Afterschool Matters

Art Credits

Art work for this issue is provided by the "B-SAFE" afterschool program of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Boston, MA. The B-SAFE Program (The Bishop's Summer Academic & Enrichment Program) is an academic and enrichment program serving young people from first grade through high school. The goal of the program is to build a community where all people feel safe, feel big, and feel connected. Art pieces shown in this issue include crayon drawings, 3D bas relief, and murals. Some pieces were designed with assistance from visiting artist, Will Whelan.

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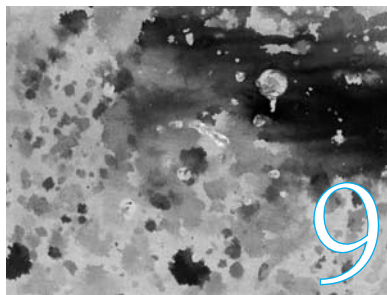
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See the inside back cover for the call for papers for the Fall 2011 issue of Afterschool Matters.

Welcome

As we get ready to go to press with this issue of Afterschool Matters, schools in Massachusetts are opening and first-year Wellesley College students are arriving. In sharing the excitement of getting a new school year underway, inevitably we ask the question, "What did you do this summer?"

Recent papers by Child Trends, "Effective and Promising Summer Learning Programs and Approaches for Economically-Disadvantaged Children and Youth"; by Afterschool Alliance, "Special Report on Summer: Missed Opportunities, Unmet Demand"; and by David Von Drehle, "The Case Against Summer Vacation" call into question longstanding notions of summer vacations spent mindlessly on the beach, at the playground, or in the neighborhood. Significant research on school achievement has identified the academic risk of summers devoid of meaningful learning experiences, particularly for low-resourced children and families.

Based on a review of experimental studies, researchers at Child Trends (Terzian, Anderson, & Hamilton, 2010) recommend seven practices of effective programs. Practices shared by programs that showed positive impact on student outcomes included:

- Make learning fun
- Ground learning in a real-world context
- Integrate hands-on activities
- Provide content that complements curricular standards
- Hire experienced, trained teachers to deliver the academic lessons
- Keep class sizes small

I think you will find that this issue of *Afterschool Matters* jumpstarts the conversation for these fundamental practices—understanding engagement and retention, keeping staff dedicated and trained, meeting needs for quantity and quality of programming, and hands-on learning. We are also highly aware that federal commitment and support for OST programs through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program will be in debate when our legislators return to Washington in mid-September.

We continue to learn more about the role of summer learning and its long-term impact on school achievement. Camping, community-based, and youth-serving organizations are intensely working to strengthen their connections to academic skill building while continuing to provide enriching, fun, and engaging life experiences for youth. We hope this issue of *Afterschool Matters* will help inspire our learning community of OST professionals to more effective service—and as author Lisa Sweet Dilles suggests, "the best of both worlds."

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Work Cited: Terzian, M., Moore, K. A., & Hamilton, K. (2010). *Effective and promising summer learning programs and approaches for economically-disadvantaged children and youth: A white paper for the Wallace Foundation.* Washington, DC: Child Trends.

participation over time

Keeping Youth Engaged from Middle School to High School

by Sarah Deschenes, Priscilla Little, Jean Grossman, and Amy Arbreton

Adolescence is a period of rapid developmental changes. Only in the early years of childhood do individuals experience such a brisk pace of change. However, all too often, out-of-school time (OST) programs do not recognize how quickly the needs and interests of adolescents shift along with their developmental changes. Program staff know—and studies have documented—that, as children enter adolescence, their participation in OST programs

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drops off (American Youth Policy Forum, 2006; Lauver, Little, & Weiss, 2004; Sipe, Ma, & Gambone, 1998). To attract older youth, programs need to offer experiences for teens that look and feel different from those designed for elementary school children. This article, drawing on data collected in a larger study of practices that engage older youth in OST programs over time (Deschenes et al., 2010), shares insights about programs that successfully engage older youth and the strategies they use to maintain high participation rates.

Developmentally, older youth are becoming "not children." Adolescents' pathways are characterized by a set of developmental tasks that prepare them for adulthood: They are learning to make decisions independently from their parents, exploring new roles and identities, forming deeper bonds with peers, and preparing themselves for careers (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2002). Given the potential benefits of OST participation, and recognizing the challenges of participation for older youth, researchers and practitioners share a keen interest in identifying ways to engage adolescents in structured activities outside of school that can provide them with important developmental opportunities.

OST programs that are successful in engaging older youth—in our study and in others—are geared toward supporting these developmental tasks, providing the personal and social assets that help youth successfully navigate through adolescence and into early adulthood (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2002). However, older youth also need programming that will change with them and support them in new developmental stages (Mahoney, Vandell, Simpkins, & Zarrett, 2009). OST program providers, therefore, need to recognize that adolescence entails several distinct stages and calibrate their programming accordingly.

In our study, attention to developmental differences emerged as central to the strategies that kept middle and high school youth engaged in OST programs over time. This article sheds light on how a set of school- and community-based programs with high rates of participation addressed these changing needs. We first present an overview of the larger study and a description of the characteristics of the program sample. We

> In our study, attention to developmental differences emerged as central to the strategies that kept middle and high school youth engaged in OST programs over time.

then detail some of the findings that indicate the importance of addressing developmental differences as a participation strategy.

Study Overview

While many studies have broadly addressed issues of OST participation for older youth or have focused on either middle school youth or high school youth, our recent study of OST participation (Deschenes et al., 2010) compared high-participation programs for both middle school and high school youth to identify which strategies and features are associated with each age group and how programs change their strategies to support these adolescents over time.

The study used a mixed methods design, combining OST participation data on middle and high school youth and program survey data with interview data from site visits in six cities: Chicago; Cincinnati; New York City; Providence, RI; San Francisco; and Washington, DC. These cities were chosen because each has a citywide initiative focused on supporting access to and participation in OST. We obtained survey data from 198 programs and interview data from 28 programs;[1] this article is based on the latter sample.

The primary focus of our research was to identify the program- and city-level strategies and features that keep youth coming to programs over time, specifically for 12 or more months. In the larger sample of 198 programs, we found, through regression analysis of survey data, that a set of program characteristics do seem particularly important in retaining youth for this long, distinguishing programs with higher retention from those with lower retention:[2]

- Being a community-based rather than a school-based program
- Serving 100 or more youth per year
- Offering many opportunities for youth involvement and leadership
- Having staff stay informed about youths' lives inside and outside the program
- Having regular staff meetings to discuss program-related issues

Analyses of the survey data revealed that these key characteristics distinguishing high- versus low-retention

Table 1. Program Characteristics

School-based	46%
Serving 100 or more youth	52%
Age of participants	
Elementary school and older students	**42%**
Middle school students only	**31%**
Middle school and high school students	**12%**
High school students only	**12%**
High school and post high school students	**4%**
Number of years in operation	
1–2	**32%**
3–4	**12%**
5+	**56%**
Operating school year only	**42%**
Open 5+ days a week	**69%**
Only program in its area with its particular focus	**23%**

Study Sample

The programs we report on here were selected to include geographic distribution across the city, a mix of program activities and goals, and service primarily to low-income youth as defined by percentage of free or reduced-price lunch participants. Because we wanted to interview providers of programs with high participation rates, the minimum participation rate among this interview sample was 60 percent, compared to a minimum of 44 percent for the larger survey sample.[3] For both middle school and high school programs, the average participation rate was 79 percent, compared to an average of 65 percent across all programs in our larger sample.

Among the 28 programs in our interview sample, as shown in Table 1, 18 were school-based and 10 were community-based programs; 14 focused on middle-school-aged youth, 8 on high-school-aged youth, and 6 on a combination of the two. Just over half were larger programs serving 100 or more youth. Most served older youth exclusively without elementary school participants. Over half had been in existence for five or more years; almost a quarter (23 percent) were the only programs in their area with their particular focus.

programs were the same for middle school programs and high school programs. However, the qualitative data from our subset of high-participation programs allowed us to explore programs' approaches to retaining middle school youth compared to high school youth at a deeper level of detail, while also providing additional insights that we could not gather from the survey or databases about how programs approached working with middle school and high school youth.

For our analysis of program interviews, based on a grounded theory approach (see Strauss & Corbin, 2007), we focused on the major themes that emerged across programs related to the successes and challenges of achieving high participation and retention rates and what program practices or features were linked to these efforts; we also analyzed program data to understand how programs participate in citywide OST initiatives. We coded interviews using codes developed from a literature review and our early findings, using an iterative process to identify and refine themes and patterns in the data. At the same time, we compared the qualitative findings to our survey analysis to create a fuller picture of which practices help retain adolescents.

Table 2. Youth Served

Eligible for free lunch	87%
Race or ethnicity	
African American	**57%**
Latino/a or Hispanic	**21%**
Asian	**10%**
White	**6%**
Mixed race	**4%**
Native American	**0.1%**
Other	**1%**
Girls	**51%**
Attending other OST activities	**24%**
With siblings in program	**32%**

A vast majority (87 percent) of youth in these programs were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Over 90 percent of the youth served were non-White; program participants were balanced about evenly between boys (49 percent) and girls (51 percent). Programs reported that less than one-quarter of their youth attended other OST activities and that about one-third had siblings in the same program. Table 2 shows the characteristics of the youth served by the programs we studied.

Older Youth, OST, and Developmental Pathways

Providers we interviewed recognized that they need to be prepared for developmental changes as youth move from elementary school to middle school to high school, and that, if they don't anticipate what these changes mean for their programs, they will lose participants' interest. But they also emphasized that each young person is on an individual path. As a director of a Washington, DC, program noted, "In order to reach a kid, you've got to meet them where they are. And if you can meet them where they are, then you can take them somewhere else." As intensive as this individual attention may be, providers noted that it is critical to participants' development, at times compensating for lack of attention at school or at home. Program providers reported using many strategies for this individualized approach to working with youth: Their staff members developed individual relationships with youth, they often allowed for flexibility in scheduling and expectations, and they provided a variety of opportunities to allow youth to excel.

In addition to their understanding of the developmental continuum of adolescence, the providers we interviewed emphasized different program strategies, discussed below, for working with middle and high school youth, based on their respective developmental stages.

Middle School and OST: Peer Relationships, Curiosity, and Structure

Middle-school-aged youth are gaining independence, beginning to make their own decisions about what to do with their time outside of school, forming stronger iden-

tities, and creating tighter bonds with peers (Frederick & Eccles, 2008; National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2002). During these years, developing close relationships with adults beyond their families also becomes important (Eccles & Roeser, 2009).

To support the growing independence and curiosity of early adolescence, developmental research suggests that learning contexts for middle schoolers should provide autonomy and challenge—emphasizing activities that support growth in reasoning; opportunities for mentoring, leadership, and meaningful input; exposure to a wide range of career possibilities; and the social and communication skills to make good choices (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2002). Programs can also support this developmental stage by providing what one researcher calls "avenues for short-term success" (Balfanz, 2009)—activities such as debate, drama, robotics, or chess for students who are strong in these areas and can excel in ways they might not be able to in other activities.

Program providers in our sample observed, however, that middle school students are particularly difficult to recruit. Because these youth are in the process of developing autonomy, they are less inclined to participate in adult-supervised activities during nonschool time—they might want to play basketball at a local court, but not in an afterschool program. They are also less inclined to break from their peer groups to participate in program activities. Other providers noted that middle school is a time when students begin to disengage from school and that detachment from OST activities often accompanies this process. Staff told us that participation was particularly tricky for students who were over-age for their class in school or otherwise lagging behind their peers.

Interestingly, providers noted that even within the middle school years, there were two distinct developmental groups: sixth- and seventh- graders and eighth-graders. Providers recognized that eighth-grade participants needed something "older," specifically geared toward their transition into high school, or they would not continue in the program.

The following are some strategies that programs in this study used to engage middle school students.

> Providers noted that even within the middle school years, there were two distinct developmental groups: sixth- and seventh-graders and eighth-graders. Providers recognized that eighth-grade participants needed something "older," specifically geared toward their transition into high school, or they would not continue in the program.

Time with Friends

Program providers emphasized in interviews that time for socializing is developmentally important and appropriate for middle school youth. Students who may have no recess during the school day or have to sit through a silent lunch need structured time for peer interactions after school.

Programs in our sample structured their middle school activities to ensure that youth had time to do homework with friends, connect with friends before joining activities, or work with friends in small-group activities. Some providers did so primarily by giving youth time to talk. Others described creating team-building exercises for participants, because participation in OST programs is an opportunity to meet new friends and connect with youth who have similar interests. Such opportunities to develop peer relationships in safe, structured environments can help youth create positive peer influences and develop positive social skills.

As one theater program director noted, although adult-structured learning is important, peer-to-peer education is also a powerful tool with this age group, especially when developing important life skills such as communicating effectively and giving and receiving constructive feedback. Staff in this program helped youth "to be a little bit more formal" with each other and gave them the skills to communicate about performances so they could "make each other better" and get an adult's help only when absolutely necessary.

In addition, younger adolescents often make choices about which program to attend based on their increasingly important friendships. According to one provider, "If a friend is doing it, they'll all want to do it." Middle school programs in particular reported that cliques can be a powerful mechanism for keeping youth involved in the program: "If you can offer those cliques what they need in order for them to have a good time, then you have a better chance of them coming, enrolling, and staying." On the other hand, cliques can sometimes be a deterrent. A respondent in Washington, DC, noted that friends often move from program to program together and can create situations that discourage other youth from joining.

New Activities to Try

Youth in the middle school years need not only to socialize but also to explore and test and be curious, using constructive outlets. One provider described the middle school period as "a tipping point" in which youth are still willing to try new things under the right circumstances. Middle school youth need to feel supported and emotionally safe. With some youth beginning to disengage from school, OST providers pointed out, "it's the last chance to engage them." Providers also used the peer group to facilitate participants' willingness to try new activities. One provider in Providence described how youth helped their peers build skills:

> [If] someone is interested, but that skill for them isn't that strong, we can group them in an activity—maybe it's costuming. "Well, I know how to sew, and I can do this activity, and I can put this together." "I'm a really good graphic artist, but Suzy's kind of 'eh' about drawing, I can teach her how to do this." "I'm really good at reading and memorizing my lines. Maybe I can teach you how to memorize your lines."

Middle school is also a time to try out different identities. Through activities such as acting, youth can play out characteristics or personality traits toward which they would not normally gravitate. Many young teens find a voice and a receptive audience in afterschool programs when they otherwise feel silenced and invisible at home or in school. These features of supportive afterschool communities can foster youths' desire to keep returning to programs.

Access to afterschool programs alone is insufficient; quality counts in ensuring that youth have access to supportive, effective afterschool programming.

Exploration within Structure and Routine

Providers conveyed that the peer relationships and exploration that take place in early adolescence need to happen in certain ways in order to be developmentally beneficial. One provider described creating a "tight container" around participants' behavior. Another noted that middle schoolers are "consistently inconsistent." Middle school youth are always changing, so staff members working with them must have the ability to adapt as needed. However, in part because of this inconsistency, middle school youth, according to providers, need structure and routine to help them feel safe and to support their developmental needs.

Routines—for everything from the sign-up process to program activities to transportation—provide an example of creating consistency in programs to support younger teenagers. Providers in our study created many

redundancies for enrollment, for example, to ensure that youth remembered to sign up at the end of the day for a program they found out about at lunchtime. Program staff distributed flyers, hung posters at schools, reminded students if they saw them at school, and even phoned youth who had signed up to remind them to come.

In Providence, one provider noted that they get "one chance" to hook middle school students. If things go wrong on the first day, students are much less likely to return. For instance, if students expect to get on a bus to go home at the end of the day, "and then the bus isn't there to take [them] back when the time comes, they're out, that's it. You lost them." Without the routine to show them that they are safe and supported, younger adolescents will not want to return.

High School and OST: Content Knowledge, Greater Responsibility, and Future Planning

As youth move into high school, they face a new set of challenges that OST programs need to recognize as they work to engage these youth. By high school, youth are much more independent, making their own decisions about how to spend their time and exercising their increasing freedom. They are starting to think about what will come next; many have developed particular interests and goals they want to pursue. These students can benefit from support that helps them plan and set goals for the future, enhances their ability to cope with their new roles and responsibilities, and gives them a greater understanding of their identity, strengths, and weaknesses (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006).

Although our analysis of the larger program sample revealed that the efforts to retain youth were similar in middle school and high school programs (Deschenes et al., 2010), our interview data from the smaller sample indicated a qualitative difference between the strategies for high school versus middle school programs. For example, as one provider acknowledged, "I think the high school programs are easy to run…. I think once you get to the high school level, most of the participants really are motivated to be there, and they're doing it because they *want* to—not because they *have* to." In addition, high school youth have more opportunities and greater demands on their time than do middle school youth; for example, they often have more family, school, and work responsibilities. Thus, although high school youth are

motivated to be there, providers cannot expect them to attend OST programs every day. Instead, successful high school programs look for "sustained but not daily attendance" (Friedman & Bleiberg, 2007).

Our study revealed that the following strategies, all of which touch on older youths' goal orientation, are important to the high-participation programs for high school youth.

Emphasis on Content

Providers of the high-participation programs in our sample reported that they met their participants' goal-oriented interests by offering strong content and exposing youth to new ideas (see also Chaskin & Baker, 2006; Friedman & Bleiberg, 2007). Older teens know what they want to learn in their out-of-school time. As a result, high school programs tended to have a narrower, more content-based emphasis than the middle school programs, concentrating on, for example, law or technology or music.

While some providers noted the difficulty of recruiting high school students because they have so many more options and responsibilities than middle schoolers, many of the high school programs with high rates of participation appeared to be more targeted in their approach to programming for older teens. As a result of this focus, high school programs, more than middle school programs, tended to have staff who had deep content knowledge (Grossman, Lind, Hayes, McMaken, & Gersick, 2009; Russell et al., 2008). Programs that meet high school youths' desire for more specific activities and training may therefore be more likely to effectively hold youths' attention.

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Responsibility and Leadership Opportunities

OST programs for high school youth often turn over to the teens significantly more of the responsibility for programs' operations, through, for example, paid jobs in the program or youth councils. To prepare youth for the responsibilities they would face in the workplace, for instance, Chicago's After School Matters provided participants with a series of jobs in an apprenticeship ladder and required professional behavior in those jobs.

Several other providers mentioned the importance of having high expectations for youth, and some tied these expectations to their retention rates. One program

assigned all its students the middle name "No Excuses." In another program, students were always expected to come to their college prep classes with the proper notebook, having done their work, and with a good attitude. Consequences for not being prepared were clearly communicated and enforced. The director noted, "I think this year we haven't lost one person because of [our expectations]. . . . Kids say, 'Wow. They *are* serious about it.'" These expectations convey to youth that staff care and are committed to their success.

Additionally, programs give high school participants more responsibility through mentoring so that they have the opportunity to work with peers or younger participants. With this additional responsibility and accountability, youth may develop stronger bonds with the programs and feel more compelled to continue their participation.

The Path after Graduation

High school teens, according to one observer, are beginning to ask, "What about jobs? What about when I leave school? What's out there for me?" Programs reported addressing these concerns about youths' goals in a variety of ways, including formal and informal college preparation. While one high school program in our study was geared to college access and enrollment, another supported college goals as an embedded part of the programming. In the latter program, college students shepherded high school students through college research and applications, although this was not a formal activity. Through conversations about expectations, high school youth came to understand the importance of higher education to achieving their goals. Older participants, as a "give back" to the program, showed high school students how to fill out college applications, get scholarships, and decide on schools to attend. Similarly, apprenticeships and other job-related programs help older teens build the skills they will need to succeed in a range of occupations after high school; these include job-specific skills, knowledge of appropriate workplace behavior and appearance, and problem-solving skills. These ideas about a future payoff give youth a reason to return to programs.

Staying in Sync with Older Youths' Needs

As many of the program providers in this study understood, adolescence is a time of rapid transformation. A sixth-grader, an eighth-grader, a high school sophomore, or a high school senior each has a particular set of needs and desires. Programs that are successful at attracting and retaining older youth pay attention to the developmental "fit" between their target participants and their program activities, characteristics, and practices. Some programs choose to target youth at a particular stage, such as older high school students; others serve a broader age range but change the experiences and environment of their participants as they age. As our study suggests, the dimensions that programs tailor to fit developmental stages include the activity selection and choices, the structure of the program, levels of responsibility expected, and the future payoff of programming.

Regardless of their approach, programs that successfully attract and engage older youth attend to the changing nature of adolescents by recognizing and honoring each individual's pathway but also by using different program features for youth of different ages and stages in their education. Middle school programs respond to youths' need for peer interaction and desire to try new things while maintaining routines and structure. High school programs support youths' interest in specific content, their desire for more responsibility, and their need to plan for their postsecondary future. Both provide youth with a community of adults to support them through their adolescent journey. The degree to which programs are in sync with their participants affects their ability to attract and retain older youth—and ultimately the degree to which they can help youth benefit from developmentally important opportunities outside of school.

Acknowledgement

> Programs that are successful at attracting and retaining older youth pay attention to the developmental "fit" between their target participants and their program activities, characteristics, and practices.

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Notes

[1] Most programs' participation rates were calculated based on data gathered from citywide OST databases; a few programs were chosen for the study based on reputation.

[2] Please see the full report for details on our quantitative analysis.

[3] Participation rates were calculated based on the management information system (MIS) daily attendance data provided to us by each city's OST initiative. In general, we calculated average program participation rates as the proportion of program sessions youth attended, averaged across all youth attending the program. For example, a youth who comes to half the sessions offered would have a participation rate of 50 percent; if a second youth has a 100 percent participation rate (attending all the sessions offered), the program's average participation rate across both youth participants would be 75 percent. The average participation rate is based on four of the six cities in the study.

using professional development to enhance staff retention

by Denise Huang and Jamie Cho

It was my intention to work here for the summer and then leave and go be a sports agent somewhere. But after three months of enjoying what I was doing and realizing there was really a connection here working with kids that I decided to stay on, change my major from communications to child development and began my career from school age.… I worked really hard, got my units, became the child care director here.… I truly believe that I was really born to be in this field.

With these words, Carol summarized a decision that led to 15 years of service at a community-based afterschool program. As a college student, she never anticipated a career in education, yet, with one summer experience forced on her by her mother, she felt connected and that she was "born to be in this field." Fueled by her enthusiasm, she moved up the ranks from child-care provider to director and eventually to executive director.

With her passion for education and devotion to the program, Carol is the ideal afterschool employee. However, her 15-year tenure makes her an exception in the afterschool arena, which is plagued by high staff turnover (Spielberger, 2001). This article discusses strategies for retention, with particular attention to the role of professional development in retaining staff.

The data and research findings for this paper were derived from two studies. The first was commissioned

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to the National Afterschool Partnership (NAP)[1] by the U.S. Department of Education to evaluate effective practices at the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLCs). The purpose of this study was to develop resources and professional development tools related to the establishment and sustainability of afterschool programs nationwide. Using rigorous methods, researchers identified 53 high-functioning programs representative of eight geographic regions, including rural, urban, community-based, and school district related programs. Exemplary practices in organization, structure, and especially in content delivery were examined.[2]

The second study, the Extension Study,[3] was set up to further evaluate how effective programs retain high-quality staff members. Four of the 53 programs in the NAP Study were examined in greater depth regarding staff recruitment, professional development, staff retention, and student outcomes. This paper extracts critical data and findings from both studies to reflect on how professional development may create a program climate conducive to effective staff retention. Findings discussed in this article are consistent with extant literature on professional development and support state licensure guidelines and accreditation standards.

Research Methods

The sample for the NAP Study consisted of 53 21st CCLC programs serving elementary and middle school students. They were chosen between 2004 and 2006 based on the Annual Performance Reports (APRs) or Profile and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS).[4] Each had met stated goals or had shown improvements in student achievement for two consecutive years. In addition, each program demonstrated promising practices in one or more of six content areas: reading, math, science, arts, technology, and homework help. For the Extension Study, four programs, one each from California, Florida, Indiana, and Texas, were selected from the original 53 programs. Based on PPICS or state standardized test data, these programs had gains in student achievement for the school years 2005–2006 and 2006–2007. Both district-affiliated and community-based programs were included in the sample. The number of staff employed at each site ranged from approximately 6 to 20. Project directors reported being in their positions 1–15 years, site coordinators 1–6 years, and instructors 1–13 years.

The NAP Study used a mixed-method strategy of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Qualitative methodology was selected for the Extension Study since such methods are most effective in revealing staff and parent perspectives. Various interview protocols were developed for project directors, site coordinators, site instructors, and parents to specifically address questions about staff qualifications, hiring and retention, relationships, and professional development.

The Importance of Staff Retention

Research has indicated that participation in afterschool programs is beneficial to students' academic development and social adjustment (American Youth Policy Forum, 2003; Posner & Vandell, 1999). Participation likewise protects students from becoming victims of crime and reduces teen pregnancy, smoking, and drug use (Fox, Flynn, Newman, & Christeson, 2003). These positive outcomes can be attributed to a number of factors, including homework help, enrichment activities, and enhanced motivation through engagement with the afterschool staff (U.S. Departments of Education & Justice, 2000).

The literature also shows that a positive relationship with just one caring adult can serve as a protective buffer for at-risk students (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990). For example, positive relationships with adult mentors in Big Brothers Big Sisters has resulted in increased academic achievement and school attendance, as well as a reduction in risky behaviors, for the participating youth (Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Hall, Yohalem, Tolman, & Wilson, 2003).

Similarly, the NAP Study reveals that one of the most important components of afterschool programs in determining student success is the availability of positive adult role models. The findings further indicate that the staff working in these successful programs were above the national average in their years of experience and education levels, were motivated by intrinsic goals, and, most importantly, developed positive relationships with students and their families. The study identifies the presence of a qualified, motivated staff with a low turnover rate as an essential component in high-quality afterschool programming. Compared to the California afterschool staff turnover rate of 40 percent or more each year ("School-age care in California," 1996, p. 1), the NAP Study programs had 43 percent of the staff remaining at the same program for 3 to

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5 years, 14 percent of the staff remaining at the same program for 6 to 9 years, and 9 percent of the staff remaining at the same program for 10 or more years.

This evidence underscores the degree to which afterschool staff influence students' social and academic outcomes. However, little is known about how programs can retain quality staff or what role professional development plays in sustaining staff motivation. The purpose of the Extension Study was to reduce the research gap and examine how staff qualifications, hiring decisions, relationships among staff, and professional development opportunities interact to create a program climate that is conducive to student learning.

> All staff reported that they were adequately prepared for their job responsibilities through orientations, trainings, and shadowing opportunities.

Strategies for Retaining Staff

Raley, Grossman, and Walker (2005) state that, despite the benefits of positive relationships with adult role models in afterschool programs, hiring and retaining qualified staff members often poses a challenge. They found that, because funding for salaries was limited, afterschool staff were often paid low wages and worked in part-time or temporary positions, which they would eventually leave in favor of full-time or higher paying jobs. Fortunately, Raley and colleagues (2005) also identified strategies, in addition to higher salaries, that can help to retain high-quality staff:

- Hiring staff who have passion, respect, and concrete skills for working with young people
- Aligning staff skills with tasks
- Making training substantive and accessible; offering day-to-day staff development
- Monitoring program quality

Among these strategies, professional development, which encompasses the last two items on the list, is frequently mentioned by other studies (Flores, 2007; Zhang & Byrd, 2005). Professional development is important for retaining qualified staff because it provides opportunities for growth and can improve worker satisfaction. Furthermore, professional development increases staff efficacy and feelings of competency, thereby bolstering motivation and a sense of belonging in the program (Huang et al., 2007).

For the purposes of this paper, we define *professional development* as any learning opportunity that provides skills and knowledge for both personal development and career advancement; these opportunities range from conferences and lectures to informal learning opportunities in the workplace. As illustrated by the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (2008), the variety of approaches to professional development include consultation, coaching, communities of practice, lesson study, mentoring, reflective supervision, and technical assistance. Speck and Knipe (2005) describe professional development as intensive and collaborative, ideally incorporating an evaluative stage. The following sections discuss key elements in Raley, Grossman, and Walker's (2005) theory on professional development and use the data gathered in the NAP and Extension Studies as examples.

Setting the Stage

All programs in the Extension Study said that they offered continuous professional development to their staff members. These opportunities ranged from job orientation and preparation for new employees, to professional development for existing staff, to meetings and other informal opportunities for communication and collaboration among stakeholders.

These four programs all held orientations for new staff. These orientations introduced employees to the physical space of the program; outlined the safety concerns and needs of the students; and defined roles, duties, and responsibilities for specific staff members. All staff reported that they were adequately prepared for their job responsibilities through orientations, trainings, and shadowing opportunities. The executive director at the California program said that new staff were given the opportunity to shadow a veteran staff member:

> The majority of them will do two days at a shadowing site. So they will go over there and learn the ropes and see the program with another group leader, or the program's leader will sit with them and just show them everything…. And then they'll go to their site.

Additionally, new staff received materials to familiarize them with their programs. One project director explained that all new employees received job-specific manuals:

> Their staff manual serves as their bible; it has everything that the program does, everything that they should be doing. It has their standards in it and their

job description, so at any time they can go back and remind themselves, "This is what I should be doing." As far as our supervisors, they have the same thing. Once they're hired, we have a program supervisor manual so we go through that…. It has eight categories, and it talks about finances, staff development, enrollment responsibilities, and stuff like that.

In addition, for specific afterschool curricula such as literacy programs or technology, science, or conflict resolution classes, the instructors attended specific trainings on the delivery of these curricula.

Providing Formal Training

Research shows that continuous professional development is needed to maintain staff efficacy (Duran & Duran, 2005). Halpern, Spielberger, and Robb (2001) stress that regular staff training can improve the quality of afterschool programming. Opportunities for formal professional development at these four programs ranged from periodical to monthly and from voluntary to mandatory. The differences were mostly based on job titles, with site coordinators receiving the majority of professional development opportunities. The interpretation of *professional development* also seemed to vary by position. In general, staff reserved the term for formal lectures and workshops, while the management considered training, staff meetings, regular feedback, and shadowing opportunities part of their staff's professional development.

Formal professional development and training catered to the needs of the employees. For site coordinators, professional development mostly focused on site management and job-specific uses of technology for management purposes. For non-certified staff, training generally emphasized classroom management and academic or enrichment programming. However, staff members who were certified teachers rarely participated in these trainings, since the information repeated the professional development for their day-school jobs. All program directors and site coordinators emphasized the importance of detecting the specific professional development needs of their staff members.

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When funding was an issue, these programs attempted to resolve the problem through innovation. For example, in order to provide professional development for all staff members, the Florida program worked hard to connect with the county's educational offices. Consequently, all afterschool activity leaders participated in a countywide teacher work day as well as a county-sponsored conference at a local middle school.

Another cost-saving strategy to maximize external benefits was the "train the trainer" approach, described by a Florida site coordinator:

Funding is always an issue, but we make do. One of the things we've learned is if we can't take everybody, we're going to take the teachers or the activity leaders or coordinators who will come back and bring back the information. So we actually have a workshop within a workshop. They'll get the information, even if they're presenting; we come back and we share that information with everybody else.

Offering Day-to-Day Professional Development

More crucial than formal training is day-to-day professional development in the forms of mentoring and coaching of afterschool staff (Raley et al., 2005). Birmingham, Pechman, Russell, and Mielke (2005) state that meetings and open dialogue with staff help to strengthen staff professionalism.

Staff Meetings

The four programs in the Extension Study held regular staff meetings to enhance staff knowledge and skills. All four program directors reported that they held site coordinator meetings at least once a month. Besides addressing daily operational issues such as deadlines, memos, and training on, for example, particular computer software or the Internet, these meetings provided opportunities for managerial staff to share information about what was and was not currently working at their sites and to strategize future improvements. One site coordinator from Indiana added:

During our site coordinator meetings we normally discuss what went on at the professional development. Last time we had two representatives that actu-

ally led a session based on their professional development workshop. So they redid their sessions and we were able to see what they did at the presentation.

Site coordinators also reported holding regular site-level staff meetings as a form of informal professional development. In contrast to the site coordinator meetings, site staff meetings varied greatly in frequency from weekly to monthly to as-needed. At many sites, the credentialed teachers who worked in the afterschool program offered job-specific preparation to their colleagues. They might, for example, mentor new staff by answering questions and telling them about site rules or provide training on how to work with students. At the Florida program, one of the credentialed teachers prepared new staff by teaching them about lesson planning:

> One thing we do is make sure that the afterschool staff have a format for the lesson plans. We are able to recycle some lesson plans to tweak them, make them a little better, fit the group that we are teaching that year. But most of the time we want to make sure that they have the lesson plans and they know this is the benchmark we're trying to go over at this point.

Staff meetings were also used as opportunities for team building, collaboration, and support. Staff members shared information, talked about difficulties, and received feedback or advice. Staff meetings were thus opportunities for mutual learning and mentoring.

Leveraging Human Capital

Another common theme among these four programs was that the project directors and site coordinators worked to maintain a family atmosphere characterized by collaboration and open communication among students, staff, parents, and day-school staff.

By using regular meetings and daily operations as professional development opportunities, these programs shared their vision, fostered team-building strategies, and maintained positive working environments as a means to motivate and retain staff members. To enhance a sense of belonging for the staff members, the four programs maintained an open and trusting environment where staff could ask questions, seek support and advice, and feel

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accepted. One site coordinator described the relationships at his site:

> When I go to work I feel it's more of a family because it's someone I can just go and talk to. For example, [the program director] is someone I can talk to about things that are happening in my life. He's also in the professional demeanor where I know if I have a problem here at school I can just go and talk to him about it.

Open communication was also perceived as imperative in the collaboration with the day school. Program leaders uniformly stressed the importance of maintaining familiarity and openness across organizational boundaries. Frequent meetings, e-mails, phone calls, and informal conversations were key in helping bridge day-school and afterschool programs. One project director explained his relationship with the day-school principals this way:

> I could pick up the phone [and talk to] any one of [the principals] today…. We're on a first-name basis, where we're very collegial. It could be just a "How do you think we could do this better?" Or they'll call and ask, "Can we do this? Do you think I should do this?" So I think it's a two-way street. It's not my way or the highway.

Day-school teachers who also worked at the afterschool programs served as liaisons between the two entities. They actively related information between the day-school and afterschool staff and monitored students' activities in both settings. Thus, when afterschool staff members identified an academic or behavioral issue, they would approach the day-school teacher freely. As one afterschool staff member said:

> You do talk to the teacher and say, "How's so-and-so doing in math? Because I helped them with it on Tuesday, and he seemed like he got it or it seemed like he didn't get it." And I think the more you work with [the students] after school, the more you can communicate with the teacher. It's almost like going backwards. You start off with the kid, then you talk to the teacher.

Finally, all four programs stressed the importance of extending this open communication to program volunteers and parents. Volunteers, often college students, were recruited with the incentives of flexible daily schedules, the opportunity for practical experience, and the chance to

contribute to society. All programs reported that these volunteers played a critical role in reducing stress on staff members by lowering staff-to-student ratios. Leadership was therefore intentional about keeping them in the flow of open communication. Parents uniformly benefitted from the multi-tiered flow of communication. They reported that the afterschool staff showed caring attitudes toward their children and were quick to address their concerns.

A climate of openness, teamwork, and collaboration helped staff members fulfill their intrinsic desire to make a difference. Many staff members mentioned this motivation as a reason for staying with their programs. They claimed that they were "passionate" about their jobs and enjoyed working with the students, as described by this staff member:

> I just like being able to be in this position and to help children. You know, as a teacher I think when you're really passionate about it, you make a difference in whatever way you can. Sometimes it may not be that I'm providing instruction. It may be that I'm just providing a social need or an emotional need for kids.

Providing Evaluative Structures

To reinforce this motivation, staff needed to know whether they were doing a good job and how to improve their skills so they could continually make a difference in students' lives. All four programs had formal or informal evaluation procedures in place for monitoring student academic outcomes, parent satisfaction, and managerial strategies. Although all four programs mentioned strong objectives in developing the well-being of the whole child, they had particularly strong commitments to goals that focused on academic achievement and improving grades or test scores. These goals were measured by tracking student progress on homework assignments, tests, and report cards.

Staff Feedback

Staff were formally evaluated in all four programs, whether by the administration of the afterschool program, the school district, or the day-school principal. Results were used to monitor program progress and to provide the framework for future professional development.

Moreover, as a strategy for continuous improvement, site coordinators provided verbal feedback on a daily basis, usually through casual or impromptu conversations. Unplanned classroom observations were also conducted by site coordinators and by most principals. The regularity of these informal forms of feedback was evidence of the trusting relationships between the site coordinators and their staff. Furthermore, informal feedback enabled site coordinators to build rapport with their staff, enhance the intrinsic motivation that inspired the staff to stay with the program, and provide a platform for staff to monitor and improve their own teaching strategies, using their skills and talents to make a difference with their students.

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Personalized Staff Development

More specifically, as part of the day-to-day professional development, all four programs gave staff autonomy to create and implement personal goals. One program conducted highly structured staff reviews using a tool developed by its external evaluator. This review enabled staff members to determine their personal goals for the following year. Some goals were self-directed: "I will gain better control of my class" or "I will work with Johnny to get all his homework completed." Others were project-oriented: "I will use this [strategy/curriculum] for eight weeks and I expect my student to [innovation results expected] after this time."

These goals were revisited six months later—sooner if needed—during a formal meeting in which a staff member's immediate supervisor provided individual feedback and encouraged personal ownership. The site coordinator said:

> [We sit every staff member] down at one point and share, "This is where I feel you are right now; these are your areas of growth and the next time we review this, this is where I would like to see you." They also have to write out their goals, and they're held accountable for those goals so that the next time we sit down, we can ask "What did you accomplish from your goal?"

What Matters to Afterschool Staff

Results from the four programs support current literature on professional development (Duran & Duran, 2005; Flores, 2007; Halpern et al., 2001; Raley et al., 2005). Study findings also revealed that critical components of staff retention include:

- Providing clear guidelines and expectations for responsibilities
- Giving staff opportunities to develop their skills and be supported in their professional expertise

Both of these key components were clearly evident in the programs of the Extension Study. Because of mandatory orientations, all staff members were able to clearly describe their roles and understood the program's expectations of themselves and their students. Shadowing opportunities further clarified responsibilities and expectations in advance.

Although external professional development was available to some staff, most support occurred on-site in the forms of daily interactions, personal communications, group meetings, and collaborations among staff members. These regular development opportunities allowed staff to constantly build new skills and maintain up-to-date information about their sites and the field. To keep staff members motivated and engaged, programs invited them to make and meet personal goals. Constant feedback enabled continuous improvement. Regular meetings provided opportunities for management and site-level staff to work together smoothly and efficiently in a family atmosphere.

Not surprisingly, staff across the four afterschool programs consistently reported an intrinsic reason for working in the program. Interview data further implied that incentives such as a career ladder and an ascending pay scale were not enticing enough to recruit or retain staff. A majority of the interviewees stated that the pay was not an incentive, regardless of whether the pay was viewed as good or inadequate. The key reasons staff gave for staying in the afterschool program were altruistic—for example, the chance to provide students with academic, social, and emotional support. One staff member said, "I know for me, I probably could go and find another job with the state and make more money. I'm sure of it, but that doesn't interest me. I love being here."

Interview results from the four sites also supported the idea that providing well-tailored, continuous professional development can enhance staff efficacy, motivation, and retention. In the current economic situation of constant budget cuts, finding that the most effective professional development need not take place in external conferences and workshops is encouraging. Intentional daily communication, feedback, and targeted on-site professional development opportunities do not entail additional costs to programs—but they matter to the staff more than external professional development and may serve as incentives to stay with the program and the profession. Notably, a number of staff members implied that they or their colleagues were encouraged to stay in the programs due to good working relationships with their immediate supervisors and the support received from them. As one instructor explained:

> [The site coordinator] has such a love for the staff and the children, and she hires people that have those kinds of personality traits. She has a lot of care and concern for the teachers and the students, and she asks us, "What can I do for you today? Do you have unmet needs?" And that interest is enough to make people want to stay.

Daily support, mentoring, and training were abundant at these high-functioning afterschool programs, helping to improve program quality and staff satisfaction. Most of these day-to-day professional development offerings were disguised as informal meetings or casual conversations with colleagues and supervisors. Furthermore, staff were empowered and supported in developing personal goals and objectives. Together with the family atmosphere created through open communication, teamwork, and support—not only within the program but often also with the host school—these programs were able to build rapport with their staff and motivate the staff to stay with the program.

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Notes

[1] The National Afterschool Partnership consists of the Southwest Educational Laboratory (SEDL); the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST); the Mid-Continent Resources for Education and Learning (McREL); the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL); the WGBH Educational Foundation; SERVE Inc.; the Institute for Responsive Education (IRE); and the U.S. Department of Education.

[2] For details, see the CRESST Final Report 768 "What works? Common practices in high functioning after-school programs across the nation in math, reading, science, arts, technology, and homework—A study by the National Partnership" (Huang, Cho, Mostafavi, & Nam, 2010).

[3] For details, see CRESST Report 769, "Examining practices of staff recruitment and retention in four high-functioning afterschool programs" (Huang, Cho, Nam, La Torre, Oh, Harven, & Huber with Rudo & Caverly, 2010).

[4] The APRs provided information including program objectives, grade levels served, number of students served, student demographics, student academic achievement data, hours/days per week, the specific content curriculum offered, number of staff in the program, and percentage of credentialed staff. In Year 2, the Department of Education contracted Learning Point to convert the APR into electronic versions called PPICS.

the changing landscape of afterschool programs

by Kathryn Hynes and Felicia Sanders

In the past 15 years, the need for quality school-age child care has combined with concerns about children's academic performance, delinquency, and safety to create tremendous momentum around out-of-school time (OST) programming. Public funding for programs has simultaneously increased, bringing greater demand from policymakers and private funders for better information about whether, and when, OST programs are a cost-effective way to improve children's outcomes.

Though OST programs receive a lot of attention, it is often hard to find even basic information about the types of programs operating, the amount of exposure children have, and the remaining demand. This article provides a clear picture of the changing landscape of afterschool programs. We use a variety of well-respected nationally representative data sources—with information from parents and from school administrators—to document trends in three areas. First, we highlight trends in program availability and use, showing trends in the percentage of children attending OST programs and the percentage of schools offering programs. Where possible, we highlight trends for policy-relevant subgroups such as low-income children and African-American children. This information helps us understand children's exposure to OST programs. Second, we provide information about trends in the types of programs that are operating. We highlight the changes in the proportion of programs that are school-based, the varying focus of school-based programs, and variation in the hours these programs operate. This information helps us understand

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what children are experiencing when their parents report that they attend "an after-school program." Finally, we use a relatively new data source to contribute information about unmet need for programming.

As demands for quality information increase, ongoing connections among research, advocacy, and policy are essential. In addition to providing up-to-date information about trends in the OST field, the findings from this article—and sometimes the problems we encountered in finding useable information—have implications for two ongoing debates: program effectiveness and unmet need.

Advocates argue that OST programs can have positive impacts on academic, social, and physical well-being (National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 2009). Others argue that, while OST programs have the potential to achieve these goals, many programs are not reaching this potential (Granger, 2008). Much of the focus among advocates is now on quality improvement, and researchers are studying the circumstances in which certain kinds of OST programs are achieving specific goals for children with specific needs. As we analyzed our data sources to provide information on key topics such as the amount of exposure children have to academic programming, we found that providing this more detailed level of information requires a more nuanced terminology that is shared among parents, advocates, researchers, and policymakers. Today, the label "afterschool program" is used for programs with very different content, goals, and duration. Moving to more nuanced terminology would help researchers provide better information that would in turn help policymakers and advocates support and implement cost-effective programming.

Similarly, debates about unmet need for programming abound. Some argue that many more children would—or should, for development reasons—attend programs if they were affordable and accessible (Afterschool Alliance, 2009). Others question broad claims of unmet need because programs are sometimes under-enrolled or have low attendance (Bodily & Beckett, 2005). The results we present in this article suggest that arguments about unmet need may be more effective if they focus on specific communities and neighborhoods where a clear need can be documented.

In this article, we first briefly review social and policy changes over the past few decades and the research on program availability and use, program content and duration, and unmet need for programming. Second, we describe the data sources used in our analyses and present our findings. We conclude with implications for research, advocacy, and policy.

Social Changes

In the past 15 years, significant social changes have affected the use, availability, and content of afterschool programs.

Afterschool as Childcare

Though afterschool programs have existed for almost 100 years (Halpern, 2002), their most recent resurgence was in response to changes in maternal employment. From 1960 to 2002, employment rates for married women with young children rose from less than 20 percent to over 60 percent. Rates of employment among unmarried mothers are even higher (Blau, Ferber, & Winkler, 2006). These increases resulted in greater demand for non-maternal care.

Childcare funding has also increased. In the mid-1990s, Congress instituted reforms to the welfare system that led to a sharp increase in labor force participation by single mothers. To enable single mothers to work, Congress substantially increased funding for childcare subsidies; expenditures through the Child Care Development Fund increased from about $3.9 billion in 1997 to over $9.3 billion in 2005 (U.S. Committee on Ways and Means, 2008). Because 35 percent of this funding typically supports care for school-age children, increasing numbers of mothers could afford to send their children to afterschool programs.

Afterschool as Developmental and Academic Support

Schools, under pressure to improve student performance by spending more time on literacy and mathematics, have struggled to help children with social, emotional, and health issues (Dryfoos, Quinn, & Barkin, 2005). Educators and social workers began viewing out-of-school time as an opportunity to provide additional support. Extended-service and community schools were created to centralize social services for low-income students and their families and to make academic and social services available during non-school hours (Dryfoos et al., 2005; Wallace Foundation, n.d.).

These initiatives were popular, and advocacy groups worked hard to increase the quantity and quality of OST opportunities. The interest in supporting academic achievement, providing opportunities for enrichment, and reducing risky behavior contributed to the federal government's 1997 implementation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program, which provides children in at-risk communities with afterschool academic support and enrichment (U.S.

Department of Education, n.d.). Because the focus is on achievement, 21st CCLC programs enroll children whether their mothers work or not. Today the federal government spends approximately $1 billion per year on 21st CCLC programs.

Further highlighting the potential for OST programming to boost achievement, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) required consistently low-performing schools to offer supplemental educational services during out-of-school time. Through these programs, students receive tutoring before or after school from entities as various as for-profit groups, non-profit organizations, and schools themselves, in locations ranging from schools to private organizations to their own homes. By the 2004–2005 school year, 19 percent of eligible students were receiving these supplemental education services (Davis, 2006; Fusarelli, 2007).

The Debates So Far

Program Availability and Use
The most basic policy question is simply this: How much has program use increased over the past 15 years? A commonly cited reference is a survey of school principals commissioned by the National Association of Elementary School Principals. The study showed that many schools had afterschool programs on site and that many of those programs had been set up in the past 0–5 years (Belden Russonello & Stewart, 2001). However, program *availability* and program *use* are not synonymous: A school's program may enroll only a small percentage of the students. Indeed, a nationally representative survey of parents indicated that, in 2005, only 20 percent of K–8 students attended afterschool programs at least once a week (Carver & Iruka, 2006).

Our research provides a clear picture of changes in afterschool program use and availability by combining reports from parents on children's use of afterschool programs with data from school administrators on the availability of school-based programs and the percentage of students who attend them. We also highlight trends in program use among low-income children and African-American children, groups that are often the focus of policy initiatives. This basic information about program availability and use is essential for more detailed discussions about children's exposure to programs and the extent of unmet need.

> The most basic policy question is simply this: How much has program use increased over the past 15 years?

Program Goals and Content
As public funding for afterschool programs has increased, so has the pressure for programs to show significant effects on children's well-being. This pressure has led to debates about children's developmental needs during out-of-school time. Over the past 15 years, considerable focus has been on using OST programs to support academics among at-risk students, and many OST programs are now located in schools. However, some in the field have worried that afterschool programs will become too "school-like" and that children's physical, social, and emotional needs will not be met (Halpern, 2002). This debate about the appropriate balance of academics, play, and social support is apparent among researchers, advocates, and program staff (Halpern, 2002; Hynes, Smith, & Perkins, 2009).

Despite the centrality of this debate, little research has documented the magnitude of the shift toward academic programming. Our research uses data from parents to show changes in the proportion of children attending school-based versus community-based programs. We also use data from school administrators to show the growth in academically oriented afterschool programs. We supplement this information with a new data source that allows us to describe the number, type, and duration of programs that schools are running. Combining results from these data sources, we present a picture of the diversity of programs that operate under the label "afterschool." This diversity is probably good for children, allowing families to find programs that meet their needs. However, we will argue that using the same label for all these programs is leading to problems for policymakers, researchers, and advocates in their efforts to design, study, and advocate for quality, effective programs.

Unmet Need
"Unmet need" for afterschool programming has been defined in a variety of ways, including documenting the number of children in self-care, the number of parents who say they would send their child to an afterschool program if one was available, and the number of at-risk children who might benefit from a program (Afterschool Alliance, 2009; Halpern, 1999). Using these measures, advocates have argued that there is considerable unmet need for OST programs.

However, these claims have been challenged by researchers and policymakers (e.g., Bodilly & Beckett,

2005). The most damaging challenges have come from studies of program attendance. For instance, an evaluation of 21st CCLC programs showed that attendance was quite low even at these free school-based programs (James-Burdumy et al., 2005). The discrepancy between the perception of unmet need and the reality of open slots may stem from several issues, including differences in OST opportunities among communities (with few opportunities in some areas and competition among programs in others), difficulty engaging the hardest-to-reach students, and differences between what parents say they might do and what they actually do.

We use data from school administrators' reports of unmet need to contribute to this debate. These data indicate that some schools report needing more slots and funding, while other schools appear to have little need for additional OST programs. Advocates may be more successful—and policymakers more receptive—if claims about unmet need became more specific, focusing on particular communities or populations that have a clear need for additional programming. They may also be more effective if they can identify the type of programs that a particular community needs—for example, free academic programs, broad-based programs, or others (Bodilly & Beckett, 2005).

Data Sources

While the OST field is quite broad, including a variety of structured and unstructured programs serving children ages 6–18, we focus this study on afterschool programs serving children ages 6–12. The data on afterschool programs for elementary school children are of far better quality than data for other types of OST programs, such as summer programs, or for youth ages 13–18.

Our analyses draw from several well-respected data sets that are collected by the U.S. Department of Education. All analyses are appropriately weighted to generate nationally representative estimates.

- The National Household Education Surveys (NHES, U.S. Department of Education, n.d. b) collect information from large, nationally representative samples of parents, including information on children's use of afterschool programs. We use data from 1995, 1999, 2001, and 2005 to highlight trends in program use and location.

> Advocates may be more successful—and policymakers more receptive—if claims about unmet need became more specific, focusing on particular communities or populations that have a clear need for additional programming.

- The Schools and Staffing Surveys (SSS) collect data on school programs and practices from large, nationally representative samples of school administrators. We use these data to document trends in the availability of school-based programs. Reports with the necessary statistics are available for 1987, 1990, and 1993 (National Center for Education Statistics). The SSS was fielded less consistently after 1993; we use an online data analysis tool for statistics from 2003.

- The 2008 survey on Afterschool Programs in Public Elementary Schools (U.S. Department of Education, n.d. c) provides information from over 1,600 public school administrators about the types of afterschool programs available in their schools. We use these data to provide information about the diversity of programs operating in schools and to examine unmet need for programs.

Findings

Program Availability

As the school principal survey indicates, school-based afterschool programs have become increasingly common over the past 20 years. Data from the Schools and Staffing Survey show that in public schools, program availability more than doubled between 1987 and 2003, as illustrated in Table 1. On-site programs are far more common in central city schools than in rural schools, and private schools are particularly likely to have on-site afterschool programs.

Due to the increasing prevalence of academically focused programs, in 2003 the Schools and Staffing Survey added a separate question about whether schools offered extended day academic assistance programs. In 2003, 62 percent of public schools in central city areas had these academic programs, as did 49 percent of public schools in rural areas. In contrast, fewer than 25 percent of private schools reported having such programs. This lower rate may reflect differences in the characteristics of children enrolled in private schools or the fact that private schools are not subject to the NCLB requirement for supplemental education.

By 2008, even more schools had OST programs on site. According to our analyses of the 2008 survey on Afterschool Programs in Public Elementary Schools (re-

Table 1. Percentage of Elementary Schools Reporting OST Programs

	EXTENDED DAY OR BEFORE- OR AFTERSCHOOL DAYCARE				EXTENDED DAY ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE
PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	**1987**	**1990**	**1993**	**2003**	**2003**
Central city	26.4%	36.9%	43.1%	51.5%	61.7%
Urban fringe	24.2%	35.1%	37.7%	49.2%	43.7%
Rural/small	9.2%	15.3%	19.0%	24.0%	48.7%
PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS					
Central city	50.7%	60.3%	N/A	84.1%	23.3%
Urban fringe	41.2%	52.7%	60.3%	65.1%	18.2%
Rural/small	17.9%	23.3%	24.4%	31.0%	17.0%

Source: Schools & Staffing Survey, 1987–1988 through 2003–2004. Results are from published reports (National Center for Education Statistics, 1992; 1993; 1996). Data for 2003 were calculated using NCES online analysis tools.

sults not shown in table), 75 percent of public elementary schools reported having some kind of afterschool program on-site. Schools without programs were more likely to be in rural areas and to serve white students. In contrast, large schools, urban schools, and schools with large poor and minority populations were more likely to have on-site afterschool programs. Many of these were academic instruction programs. If we exclude programs that consisted solely of academic instruction or tutoring, 60 percent of public elementary schools reported having at least one afterschool program on-site.

Program Use

While the majority of *schools* now offer programs, most *children* do not attend afterschool programs. Based on parent reports from the National Household Education Surveys, in 1995 about 12 percent of children ages 6–9 regularly attended an afterschool program; by 2005 approximately 24 percent of young children regularly attended a program, as shown in Figure 1. For children ages 10–12, data are available only from 1999 to 2005. The percentage of these older children in afterschool programs remained fairly steady, at 17 percent in 1999 and 19 percent in 2005.

How do we reconcile these statistics about children's use of programs with the large proportion of schools that have programs? The simplest reason is that school-based programs enroll only a small percentage of the school's students. Rough calculations from the 2008 survey on Afterschool Programs in Public Elementary Schools indi-

cate that, among elementary schools with afterschool programs, only about 19 percent of the school's students were enrolled in the programs. If we include academic/tutoring programs, schools with programs enrolled roughly 24 percent of their students.

Another reason that growth in the percentage of schools with programs seems larger than growth in the percentage of children attending is that most of the growth in afterschool program use occurred in shown in Table 2. According to the National Household Education Surveys, in 1995, about half of the children ages 6–9 in afterschool programs went to community-based programs. The other half attended school-based programs, with 6 percent of children in each kind of program. In 2005, enrollment in community-based programs was about the same, at 8 percent, but 16 percent of children ages 6–9 were enrolled in school-based programs. Data from the 2005 National Household Education Survey indicate that this heavy reliance on

Figure 1. Use of afterschool programs, children ages 6–9

Source: 1995–2005 National Household Education Surveys

Table 2. Use of School-based *vs.* Community-based Programs

	CHILDREN 6–9		CHILDREN 10–12
	1995	2005	2005
Child enrolled in afterschool program *at his/her own school*	6%	16%	13%
Child enrolled in afterschool program *at another location*	6%	8%	5%
Child not enrolled in afterschool program	88%	76%	82%

Source: 1995 & 2005 National Household Education Surveys

school-based programs is also apparent for children ages 10–12. Though school-based programs do not appear to be *replacing* community-based programs, a clear majority of children who regularly attend programs now do so at their own schools.

From these data, we conclude that most schools are now in the business of providing or hosting afterschool programs, but the percentage of children enrolled in these programs remains modest. Indeed, statistics on the percentage of children who regularly attend a program may lead us to overestimate children's exposure to afterschool environments, because many children attend programs for a very small number of hours per week. Figure 1 shows that, in 1995, parents reported that most of the children who regularly attended afterschool programs did so for at least five hours per week. Over the following decade, the percentage of young children attending programs grew rapidly, but the percentage attending for more than five hours per week grew more modestly. In 2005, only 16 percent of children ages 6–9 and 10 percent of children ages 10–12 attended programs for five or more hours per week.

Researchers can improve our understanding of program exposure by collecting information about the reasons children attend for only a few hours—for example, because parents want to avoid childcare costs, because the program is open only for a few hours, or because children prefer to do other things. But limited exposure raises an important question about the amount of exposure that is necessary for programs to affect children's outcomes. In some cases, attending a program for a few hours per week may be developmentally beneficial and worth the investment, while in other cases this limited exposure may have minimal impact and be an inefficient use of resources.

Program Use among Subgroups

Public funding for programs has often targeted low-income children and children who are presumed to need developmental support. In an earlier report, we documented changes in the use of afterschool programs among low-income children (Hynes & Doyle, 2009). In 1995, children from families with higher incomes were more likely than poor children to attend afterschool programs. However, public funding for programs increased substantially over the following decade; by 2005, the gap had closed considerably.

Because of the focus on OST as a way to support academic achievement, we also use the National Household Education Surveys to examine race differences in afterschool program use. As Figure 2 shows, African-American children are twice as likely as white children to attend programs. Indeed, while program use remains modest among white children, in 2005 nearly 40 percent of African-American children ages 6–9 regularly attended an afterschool program. The race gap is even larger among children exposed to programs for five or more hours per week.

Reasons for these race differences are unclear. African-American children are more likely than white children to live in single-parent families, to access childcare subsidies, and to live in urban areas; all of these factors are associated with afterschool program use. However, in an earlier study, we found that these factors do not explain the large race differences in program use (Hynes &

Figure 2. Race differences in afterschool program use, children ages 6–9

Source: 1995–2005 National Household Education Surveys

Sanders, 2009). Given the persistence of racial achievement gaps in this country, more research is clearly necessary on the reasons for race differences in afterschool program use and the effects of differences on children's outcomes.

Program Content

Though the OST field is well aware that after-school programs differ widely in their goals and that academic programming has increased, data have not been available to quantify these trends. Data on program goals are essential in efforts to use n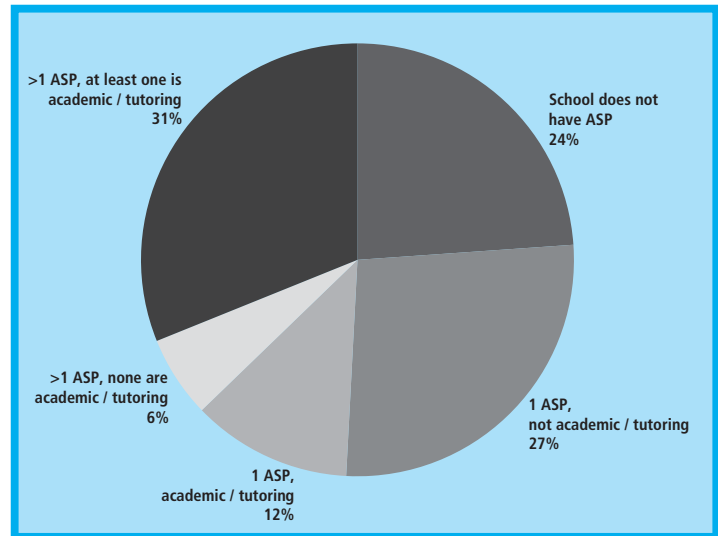ationally representative data to understand the effects of various kinds of programs on children's development. The best data on the content of afterschool programs come from the 2008 Survey on Afterschool Programs in Public Elementary Schools. Rather than simply asking whether schools have "an afterschool program," the survey asked school administrators whether they had various kinds of programs: fee-based extended day, academic/tutoring, 21st CCLC, and "other" types of broad-based programs. Our analyses of these data indicate that schools were running a variety of programs. Forty-three percent had academic/tutoring programs; 10 percent ran a 21st CCLC program; some schools ran both. Thus approximately half of all public schools were running at least one program with an explicitly academic focus. Schools also ran programs that may or may not have included academic content: 46 percent ran fee-based extended day programs, and 16 percent reported having broad-based programs focused on such topics as culture, arts, or social skills. Because we do not know how many of these fee-based programs and "other" programs focused explicitly on academics, we cannot estimate the proportion of schools with academically focused afterschool programs. Also, because this survey excludes programs in private schools and community-based organizations, we cannot estimate the proportion of children attending academically focused afterschool programs.

However, the 2008 Survey on Afterschool Programs in Public Elementary Schools does show that many schools are offering more than one OST program, as shown in Figure 3. If schools offered only one afterschool program, it was typically fee-based afterschool childcare. However, 37 percent of schools reported operating more than one type of program, typically offering both an academic/tutoring program and at least one more broadly-based program.

Figure 3. Availability and types of programs in schools

Source: 2008 U.S. Department of Education Survey on Afterschool Programs in Public Elementary Schools

Unfortunately, parent surveys about children's afterschool program use do not ask questions that really allow us to understand the extent of academic programming. In 2005, the NHES asked parents about the activities in which their children spent the most time during their afterschool program. One of the choices was "Homework / educational / reading / writing." This choice was reported as a major activity for 76 percent of children ages 6–12 who attended school-based programs regularly and 62 percent of children who attended community-based programs regularly. While these seem to be substantial percentages, it is unclear how many of these programs are simply providing some time for children to do homework, which should have different developmental effects than programs that are actively engaging in academic instruction. To be able to use these large data sets to estimate program impacts, we need more detailed information about the goals of the programs that children are attending.

Despite this limitation, parent surveys do provide evidence that children are increasingly attending afterschool programs for developmental reasons, not just for childcare. If afterschool programs were solely for childcare, we would expect children whose parents work to use programs more than children with at least one parent at home. According to data from the National Household Education Surveys, in 1995 that was the case: 21 percent of children ages 6–9 with employed single parents attended afterschool programs, compared to only 9 percent of children with single parents who were not employed. By 2005, however, this gap had closed substantially: 34 percent of children with employed sin-

Figure 4. Operating hours of different types of afterschool programs

Source: 2008 U.S. Department of Education Survey on Afterschool Programs in Public Elementary Schools

Figure 5. School reports of barriers to participation*

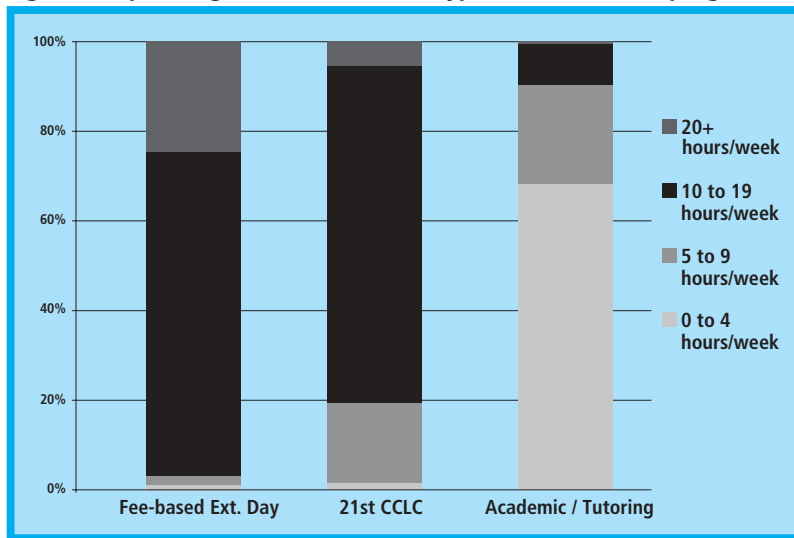**Among schools that run afterschool programs. Source: 2008 U.S. Department of Education Survey on Afterschool Programs in Public Elementary Schools*

analyses of the 2008 survey on Afterschool Programs in Public Elementary Schools show that schools' academic/tutoring programs were qualitatively different from their other afterschool programs. Most importantly, they operated for far fewer hours than other types of afterschool programs, as shown in Figure 4. Only 1–2 percent of fee-based extended day programs and 21st CCLC programs were open for fewer than five hours per week, compared to 68 percent of the academic/tutoring programs.

Unfortunately, while we know that these short-hour tutoring programs exist, we cannot tell from parent surveys how many of the children attending afterschool programs for fewer than five hours per week are attending these tutoring programs and how many are attending other types of programs but choosing to attend for a small number of hours. To provide the kind of detail that policymakers are seeking about the circumstances in which particular kinds of afterschool programs are cost effective in achieving particular outcomes, a more nuanced terminology is needed that can distinguish among different types of programs.

Unmet Need for Programs

The policy and advocacy communities need to understand the extent of unmet need for programming in order to develop compelling arguments for additional programs. Because most of the growth has been in school-based programs, the 2008 survey on Afterschool Programs in Public Elementary Schools provides a sense of the unmet need for afterschool programs. School administrators were asked to report how much either cost or insufficient slots were barriers to student participation in programs in their schools. These questions were answered only by school administrators who both have a school-based program and actually run the program, so these data do not cover school-based programs run by community organizations (53 percent of the fee-based programs in schools) or schools that don't offer afterschool programs.

As Figure 5 shows, most schools that run fee-based extended day programs reported that insufficient slots

gle parents attended programs regularly, compared to 29 percent of children with single parents who were not employed (Hynes & Doyle, 2009). Thus, the use of programs for developmental purposes is clearly increasing, though the content of the programs and their developmental goals cannot be deciphered clearly enough from these surveys.

The use of afterschool programs for developmental purposes—particularly the rise in academic/tutoring programs—may be related to parents' reports that children attend programs for fewer than five hours per week. Our

were not a barrier to participation. Only 21 percent reported that insufficient slots were a moderate or large barrier. These responses may indicate that schools have the ability to expand the number of fee-based slots to meet demand. In addition, 62 percent of schools with fee-based extended day programs reported that costs were not at all or were only a small barrier to participation. These data from schools that run fee-based programs challenge broad claims of unmet need.

However, there were clear exceptions. Further analyses indicate that urban schools were more likely than schools in other locations to report insufficient slots and cost barriers. High-poverty schools were actually less likely than low-poverty schools to report insufficient slots, but, not surprisingly, they were more likely to report that costs were a barrier.

School administrators who had 21st CCLC programs were asked whether insufficient slots were a barrier to participation. Because 21st CCLC programs are publicly funded and free to participants, this question reflects, to some extent, demand for free programming. Only 29 percent of school administrators with 21st CCLC programs indicated that limited slots were a moderate or large barrier to participation. Large schools, urban schools, and schools with large minority populations were most likely to indicate unmet need for slots, even when they had a 21st CCLC program.

One of the main limitations of these data is that they cannot describe demand for programs among schools that do not currently offer them. For instance, it is unclear whether schools that do not run fee-based programs choose not to run them because of limited demand or whether there is unmet need for programs at these schools. School administrators indicate that many schools with programs are meeting their students' needs. Therefore, while some schools still report unmet need for programs, claims about unmet need may be more effective if they focused on specific communities and on unmet need for specific kinds of programs.

Implications for Research, Policy, and Advocacy

The results presented in this article show that the availability of school-based afterschool programs has increased rapidly over the past 15 years. Both community-based and school-based programs are still available, but today a clear majority of children attend school-based programs. Schools offer a range of programs, from short-hour tutoring programs to longer-hour programs that provide childcare, enrichment, or both. While most schools are now in the business of running or hosting at least one afterschool program, we should be careful not to overestimate children's exposure to programs: most children do not attend programs, and some attend for fewer than five hours per week.

While many of the observed trends were expected, we were surprised by the large and persistent race gap in afterschool program use. African-American children use afterschool programs far more than their white counterparts, making these programs an important developmental context for these children. Research to date has not been able to explain why African-American children are attending at higher rates than their white counterparts. In addition, we do not know whether the goals, content, and quality of the programs that African-American children attend are the same or different from programs that white children attend. We also do not know whether these diverging OST experiences are reducing (or increasing) racial inequality. Further research on this topic is essential, as is careful practice and policymaking. Advocates and policymakers need to clearly recognize that policies influencing program quality and funding disproportionately influence African-American children.

Using a mix of data sources, we were able to provide nationally representative information on a variety of policy-relevant topics. However, we became acutely aware that more nuanced terminology to describe the wide variety of programs being offered would greatly improve the field's ability to move forward in research, advocacy, and policy. Two dimensions seem particularly important to capture:

- Program goals: the primary content and expected developmental outcomes of the program
- Program duration: the number of hours per week and weeks per year the program is available, as well as the number of hours per week and weeks per year a given child actually attends the program

More nuanced terminology would help researchers, policymakers, and advocates identify, implement, and support programs that can improve children's outcomes

> More nuanced terminology would help researchers, policymakers, and advocates identify, implement, and support programs that can improve children's outcomes in a cost-effective way.

in a cost-effective way. This terminology would help us answer questions such as these: Are children experiencing greater gains in academic achievement when they attend short-hour tutoring programs or longer-hour programs that integrate academics with enrichment? Are children less likely to become obese if they attend short but intensive athletic activities after school, or do broad-based afterschool programs also prevent obesity because children in programs are less likely to sit in front of the television eating snacks? How much academic programming after school is developmentally helpful and how much is too much?

Greater specificity would also help the field move beyond debates about unmet need for programs. For example, a community may have plenty of fee-based afterschool care but lack the short-hour academic tutoring its children need, or vice versa. Our results show that on one hand, many schools are running programs, and many of these schools report little unmet need for additional slots. On the other hand, some schools that run programs still report unmet need, and the data did not assess unmet need in schools that do not have or run specific kinds of programs. These mixed results support the idea that arguments about need should focus on specific geographic areas that have documented unmet need for particular kinds of programs (Bodily & Beckett, 2005).

This more nuanced terminology should be developed collaboratively and used consistently. It would allow researchers to collect better data from parents and school administrators about the types of programs children are using and about remaining unmet need. With better data, researchers, advocates, practitioners, and policymakers could study program effectiveness, hone quality improvement efforts, and promote the right kinds of programs for communities' varying needs.

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honoring 15 years of the 21st century community learning centers program

A Polity-Centered Analysis

by Sarah Fierberg Phillips

In 1994, Senators Jim Jeffords (R-VT) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Representatives Steve Gunderson (R-WI) and William Goodling (R-PA) sponsored the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Act (S.1990, 1994a; H.R.3734, 1994b) in order to "open up schools for broader use by their communities." Part of the full-service schools *zeitgeist*, the act never passed independently. However, it was incorporated into the Improving

America's Schools Act of 1994, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary School Act. In this act, Congress appropriated $750,000 for the 21st Century Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program, requiring that grants be made for "projects that benefit the educational, health, social service, cultural and recreational needs of a rural or inner city community." Funds could be used for a wide array of purposes including literacy education; integrated education, health, social service, recreational, or cultural programs; summer and week-

end school programs; and parenting skills programs. The first grants were awarded in 1995.

Over the past 15 years, the 21st CCLC program has grown and changed. Today, it is the largest federal funding stream for afterschool programming, funneling $1.17 billion directly to states to support "the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools" (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The 21st CCLC program's 15th anniversary is a suitable time to review its political history. As debates surrounding the next reauthorization of the

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Elementary and Secondary Education Act commence, afterschool advocates can benefit from a deeper understanding of how this country's seminal afterschool program has been expanded and maintained. Yet my literature search revealed no prior scholarship that uses political theory to analyze the history of the 21st CCLC program.[1] Emphasizing the intersection of policy and politics, this paper uses Theda Skocpol's polity-centered approach (1992) to analyze two key moments in the history of the 21st CCLC program: 1998, when the program's budget grew from $40 million to $200 million, and 2003, when President Bush attempted to cut the program's budget from $1 billion to $400 million. A thorough understanding of this history can help afterschool advocates successfully respond to President Obama's recent proposal to dramatically change the 21st CCLC program once again.

The Polity-Centered Approach

According to Skocpol, efforts to understand the "origins and transformations of national systems of social provision" must focus on the state of the *polity*, a term that refers to the political organizations and institutions of a society. In the U.S., the polity includes the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government as well as political parties and extra-governmental interest groups. Skocpol argues that policy is initiated or transformed when congruence exists between the goals and capacities of key political actors such as politicians, bureaucrats, political parties, and interest groups. However, socioeconomic relations, cultural patterns, and previously established social policies influence this congruence, in part, by creating "group political orientations" (Skocpol, 1992, p. 41).

This paper uses Skocpol's polity-centered approach to explain why efforts to change the 21st CCLC program were successful in 1998 and unsuccessful in 2003. It explores the way that changing work patterns and growing interest in positive youth development helped create broad support for afterschool during the 1990s. It pays particular attention to the congruence among the interests and abilities of philanthropists, U.S. Department of Education (US DOE) leaders, and the White House during the late 1990s, as well as between Congressional

leaders and afterschool advocates during 2003. It discusses changes to the balance of power between the Democrats and Republicans during both time periods and explores the way that the expansion of the 21st CCLC program in 1998 and subsequent changes worked to frustrate the President's efforts in 2003. This paper concludes by reviewing recent controversy surrounding President Obama's proposed changes to the 21st CCLC program, suggesting that afterschool advocates consider the President's efforts in light of history and draw on the past to shape their response.

The Clinton Era

Changing work patterns, a booming economy, and a growing youth development field played a critical role in turning a small Congressional program aimed at opening up schools to their communities into a massive Presidential program emphasizing afterschool childcare. Between the 1970s and 1990s, U.S. work patterns changed dramatically. The length of the work week expanded; by 1998 the U.S. had more workers putting in 50 hours of work per week than nearly any other country (Jacobs & Gerson, 1998). During this period, women's labor force participation also shifted. Whereas slightly more than 40 percent of women 16 years and older were working outside the home in 1976, approximately 55 percent were working outside the home in 1993 (Rones, Ilg, & Gardner, 1997). Moreover, 1996's welfare reform legislation, the Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act, ended welfare entitlements and pushed welfare recipients into the labor force. Coupled with an unprecedented economic boom, the welfare caseload fell from over 12 million to about 5 million between 1996 and 2002 (Currie, 2006).

These trends meant that parents needed afterschool childcare more than ever before. At the same time, researchers and youth workers radically altered their understanding of effective youth programming. Prior to the late 1980s, research on young people operated primarily within a deficit perspective, in which young people were commonly constructed as "problems" to be "fixed." As a result, youth programs typically emphasized prevention or treatment of specific risk factors such as substance abuse or violence. As researchers began focusing on resil-

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ience and positive youth development, they re-oriented the field toward the supports and experiences young people need to develop the personal characteristics and habits that will enable them to grow up healthy and strong (Lerner, 2005). Scholars and practitioners working from this perspective tend to argue that community-based programs can encourage positive youth development (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Lerner, 2005).

In this context, interest in after-school and out-of-school time programming grew. By the mid-1990s, several large foundations, including the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Wallace-Reader's Digest Foundation, and the Open Society Institute, began championing after-school initiatives. The Mott Foundation, in particular, saw an opportunity "to take afterschool programs and school-community partnerships to scale by increasing federal funding" (Hurst & Chung, 2005).

Mott's interests were quite similar to those of U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley. Supported by his longtime advisor Terry Peterson, Secretary Riley strongly believed in partnerships as a vehicle to advance educational policy (Sack, 2000). In 1997, Peterson approached Mott Foundation President Bill White. As Peterson recollected:

> After knowing Bill about one minute, I innocently asked…if Mott would be willing to invest a couple million dollars in technical assistance and training for afterschool programs if we were able to get our Administration and Congress to appropriate a couple hundred million dollars for the 21st Century Community Learning Center programs…. Bill said, "yes" on the spot. (Peterson, 2004, p. 3)

With Mott's support secured, Riley and Peterson had little difficulty convincing President Clinton to advocate expansion of the 21st CCLC program, which was originally enacted in 1994. Both the President and the First Lady strongly supported childcare. In his initial welfare reform proposal, the President advocated expanding childcare support for former welfare recipients and vetoed Congress' first welfare reform legislation partly because it did not offer sufficient funding for childcare (Conlan, 1998). In 1997, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton organized a White House Conference on Child Care because, as one observer opined, she wanted to secure her legacy after being widely criticized for her role

in the President's failed healthcare reform efforts (Tumulty & Blackman, 1997). At the conference, the President cited changing work patterns to argue that "nothing is more important…than finding child care that is affordable, accessible, and safe" (Clinton, October 23, 1997).

In January 1998, the President announced his commitment to a fivefold expansion of 21st CCLC, declaring that he would request $200 million for the program in his budget for the next five years and highlighting the partnership Riley had cemented with the Mott Foundation (US DOE, 1998). Clinton framed his efforts in terms of childcare and delinquency prevention, saying, "I am proposing the expansion of before and after school programs to help some 500,000 children say no to drugs and alcohol and crime, and yes to reading, soccer, computers, and a brighter future for themselves" (US DOE, 1998). In a later speech, he reiterated that his proposal was part of a broader effort to expand quality, affordable childcare (Clinton, June 17, 1998).

President Clinton's efforts to improve childcare were made possible, in part, by a policy environment ripe for enhanced public spending. In 1998, after nearly six years of unprecedented economic growth, President Clinton was able to report the first federal budget surplus since 1969. In this context, the President had room to advocate spending increases.

While the Monica Lewinsky crisis stalled progress on much of the President's agenda throughout 1998, the President's call to increase funding for the 21st CCLC program was generally supported by Congress. In the House of Representatives, for example, Representatives Louise Slaughter (D-NY) and Barbara Kennelly (D-CT) introduced separate pieces of legislation calling for increased funding for the 21st CCLC program. Slaughter's bill had 18 co-sponsors, all but one of whom were Democrats (America Afterschool Act, 1998). House Republicans, at the time the Congressional majority, supported a modest increase in the budget, but the $60 million they attempted to appropriate fell far short of the $200 million the President requested (Kennedy, 1998).

In the end, Democrats rolled President Clinton's proposal for expanding the 21st CCLC budget into an omnibus appropriations bill, which they passed in late October despite strong opposition from Republicans (Omnibus Appropriations Conference Report, 1998). In

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part, this success was due to changes within the Republican Party in 1997–1998. While Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-GA) oversaw strong party unity during his first few years as speaker, his influence waned after the Republican showdown with President Clinton over the budget in 1996 (Conlan, 1998). After being reprimanded by the House in January 1997 for ethics violations, Gingrich nearly lost his job as speaker in a July coup (Jenkins, 1997; Rogers & Kuntz, 1997). More importantly, efforts by Gingrich and the Republican Party to remove President Clinton from office over the Lewinsky matter failed. The American public remained strongly supportive of President Clinton throughout the crisis, and an overwhelming majority did not support his impeachment (Fischle, 2000). By the time Congress began debating the omnibus appropriations act, the Republican Party was in disarray and in no position to defeat Democratic efforts.

Thus, President Clinton's fivefold expansion of the 21st CCLC program was voted into law in late October 1998, marking a major expansion of the federal government's support for afterschool programs (Omnibus Appropriations Conference Report, 1998). While social, economic, and educational developments helped set the stage for this tremendous growth, strong alignment among the ideas and interests of the Mott Foundation, the Secretary of Education, and the President and First Lady coincided with Republican disarray to propel the program's expansion through Congress.

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The Bush Era

Under President Clinton, the 21st CCLC program grew from a relatively minor program to a major federal investment in afterschool programming. Clinton's successor, President George W. Bush, initially showed great interest in the program as well. In his 2001 budget, for example, President Bush proposed increasing the 21st CCLC budget to $1 billion (US DOE, 2008). However, the President seemed to be less interested in enhancing federal childcare support than in promoting education reform. An uncommon degree of bipartisan collaboration, broad Congressional support, and existing state models helped advance the President's education priorities, enshrining them in No Child Left Behind, the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Finn & Hess, 2004). During the reauthorization process, the 21st CCLC program was significantly altered. Instead of being administered by the federal government, the program was devolved to the states and reorganized to emphasize "remedial education, math and science classes, tutoring and mentoring"— a change that fit squarely with the President's interest in test scores and accountability (Finn & Hess, 2004; No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

In February 2003, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., a highly regarded policy research organization, released the first year of a multiyear analysis of the 21st CCLC program commissioned by the US DOE (Mahoney & Zigler, 2006). Initiated under President Clinton, the study's preliminary findings suggested that the 21st CCLC program had no impact on the percentage of children caring for themselves during afterschool hours and no positive effect on students' behavior (Dynarski et al., 2002). Subsequent phases of the study also found little academic benefit, although the authors concluded that the program had led to increased parental involvement, generated small improvements in math scores, and improved African-American and Hispanic students' grades and school attendance (*Investment in after-school programs*, 2003).

In response, President Bush recommended a 40 percent budget cut for the 21st CCLC program. In testimony before a subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee, William Hansen, Deputy Secretary of Education, framed the President's decision in rational terms that emphasized the President's interest in accountability. In light of Mathematica's report, Hansen explained, the President decided to "spend those resources on proven effective programs…representing our priorities"—namely, Title I and special education (*Investment in after-school programs*, 2003).

It is not surprising that a President whose entire education policy was based on high-stakes testing and ac-

countability withdrew support for what he believed was an ineffective education program. However, the President's efforts also seemed to be partly shaped by socioeconomic conditions. Between 2001 and 2003, President Bush pushed significant tax cuts through Congress. In the wake of 9/11, the President also greatly increased federal spending. With less revenue and increased expenditures, the deficit grew and the President was forced to cut spending on social programs.

However, President Bush was unable to push his 21st CCLC budget cut through Congress. The same groups that catalyzed President Clinton's expansion of the 21st CCLC program stymied his efforts. Recognizing the need for ongoing organizing to protect and expand on their 1999 budgetary victory, the Mott Foundation and US DOE joined forces with the J.C. Penney Company, the Open Society Institute, the Entertainment Industry Foundation, and the Creative Artists Agency Foundation in September 1999. In 2000, the group established the Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to promoting "afterschool for all" (Afterschool Alliance, n.d.).

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The Afterschool Alliance played a key role in defeating President Bush's proposal, but, by this time, its efforts were part of a much larger movement. A survey by the National Association of Elementary School Principals found that 67 percent of principals said that their schools offered optional afterschool programs (Noam, Miller, & Barry, 2002). The students and families served by these programs, the staff they employed, and the local and state intermediaries and foundations dedicated to their success rallied to protect their interests. The Afterschool Alliance published survey data showing that "nine in ten Americans think afterschool programs are important" and "three in four voters…are concerned about President Bush's commitment to leave no child behind when they are informed of his 2003 proposal to cut federal funding for afterschool programs" (Afterschool Alliance, December 2003, p. 2). In addition, the Alliance published a report noting that current funding levels were insufficient to meet the demand for 21st CCLC programs (Afterschool Alliance, March 2003). In March, the organization co-sponsored a briefing on Capitol Hill with a bipartisan group of senators including Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Christopher Dodd (D-CT), John Ensign (R-NV), Ted Kennedy (D-MA), and Gordon Smith (R-OR). During this briefing, advocates introduced legislators to leading afterschool programs and discussed the large body of research contradicting Mathematica's report (Afterschool Alliance, April 21, 2003).

Legislators seemed predisposed to support the positions of the afterschool community. The 21st CCLC program had been relatively popular with legislators since 1998, and President Bush's efforts to devolve funding to the states made it more so. Legislators were unwilling to cut a program that generated revenue for their communities, particularly because many of these communities had been forced to cut programs for children as a result of state budget crises that stemmed from the President's tax cuts (OMB Watch, 2003).

Furthermore, by 2003, the bipartisan coalition supporting No Child Left Behind had dissipated (Mahoney & Zigler, 2006), and the President's popularity was waning (BBC News, n.d.). Thus, even Republicans were willing to challenge the President's proposal to cut the 21st CCLC budget. On May 13, 2003, the Senate Appropriations subcommittee responsible for education held a special hearing on the President's proposed budget cuts. Two U.S. DOE staffers represented the Administration's position, while the Afterschool Alliance; the mayor of New Haven, Connecticut; the chief of police of Knoxville, Iowa; and two students represented the afterschool community. The hearing transcript suggests that afterschool advocates packed the room (*Investment in after-school programs*, 2003).

During the hearing, the committee chair, Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), vigorously cross-examined staffers. At one point he chastised US DOE Deputy Secretary Hansen for his efforts to ascertain Congressional intent. "Speak for yourself; do not speak for Congress," he declared (*Investment in after-school programs*, 2003, p. 7). Similarly, after forcing the director of US DOE's Institute of Education Sciences to acknowledge some of the benefits found by Mathematica, Specter declared:

> And that is why, frankly, I am surprised that, when your studies are incomplete, you come in and want to reduce it from $933 million to $600 million. Your last answer articulates the difficulty of making an evaluation. And the evaluation is incomplete. (*Investment in after-school programs*, 2003, p. 9)

Though he badgered US DOE staffers, Senator Specter asked no questions of the 21st CCLC advocates who testified. Further, in his final statement, after thanking the afterschool advocates for their work, Specter declared, "I think we have heard very, very impressive testimony. You have very, very solid Committee support here" (*Investment in after-school programs*, 2003, p. 46).

Senator Specter's efforts are typical of legislators on program-related committees, who tend to defend their programs and blame representatives of the executive branch by providing a platform to "amplify indictments prepared by others" (Derthick, 1990, p. 161). Not surprisingly, the Senate Appropriations committee rejected the President's proposed budget cuts, recommending a $7 million increase for the program. In the report accompanying its final appropriations bill, the committee went a step further, revising the academic orientation of the program and "urg[ing]" US DOE to "include developmental and prevention indicators…in any performance goal, objective or indicator" for the program (*Departments of Labor,* June 26, 2003, p. 240).

Lessons for Future Advocacy

Between 1994 and 2003, the 21st CCLC program grew from a small Congressional initiative into a massive federal program and a billion-dollar industry. The polity-centered approach helps explain the causes and consequences of this tremendous shift. Changing work patterns and growing interest in positive youth development helped create broad support for afterschool during the 1990s. The congruence of philanthropic and political interests, coupled with a budget surplus, enabled President Clinton to advocate for a fivefold increase in the 21st CCLC budget. However, changes to the balance of power between Democrats and Republicans were ultimately responsible for the passage of the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 1998, which made the President's proposal law. The polity-centered approach also explains why President Bush was unable to cut the 21st CCLC budget in 2003. A powerful afterschool movement purposefully created in the aftermath of 1998's budgetary victory, growing congressional disillusionment with No

Child Left Behind, and the President's waning popularity created a strong alliance between afterschool advocates and congressional leaders.

Seven years later, sweeping changes to the 21st CCLC program are being considered once again. In his FY2011 budget and blueprint for reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, President Obama proposes to use the 21st CCLC program to support full-service community schools and extended school day initiatives as well as more traditional before- and afterschool programs. In addition, he intends to federalize responsibility for administering the program, limit the role of community-based organizations, and narrow eligibility, while level-funding the initiative (Office of Management & Budget, 2010; US DOE, 2010a; US DOE, 2010b).

Many afterschool advocates oppose the President's proposals. Without additional funding, they fear that the consolidation of afterschool, full-service community schools, and extended day initiatives will lead to deep budget cuts in afterschool. Advocates also are concerned that the President's proposals will negatively affect existing afterschool providers and leave some communities without afterschool programs altogether (Afterschool Alliance, 2010; Policy News, 2010; Public Witness Hearing, 2010).

Much as they did in 2003, afterschool advocates have been organizing to protect their interests (Policy News, 2010). In the end, these efforts may succeed, but advocates might do well to consider the President's proposed changes in light of the history presented in this paper. First, they should acknowledge that the President's emphasis on full-service community schools is consistent with Congress' initial vision for the 21st CCLC program. Both the original House and Senate versions of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Act (S.1990, 1994a; H.R.3734, 1994b) refer explicitly to the creation of "community schools." Similarly, funds for the 21st CCLC program could originally be used for "integrated education, health, social service, recreational, or cultural programs" (Improving America's Schools Act, 1994). Thus, when afterschool advocates decry the President's

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proposal for diverting funds away from afterschool, they need to remember that afterschool once diverted funds from community schools.

Advocates are right, however, to oppose the President's efforts to federalize the competition for 21st CCLC funds. In 2003, legislators were unwilling to cut the 21st CCLC program's budget, in part, because it was not in their self-interest to do so: Supporting President Bush's proposal would have reduced funding for their constituents. If enacted, President Obama's proposal to federalize the 21st CCLC competition would likely reduce advocates' power by complicating their relationship with legislators. Legislators would no longer have state earmarks to protect and could very well have few 21st CCLC grantees among their constituents. As a result, they might be far less interested in the program and unlikely to oppose further changes. Thus, supporters of the 21st CCLC program must continue to organize against this element of the President's vision.

At the same time, however, they might do well to consider a more nuanced approach to extended school day initiatives. Certainly, afterschool advocates are right to question the logic behind the President's proposal to fund extended day initiatives as part of the 21st CCLC program. The latest report on Massachusetts' heralded Extended Learning Time initiative is not too different from Mathematica's findings about the 21st CCLC program in 2003. To date, the main academic effect of Extended Learning Time in Massachusetts has been a statistically significant positive effect on fifth-grade science scores (Boulay, Robertson, Maree, & Fox, 2010).

While afterschool advocates could exploit this irony as they organize against the President's vision, they also might explore the degree to which extended day actually presents important opportunities for the afterschool field. In Providence, RI, for example, extended day is being used to integrate the city's highly successful afterschool system with the regular school day. This model seems particularly promising as it meets the needs of students, schools, and traditional afterschool providers. All Providence middle schoolers have, and soon all Providence high schoolers will have, access to high-quality afterschool programming. There are direct links between the school day and afterschool. By working to-

gether in a citywide system, afterschool providers can leverage resources as never before (Kotloff, 2010). Instead of opposing extended day completely, afterschool advocates might use this opportunity to take Providence's model to scale.

Any efforts to do so, however, must address issues of funding. In 1998, there was little outcry when President Clinton focused the 21st CCLC program on childcare rather than community schooling. In 2001, few seemed to mind increased emphasis on academic achievement instead of youth development. Yet, both changes to the 21st CCLC program were accompanied by large increases in funding. Today, afterschool advocates would do well to consider the power of public-private partnerships illustrated by the Mott Foundation's ability in 1998 to secure $40 million worth of federal funding with a relatively small investment. In light of this history, afterschool advocates might ask philanthropic allies to use a similar strategy to ensure that President Obama's proposals do not lead to deep budget cuts among afterschool providers.

Whatever form future advocacy efforts take, they are strongest when they are rooted in a solid understanding of history. Indeed, the best way to honor the 15th anniversary of the 21st CCLC program might be to draw on the lessons of its past to enhance the future.

> Today, afterschool advocates would do well to consider the power of public-private partnerships illustrated by the Mott Foundation's ability in 1998 to secure $40 million worth of federal funding with a relatively small investment.

21ST CCLC UPDATE

"The Senate Appropriations Committee passed their education spending bill (S. 3686)... [in late July] with new policy language for 21st CCLC allowing State Education Agencies to sub-grant funds to Local Education Agencies for a longer school day, along with a $100 million increase. The full House Appropriations Committee has yet to mark up their education spending bill; however, the Subcommittee increased 21st CCLC funding by $35 million...[E]ventually a Conference Committee made of House and Senate Appropriators will meet to reconcile the differences between the two spending bills."

Posted August 3, 2010 at
www.afterschoolalliance.org/policyFedNewsArchive.cfm

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Notes

[1] My research identified one peer-reviewed article (Mahoney & Zigler, 2006) addressing the 21st CCLC program. Exploring the translation of science into policy, this article provides an excellent summary of scholarly reactions, critiques, and debates, but it pays little attention to political processes or political theory.

a system that works

Highlights of Effective Intervention Strategies in a Quality Improvement System

by Diana Sinisterra and Stephen Baker

In "How Is the Afterschool Field Defining Program Quality?" in the fall 2009 issue of *Afterschool Matters*, Palmer, Anderson, and Sabatelli review recent research on quality frameworks. They conclude that six domains of quality are especially critical: supportive relationships, intentional programming, strong community partnerships, promotion of youth engagement, physical health

and safety, and continuous quality improvement. This review and other recent cross-program or meta-analytic efforts to identify core components of quality afterschool programs (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Metz, Goldsmith, & Arbreton, 2008) provide a valuable opportunity for afterschool providers to reflect on their practices. In addition to correlational assessments of program attributes and outcomes, however, the field also needs data about how specific interventions have improved quality in afterschool programs (Granger, Durlak, Yohalem, & Reisner, 2007; Pittman, Smith, & Finn, 2008).

This paper describes one approach to such quality improvement efforts: the Quality Improvement System (QIS) implemented by Prime Time Palm Beach County (Prime Time) in Palm Beach County, Florida. Prime Time's QIS is recognized as one promising systemic ef-

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of quality in the afterschool field and its implementation in afterschool programs (Yohalem et al., 2009). In addition to describing the implementation of the QIS, this article describes its effects on program quality. Following a description of the QIS, we review findings from an evaluation of afterschool programs in the QIS conducted by the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. This evaluation demonstrates the specific value of QIS over time for participating organizations, comparing QIS results to those of afterschool programs outside Palm Beach County. We also summarize key findings from an independent longitudinal process evaluation of QIS conducted by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago during the past four years. This evaluation allows us to "look inside the black box" to describe and analyze the ways in which the system has supported quality. We conclude by arguing that the long-term and iterative process of the QIS has been essential to creating a community of afterschool providers who value high-quality programming.

Palm Beach County's Quality Improvement System

Prime Time Palm Beach County is a nonprofit afterschool intermediary organization. Its framework was developed a decade ago by a county-wide consortium in response to concerns about low-quality afterschool programs. Since its inception, Prime Time has spearheaded efforts to create standards, supports, and resources for Palm Beach County afterschool providers. As part of this emphasis, Prime Time coordinated a work group of key stakeholders that created Palm Beach County's five quality standards (see box), which predate but overlap with the recently developing consensus in the field about key aspects of quality (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Miller, 2005; Pittman et al., 2008).

These standards were initially intended to be benchmarks for an afterschool Quality Rating System (QRS) similar to one already in place for early education childcare centers. The QRS was designed to assign star ratings and provide incentives to early care programs meeting quality thresholds. But as Prime Time

fort to improve quality in the afterschool field (Yohalem, Granger, & Pittman, 2009). As a systemic effort, the QIS incorporates many elements of quality improvement being implemented in other afterschool settings, including assessment, planning, coaching, training, and networking. The experience of developing and implementing QIS offers opportunities for learning at multiple levels: how a systemic response can develop from an initial concern about low quality; how afterschool program directors experience the introduction and continuation of such a systemic approach; and how a system's multiple strategies can be refined and aligned. This experience also provides an opportunity to step back and reflect on the relative importance of specific contributing elements in the larger system.

Our primary intention in this article is to document findings and lessons from a systemic quality approach in a way that can inform the crucial discussion

continued to clarify its core vision for quality improvement, the work group reoriented its philosophy and renamed the initiative the Quality Improvement System, an approach that since then has demonstrated a record of improving and sustaining quality for large numbers of afterschool providers.

The QIS is a low-stakes approach designed to help afterschool programs continuously improve the quality of their services. Instead of using a system of rewards or sanctions, the QIS provides training and a quality assessment tool that give afterschool providers a grounding in the five quality standards. It also offers support and resources to help providers work toward the standards. The process begins with an initial external baseline assessment. Then the afterschool program is assigned a quality advisor, a Prime Time employee with expertise in youth development, afterschool programming, and coaching. The quality advisor and program leaders use the assessment to create an improvement plan, which guides the program's subsequent quality improvement efforts. This improvement plan includes recommendations for training or other supports and resources needed to improve quality. Programs also conduct a self-assessment to assess their quality and to reinforce their understanding of the quality standards. This cycle of assessments and supports is expected to be long-term; participating programs receive an annual external assessment with new plans, specific suggestions for improvement, and links to additional resources and technical assistance.

The Program Quality Assessment

The quality assessment tool used in the QIS is a modified version of the HighScope Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA, HighScope Educational Research Foundation, 2005b), which was chosen after careful consideration of various out-of-school time quality assessments. To align the existing assessment tool and Prime Time's five quality standards, HighScope Youth Development Group (now the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality) was contracted to adapt the tool for local use. The result of this work is the Palm Beach County Program Quality Assessment (PBC-PQA, HighScope Educational Research Foundation, 2005a), which consists of two major parts, Form A and Form B. Form A is a point-of-service observational tool that consists of four domains: Safe Environment, Supportive Environment, Interaction, and Engagement. Each domain includes subcategories (scales) with specific indicators (items). Prime Time contracts with a local organi-

zation that trains and supervises external assessors to use the PBC-PQA to conduct the observation of three staff members at each afterschool site. An afterschool program's Form A score comprises the average of these three observation scores.

Form B was designed to capture program quality at the organizational level using four domains—Youth-Centered Policies and Practices, High Expectations for Youth and Staff, Organizational Logistics, and Family—and their corresponding scales and items. The information for Form B is collected through interviews with administrative staff and reviews of program documents. We include findings from both Form A and Form B assessments below.

QIS Outcomes

As part of its work in Palm Beach County, the Weikart Center analyzed assessment data that began with the 37 school- and community-based afterschool sites that participated in the 18-month QIS pilot project in 2006–2007 and continued through assessments of the 90 sites participating in 2008–2009. Simultaneously, the researchers were collecting YPQA assessment data in three states from organizations serving elementary school-age children; these providers met basic organizational and program criteria including having full-time administrators, delivering year-round programming, and producing a weekly schedule of offerings. This rich data set allowed the Weikart Center to estimate the impact of the QIS intervention in three ways:

- By measuring changes in scores within a single program year during which a program improvement plan was being implemented
- By measuring changes in scores over two or more years
- By comparing scores of programs in QIS to those of similar programs using the YPQA outside of Palm Beach County

Changes in One Program Year

As indicated in Table 1, the Weikart Center researchers concluded that, with the exception of one domain—Supportive Environment, which was relatively high at baseline—assessment scores increased during the 2008–2009 academic year. The Center determined that, although the differences were not statistically significant, "the fact that measured quality is higher later in the year suggests that the QIS, with its mix of assessment, training and technical assistance, is working" (Sugar, Pearson, Smith, & Devaney, 2009, p. 2).

Table 1. 2008–2009 Palm Beach County Mean Scores across Time, Form A

	T1 (N = 99 offerings)	T2 (N = 74 offerings)	T3 (N = 97 offerings)
	9/1/08 – 11/30/08	12/1/08 – 1/31/09	2/1/09 – 4/31/09
Safe Environment	4.90	4.92	4.95
Supportive Environment	4.43	4.24	4.35
Interaction	3.57	3.60	4.62
Engagement	2.80	2.82	2.91

Adapted from Sugar et al., 2009

Note: Statistical significance for difference of means was tested across time points. There were no statistically significant differences.

Table 2. Comparison of Pilot, Baseline, and Year 2 Domain Scores, Form A

	Pilot Baseline Mean (N = 23 sites)	Pilot Reassessment Mean (N = 23 sites)	2008 Baseline Mean (N = 24 sites)*	2009 Reassessment Mean (N = 24 sites)*
Safe Environment	4.39	4.75	4.75	4.85[abc]
Supportive Environment	3.91	4.25	4.26	4.37[a]
Interaction	3.26	3.51	3.43	3.65[ac]
Engagement	2.53	2.81	2.83	3.00[a]

Adapted from Sugar et al., 2009

Table 3: Comparison of Pilot, Baseline, and Year 2 Domain Scores, Form B

	Pilot Baseline Mean (N = 23 sites)	Pilot Reassessment Mean (N = 23 sites)	2008 Baseline Mean (N = 24 sites)*	2009 Reassessment Mean (N = 24 sites)*
Youth-Centered Policies and Practices	2.89	3.41	4.15	4.46[abc]
High Expectations for Youth and Staff	3.99	3.56	4.80	4.82[ab]
Organizational Logistics	4.33	4.73	4.20	4.20[b]
Family	3.74	4.23	4.54	4.79[abc]

Adapted from Sugar et al., 2009

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*Between the pilot and baseline years, one of the pilot sites split into two sites.
[a] Indicates significant difference between pilot baseline mean and 2009 reassessment mean at $p \leq .05$ level.
[b] Indicates significant difference between pilot reassessment mean and 2009 reassessment mean at $p \leq .05$ level.
[c] Indicates significant difference between 2008 baseline mean and 2009 reassessment mean at $p \leq .05$ level.

Changes across Program Years

In addition to changes within a single year, participating organizations showed robust improvement in both Form A and Form B scores across multiple years. As indicated in Table 2, with the exception of one data point (2008 Interaction score), the aggregate scores of each domain on Form A stayed the same or increased from one year to the next. Weikart researchers suggested that "gains produced by the QIS intervention are both stable and sustainable" (Sugar et al., 2009, p. 7).

Form B scores, provided in Table 3, follow a similar trajectory. With the exception of the Organizational Logistics domain, increases in these scores over time are both consistent and statistically significant. This pattern suggested to the Weikart researchers that "core components of the QIS are being successfully institutionalized in management policies and practices" (Sugar et al., 2009, p. 10).

Comparisons to a Larger Sample

Quality scores of afterschool programs serving elementary school-age children in other states offer another way to assess the effect of the QIS. As Figure 1 indicates, Palm Beach County QIS programs scored higher in all domains of the PBC-PQA observational tool, Form A, than peer organizations using the comparable YPQA tool on which the PBC-PQA was based (Sugar et al., 2009). The differences between QIS programs and comparison programs were statistically significant in all cases.
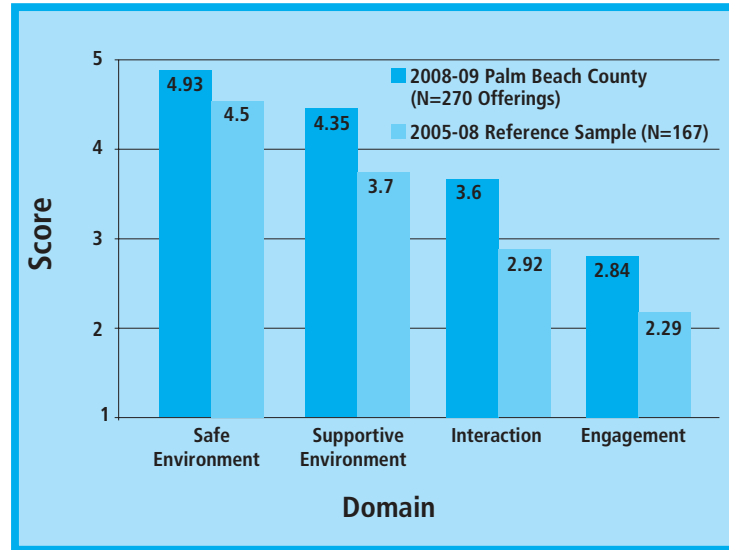
Together, these analyses provide specific measures of the improvements in program quality experienced by agencies participating in the QIS.

What Makes QIS Effective

Key findings from an overview of annual process evaluations, conducted over the same time by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago (Baker, Spielberger, Lockaby, & Guterman, 2010; Spielberger & Lockaby, 2006; Spielberger & Lockaby, 2007; Spielberger, Lockaby, Mayers, & Guterman, 2008; Spielberger, Lockaby, Mayers, & Guterman, 2009), provide additional detail on the operations and effects of the QIS.

Chapin Hall researchers observed the development of supports for quality in afterschool programs in Palm Beach County between 2004 and 2009. They conducted more than 50 cross-sectional and longitudinal interviews with program and agency directors, interviews with

Figure 1. Palm Beach County domain scores vs. large reference sample of programs serving elementary-age youth

From Sugar et al., 2009
Note: Statistical significance for difference of means was tested between the two samples. All differences between the domain means were statistically significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.

Prime Time staff, and observations at planning meetings and other events. They also reviewed program documentation of assessment scores and use of QIS services. This research identified several aspects of the QIS that were important in explaining rising trends in program quality among participating agencies.

Low-stakes Support

A key aspect of the QIS is its low-stakes and supportive approach. The switch in name from a Quality Rating System to the Quality Improvement System was accompanied by related conceptual changes and practices. Instead of rewarding agencies with star ratings and incentives only when quality thresholds had been met, the QIS front-loaded its support. Incentives of $1,500 to $3,500, based on enrollment, were provided to agencies as they joined the QIS. Instead of using only external assessors, program staff were also trained in self-assessment so that both external and internal assessments using the PBC-PQA tool would be available to describe program strengths and weaknesses.

Framing quality improvement as a combination of outside guidance and local knowledge increased a sense of ownership and acceptance among program staff. Assessment, in the words of one participant, was something that QIS did "*with* providers instead of doing *to* them" (Spielberger & Lockaby, 2007, p. 23). Having staff participate in the assessment process made it easier for some to "open their minds," accept the need for improvement, and focus their attention on specific areas of need

(Spielberger et al., 2009, p. 16). On occasion, program self-assessments were more critical than external assessments, a result that further diminished the threat from the external assessment.

Even with this relatively low-stakes approach, however, some program directors expressed trepidation at being assessed by outsiders. These concerns were of several types, including a worry that the assessment had taken place when the best staff weren't present; that "mitigating factors" were not appreciated, understood or taken into consideration; or that the baseline scores were not fully explained or understood (Spielberger et al., 2009, p. 14). These concerns hint at the challenges of engaging programs even in lower-stakes appraisals of performance, underscoring the value of a supportive approach like the one embodied in QIS for engaging programs in honest discussions about quality.

Long-term and Continuous Quality Improvement

Another reason for the effectiveness of the QIS was that it presumed a long-term relationship with participating agencies and a continuous focus on quality improvement. As programs entered the QIS during its phased rollout between 2006 and 2008, some program directors new to the QIS were generally skeptical of the low-stakes philosophy and wondered how programs would be motivated to change without explicit external incentives. Longitudinal interviews, however, revealed that the year-long QIS cycle of assessment, planning, and support kindled in program directors an intrinsic interest in increasing quality. The process largely eliminated doubts about the strategy of using ongoing support, rather than specific rewards or sanctions, to encourage the development of quality. The low-stakes approach and the long-term nature of involvement were compatible strategies.

Our interviews indicated that, among those directors with some initial uncertainty about QIS, most found their concerns substantially reduced in just one year of participation. By the third year, the views of program directors had converged on a high level of satisfaction with QIS and a belief in its positive effect on quality—whether the program directors had joined QIS enthusiastically and well-informed or had started with indifference and uncertainty or a more superficial understanding. Time

and the ongoing QIS cycle worked together to allay concerns and allow programs to make changes over multiple years that may have been difficult for some program directors to imagine in the short term.

Quality Advisors

As noted earlier, programs participating in the QIS are each assigned a quality advisor who reviews the findings from the external and self-assessments and helps to generate an individualized program improvement plan. All the program directors interviewed expressed appreciation for their quality advisors and identified them as providing critical support. That support was concrete and practical, as quality advisors helped interpret assessment findings; conceptualize what improvements might look like in that specific program; and link programs to training, curricular resources, and other supports provided by Prime Time or partner agencies. The individualized nature of this process resulted in targeted use of resources, linking specific program weaknesses with specific resources such as trainings, "as opposed to blindly sending your staff to all kinds of trainings," as one program director characterized it (Spielberger et al., 2009, p. 14).

The support from quality advisors was also relational. Quality advisors are one important reason many program directors described the move from the QRS to the QIS as a shift from something directive to something that felt like "coaching" (Spielberger & Lockaby, 2007). Quality advisors were frequently described as trusted, reliable, flexible, and responsive; they developed long-standing relationships with programs and often provided social and emotional support. Quality advisors were described as encouraging program directors to take ownership of the assessment process—choosing, for example, whether to conduct the self-assessment before or after drafting the improvement plan. They served as important advocates with Prime Time regarding program managers' experiences with the QIS process and provided helpful links to and perspectives on developments outside the particular agency (Spielberger et al., 2009). Notably, program directors who were part of the QIS from its pilot phase and described particularly close relationships with their quality advisor also participated in large numbers of Prime Time services and supports (Spielberger et al., 2009).

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A System of Supports and Resources

The low-stakes approach, the long-term and continuous nature of the QIS, and the engagement of quality advisors all serve as pathways to critically needed and tailored supports and resources. Accordingly, the QIS has also been effective because Prime Time built a *system* of supports, with each part playing a different role. These supports include a wide variety of educational, training, and career advising services offered to individual afterschool practitioners, or at times to all staff at a specific afterschool program, through Prime Time's professional development department. The community partnerships department provided additional resources.

With a vision of a system of supports as the guiding concept, Prime Time's professional development team responded to the learning needs of the community of practitioners in Palm Beach County, even as it attended to standards from the larger field. It worked to align the types and number of trainings with the goals afterschool programs identified in their improvement plans. It guided training participants through the process of creating customized, practicable plans for their own afterschool programs. Trainings were explicitly linked to the five quality standards, the PBC-PQA tool, and a set of core competencies that Prime Time's professional development team developed in coordination with other local partners.

Prime Time's community partnership team offered resources and services to eligible programs in Palm Beach County, with priority given to those in QIS. The community partnership team managed contracts with several local nonprofits to deliver a variety of enriching curricular enhancement activities. Afterschool programs could request high-quality activities for their youth in content areas such as arts and culture, sports, health and wellness, media arts, literacy, and science and technology. In addition to providing direct services to youth, these "enhancement" agencies were also expected to work with the afterschool staff to help them strengthen their skills in these content areas. These contracts helped afterschool programs offer challenging experiences— one of the five local afterschool quality standards—while simultaneously supporting future capacity of the afterschool programs (Baker et al., 2010).

As Prime Time increased the number of supports available to afterschool organizations, it fine-tuned what each part of the system provided to fill in gaps and reduce overlap. Although it was not restricted to QIS participants, this larger system of supports and resources became an integral part of helping programs meet the goals they set for themselves and improve their quality one aspect at a time.

Making Quality Work

This article summarizes research that demonstrates the effectiveness of the Prime Time Quality Improvement System and highlights essential elements that appear to contribute to the system's effectiveness. Perhaps of utmost importance has been the conception of QIS as a long-term process with embedded supports. This approach has allowed Prime Time administrators to revisit and revise the QIS in incremental steps, first through the QRS that helped to inform QIS development, through an 18-month QIS pilot, and through a rollout to a larger and more diverse population of afterschool sites. The longevity and stability of the system has reassured program directors who were able to increase their trust and involvement with QIS as they repeated the cycle of assessment, planning, supports, and reassessment. The QIS allowed even programs at relatively low initial levels of quality to begin paying attention to improvement, with the expectation that a culture of quality could be nurtured whatever their starting point. More broadly, it has allowed the slow but steady growth of a learning community in Palm Beach County that values and aspires to high-quality afterschool programming.

The Prime Time QIS provides a concrete example for afterschool programs outside Palm Beach County. As other research has demonstrated, even lower-quality programs often have some strengths—for example, in ensuring participants' physical health and safety—on which to build toward more difficult but important aspects of program quality such as youth engagement and youth-adult interactions (Sugar et al., 2009). As the afterschool field seeks to make the transition from focusing primarily on child safety to emphasizing enrichment and development, it has a strong interest in moving lower-quality programs toward these higher-order skills. The QIS has

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demonstrated that these improvements are possible, that a supportive and long-term approach can help overcome program staffs' uncertainty or fear about making these improvements, and that supports and services can be targeted and refined in a systematic fashion.

As it continues to oversee QIS, Prime Time confronts challenges that are endemic in the field, including staff turnover, competing priorities, changes in funding requirements, and a need for more, and more diverse, funding. But a commitment to high quality, supported systematically over the long term, holds the promise of meeting these challenges and sustaining the improvements important to individual practitioners and the afterschool field as a whole.

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new faces, new places

A 4-H Science Learning Program in Urban Out-of-School Settings

by Walter A. Barker, Eric Killian, and William P. Evans

Young people in the U.S. are falling behind their peers in the rest of the developed world in science, technology, engineering, and math. The Program for International Student Assessment study, conducted every three years, ranked the U.S. 24th in math and science out of 29 countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Baldi et al., 2007).

Out-of-school time programs can support young people in learning science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) concepts and skills. A decade of research and evaluations (National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 2009) provides strong evidence that afterschool programs make a difference in the lives of youth who attend.

4-H—one of the oldest and largest out-of-school youth development programs in the country—can make a unique contribution. Its roots in the national land-grant university system give 4-H substantial experience in developing hands-on STEM programming that engages young people. Moving beyond its rural and agricultural roots, 4-H is tak-

ing this expertise into urban settings. A twelve-week introductory science program piloted by University of Nevada Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development in three Nevada cities illustrates how 4-H's experiential learning model can engage urban youth in science learning.

The 4-H Model of Experiential Learning

4-H is sponsored by cooperative extension programs in land-grant universities located in every state of the nation. The original mission of these institutions was to teach agri-

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culture, military tactics, and mechanical arts, as well as classical studies, so that members of the working classes could obtain a liberal and practical education. Today's land-grant universities continue to be open and accessible to the public. Their 4-H youth programs, which are available in nearly every county in the nation, provide opportunities to millions of young people (Washington State University Extension, 2009).

4-H is the largest out-of-school youth development program in the U.S., with over 7 million members and 500,000 teen and adult volunteers (4-H National Headquarters, 2009). It is also one of the oldest, having begun between 1890 and 1900 (Iowa State University, 2009). 4-H has a track record of providing a variety of positive youth outcomes, including personal and life skills development as well as career development (Arnold, 2004; Hendrick, Homan, & Dick, 2009; Rockwell, Stohler, & Rudman, 1984). The program started in order to provide youth in rural areas with knowledge in agriculture and other practical areas as well as with life skills and support for career goals. Today, 4-H's innovation, creativity, and diversity of programs can foster the development of capable young people not only in rural areas but also in cities and towns.

The 4 "H"s of the organization's name are:
- Head: cognition, critical thinking
- Heart: emotional well-being, self-discipline, integrity, communication
- Hands: social development, citizenship, service to others
- Health: physical capability, healthy lifestyle

Teaching in 4-H uses a model of hands-on experiential learning, illustrated in Figure 1.
- **Do.** Participants use all their senses to experience an activity. This process leaves lasting memories of their involvement.
- **Reflect.** Participants look back on their experience critically and share it with others. They describe, discuss, and share concrete examples of problems encountered in the first phase and the ways they overcame them.
- **Apply.** Participants generalize (*so what?*) and apply what they have learned (*now what?*) to similar situations.

The greatest benefits of the 4-H model come from cooperative learning, when members work together in a small group to achieve a common goal. Youth and adults work together in partnership. Hands-on involvement ensures that each participant is connected to the activity and engaged in the task. In addition to developing life skills, participants gain knowledge and often find reasons to ad-

Figure 1. 4-H's experiential learning model (Norman & Jordan, 1999)

1. "DO"
Experience the activity. Youth work in groups with no help from leaders, allowing them to explore and discover.

5. "APPLY"
What does this activity mean to youths' everyday lives? What did youth learn about decision making and communication; what advice can youth share with others; what do they think about leadership?

2. "SHARE"
Youth share what happened during the activity: How they felt; what was challenging, easy, surprising. How was it to work in a group; what did youth do to plan the activity?

4. "GENERALIZE"
Let youth share similar experiences from other activities; what they learned about decision making, problem solving, and critical thinking. Let youth share some live skills they have improved.

3. "PROCESS"
Process by discussing: what youth learned about themselves; how did they make decisions; what steps were taken to make decisions; what problems came up and how were they solved? What live skills did youth develop through this activity?

DO   REFLECT   APPLY

Adopted and modified from Norman and Jordon, University of Florida

just their attitudes. A focus on fun is paramount. Because of this emphasis, the youth tend not to think of 4-H learning activities as being similar to school classes.

The 4-H program is delivered in various settings including afterschool programs, community clubs, overnight and day camps, and school enrichment programs. Its project activities can be customized to meet the needs of various audiences.

The 4-H Science and Technology Program

In response to a national critical need to encourage youth to engage in science, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development (UNCE4-HYD) developed a 12-week program called "New Faces, New Places: An Introduction to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math." This program was a recruitment tool that would allow graduates to form new 4-H STEM programs similar to 4-H special interest clubs.

The mission of the UNCE4-HYD is to provide educational strategies and opportunities for youth to develop life skills that will help them to become healthy, self-directing, and contributing members of society. In 2006–2007, UNCE4-HYD was engaged in several afterschool programs with the cities of Las Vegas, Henderson, and Logandale—with remarkable success. In 2008, UNCE4-HYD brought together 12 youth development organizations—including

local schools, Boy Scouts, faith-based organizations, youth members from surrounding 4-H clubs, and UNCE faculty and staff—to participate in a needs assessment. A key outcome was the formation of a partnership among the groups that prioritized areas for youth programming and provided an opportunity for collaboration.

The main priority in terms of content was STEM learning. Participating groups agreed that UNCE4-HYD, because of its long history and expertise, would provide educational programming, curricula, and training and development for site volunteers. The collaborating agencies' responsibilities were to organize the youth and to provide volunteers and locations for program delivery. The agencies were new to 4-H, and their leaders were excited to partner with 4-H. These new outlets also expanded the opportunities for 4-H programming to reach more urban youth.

New Faces, New Places was a direct response to the Program for International Student Assessment study (Baldi et al., 2007) evaluation. Its STEM educational components are:

- Science: basic scientific concepts, plant and animal science, nutrition
- Technology: computer simulation on geospatial information systems (GIS) and global positioning systems (GPS), robotics
- Engineering: construction of robots and rockets
- Math: measurements and calculations required by activities throughout the program

The program goals were to enhance participants' acquisition of scientific knowledge; develop skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, and teamwork; and create positive attitudes toward science. The program built on 4-H's experience in STEM programming while modifying its basic activities for urban participants. For example, "butter making" is an activity in the 4-H animal science program. It was renamed "chemical reactions" in the basic science sessions of New Faces, New Places. Participants learned about chemical reactions by observing what happens in the butter-making process: After rapid shaking in a closed container, milk cream turns solid because of the accumulation of fat. Continued shaking brings it back to a liquid state and then separates the whey and produces butter, a solid.

Program Description

New Faces, New Places was delivered after school at 15 sites, each with 40 youth ages 8–15. Sites included community clubs, school sites, community centers, faith-based organizations, and day and overnight camps in

Table 1. New Faces, New Places Sessions and Content

PROGRAM SESSION	CONTENT
1. What Is 4-H?	4-H youth development, the 4 Hs (see page XX)
2. Dr. Germ	Importance of hand washing for a healthy lifestyle
3. Healthy Nutrition	Food selection, preparation of a fruit smoothie
4. Plant Science	Plants and their relationship to the environment, types of trees
5. Animal Sciences	Animals and the environment, activity with small animals
6. Basic Science	Simple chemical reactions
7. Space Science	Rocketry, robotics, geospatial information system (GIS) and global positioning system (GPS)
8. Plant Science	Properties of wood
9. My First 4-H Project	Making a wooden key holder
10. 4-H Clubs	What 4-H is, how to belong, benefits
11. So You Want to Start a 4-H STEM Club?	Logistics of beginning a 4-H club to build mastery and life skills

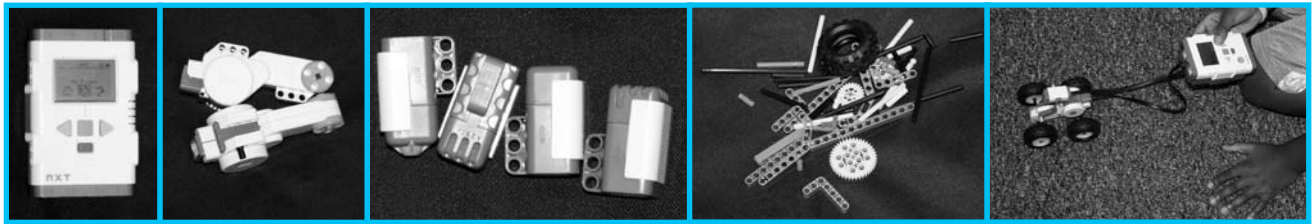three cities: Las Vegas, Henderson, and Logandale. The program was conducted twice a week for 12 weeks.

Activities in New Faces, New Places were designed to engage youth in enjoyable, concrete projects that would pique future interest in 4-H and STEM learning. The curriculum that guided the program (Barker, Leas, & Sanders, 2008) is illustrated in Table 1. Every session included one or more hands-on activities.

The Experiential Learning Model in Action

Learning in New Faces, New Places incorporated 4-H's experiential model. For example, in the robotics session, a set of activities introduced engineering and the construction of robots. The session began with knowledge building: Participants played a bingo-like game, SciPhi-O, in which they learned the robotic parts.

The **Do** segment involved planning, constructing, and testing a simple robot using parts from Lego Mindstorms kits (see Figure 2). Participants were divided into groups of ten. Each group received the same instructions, reproduced in the box "Robotics Scenario." Groups were given two hours to build their robots. The main

Figure 2. Lego Mindstorms parts for a simple robot

parts, a processor "brick" and motor, were provided to each group; groups had to "purchase" the additional pieces and sensors they would use to build their robots. Once parts were purchased, they could not be returned or swapped with other groups. To ensure that they worked as a team, participants were not allowed help from outside their groups.

The **Reflect** segment enabled participants to discuss and analyze their experiences. Specific questions guided the discussion: What happened? What did you see, hear, touch? How did you feel? What was the most difficult or the easiest? What problems or issues seemed to occur over and over? What similar experiences have you had? How did your group solve the challenges?

The **Apply** segment also was guided by specific questions. For example, "What did you learn about yourself?" encouraged critical thinking and decision making. "What did you learn about working in a group?" enabled participants to reflect on their teamwork and problem-solving strategies. "How will you react in the future as a result of this activity?" helped participants apply what they had learned.

ROBOTICS SCENARIO

An office has been contaminated with a radioactive material. No one can enter the office because of this material. Your group is one of several groups contacted to design and build a robot to clean the office of all contaminants. The most creative robot at the lowest production cost will be selected for this job. To finance the project, Clark County 4-H Financial Bank, Inc., will donate to each group $1,000 as a start for the project. Groups can borrow, in addition to the $1,000, any amount that will help to complete their project.

All completed and/or submitted robots will be judged according to the group's robot plan. This means that the robot will have to perform the work as designed by the robot's plan. The group with the winning robot will receive a $10,000 prize.

Site Leader Training

The training of the volunteer program leaders at each site was crucial to the success of New Faces, New Places. These leaders were typically associated with the nonprofit partner organization that was hosting the UNCE4-HYD program. For the safety of participants, a background check was conducted on each site leader.

All leaders received eight hours of training in program delivery and class management. The content included instruction and activities on ages and stages of youth development in order to develop leaders' understanding of the behavior and characteristics of youth ages 8–15—and how to deal with these behaviors and characteristics. Site leaders learned to distinguish a program, an activity, and a project in the 4-H youth development model. They learned critical elements of youth development (Kress, 2004) that are necessary for youths' safety and positive learning.

The experiential learning model of Do, Reflect, and Apply occupied most of the leader training time. Site leaders experienced the model and had to demonstrate their ability to use it. At the end of the training, they learned to evaluate progress toward the program's goals and objectives.

Data Collection and Analysis

This article summarizes the findings of the evaluation of the first round of New Faces, New Places. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. A 31-item evaluation Likert scale instrument was developed to measure program outcomes pre- and post-participation. Data were collected using an on-site program PowerPoint evaluation survey using the PRS (Personal Response System) RF "clickers" and Interwrite personal response software (Penn State Information Technology Service, 2009).

Leader Reactions

Between 2006 and 2009, leader training made it possible to increase the number of afterschool clubs. Using the PRS system, 88 percent of the site leaders gave a positive rating for the training. The PRS system itself received a high rating. Leaders' reflections reveal the importance of the training:

> [I] never thought of the importance of risk management before now. Wish we could have more of this type of training.

I will keep some of the ideas I have learned; it gives me a greater understanding about youth development. What I have learned about youth development is that there is a lot to know; it will help me to be a little more understanding about kids.

The meaning of the 4-Hs, first time I heard and learned what it means. The most important thing I have learned is understanding the ages and stages of youth.

A special comment came from a volunteer who had been with the Clark County 4-H for more than six years:

Compared to five years ago, these trainings have been more effective in helping us with 4-H. You have made a great difference with the program. After so many years working with 4-H, I now really know what 4-H means.

One site leader commented on the content of the youth program itself:

[I] wish we had this when we were in school—never heard about 4-H and Extension.

Participant Reactions

Use of the PRS system improved the accuracy and response rates of data collection. Of the 600 student participants, 450, or 75 percent, completed the 12 sessions. Ninety percent said that they enjoyed using the electronic PRS system. Seventy percent indicated that they were likely to become members of existing or new 4-H clubs.

From 2006 to 2009, enrollment in the 4-H program increased from 175 to 650. This is one of the greatest increases in program history. County fair 4-H exhibits doubled, and youth from diverse ethnic backgrounds now demonstrate and display their projects at the fair.

Post-participation survey results show important gains in life skills. Quantitative and qualitative results show that the program taught some students not to hesitate to ask questions, to listen more, and to work with a team. About 25 percent of students indicated that they now had more confidence in working on science projects. A majority of participants, 55 percent, noted that they would be confident in using the information they had learned in school.

Qualitative comments reinforce the quantitative findings. As one participant put it when asked what was important about this program:

The meaning of the 4-Hs—first time I heard and

learned what it means. This is awesome! The most important thing I have learned is in robotics and rocketry. It's real fun, cool.

The most important outcome may be the interest participants have shown in future 4-H activities. Fifteen graduated youth now form a core of youth leaders to expand the GIS / GPS activities. In addition, four new 4-H clubs have formed. One club with 32 members, 80 percent of whom are Hispanic, is fully chartered and has carried out its first program activity, a parent-community night. The other three clubs, whose populations are approximately 80 percent African American, 10 percent Caucasian, and 10 percent Hispanic, are awaiting their final chartering approval. Of the 450 youth who were engaged in New Faces, New Places, more than 200 are officially enrolled in existing or newly formed clubs.

Learning from Experience

Bringing 4-H into an urban environment means modifying programs and emphases to suit new audiences. To respond to the needs of community partners and schools, UNCE4-HYD promoted the STEM aspects of existing 4-H programming. To the familiar aspects of 4-H, such as plant and animal sciences, we added chemistry, engineering, computer technology, and the math without which none of these activities could work. Our urban participants found this focus appealing, as their survey results and post-participation comments showed.

As we market this program beyond the three pilot cities, we emphasize that we are complementing what the schools are doing by providing a *hands-on approach* to problem solving. Our experience with introducing 4-H programming in urban environments suggests additional considerations for out-of-school youth development programming.

Networking, partnering, and collaboration must be in place to achieve success. Most of the partnering agencies in these urban settings did not know of Cooperative Extension

and only a few had heard of 4-H. One of the biggest challenges for University of Nevada Cooperative Extension faculty and staff was to increase credibility with collaborators. Our position as an outreach program of University of Nevada helped us approach this challenge successfully. We partnered with potential partners in the needs assessment, providing leadership and enabling them to experience the benefits of our programming. These activities helped to expand the new partners' views of our possible contributions, indicating that Extension had a great deal to offer—more than most of the other organizations involved—in the areas of research-based program development, evaluation, and professional development support. Taking Extension to the people through a recruiting and networking program paid great dividends, enabling us to emphasize Extension's role and expand our youth development focus.

Recruiting and training site leaders is another critical component of program success. We provided professional development opportunities and then allowed site leaders to deliver parts of the program until they achieved confidence in the skills they had learned. All of the training emphasized the 4-H experiential learning model. The collaborative training led to better communication, a shared sense of program purpose, and higher levels of competency to deliver the curriculum.

Recruiting and retaining youth is another challenge. Our observation was that maintaining maximum attendance was less a challenge than getting support from parents of youth who were not attending. We had some success with hosting parents' nights at the beginning and the end of the program. One strategy we used in promoting the program was to include photos and videos of actual participants in promotional materials. We shared the successes of the program through newsletters and radio and TV shows, making the point that everyone is a stakeholder in youth development efforts. Since every participant in New Faces, New Places had filled out the 4-H enrollment form, we had permission from most parents to take and use pictures of their children.

4-H is a national youth development program that is available in all states and most counties. If your organization is not affiliated with a land-grant university's Cooperative Extension, consider developing a partnership to foster a S.T.E.M. program in your location. Most Cooperative Extension systems are looking for ways to partner and to assist in fulfilling the needs of people in their communities. New Faces, New Places is expanding to become a popular youth program in Clark County, Nevada. Its success can be replicated elsewhere; the potential of this model in urban areas is great. Longitudinal evaluation of participant outcomes will assist in expanding this model to other audiences and contexts.

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can we talk?

Creating Effective Partnerships between School and Afterschool Programs

by Lisa Sweet Dilles

Changing demographics and the No Child Left Behind Act have increased the need for instructional support for students. This need entails a change in the relationship between afterschool programs and schools. School districts, nonprofit organizations, and funders now require a focus on education support. The older recreational model of afterschool programming may have been admirably suited to older goals, but now the mission of afterschool has been expanded. Professionals entrusted with supporting both the education and social development of our students cannot continue to operate from an old paradigm that no longer meets this new focus. A reasonable partnership between the world of afterschool and the school day is essential. In this essay, I use my own experience and that of professionals with whom I talked to explore how school and afterschool can create a new partnership—one that benefits children—by understanding the challenges each faces.

Storm Clouds Ahead

When I was hired three years ago as the afterschool director in the Live Oak School District, I'd been a classroom teacher in the district for 12 years. I had a vision of what was needed, primarily from the schools' perspective. Afterschool time seemed to be a golden opportunity to boost students' academic skills. The superintendent told me to redirect the program's focus to emphasize academic support for students who were below grade level on standardized tests. I had eagerly used grant money to purchase mobile laptop carts for math and writing academies at each site. I was cheerfully ready to change the focus of the Live Oak afterschool programs from recreation to academic support.

LISA DILLES was the assistant director of afterschool programs in Live Oak School District, Santa Cruz, California, for three years. She has worked in the district for 21 years, as a bilingual classroom teacher, resource specialist, and English language program coordinator. She recently became the principal of Green Acres Elementary School in Santa Cruz. This article is the culmination of her research in the Afterschool Matters Practitioner Research Fellowship in 2008; she presented this research at the ASM Roundtable at UC-Berkeley in fall 2009.

I had a lot to learn. Working with the current culture of afterschool programs, while adding academic support and aligning with the school day, would prove to be a bigger challenge than I could have imagined.

Schools and Afterschool Programs in Live Oak

The Live Oak School District is located only a mile from the coast in Santa Cruz, California. It is a beautiful area, known for its beaches, balmy weather, and great surfing. Well-known nearby landmarks are the redwood forests and the University of California. The Live Oak neighborhood is an incongruous mixture of luxurious homes overlooking the water and crowded apartment complexes where families double up to save money. The area has a significant number of Spanish-speaking families.

The small district, consisting of three elementary schools and one middle school, feeds into the nearby unified school district for high school. Each elementary school has about 400 students. Up to 65 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, so the schools are eligible for federal Title I funds. Between 30 percent and 65 percent of the schools' populations are English language learners. One of the schools is in the second year of "program improvement" due to poor test scores for its Hispanic and low-income students.

For more than 25 years, the state has funded a fairly typical afterschool "Kid Care" program at the district's elementary schools. This program has historically focused on supporting working families with safe afterschool care on the school campus. Its guiding principles stress personal and social growth.

However, like many districts in California, Live Oak wants to achieve significant academic gains for its students. Reducing the achievement gap between various groups is a greater priority than ever, and afterschool programming is viewed as a strategic way to support struggling students. Two years ago, Live Oak was awarded an After School Education and Safety (ASES) grant for a new afterschool program. This grant, administered by the California Department of Education, requires ASES programs to have educational and literacy components and to provide tutoring and homework assistance. The ASES and Kid Care programs function side by side at two of the three school sites and share many activities.

> In Live Oak and elsewhere, teacher and administrator expectations of afterschool programs have shifted, while the training and experience of afterschool staff have not.

Culture Shock

As I began to coordinate the two afterschool programs, it became clear that the original afterschool staff members had their own strong ideas about the purpose of the program. The Kid Care program model with which they worked was originally designed and funded by the California Child Development Division. Student progress was measured only by rating scales that tracked children's personal and social development. The staff felt that afterschool should definitely *not* be like school. They believed that children who had been in school all day needed to run and climb, play checkers, bake, and dance. They saw themselves as leaders focusing on creativity and social development, rather than as teachers focusing on academic growth. They emphasized free play, arts and crafts, and time with peers. Homework time was scheduled, but not essential. Time for math facts and reading comprehension was not included.

The superintendent wanted both the established afterschool program and the new ASES program to increase support for schoolwork. He told me to implement a "much-needed expansion of academic time." He explained that he had selected me to run the programs primarily because my background included working with struggling students in our district. Although on the surface this seemed to be a simple enough task, it was far more complex than I expected.

The growing body of research on the changing vision and mission for out-of-school time includes case-study research by Harvard professor Gil Noam. Describing the process of planning a school-based afterschool program, he writes, "The primary tension involved disagreement on whether the program should be primarily academic—focused on raising test scores and providing homework supervision—or enrichment—targeting students' individual interests and providing kinesthetic and arts programming" (Noam, 2004, p. 11). When teachers, principals, afterschool program leaders, and parents at school sites have not discussed their differing priorities, the result is confusion about the program's mission. In Live Oak and elsewhere, teacher and administrator expectations of afterschool programs have shifted, while the training and experience of afterschool staff have not. Unrealistic expectations, disagreement about purpose, and underfunded state mandates such as ASES have created stress and at times animosity between the school and afterschool stakeholders.

I conducted research to discover what stakeholders believed about the two afterschool programs in the district. Through interviews, focus groups, and surveys, I gathered information from teachers, principals, afterschool program staff, and students over a six-month period. I specifically asked the question, "What is the purpose of the Live Oak afterschool programs?" What I found not only clarified the complex issues at play, but also helped me understand what I needed to do to help move our programs forward.

What Stakeholders Thought

Not surprisingly, stakeholders held conflicting opinions about the purposes of the afterschool programs. What amazed me was just how differently they still viewed the programs' goals.

Principals

Principals said that they wanted the afterschool programs to boost student achievement. However, while they believed that children benefit from supervised activities and homework help, they were leery of managing more responsibility. "I can accommodate your program and let you use our rooms, as long as it doesn't put more work on my plate," said one. Another, who "in theory" supported academics in afterschool, was not interested in adding to an already long administrative work day. Principals who responded to my survey wanted someone else to be responsible for students receiving the academic support that would boost their test scores. The survey showed that principals viewed the afterschool program as separate from the core school-day program. Although they wanted the afterschool programs to help raise state test scores, they did not want to be involved in planning the process.

Teachers

Teachers overwhelmingly wanted the afterschool programs to help students academically. Of the 65 teachers surveyed, fully 92 percent agreed with the statement that afterschool programs should reinforce what was taught during the school day. However, their beliefs about the afterschool programs made them skeptical about the feasibility of a real academic boost. Most teachers felt that the current purpose of the afterschool programs was basically childcare. They mentioned low staff skills, lack of "real" homework help, and high employee turnover. To be fair, in interviews I also heard positive comments about art and sports activities. Some teachers also noted the value of unstructured play. In response to a question

about how to improve the afterschool program, teachers did not suggest increasing communication with afterschool staff about student needs. Though many teachers said they would prefer that the afterschool programs provide high-quality academic help for students, they offered no assistance or suggestions about how to improve the quality of that support.

Afterschool Program Staff

Afterschool program staff saw the primary purpose of their program to be developing children's socialization skills and keeping them safe. Many felt that, since the children had been in school all day, they now needed to unwind. "Mostly they need chill time and not to be told what to do and where to be," said one leader. Another commented that children felt more comfortable talking to the afterschool staff than to the classroom teachers. Afterschool staff felt that they were more interested in "the child as a person." Staff from both programs felt that children were tired in the afternoon. Even the new staff in the ASES program indicated that they believed that doing academic tasks beyond homework might be too much to expect.

Many afterschool staff members said they enjoyed working in a setting that offered more freedom than did the classroom. In commenting on the gulf between school and afterschool, they had a generally cautious view of the relationship. Many felt that the afterschool program was blamed for problems ranging from messy bathrooms to lack of homework completion or issues with supervision. As a result, the afterschool staff tended to feel "stressed" when they saw teachers approaching. Overall, while afterschool staff members were committed to keeping children safe and happy during the afternoon, they felt that afterschool was not, and probably couldn't be, converted into an academic intervention program while staffed by the existing group leaders.

Children

Elementary school children generally attend afterschool because their parents have decided they should. When asked what the purpose of afterschool was, most children mentioned homework time. A fourth grader said, "It helps me with homework, like if I don't know a question sometimes they will introduce me to the word or question." Several felt it didn't help them with school at all and simply wrote "No" on the survey. Another said, "It helps a little, and it just makes afterschool time more fun." One second grader commented, "I like it because they do fun stuff, and when it's sunset they take care of

you." Children thus seemed to value the social and safety aspects of afterschool programming as well as the academic support.

Steps in the Right Direction

We have been working to take steps in the right direction in Live Oak. I have knocked on many doors, listened to many members of the school community, and planted many seeds. This work is paying off: Positive shifts are beginning to occur. At one school, the principal asked teachers to teach in afterschool several times a week, and several volunteered. These teachers are leading popular groups including readers' theater, Math Marathon, and a gardening group with a science focus. The afterschool program pays a fifth-grade teacher to run a tech club on Fridays, where she teaches students to create such products as slideshows, videos, and podcasts. One principal is considering flexing the reading teacher's hours so she begins her day at 10:00 a.m. and teaches well into afterschool hours. The school secretaries talk to parents about afterschool openings and refer them to me directly. As afterschool director, I have been asked to attend faculty meetings once a month. These are small steps toward a real partnership. Feedback from district staff, teachers, and parents has been positive on the program changes they see this year.

Moving forward, in Live Oak and elsewhere, we need to shift from the current model of disparate programs to one of shared purpose. As school districts design or modify their afterschool programs, they should approach the task as a team effort. Ongoing shared planning and purposeful communication between school and afterschool staff are absolutely essential in order to improve educational outcomes for children. This shift to a collaborative model is a significant one that will require diligence, energy, and goodwill to implement effectively.

Three important steps can help to ensure that a district's afterschool programs are serving students' needs:

- All stakeholders must develop in advance a clear vision for the afterschool program. The vision should include important components for boosting both academic and social competencies.
- Afterschool staff must include both academic teachers and leaders with youth development and recreational expertise. All need to have the requisite skills for their

> Ongoing shared planning and purposeful communication between school and afterschool staff are absolutely essential in order to improve educational outcomes for children.

defined roles in the afterschool program.

- The afterschool program must be considered a part of the school community. There should be a steady two-way flow of information between the teachers and the afterschool staff. Respectful collaboration will create stronger programs with better results for students.

The shift to a more academic focus is a major change in the afterschool culture. It can be accomplished only through well-designed partnerships between afterschool staff and school educators. Afterschool programs have something the schools crave: more time with students. Schools have something that afterschool programs need: trained teachers. Pretending that the existing staff and structure of afterschool can suddenly offer effective academic support is unrealistic, but blending the edges of school and afterschool can be part of a dynamic plan for increasing student achievement and providing valuable enrichment. If the schools can provide the instructional boost and afterschool can offer the engaging enrichment, students will have what they deserve: the best of both worlds.

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Afterschool Matters

Call for Papers
Fall 2011 Issue

Afterschool Matters, a national, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to promoting professionalism, scholarship, and consciousness in the field of afterschool education, is seeking material for the Fall 2011 issue. Published by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time with support from the Robert Bowne Foundation, the journal serves those involved in developing and running programs for youth during the out-of-school time hours, in addition to those engaged in research and in shaping youth development policy.

Afterschool Matters seeks scholarly work, from a variety of disciplines, which can be applied to or is based on the afterschool arena. The journal also welcomes submissions that explore practical ideas for working with young people during the out-of-school hours. Articles should connect to current theory and practice in the field by relating to previously published research; a range of academic perspectives will be considered. We also welcome personal or inspirational narratives and essays, review essays, artwork, and photographs.

Any topic related to the theory and practice of out-of-school time programming will be considered for the Fall 2011 issue. We invite you to discuss possible topics in advance with us. Suggested topics include:

- Descriptions and analyses of community-based youth organizations as institutions that support youth development through civic engagement, social and emotional development, arts development, academic achievement, or other means.
- Descriptions and analyses of programs that collaborate with a range of community institutions, such as faith-based organizations or businesses.
- Exploration of employment-related topics, including, for example, youth organizations as spaces for training and employment, youth as workers, community economic development, and youth programs.

Submission Guidelines
- Deadline is January 17, 2011, for the Fall 2011 issue of *Afterschool Matters*.
- Submissions should be double-spaced in 12-point font, including quotations and references, and submitted electronically or on a disk in Microsoft Word or Rich Text format.
- Submissions should not exceed 5,000 words.
- Include a cover sheet with the manuscript title, authors' names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses.
- The names of the authors should not appear on the text, as submissions are reviewed anonymously by peers.
- Follow the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition (July 2009), for reference style guidelines. Present important information in the text and do not use extensive footnotes.

Inquiries about possible articles or topics are welcome.
To inquire or to submit articles, contact:

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