Linn County Extension had one school in its 21st CCLC program. Johnson Elementary School served a total of 54 participants with 35 students who had regular attendance. Johnson Elementary School is located in the Wellington Heights Neighborhood in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The children who live in Wellington Heights have significantly higher risk factors than youth in other areas of Cedar Rapids. This neighborhood has higher rates of crime, poverty, and unemployment.

85% of the students who attend Johnson Elementary qualify for free or reduced lunches. 69% of the students who attend Johnson Elementary are considered minorities.

The goals of the STARS 21st CCLC to be met during the 2012-2013 school year were:

- Participants will have safe and supportive families, school and community.
- Participants will demonstrate positive social skills and healthy lifestyle choices.
- Participants will be better prepared for a productive adulthood.
- Participants will succeed in school.

The first three goals were met as evidenced by several evaluation tools including: parent surveys, teacher surveys, and staff evaluations of students. Goals were also met through various enrichment activities the students participated in during the summer and school year programming. These activities included: project based learning, trips to local colleges, and programming.

Participants did make academic improvement as evidenced by ITBS scores and teacher surveys, however, the students were not all proficient.

During the summer of 2012, 38 students participated in a six week day camp. Each week of camp, the students participated in different academic activities that correlated with a weekly theme. Each week of camp, students engaged in project based learning activities. During our “Top Chef” week, students had to work together to create their own restaurant. Students learned the basics of cooking, nutrition, and food safety. Students then decided on a restaurant theme, menu items, and costs. Students chose roles (server, chef, etc) for themselves. On Friday, the restaurants were open for business. Two community members visited each restaurant, ordered food off the menus, and scored the service and the food. Each restaurant was given a prize for their hard work and creativity.

Many of our students do not have the opportunity to participate in swimming lessons. As a result, many of our students have limited swimming skills. During our summer camp, students participate in weekly swimming sessions. We do a pre and post evaluation of their swimming abilities.

- 79% of the students of participated in swimming sessions improved their swimming skills.

Another large focus of our summer camp is helping students improve their social skills. We were very intentional about encouraging, demonstrating, and practicing positive social skills. Staff taught lessons on social skills. A social worker from Tanager Place, did a weekly session with the students. The school counselor led a few sessions on “Friendships”
with the students. Staff completed 3 evaluations on students during camp. These evaluations were completed during week one, week three, and week six.

- 70% of the students who were regular attendees at camp showed improvement of social skills.

2012-2013 School Evaluation

The major focus of our school year program is on academics. Every day during the week at STARS, students have time to work on homework with staff assistance. Additionally, we do intentional academic programming 4 days during the week. On Mondays and Wednesdays, STARS staff led the students in various academic activities. During the fall semester, students read and reviewed lots of books. Students then created projects based on the books they read. We had a Reading Fair for parents to view their projects. In the spring, staff focused on science. Students participated in various science projects. At the end of the semester, students were able to create their own science experiments to share with their parents. The pictures below are of our science fair.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, students participated in additional math and reading lessons with a certified teacher from the school. The students put on a performance for the parents at the end of the year highlighting all that they had learned.

We only received test scores for students in 4th and 5th grade per PPICS requirements. Of those students, 57% were proficient in reading and 64% were proficient in math. This may seem low- HOWEVER—last year only 21% of the same students were proficient in reading and only 43% in math. So the percentage of students became proficient in reading increased by 36% and in math it increased by 21%.

What do teachers have to say?

According to the teacher surveys, teachers indicated that STARS participants improved the most in the following areas:

1. Academic performance (46% of students improved)
2. Getting along with others (46% of students improved)
3. Being attentive in class (43% of students improved)

What do parents have to say?

“STARS offers a high value academic curriculum that was not available at other locations we checked into.”
“We highly value the home work help and academic reinforcement she receives here (at STARS) along with social/life skills—which make this a well rounded program!”

“My kids learn and play. It’s both valuable and makes them happy.”

**What do community partners say?**
“I would love to work with this type of program again. I enjoyed working on fun academic lessons and projects with kids in small groups.”

“I feel it is a necessary program and service to offer in the community.”

**What do students have to say?**

Videos