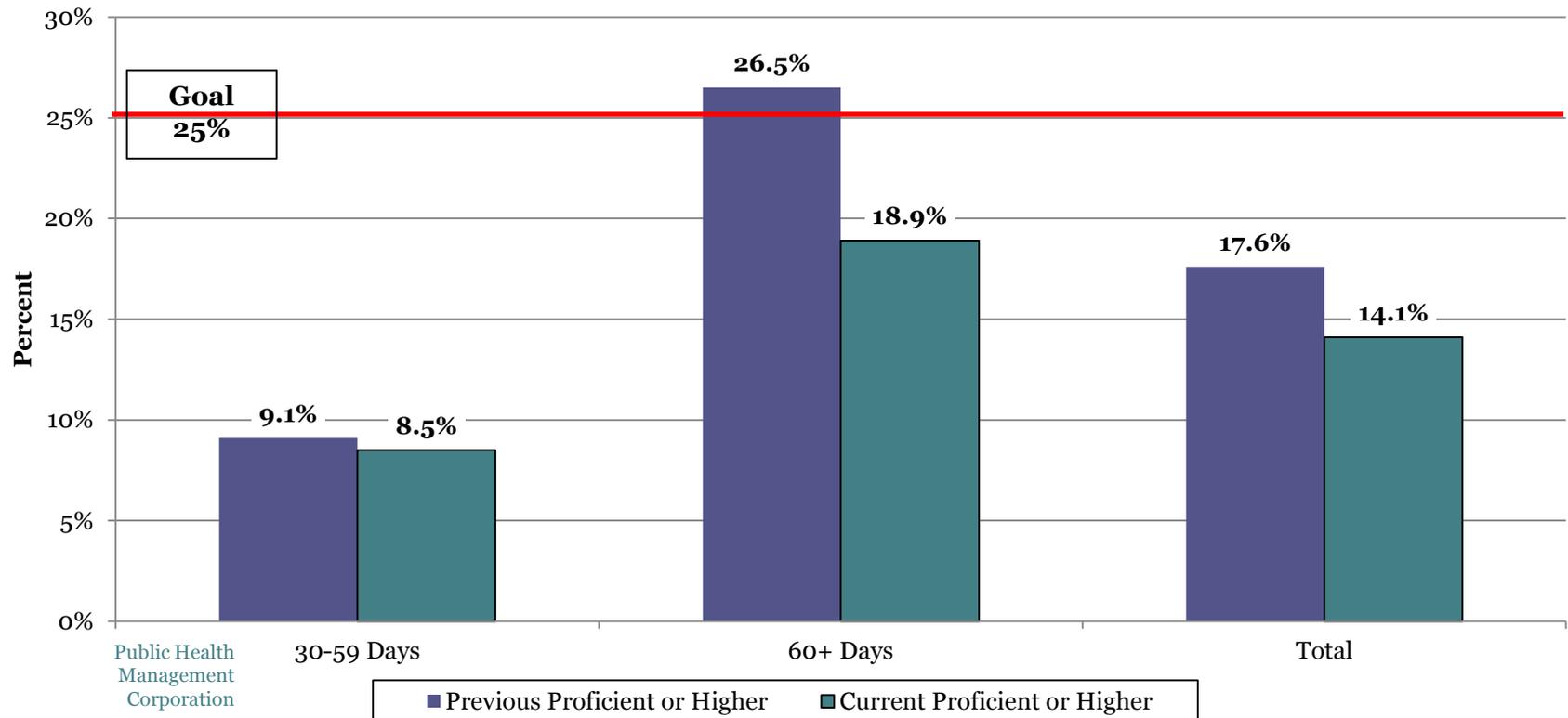
# Middle School Program Results

Program Targets  
were not met for MS  
State Math  
Assessment Scores

- Less than the targeted 25% of all middle school students' current state assessment math scores **did not** improve from proficient or higher (17.6%) in the fall to proficient or above (14.1%) in the spring

# Changes in Middle School PSSA Math Scores by Length of Time in Program

**Figure 3. Previous and Current PSSA Math Proficient or Higher Scores for Middle School 21st CCCLC Students, 2015-2016, by Length of Time in Program**



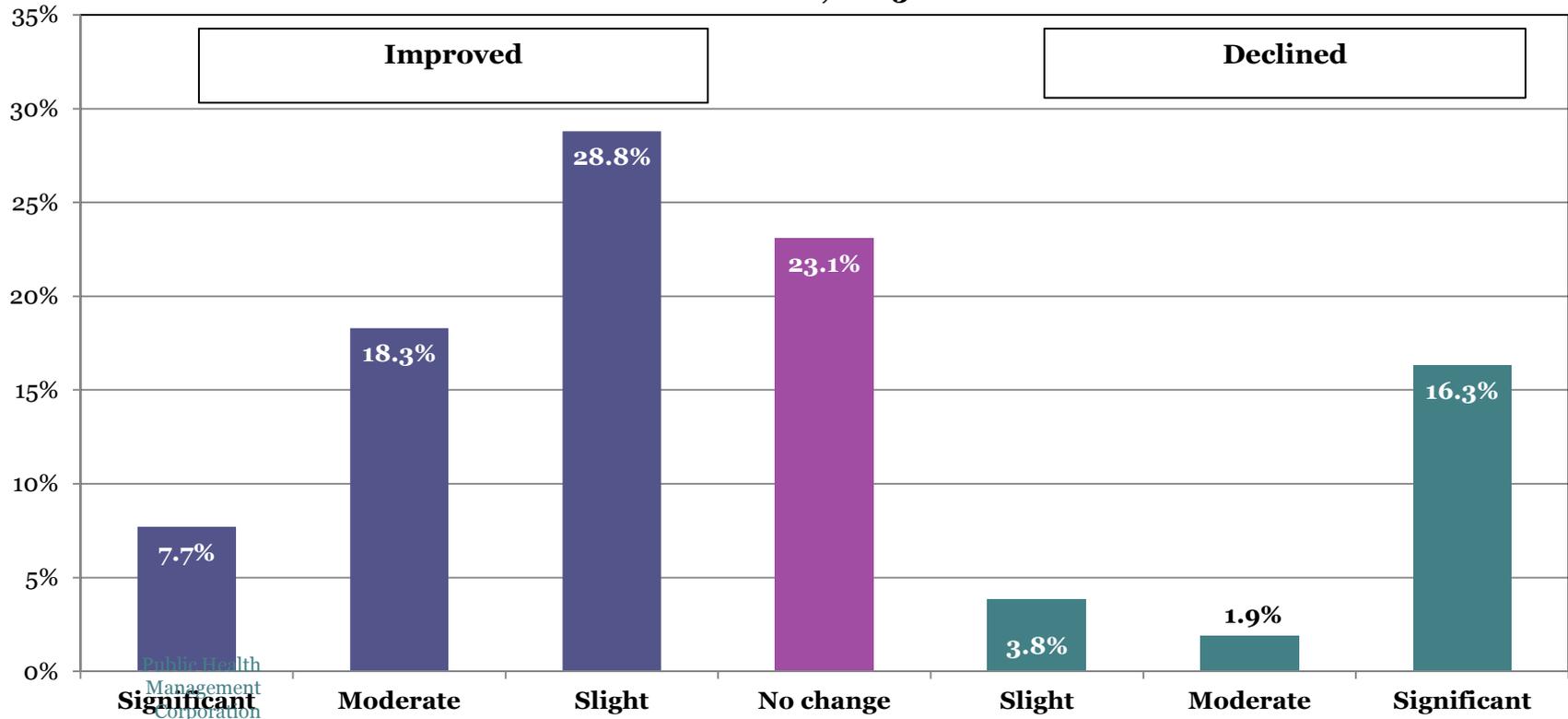
# Middle School Program Results

Program Target (70%)  
was not met for MS  
students' improvement  
in academics

- A majority, or 54.8%, of middle school students improved their academic performance during the afterschool program.

# Changes in Middle School Students' Academic Performance

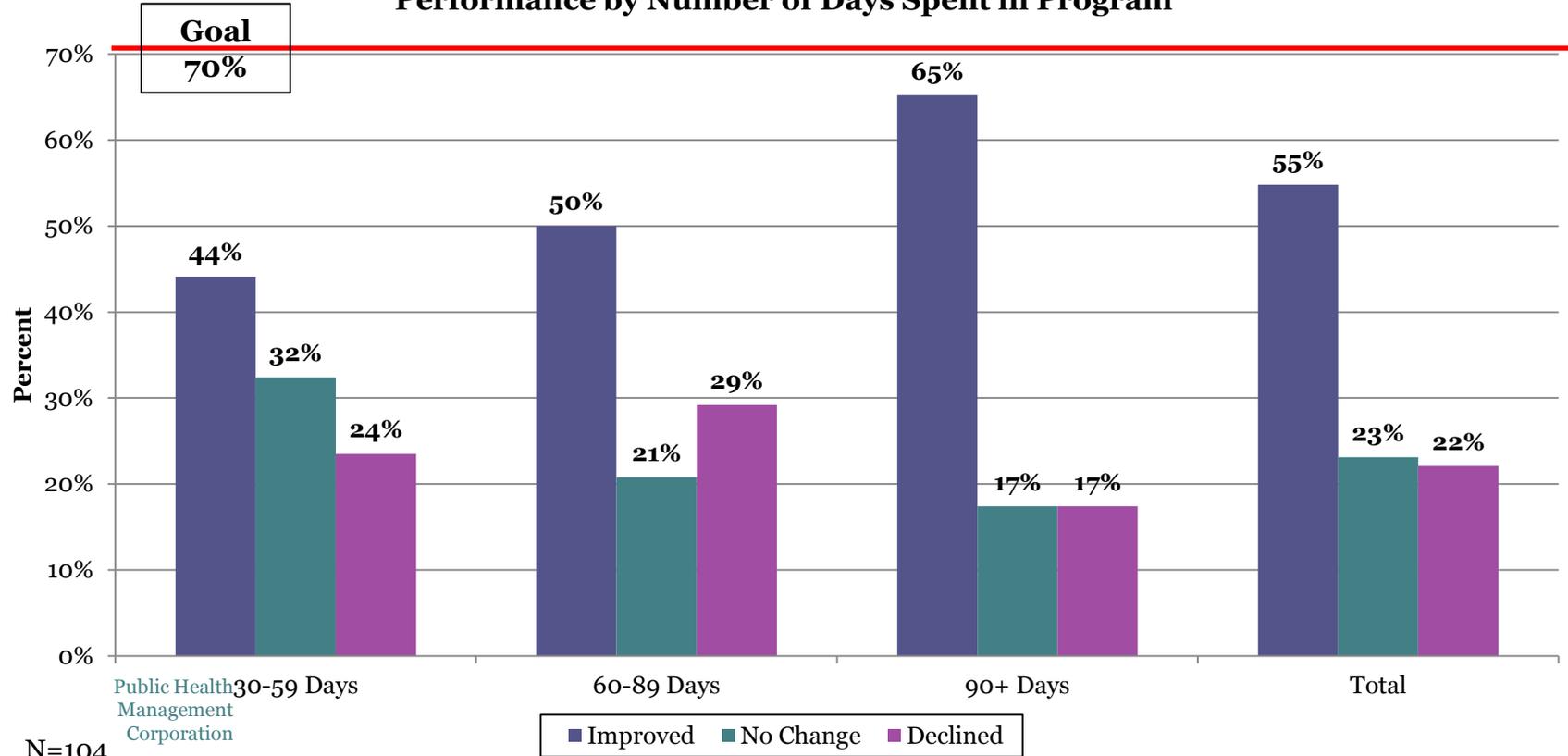
**Figure 4. Changes in Cohort 7 21st CCLC Middle School Students' Academic Performance, 2015-2016**



N=140

# Changes in Middle School Students' Academic Performance by Length of Time in Program

**Figure 5. Pottstown 21st CCLC Middle Schoolers' Change in Academic Performance by Number of Days Spent in Program**



# Program Goals



- Best Practices
  - Student access to programs;
  - Partnership with families, schools, and other community contacts;
  - Level of supervision and structure the program provides;
  - Quality of staff training; and
  - the degree to which program activities are carefully matched with the program's specific goals and objectives

## Best Practices: Access



Access

- Transportation home for middle school students from afterschool and summer programs.

# Best Practices: Partnership

Partnership between  
children, parents,  
and the community

- ArtFusion
- Steel River Playhouse
- Pottstown Regional Public Library
- Great Valley Nature Center
- YWCA TriCounty Area
- Pottstown Family center

# Best Practices: Program Quality

## Supervision

- Students are supervised in small classes.

## Structure

- Program provides structured activities at all levels.

## Staff Training

- Staff attend mandatory 21st CCLC grantee meeting and ELO conference, regional training, and summer institute.
- Teachers are certified in their fields.

## Match with Program Objectives

- Program activities (homework help, tutoring, enrichment) match program objectives (increased grades and test scores, improved behaviors).

# Conclusion

- Pottstown's 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC afterschool and summer program substantially met its goals for improving the Mathematics and reading and English Language Arts grades of the middle school students who participated.
  - It did not meet the goals for improving Mathematics standardized testing scores and academic performance as reported by teachers.
- The program did meet its goals for employing best practices in middle school afterschool programming:
  - It offered extensive academic as well as social enrichment activities on a regular basis that were related to the program's goals and objectives.

# Comments

- In reviewing these evaluation results it might be helpful for project and school district staff to consider whether the targets which were selected are reasonable for this group of students.
  - The evaluation did not include information on how target levels were selected, but the rationale and history behind these targets could provide a helpful addition to the discussion.
- The program goals for the high school afterschool and summer program could not be measured due to the small number of attendees.
  - The project director and staff report that they will discuss this issue with the high school principal in order to increase attendance by removing barriers to college visits.