Afterschool Matters

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Welcome

As the long winter finally wanes, we New Englanders are forcibly reminded that we live in a four-season climate and that each season places its unique stamp on our lives and daily routines. While many facets of weather can be forecast, unpredictable changes can always challenge our preparedness and cause us to rethink or restock our toolbox.

Work in the out-of-school time field ebbs and flows in cycles much like the seasons. For example, in the last two years we at NIOST have been deeply involved in the issue of physical activity and healthy eating, in synergy with the First Lady's Let's Move initiative to stem childhood obesity. Ten years ago OST's role in childhood obesity seemed peripheral. Now it is clear that OST programs can and must play a vital role in promoting child wellness.

This issue of *Afterschool Matters* focuses on two of the many issues that are putting their stamp on the OST climate today: systemic development and quality building. As the field strives to systematize the governance, delivery, and use of OST programming, much effort is also directed toward assessing the quality of program practices and the impact of program participation. Even as we secure many accomplishments in these domains, we are continually challenged by the unexpected—shifts in funding sources, changing regulations, and the emerging needs of today's youth. The articles in this journal augment our professional toolboxes with many carefully developed strategies for growing the field and for improving daily program practices.

As one season moves into another, we move to embrace what we know that season will bring. Developing systems and building quality define a large part of our work during this "season" in the development of our field. As we work to resolve the complex challenges brought forth in these pages, we continue to make the OST program space a stronger and more effective setting for advancing the lives of children and youth.

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networks analysis of a regional ecosystem of afterschool programs

by Martha G. Russell and Marc A. Smith

"One of the most important, cross-cutting social policy perspectives to emerge in recent years is an awareness that no single institution can create all the conditions that young people need to flourish" (Melaville & Blank, 1998). Case studies have documented the impact of family-school-community collaboration in afterschool programs on increasing awareness about the problems of at-risk youth (Lauer et al., 2006), initiating dialogue among leaders and community representatives, developing

rich school-based information systems, and demonstrating how to build strong relationships between public and private sectors through the combination of leadership and money (Schargel & Smink, 2001). Communities, families, and youth are interrelated: The availability of quality afterschool programs is related to the health and strength of communities (Norris, 1994), and strong communities play an important role in supporting fami-

lies as they help children develop (Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2002; Kane, 2004).

This paper describes a network analysis of the ecosystem of afterschool programs in Dallas County, Texas. We use the term *ecosystem* as metaphoric reference for program analysis and strategy formation based on a network-centric mindset. The Innovation Ecosystem

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Table 1. Components of the Region-Communities-Families-Youth System

COMPONENT DESCRIPTION	IMPORTANCE TO THE AFTERSCHOOL ECOSYSTEM
Regions and cities support their neighborhoods and communities through municipal programs that ensure meaningful employment, support infrastructures for workers, provide business development for new companies and services, and cultivate inter-organizational effectiveness among the municipal entities charged with the well-being of communities and neighborhoods.	With participation from youth who have investment in the community's future, municipalities maintain a shared vision of how children mature into contributing members of the community.
Communities and neighborhoods take care of their families by ensuring adequate housing, fostering a sense of community, supporting parents to provide safe and nurturing environments for their children, and providing options for dependent care for working parents.	Strong communities have the capacity to offer programs that are relevant to community members. Such communities support families' involvement in their children's learning and development.
Families (particularly their adults) take care of children by providing for necessities, promoting self-esteem, supervising and guiding children's activities, and being involved in children's learning.	Productive and well-adjusted parents provide stability, security, encouragement, and continuity to youth in their learning and development activities both at home and at school.
Youth learn to participate in families, communities, and regions or cities by completing school and becoming employed, participating in service activities, voting, volunteering, assuming leadership roles, and in general engaging and functioning in the world.	Out-of-school activities create bridges of involvement to help youth grow into fully functioning citizens who contribute to the care and well-being of their communities and families and who participate as citizens in the democratic processes of their cities, states, and country.

Network, based at Stanford University, refers to an ecosystem as "the inter-organizational, political, economic, environmental, and technological systems through which the synergistic relationships of people, knowledge, and resources are continually realigned to promote harmonious and agile responsiveness to changing internal and external forces" (Huhtamäki, Still, Rubens, & Russell, 2010, p. 7).

In the past two decades, theorists, analysts, and program developers have explored integrated models to understand the synergy of key influences. Bronfenbrenner (1979) has conceptualized an individual's developmental ecosystem as an interplay of settings, contexts, cultures, external events, and key life events. Turgay's (1996) triangulation model for child, family, and school and Berns' (2010) bio-ecological model of human development argue that children develop through an interrelated system of influences. Concepts in systems thinking have been applied to a wide variety of social service contexts (e.g., Armour et al., 1989; Gerrard, 2009; Wetzel & Winawer, 2002), including afterschool education (Gootman, 2000).

The network analysis reported here posed two questions about the Dallas County afterschool ecosystem:

- What strengths and vulnerabilities can be identified in the patterns of existing relationships between and among afterschool programs, sponsors, and program support organizations in Dallas County?
- What insights for resource development and program advocacy to better satisfy the unmet needs in Dallas can be gleaned from better understanding the networks of financial resources for afterschool care?

Our analysis showed considerable vulnerability in a system in which afterschool programs worked in isolation and relied on just one or two sources of funding. Considerable opportunity therefore existed for programs to collaborate to build a more cohesive system of afterschool programming. The Dallas Afterschool Network was formed in 2007 to address these vulnerabilities and opportunities.

The Need for Network Analysis in Dallas

In 2005 Dallas afterschool leaders met to articulate their need for information that would support their requests for program resources. While several national assessments (Afterschool Alliance, 2009; U.S. Census Bureau, 2005) had gathered and disseminated information about the need for and availability of afterschool services na-

tionally, potential funders of Dallas programs wanted greater specificity at the local level. Although bits and pieces of program information and community data had been identified, no coherent set of data—or established units of measure—existed. To provide urgently needed documentation, Martha Russell (2006) conducted an assessment for Dallas County.

Beyond merely conducting a census, the assessment sought to create a network-centric mindset toward the need for and availability of out-of-home care for the estimated 330,050 children ages 5–13 who resided in Dallas County in 2006 (Russell, 2006). Sampling households in a cross-section of Dallas neighborhoods, a parent survey showed that 41 percent of these children needed afterschool care, an estimated need of 135,000 childcare FTEs, counting full-time equivalents as five days a week from the end of the school day until 5 p.m. or later (Russell, 2006). Though the needs of preschool children and secondary school youth are important components of the larger social system, they were not included in this assessment.

In an ecosystem, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; meaningful interventions (and pathologies) can

Table 2. Classification of Afterschool Programs and Services in Region-Communities-Families-Youth System

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Home-based care	Private home daycare, home school, and care in the child's own home, provided by parent, friend, neighbor, or relatives
Out-of-home care, public	Regional civic programs, including public schools, parks and recreation, and libraries
Out-of-home care, private community-based	Private programs, including those offered by community-based programs such as housing-based programs, neighborhood programs, local tutoring programs, faith-based programs, and licensed daycare programs
Out-of-home care, private organization-based (nonprofit or for-profit)	Private programs offered by private schools or state or national entities, such as Girls, Inc.; Boys & Girls Clubs; Scouts; Big Brothers/Sisters; or arts, sports, and academic achievement programs

Figure 1. Relationships in the Region–Communities–Families–Youth System
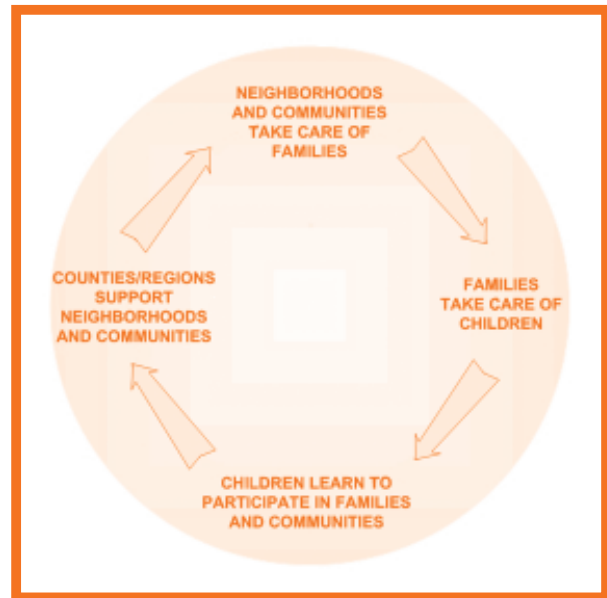
come from many directions. To study the ecosystem of afterschool care in Dallas County, we constructed a systems model to illustrate the interconnectedness of regional, community, and family responsibilities for children. The systems framework included both tangible factors, such as formal programs, and intangible forces and functions derived from local culture and the social capital of relationships among individuals and organizations. The Region-Communities-Families-Youth System (Russell, 2006), summarized in Table 1, provides a framework for categorizing afterschool programs and assessing opportunities to strengthen the system. Figure 1 shows the relationships among the system's components.

Methodology
Data and Sample

A subset of data from the comprehensive inventory of Dallas County afterschool programs (Russell, 2006) was used in this network analysis. Data about programmatic and financial sponsorship were available for 525 afterschool programs, which were linked to a total of 25 support organizations. We used two additional variables from the inventory's extensive data about the afterschool programs: the program's capacity for full-time equivalent enrollments and program classification in the Region-Communities-Families-Youth System.

The term *afterschool program* can mean anything from a YMCA basketball league to an extended-day program that includes both before-school and afterschool care. To clarify how programs and services contributed to the ecosystem of afterschool programs in Dallas, we categorized inventoried programs as shown in Table 2. While recog-

nizing that some programs may belong to more than one category, we assigned each program to only one category in order to facilitate data-driven analysis.

We mapped this classification of afterschool programs to the Region-Communities-Families-Youth System as shown in Figure 2. Though home-based care—used for 59 percent of Dallas children ages 5–13—is critical to the afterschool ecosystem, our resources did not allow us to include home-based programs in the analysis. However, many local private services, some of which were offered in homes, were included.

Social Network Analysis

We used a *social network analysis* to assess the relationships between afterschool programs and their financial and programmatic sponsors in the Dallas afterschool ecosystem. Social network analysis is a quantitative method for studying the social structures of actors. Visual maps and network metrics represent people or social units as points in two-dimensional space and relationships among pairs as lines linking those points (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Visualizing social configuration quantitatively allows investigators to gain new insights into the patterning of social connections and to communicate their results to others (Freeman, 2009).

Visual social network analysis has been used to study several types of relationship structures. For example, Levine's (1979) work on "corporate interlocks" shows relationships through which social norms influence information flow for business intelligence. Network analysis has been used to map mental health services in rural areas (Fuller, Kelly, Law, Pollard, & Fragar, 2009), state social services (Corteville & Sun, 2009), and community disaster resilience (National Research Council, 2009). Social net-

Figure 2. Regional, Community, Organization, and Family Synergy in the Dallas Afterschool Ecosystem
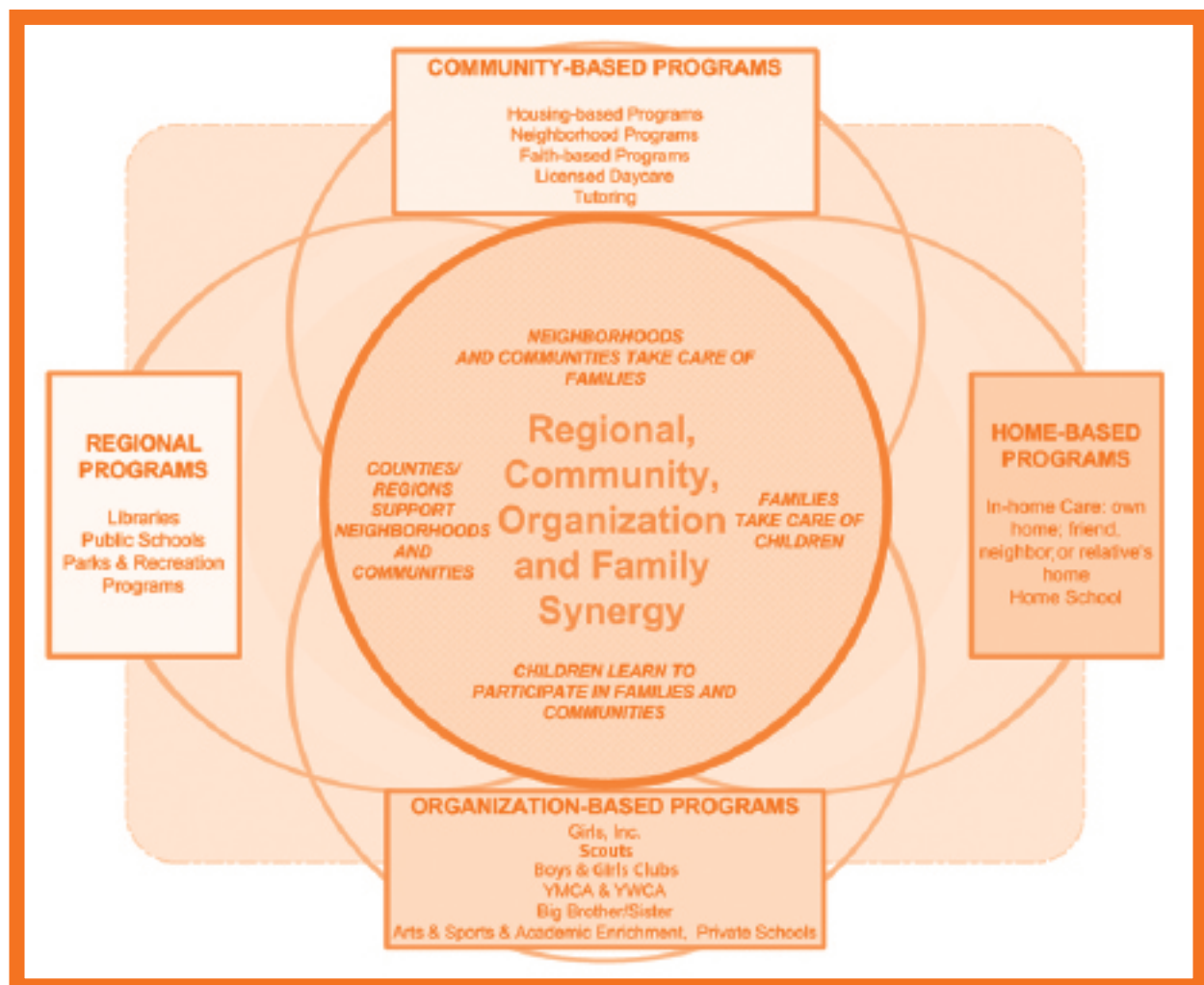
work analysis is based on the premise that network structures are critical to understanding systems of relationships.

The relationships between various actors, shown as *nodes*, can be modeled as either one-mode or two-mode networks. In one-mode networks, all the nodes are of same type. Among program board members, for example, all of the nodes would be of the same type: program board members. Connections between nodes would represent board members' acquaintance or membership. In the two-mode networks shown in this analysis, two types of nodes represent two types of actors: afterschool programs and their resource providers. These two-mode networks show the node of each afterschool program connected to the nodes of all providers from which that program receives resources.

The connections between the nodes, called *edges* and indicated by lines on a network map, may be undirected or directed. In a directed connection, an arrow indicates the direction of the relationship. For example, a directed connection between a funder and a program would have an arrow pointing from the funder to the program.

The metrics of social network analysis can be calculated both for the network as a whole and for its actors using a variety of computer-based tools. In this analysis, NodeXL (Smith et al., 2009) was used for network visualization. Tools such as NodeXL make social network analysis, once the exclusive province of users who could write computer code, accessible to anyone who can use a spreadsheet to create a pie chart (Bonsignore et al., 2009). Basic metrics used in our network analysis include:

- *Nodal degree* represents the number of connections of a given program or sponsor node.
- *Centrality* is measured by the number of edges (relationships) that one node has.
- *Betweenness* is a specific centrality measure that indicates the importance of the relationship as the shortest point between two other nodes.
- *Out-degree* is the number of outwardly directed edges of a given node.

To construct the maps displayed on the following pages, we used an algorithm that lays out the nodes with as few crossing edges as possible.

Network Analysis of the Dallas County Afterschool Ecosystem

Our network analysis focused on the relationships between afterschool programs and the organizations that provided both programmatic and financial support. A further analysis of networks of financial support re-

vealed important vulnerabilities in the Dallas County afterschool ecosystem.

Afterschool Programs and Resource Providers

Our network analysis of financial and program support for afterschool programs is mapped in Figure 3 on page 6. Dallas afterschool programs are shown as circles and organizations that provided program or financial support as rectangles. *COL* within a rectangle indicates program support. Edges, shown as lines between programs and organizations, indicate a resource relationship for that afterschool program.

In the 1200 unique edges mapped in Figure 3, over 525 programs reported relationships with one or more of 25 resource organizations. The number of programs to which each of those 25 resource organizations related (the out-degree) ranged from 5 to 250.

The network analysis in Figure 3 reveals clusters of afterschool programs, defined by the sources of their resources. The clusters on the left and at the bottom show afterschool programs clustered around organizations that provide content and activity support (COL). The *betweenness centrality*—the relationship importance indicated in the map by the concentration of provider rectangles—shows that Scouts, Dallas arts organizations, the parks & recreation program, Campfire Girls, and social-service-sponsored programs such as Weed and Seed function as an important support cluster for enrollment-based afterschool care programs in the ecosystem. The dense overlay of edges between and around these organizations indicates interconnections among afterschool programs in this cluster, primarily through the resource organizations. Some programs in this cluster also rely on the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program and the Texas Workforce Commission program for financial resources.

The cluster on the right is built around financial rather than programmatic support. The funding organizations reaching the greatest number of programs are the 21st CCLC program and the Texas Workforce Commission. The "other" categories of both resource and program support are linked to many programs, but the actual relationship influence of these composite categories is likely to be fragmented rather than concentrated.

Afterschool programs in the cluster on the right receive financial support from a variety of public (state and regional) agencies, social service agencies, businesses, faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations,
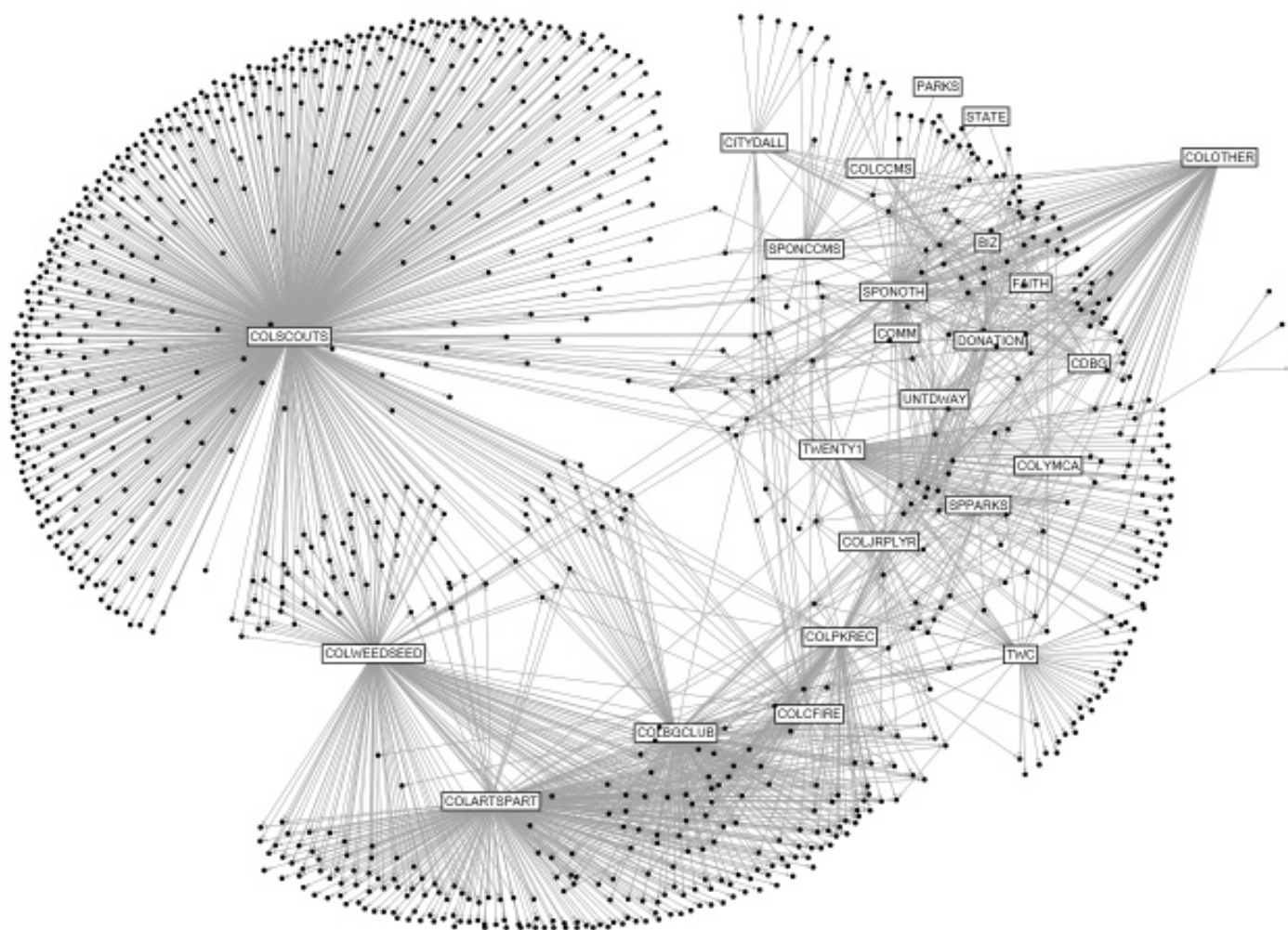
KEY:

● = afterschool programs

COL = program support providers: Boys & Girls Clubs, arts programs, Campfire Girls, parks and recreation, special parks programs, YMCA, Child Care Management Services, Junior Player programs, Weed and Seed programs, Scouts, and others

☐ = financial support providers: 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Child Care Management Services, faith-based organizations, United Way, City of Dallas, community services, social services, Community Development Block Grants, parks, private donations, Texas Workforce Commission, and others

Figure 3. Networks of Financial and Program Support in the Dallas Afterschool Ecosystem

Community Development Block Grants, and the City of Dallas. Other funding sources are contributions from individuals through donations and fundraising activities. Some of the afterschool programs in the cluster on the right receive program support from the YMCA and from the parks department.

The core of the cluster on the right is somewhat diffuse in comparison to the other clusters on the left. The afterschool programs in this cluster have more diverse relationships with providers of funding and program support. A significant number of programs in the right cluster have relationships with several resource organizations, as evidenced by the web-like overlays of edges between the program and resource organizations. These afterschool programs have the potential to collaborate through their sponsor organizations.

Of special interest is the relationship interconnectivity of several dozen programs mapped between the clusters.

Their interconnectedness could indicate an intentional collaboration strategy; in fact, many of these afterschool programs do operate under shared program leadership.

Programs with the lowest betweenness centrality are shown at the periphery of the map; they are characterized by a pattern of low interconnectivity with resource providers. Many programs receive financial or programmatic support from only one organization; very few of these afterschool programs have relationships with more than organization. The peripheral position of the state and of the parks department as funding sources are also notable. This network analysis reveals a pattern of low connectivity among programs and resources for afterschool care in Dallas County. The map suggests that building synergy across Dallas programs requires interventions to increase connectivity for the flow of information as well as for the exchange of financial and program resources. At the time these data were collected, no such program or organization existed.

Networks of Financial Support

To better understand the network structure of sponsors in the Dallas afterschool ecosystem, we further investigated the relationships between programs and their financial sponsors. In Figure 4 (page 8), financial sponsors are shown as hollow rectangles. Private afterschool programs are shown as squares and public programs as circles. The size of the square or circle reflects the FTE capacity of the program, ranging from several hundred in large programs based in parks and public schools to small programs of 5 to 10 children in private local programs. Programs without enrollment requirements, such as Boys & Girls Clubs, Scouts, parks and recreation programs, and Weed and Seed programs, were not included in this analysis. Most programs sponsored by national organizations are open enrollment and do not report attendance.

In Figure 4, relationships between 251 programs and 15 sponsors are represented by 401 unique edges. Programs cluster around their sponsors. Afterschool programs at the center of the network map have relationships with multiple sponsors, while programs at the periphery tend to have relationships with only one sponsor.

The sponsors bifurcate into roughly two groups. Private sponsors—donations, businesses, United Way, and faith-based organizations—cluster in the middle. These sponsors fund many public and some private afterschool programs but are generally not the only source of funding for those programs. Public sponsors, including 21st CCLC, Texas Workforce, Child Care Management Services, the City of Dallas, parks and recreation, and the

State of Texas, are located toward the periphery of the network map. Most of the afterschool programs funded by these providers are dependent on a single sponsor.

Afterschool programs that were entirely supported by parent fees and family-based in-home care were not included in this analysis. These kinds of care could benefit significantly from relationship synergy in the ecosystem, but such relationships remain, for the most part, yet to be developed.

System-based Insights into the Dallas Afterschool Ecosystem

This network analysis shows the strength of a cluster of afterschool programs that had diversified resource structures and were interconnected (Figure 3). It shows vulnerability in the isolation of many Dallas afterschool programs and the low level of interconnectivity between the two primary clusters of support (Figure 4). This network resembles what social network analysts call a *scale-free network*. In scale-free networks, growth patterns attach to highly connected nodes, in a "rich get richer" manner. Scale-free networks tend to be "robust against accidental failures but vulnerable to coordinated attacks" (Barabási & Bonabeau, 2003, p. 57). One such "attack" at the ecosystem level could be a serious cutback in state funding—which has, in fact, occurred.

The network analysis also provided insights about strategies that could improve the synergy across the ecosystem of afterschool programs in Dallas, including among financial and program support organizations, which were represented in each cluster in the network maps. The network structure shown in Figure 4 suggests that, while program capacity has been dependent on public sector support, the clusters vary in their type of program support and sponsorship, as well as in their capacity to serve children. This set of patterns suggests that the ecosystem would benefit from strengthening its diversity. An organization created to synergize the ecosystem could benefit from using a multifaceted and decentralized approach to address needs of many different types of programs.

Isolation of Afterschool Programs

Most of the programs in the Dallas afterschool ecosystem operated in isolation. The independent home-based afterschool services, not shown in these analyses, most likely followed this pattern. Organizations that provide program support, staff training and development, and financial resources have the potential to connect these programs into the network of relationships in the afterschool ecosystem.
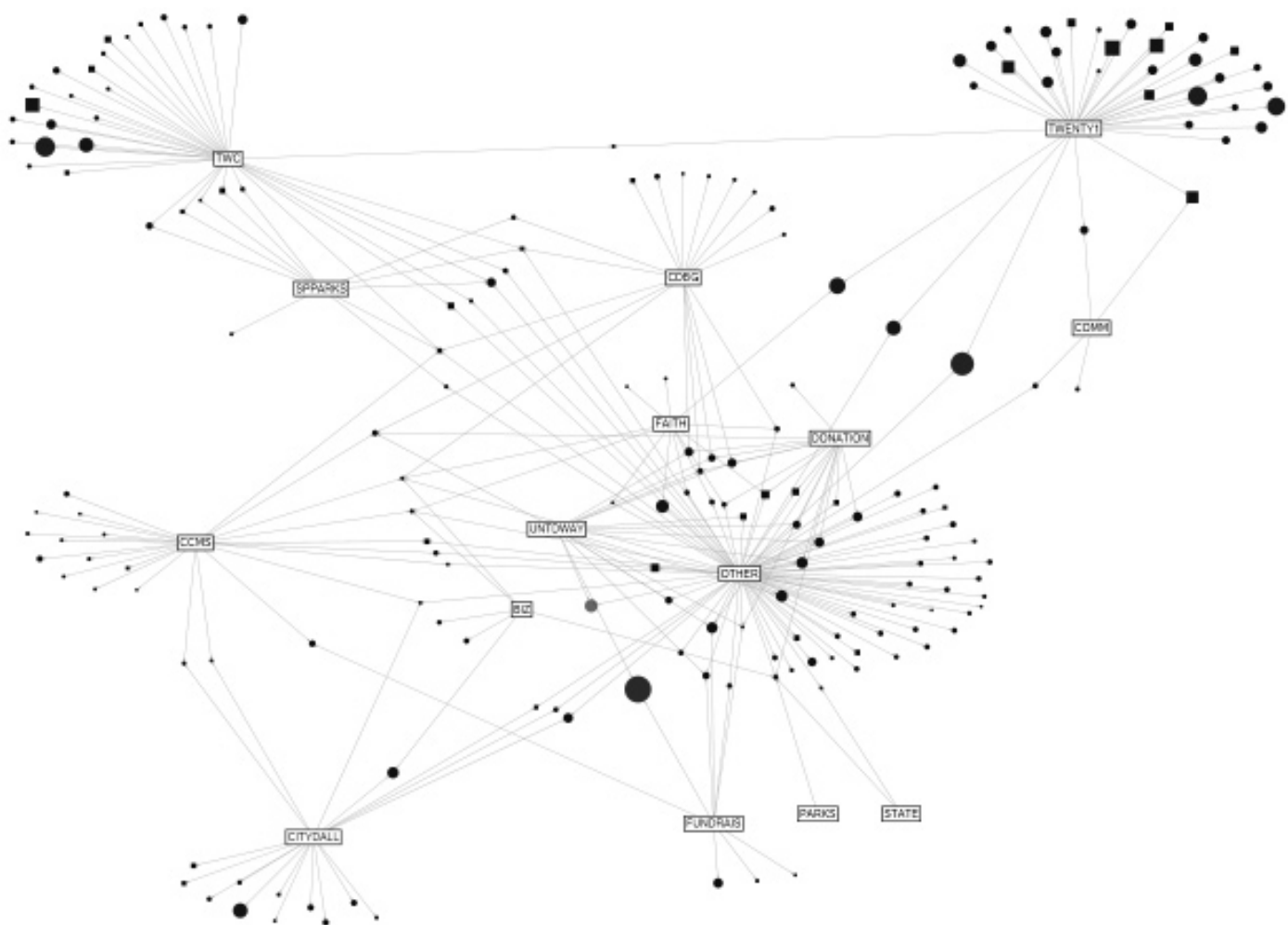
KEY:

☐ = financial sponsors: businesses, community organizations, faith-based organizations, City of Dallas, Child Care Management Services, program fundraising, Community Development Block Grants, donations, United Way, special parks programs, parks & recreation programs, 21st CCLC, Texas Workforce Commission, social services, and others

■ = private afterschool programs

● = public afterschool programs

Figure 4. Networks of Financial Support for Afterschool Programs, Showing Category and FTE Capacity

Funding

Only 12 percent of Dallas afterschool programs were supported entirely by parent fees. In 25 percent of programs, parents paid no fees. Program directors in 63 percent of programs reported that parent fees paid only a portion of the costs.

Most school and community-based programs reported receiving funds from more than one source, in addition to parent fees; some were supported by four or five different sources. The variety of funding sources for Dallas County afterschool programs is shown in Figure 5. While 40 percent of Dallas afterschool programs received resources from faith-based organizations and 23 percent received resources from businesses, nearly half of the Dallas County afterschool programs reported that they received resources from "other" sources. These other sources varied widely, ranging from a VFW auxiliary to local charities to a government-assisted food program. Resources were administered by federal entities, particularly the 21st CCLC program; state programs such as the Texas Workforce Commission; re-
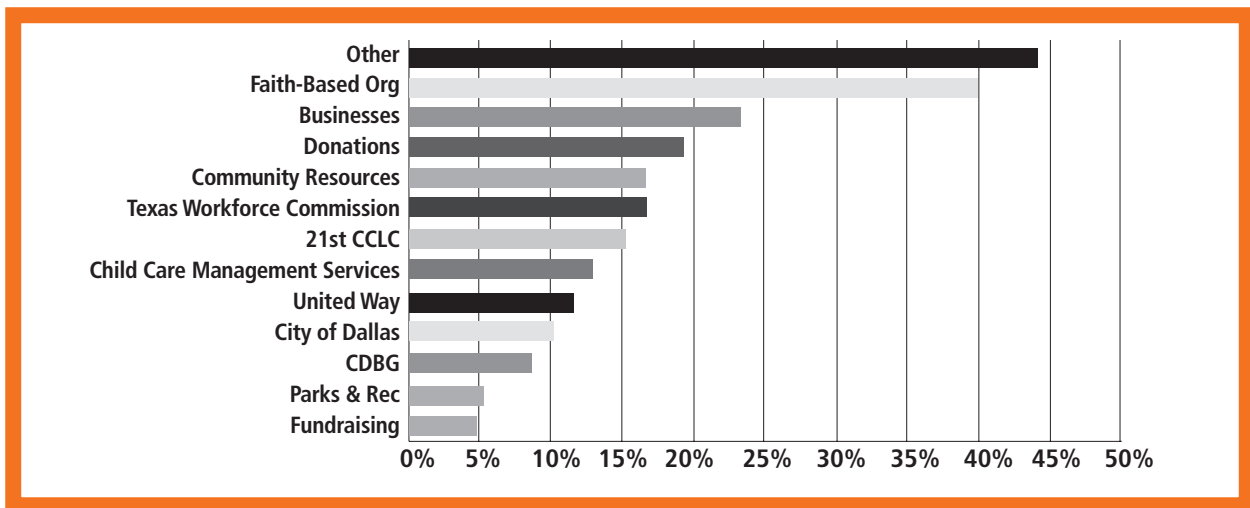
Figure 5. Sources of Resource Support of Inventoried Programs as Reported by Program Leaders

gional entities such as Child Care Management Services; city-administered Community Development Block Grants, and local charity organizations.

Low Interconnectivity around Two Clusters of Financial Support

The network structure of the clusters of relationships through which Dallas afterschool programs received financial support provide two insights. Few afterschool programs had diversified their funding sources; many programs relied on only one external source of funding. Yet, the stability, and in some cases survival, of these programs depends on external resources for program costs, because parents cannot afford to pay. External financial resources are likely to come either from national and state sponsors or from regional and locally funded sponsors. Both clusters of sponsors rely on a need-based strategy for funding. Opportunities for afterschool programs to diversify their sponsorship may help not only to stabilize the afterschool ecosystem but also to build synergy.

Dependence on the Public Sector

In Dallas many afterschool programs received public funds, including those in schools, libraries, and parks. Roughly 40 percent of organization-based programs, such as Scouts and Boys & Girls Clubs, used publicly funded facilities.

Nearly half of the out-of-home FTE capacity in Dallas County received financial resources from sponsors that were publicly funded through national or regional sources. Decisions about these funds are made by regional, state, or national decision-makers rather than by local groups who understand the ecosystem intimately. Out-of-home afterschool programs in Dallas County

are thus vulnerable to the judgment of decisions made by people who lack familiarity with the Dallas afterschool ecosystem. Community and neighborhood resources must be mobilized to support funding for out-of-home afterschool programs. Local decision-makers must convey an understanding of the afterschool ecosystem to state and regional decision-makers in order to inform their decisions about resource allocation.

Synergy and Collaboration among Programs through Financial and Program Support

Collaboration exists among some staff in some afterschool programs. However, at the time of this data collection, most collaboration was ad hoc and no formal support of network connections existed. Over two-thirds of program leaders interviewed for the assessment said they were aware of other afterschool programs in their neighborhoods. Nearly half said they had some informal cooperation with other programs.

At the time of the data collection for this assessment, afterschool care services in Dallas County were not championed, organized, or managed under any one authority. Although all programs contributed to satisfying the need, many programs offered their own discrete services, and many funders provided support for programs without coordination, resulting in inconsistent and poorly defined accountability requirements. No single entity addressed the full scope of afterschool programs in Dallas County.

After the assessment its sponsor, Heart House Dallas, organized program directors and community leaders to establish the Dallas Afterschool Network. Now in its fourth year of operation, the Dallas Afterschool Network

has provided advocacy, networking support, and training; its mission is to advance the quality and availability of afterschool programs in the Dallas community. More information is available at www.dasn.org. The network has served as a catalyst for building connections among afterschool sponsors. A network analysis of the current relationships among the programs and sponsors in Dallas County would likely show a changed network structure.

Using Network Analysis as a Catalyst for Change

Many communities have existing data that can be used in a network analysis. If two names can be associated by a relationship, such "A funds B," or "X shares services with Y," a network can be constructed and analyzed. Although using network analysis for service systems is relatively new, previous work done in the fields of sociology provides a conceptual framework and set of analytical methods that can now be more easily leveraged for the study of community service programs.

Network analysis can be conducted for policy analysis and administration, as well as for program development and evaluation. Once within reach only for people who could write computer code, network analysis can now be conducted by the much larger population of people comfortable with spreadsheet applications. Program managers can add network analysis to their toolset for reviewing systems of connected institutions, organizations, and people. The data-driven visualization of patterns in the network analysis of service systems and their organizational infrastructure can help groups of program directors, policymakers, and stakeholders better understand the complex set of relationships in ecosystems. The visual representation of these patterns enable the development of shared mental models in identifying objectives and in evaluating progress toward a shared vision.

Afterschool programs require resources. Especially in times of economic constraint, community developers and program leaders need relevant and compelling documentation to support their requests for resources. Network analysis makes it possible to visualize relationships in a system of programs and resources. These maps can be shared with practitioners and policymakers, as well as with researchers, to build stronger networks and more effective funding.

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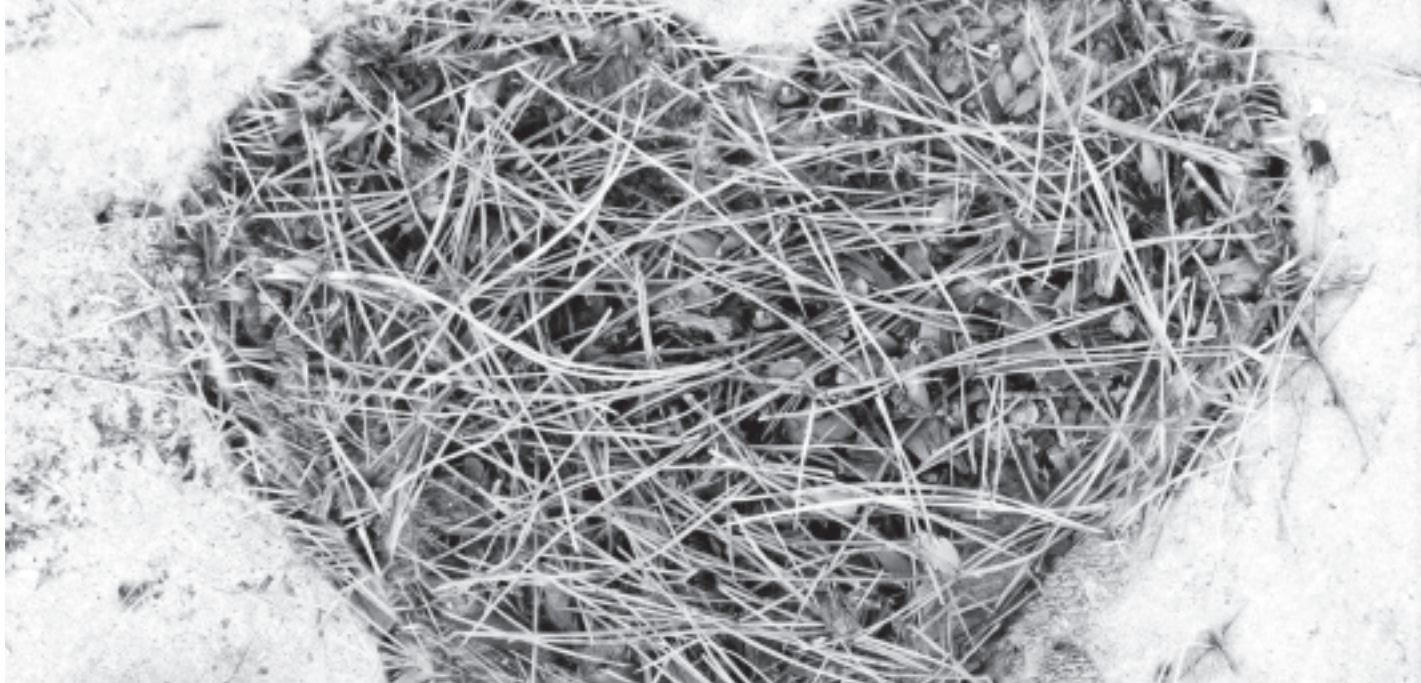
building an afterschool workforce

Regulations and Beyond

by Patricia Cole

In the space of an afternoon, an afterschool worker may perform many roles—homework tutor, mentor, athletic director, games master, role model, reading coach, top chef, bridge to parents, and, above all, an adult who develops positive relationships that can change children's lives. Program staff is a critical ingredient of the quality of afterschool programs, which are increasingly seen as means to support youth development and school success. But what qualifications—education, training, and experience—should staff members possess?

Building the workforce to help children and youth in afterschool programs reach their potential is a task that the field itself should undertake, together with the policymakers who regulate, fund, and oversee programs. With the reauthorizations of both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Child Care and Development Block Grant long overdue, the role of af-terschool in achieving national education goals by supporting the development of well-rounded children and youth must come into sharper focus.

The National AfterSchool Association, under the auspices of an Edmund A. Stanley Research Grant from the Robert Bowne Foundation, developed a baseline look at how states are approaching staff qualifications and training in two federal funding streams for afterschool programs:

- Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), the umbrella term for all federal childcare funding, discretionary and mandatory, governed by the provisions of the Child Care and Development Block Grant
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)

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The study looked at states' basic floors for qualifications and professional development for staff in center-based afterschool programs. It also examined approaches to improving quality.

These two funding streams have different perspectives on shaping program characteristics. CCDF subsidizes children in programs where the basic *inputs* are regulated for licensing purposes. 21st CCLC, on the other hand, stems from an education perspective that stresses *outputs*. It funds grantees for the specific purpose of improving academic success, particularly among children from low-income families, while providing enriching activities. With funding of $1.1 billion, 21st CCLC is the major federal program devoted solely to afterschool; it plays a significant role in providing afterschool opportunities for low-income children and youth. Unlike a program such as Head Start, 21st CCLC does not come with an extensive internal regulatory framework. However, programs and states may have to respond to requirements from other sources.

If afterschool is to become a *system* at the program level and a *profession* at the staff level, the field needs to examine requirements resulting from differing perspectives as well as the cohesive approaches to afterschool regulation in some states. Afterschool practitioners, agency officials, advocates, and other stakeholders around the country are working to identify the competencies program staff need and creating systems to support their professional growth. Understanding the requirements of different oversight sources, the perspectives that can divide them, and the common mission that connects them may forge a path toward accomplishing those tasks.

Methodology

The study examined regulations and, as needed, state statutes related to staff in center-based childcare programs serving school-age children in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. State childcare regulations were accessed through the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education (2009) online database. A data collection instrument (DCI) for each state was used to gather information about how that state's regulations addressed qualifications and professional development requirements for afterschool staff. In a few cases, state statutes and other state guidance, available online through the state childcare administering agency, were consulted for further clarity. Tables with information from all states were developed for specific characteristics, such as qualifications required of program directors. These tables formed the basis for more detailed analysis.

Information also was obtained via web-based searches on state quality rating and improvement systems and professional development systems, as well as from state CCDF plans available from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2010). While every effort was made to ensure accurate interpretation of regulations and statutes, every state's structure differs, making following and crosschecking regulations difficult.

The study also examined information on 21st CCLC programs in 42 states and the District of Columbia. Most frequently the information was contained in requests for applications, which outline the requirements for receiving grants. Other documents examined included additional program guidance, evaluations, and annual reports. Documents were obtained primarily through web-based searches supplemented, in some cases, by information requests to the state administering agency and limited follow-up with state program officials. Information from these sources was added to each state's DCI and analyzed by constructing tables that included information from all states where data were available.

Childcare Regulatory Framework

In many afterschool programs, state childcare licensing rules and regulations shape staff qualifications and training. Regulations generally set minimum qualifications for various positions, as well as requirements for pre-service training and ongoing professional development through in-service training. While regulations set a floor, other frameworks for improvement in states help raise the level of quality. These different approaches to quality have the potential to interact; providers and regulators could create a partnership toward building an infrastructure that would define and ultimately raise the quality of afterschool staffing.

All states regulate at least some types of childcare providers serving children up to age 12, and some include older children as well. Childcare funded through the federal CCDF program is administered in this context.

> Afterschool practitioners, agency officials, advocates, and other stakeholders around the country are working to identify the competencies program staff need and creating systems to support their professional growth.

Table 1. States Defining Director and Frontline Staff

POSITION	NO. OF STATES USING THIS POSITION	BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER	ASSOCIATE DEGREE	CREDENTIAL OR CERTIFICATE	NON-DEGREE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EXPERIENCE
Program Director	50	41	32	37	40
Head Teacher/ Group Leader	22	9	8	7	17
Teacher/ Caregiver	39	5	5	10	37

Table 2. Educational Content for Program Directors

TYPE OF CONTENT	NUMBER OF STATES DEFINING TYPE OF CONTENT			
	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Associate Degree	Credential or Certificate	Non-Degree Education, Training, and Experience
Related to Child Development	28	28	37	27
Related to School-Age Children	21	8	4	8
Not Related to Child Development	20	8	0	1
No Education Requirement –Experience Only	N/A	N/A	N/A	10

However, childcare regulations in many states do not cover all afterschool programs. Often programs serving children older than age 12 and those operated by school districts or national youth organizations are exempt from regulation. Providers, students, and parents are left with a patchwork of oversight and, in many cases, little regulation at all.

Staff Qualifications

Our study found that at least 23 states had distinct requirements for school-age program staff. Another 10 had staff-related provisions embedded in or in addition to their basic personnel requirements. However, even states that do not have separate regulations for school-age programs may

nevertheless recognize the distinct needs of school-age staffing.

Qualifications defined in regulations are a *floor,* so they by no means describe every person holding a particular position in a particular state. Many after-school staff members have qualifications well beyond the minimum required. Still, regulatory requirements provide insights about how their framers view certain positions: might a college degree be desirable for a specific position, or is a minimal amount of education enough?

Requirements for childcare qualifications are a system of *equivalencies*: combinations of education, credentials, training, and experience considered to equally qualify an individual for a position. Often the requirements of one state cannot easily be compared to those of another state because of the large number of possible permutations. In this study, qualifications were divided into four categories: bachelor's degrees or higher, associate degrees, credentials or certificates, and education and training that did not require a degree. Experience required was noted in all categories.

The study focused on minimum qualifications for two levels of positions: program director and frontline staff. The latter category includes both head teachers (sometimes called group leaders) and teachers or caregivers. All states define a director or administrator position for the person who oversees and plans the program. Most, but not all, states define qualifications for

Figure 1. Program Director Qualification Requirements by Education vs. Years of Experience
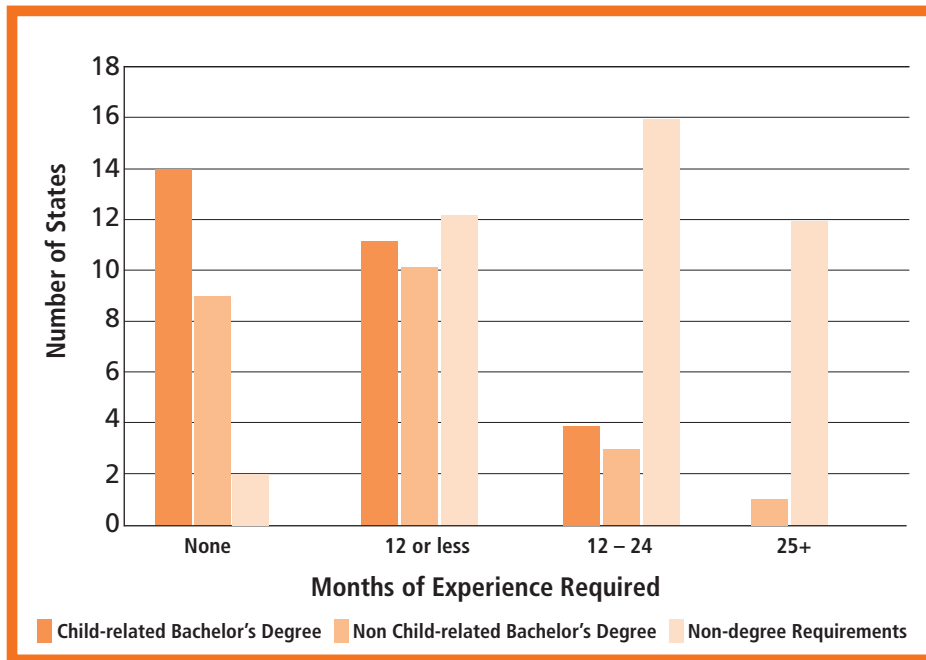
states required a combination of college credit or other training with experience in a child-related field. In general, the further a program director's education moves from a bachelor's degree in a child development field, the more experience that candidate needs, as Figure 1 shows.

Frontline staff, because they work most closely with children day in and day out, are the ones who form the relationships that are all-important in determining the quality of children's afterschool experiences. Our study found that requirements for frontline positions generally did not include academic degrees. Although a few states defined qualifications that included significant academic coursework, fifteen states required only minimal qualifications for caregiver or teacher positions, and only five of these defined a supervisory position between program director and teacher that might supply more expertise in interacting with children. The qualifications generally consisted of a minimum age (usually 18), a high school diploma or equivalent, and perhaps a few months of experience.

at least one level of frontline staff who work directly with children. (See Table 1, page 14.)

As would be expected, the most stringent and extensively described qualifications were for *program directors.* Of the four categories, education and experience are the key qualifications. Table 2 (page 14) summarizes the requirements for program directors in terms of educational content. Generally, states required educational content to be related to child development, although bachelor's degrees outside a child-related field were allowed in many states. Twenty-one states included majors relevant to working specifically with school-age children, such as elementary education or youth development. The non-degree category required some combination of college credit, clock hours of training, and experience. About half of the

The minimal qualifications required for frontline staff in many states doubtless reflect the reality of factors such as low compensation and the part-time nature of many afterschool jobs. These factors make attracting highly trained staff difficult. Yet until the skills needed for the job are defined and their importance emphasized, addressing these factors will be difficult.

Pre-Service and In-Service Training

Our study determined that regulations in most states recognized the need for job-related training, requiring some type of pre-service or orientation training as well as ongoing professional development.

Though most states had pre-service requirements, many did not specify the number of hours or did not require training to be completed prior to employment. In a few states, pre-service training entailed several steps. Table 3 summarizes the timeframes in which states required pre-service training to be completed. Pre-service

Table 3. Timeframes for Completing Pre-service Requirements

TIMEFRAME FOR COMPLETING INITIAL REQUIREMENT	NUMBER OF STATES
Prior to employment or within one month of employment	26
Within 6 months of employment	7
Within 1 year of employment	2
Timeframe not specified	6
No information found	10

Table 4. Hours of In-service Training for Frontline Staff

RANGE OF HOURS REQUIRED	NUMBER OF STATES
10 or less	18
11–15	23
16–20	6
20+	3
Calculated as percentage of hours worked	2
Adjusted for part-time work	6

requirements tended to emphasize health and safety issues and emergency procedures. Other topics included policies and procedures, guidance and discipline, and child development.

Almost every state required program staff to participate in annual in-service training to upgrade or maintain their skills and knowledge. As Table 4 shows, most states required 15 hours or less of annual training for teachers or caregivers. In-service training typically covered such areas as child growth and development, health and safety, parent involvement and communication, activity and lesson planning, professionalism, and interactions with children. Several states included topics related to school-age children or required that training pertain to the age group with which the practitioner works.

Only a few states required professional development plans for all staff. Such plans chart a course for individual staff members and help to ensure that training is helping them meet professional goals. A handful of states required training opportunities to be approved through formal state training registries. Other states were grappling with such basic issues as how many of the required training hours could be provided through self-study.

The minimal qualifications required of frontline staff in many states make pre-service and in-service training critical to ensure that staff members have the skills and knowledge necessary to work with children and youth. However, a great deal of the training states required seemed not to be directed at clear professional development goals such as degrees or credentials. States could revise their training requirements in order to ensure basic competencies as well as to help all staff move upward in the profession by setting and reaching professional development milestones.

Other Means of Quality Improvement

Increasingly states are looking at ways to improve the quality of early care and education through systematic methods that often are outside, but may intersect with, the regulatory system.

Quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) encourage better program quality by establishing tiers of quality with increasingly high standards. At least 19 states had statewide QRIS for childcare programs, with more states designing or piloting them. These QRIS did not always include afterschool programs, but at least 12 states had embedded provisions for school-age children in their overall requirements, and four had separate school-age tracks (Afterschool Investments Project, 2010). Licensing requirements set by regulations often were incorporated into QRIS as the first level of quality. QRIS typically addressed staffing issues by requiring that a certain percentage of staff attain a certain level of qualification for a program to advance to a higher quality tier.

Competencies and credentials that address the basic skills and knowledge for practitioners are an important step in developing and recognizing qualified staff in a still-emerging field such as afterschool. Considering the minimal qualifications required for frontline staff in many states, establishing a set of competencies that ensures a basic level of knowledge would be an important strategy for improving afterschool quality. Our study identified a few states, including North Carolina and Tennessee, that incorporated their core competencies into training requirements. Sixteen states have developed school-age credentials to recognize the attainment of knowledge and competencies for delivering afterschool services (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010).

Professional development systems or *registries* are quality improvement systems for individual staff. These systems offer articulated frameworks for achieving levels of competencies and advancing in the profession; they also provide quality assurance and outreach to bring practitioners into the system. At the time of this study, 10 states and the District of Columbia had developed such systems for the afterschool workforce (Afterschool Investments Project, n.d.). Professional development systems provide avenues for staff to create personal training programs and goals. A few states have integrated professional development systems into regulations by requiring training to be approved by the state registry and incorporating credentials into qualification frameworks.

Cost can be a barrier to improving program quality, particularly when it comes to staff qualifications and training. If individuals have to pay for training, low pay

Table 5. Developing a Quality Workforce: Examples of Interplay Among Systems

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM	REGULATORY/LICENSING FRAMEWORK	QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM
Defines career lattices and levels of qualifications	Ties requirements to qualify for positions to professional development systems	Requires proportion of staff to be at certain levels in the lattice to move to a higher tier
Establishes core competencies	Requires training to relate to achieving core competencies	Requires proportion of staff to achieve core competencies for each tier
Develops school-age credentials; creates higher education curricula and degrees	Recognizes afterschool credentials and degrees in qualification requirements	Relates staff qualifications to movement among tiers; provides assistance in achieving goals
Approves training courses and trainers	Requires training to be from approved list of trainers	Requires training to be from approved list of trainers

and the part-time nature of many afterschool jobs may be barriers to higher credentials or degrees. The success of such initiatives may depend on higher reimbursement rates for programs as well as bonuses, stipends, and scholarships for staff. These resources can come from special funds or programs such as the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood project, which in some states includes afterschool workers (Afterschool Investments Project, 2007).

Enhancing the Intersection of Regulation and Quality Improvement

Promoting interrelationship between quality improvement mechanisms and regulatory frameworks could help ensure more widespread increases in the level of staff qualifications and more purposeful requirements for mandatory training hours. Table 5 illustrates how such interactions among professional development, regulatory, and quality improvement systems could improve quality.

21st Century Community Learning Centers

As the largest federal program devoted specifically to afterschool services, 21st CCLC is of great significance in providing enriching experiences and academic assistance primarily to low-income students. This significance warrants attention to the requirements affecting local program staff. Because there are no federal performance standards for the program, states can set their own requirements, generally through their Requests for Applications (RFAs, known by various names in different states). Depending on the state and local grantee, 21st

CCLC programs may also be affected by regulations such as federal requirements for paraprofessionals in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, state childcare regulations, or state department of education requirements. Because RFAs do not always address such external requirements, a complete picture is difficult to piece together. Consequently, our study could not use 21st CCLC guidance to explore other sources of state regulation for afterschool programming.

About a third of the RFAs examined in our study set out some requirements for staff qualifications. Often these requirements were related to specific roles, such as director and staff who provide academic services; these were usually required to be certified teachers. More than half of the RFAs either did not address personnel-related requirements or simply required programs to describe their staffing plans. An examination of the guidance documents suggests that states generally patterned their RFAs on the informal federal guidance from the period when funds flowed from the federal level directly to local grantees. This guidance did not address staff qualifications; the implicit assumption was that most staff would be certified teachers. Reports on program characteristics on a national basis and for individual states show that many staff, although by no means all, do have that qualification (Billman & Smith, 2008; Faris, Hilgeman, Huang, & Zoblotsky, 2008; Jurich & Frye, 2009; Naftzger, et al., 2007; Naftzger, Kaufman, Margolin, & Ali, 2006).

The treatment of staff qualification requirements in the 21st CCLC program creates something of a paradox. On the one hand, 21st CCLC's nature as a grant

whose recipients are judged on *outcomes* may mean less emphasis on requiring specific *inputs* such as staff characteristics. The childcare regulatory framework, which applies to many programs that do not receive public funds, must focus more on the inputs that programs need to provide services at a basic level of quality. On the other hand, where 21st CCLC programs do set requirements, they can actually be more exacting. For example, in the handful of states where our study could compare requirements for similar positions across settings, the 21st CCLC programs were likely to set a specific requirement, such as being a certified teacher. In contrast, childcare regulations might define several possible combinations of education, training, and experience.

In contrast to the consideration of staff qualifications, state guidance in RFAs routinely discussed professional development. This practice again mirrors the federal guidance, which clearly suggests that even staff who are certified teachers may need additional training in working with children and approaching learning in an afterschool setting. The U. S. Department of Education's non-regulatory guidance (2003) notes, "Staff training should focus on how to work with children, how to negotiate, and how to address the needs of children of different ages, races, and cultures, and children with disabilities." Training also should cover "strategies for implementing the different program components of academics, enrichment, and recreation" (U. S. Department of Education, 2003, p. 14). Our study found that state guidance routinely required programs to develop and maintain professional development plans.

One reason the program guidance explicitly addressed professional development is that the federal statute designates funding for training and technical assistance, up to 3 percent of federal allocations. Training dollars are provided for each program, creating an important distinction between 21st CCLC programs and other afterschool programs. While other programs may benefit from training support funded through the quality improvement portion of CCDF or other programs that have training and technical assistance money, these

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funds do not automatically attach to individual programs as they do in the 21st CCLC legislation.

Moving toward a Comprehensive Staff Quality System

While afterschool programs funded by different sources may emphasize different components, clearly there is a commonality of basic activities, staffing, and structure that could be the basis of a cohesive approach to afterschool quality in the states. A few states are working to develop an approach to afterschool regulation that takes steps toward a more cohesive system.

Michigan requires all programs serving children up to age 12 to be licensed as childcare centers, regardless of whether they are operated by public schools. 21st CCLC projects exclusively serving children older than 12 must meet the minimum requirements of licensing and follow the *Model Standards for Out-of-School Time/After-School Programs in Michigan* (Michigan State Board of Education, 2008).

New Jersey recognizes the importance of standards and congruent guidelines across programs. Childcare regulations exempt school-operated programs from licensing, but the state's 21st CCLC RFA advises local education agencies applying for grants to use the regulations for childcare centers as a guide for best practices. Community-based grantees must be licensed and adhere to the manual, as must the state public-private partnership for afterschool programs, New Jersey After 3.

In *Maine*, a legislatively commissioned Afterschool Work Group reported on the patchwork of oversight of afterschool programs. The work group recommended developing licensing rules for afterschool programs, including those for children over age 12. It also recommended covering school-administered programs either through childcare licensing or by having the Maine Department of Education develop quality standards that mirror the licensing standards (Afterschool Work Group, 2008).

The task of creating a comprehensive approach through standards that encompass a range of programs is complex. School-based programs are often reluctant to come under licensing requirements overseen by non-

education agencies. Little information is available about how state or local departments of education provide oversight for afterschool programs. It is sometimes difficult to reconcile differing perspectives on what afterschool *is* and therefore what type of staff afterschool programs need. Left out altogether in many states are programs for older youth, because childcare regulations end at age 13.

Yet 21st CCLC programs already are subject to differing requirements in different states. As programs become self-sustaining, they may find themselves navigating a different world from when their grants provided for training and technical assistance. They may need to vie for participants and give parents some assurance of quality services. North Carolina, which exempts school-operated programs from licensing, finds such programs voluntarily participating in its quality star licensing system for marketing purposes. A comprehensive approach to afterschool may become more desirable if it includes a system of quality assurance and improvement accessible to all programs, allowing programs to work together across settings to raise the quality floor—and allowing parents to make sense of the tangle of afterschool programs in their communities.

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Recommendations

Creating a picture of states' expectations for afterschool staff is akin to assembling a complex jigsaw puzzle whose pieces are different sizes and shapes—or are missing altogether. Trying to assemble the puzzle reveals the state of the afterschool field as it strives to become a *system* at the program level and a *profession* at the staff level. Some states have put some of the pieces together; others have started to sort them out. In still others, the pieces seem to be in different boxes. While most states do not seem to be thinking of an overall framework of requirements across program settings and funding streams, a few states have moved toward creating connections among different afterschool settings and aligning their requirements.

Even without a complete picture, some insights emerge. State childcare regulations can be used in concert with other quality improvement approaches to help create a professionalized workforce. In fact, most of the

work to build afterschool systems and improve professional development has been underwritten by CCDF quality funds. However, sometimes afterschool is overlooked in writing early childhood regulations or creating quality improvement systems. Both kinds of system should include afterschool to ensure appropriate qualifications for afterschool practitioners.

Though staff qualifications for the largest source of school-based afterschool programming are often not delineated, the 21st CCLC program could be an important partner in building a larger afterschool system, particularly because it has training money to support the programs it funds. Being encompassed by a larger system also could create smoother transitions once programs' 21st CCLC grants have ended.

A high priority should be placed at all policy levels on developing a comprehensive view of how we support children and youth during their out-of-school hours and how we value the skills of the adults who provide that support.

States have the largest role—as well as a great stake—in developing a system of high-quality afterschool programs staffed by qualified personnel. States need to:

- Move toward consistent and coordinated regulation of afterschool programming for all ages of children and youth, as well as support for quality improvement across programs.
- Ensure that regulations governing childcare licensing, as well as professional development and quality improvement systems, include provisions or components specifically directed to afterschool programs.
- Increase qualification and training requirements to reflect best practices in afterschool staffing and to ensure that training hours work toward meaningful professional goals.
- Integrate quality and staff improvement systems into regulations by, for example, incorporating professional development lattices as well as afterschool-specific credentials into position qualifications and by requiring training to be related to attaining competencies, especially for entry-level staff.

Afterschool practitioners and stakeholders play a significant role in turning the broad concept of afterschool

into a recognized field and profession. Afterschool stakeholders need to:

- Advocate for a comprehensive view of afterschool programming that promotes consistency in requirements across settings and funding sources as well as support for quality improvement.
- Continue their work on core competencies, higher education program content, and afterschool staff credentialing, working with state agencies that oversee the various afterschool programs to connect these efforts to requirements for staff qualifications and training.
- Continue to promote a stronger vision of afterschool work with higher levels of qualifications for afterschool workers, particularly in states with minimal requirements.
- Work to develop continuity among afterschool credentials nationwide to create greater cohesiveness and mobility in the afterschool field.

Congress and the Administration, who set overall policy for care and education for all ages of children and youth and who provide the largest source of afterschool funding, need to:

- Develop an overview of the afterschool field and a unified approach to supporting quality improvement, including defining and supporting staff education and training.
- Promote coordination of professional development and quality improvement funded through CCDF and 21st CCLC.
- Provide leadership in promoting comprehensive oversight and quality improvement through an afterschool initiative similar to the Early Learning Challenge Fund. That initiative would fund state efforts to establish frameworks of standards and quality improvement across early childhood settings (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). A similar initiative for afterschool quality improvement would help coordinate approaches under different funding streams and in different settings, create more consistent standards across programs, and encourage movement toward higher levels of qualifications. Such an effort also should encompass areas that rarely have state oversight, such as programs for teens.

Some states are clearly showing the way in building systems to ensure quality and opportunities for program staff and even bringing different afterschool settings under one umbrella.

The picture of expectations for staff qualifications in afterschool programs is fragmented, but not without bright spots or a sense of new directions. Some states are clearly showing the way in building systems to ensure quality and opportunities for program staff and even bringing different afterschool settings under one umbrella. Afterschool is finding its way into definitions of qualifications and quality improvement efforts. Though we have a long way to go before support for afterschool staffing is widely addressed in a systematic way, the path to reaching that point is clear. Afterschool can boost not just academic success, but all domains of child and youth development. If afterschool is to fulfill this potential, stakeholders such as government, parents, advocates, and program administrators must be purposeful about ensuring the central component of quality: the staff who build the relationships that make a difference in children's lives.

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the effect of afterschool program participation on english language acquisition

by Rebecca London, Oded Gurantz, and Jon Norman

In the past quarter century, the nation's K–12 public schools have experienced a large influx of students who speak languages other than English. In the 2008–09 school year, California public schools served 1.5 million children (24 percent of the student population) whose primary language was not English (California Department of Education, 2010). This percentage represents a substantial increase from 25 years earlier, when just 8 percent of California's public school students were English learners (Williams et al., 2007).

Research has shown that many factors affect how English learner (EL) students acquire English language skills, including their preparation before entering U.S. schools, their out-of-school environments, and schools' educational practices (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006; Ready & Tindal, 2006; Saunders &

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O'Brien, 2006; Valdés, 1998). An in-depth ethnographic study by Valdés (1998) identified the importance of out-of-school social settings, indicating that they heavily affect EL students' in-school performance. A review of the limited literature on out-of-school settings and oral English language development also supports this finding (Saunders & O'Brien, 2006).

High-quality afterschool programs offer many benefits, including academic achievement, but research has not focused specifically on the effects of afterschool programs on English language development. In a meta-analysis of 35 studies, Lauer and colleagues (2006) found that afterschool programming had positive effects on math and reading outcomes, especially for low-income at-risk students. In addition, research has shown that young people who participated in afterschool programs attended school more regularly than did non-participants (Espino, Fabiano, & Pearson, 2004; Fabiano, Pearson, Reisner, & Williams, 2006; Huang, Kim, Marshall, & Pérez, 2005; Welsh, Russell, Williams, Reisner, & White, 2002) and showed improvements in their work habits (Vandell, Reisner, & Pierce, 2007). Some evidence supports a "dosage effect": students who attended programs more frequently experienced stronger academic gains (McComb & Scott-Little, 2003). This finding is difficult to replicate because many afterschool programs do not keep the detailed attendance records needed to examine dosage effects.

Together, these studies illustrate the benefits of afterschool programs on students' academic performance, particularly for disadvantaged youth. However, the majority of research on afterschool program participation focuses on Anglo-American and African-American youth. Research has not fully examined the experiences of Latino youth, who may face different academic and social challenges. Latino youth in afterschool programs are more likely to be EL students, to be immigrants to the U.S., and to come from lower-income households (KewelRamani, Gilbertson, Fox, & Povasnik, 2007). Researchers have examined children of migrant Latino workers (Riggs & Greenberg, 2004) and rural Latino children (Riggs, 2006) who attend afterschool programs, but few large-scale studies have examined Latino students' participation in afterschool programs or the effects of participation on English language acquisition.

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> The literatures on both afterschool programming and English acquisition point to the potential importance of non-academic settings in helping EL students learn English.

of non-academic settings in helping EL students learn English. In this article, we use an innovative data source—the Youth Data Archive—to follow elementary and middle school students from a single school district over four academic years to discern any links between their afterschool program participation and English language development. We found that students attending the program had greater rates of gain in English development, but they did not necessarily achieve proficiency gains or redesignation as "fluent English proficient" sooner than non-participating students. Our results point to the need for increased examination of the link between in-school and out-of-school activities in relation to English language acquisition.

The Community and the Program

The setting for this work is Redwood City and the neighboring unincorporated area of North Fair Oaks, located about 25 miles south of San Francisco in San Mateo County, California. The Redwood City School District comprises 17 schools serving about 9,000 students in grades K–8.

The afterschool program is the Boys & Girls Club of the Peninsula (BGCP), which has several centers across San Mateo County. Nearly all (97 percent) of the Redwood City students who attend a Boys & Girls Club go to just one clubhouse, which is located on the grounds of a K–8 school in the district. This site serves primarily as an afterschool program, though the club is also open for activities on weekends and hosts organizations during the school day, including a small alternative high school.

Program activities start when school is dismissed. The Boys & Girls Club has partnerships with several other schools to have staff walk students to the program. Students begin with homework help in computer classrooms or working with staff and volunteers. They may complete extra worksheets, engage in independent reading, or occasionally work on art projects. At the end of the homework hour, students move on to activities for which they or their parents have signed up, such as open gym time, arts and crafts, or enrichment programs. Structured programming ends about 5:30 p.m., when students congregate in a game room stocked with foosball, pool, and board games to wait for their parents to pick them up.

Data and Methods

Data for this study come from the Youth Data Archive (YDA), which consists of individual-level data for young people in several San Francisco Bay Area communities. The data are supplied by public and private agencies including school districts, city and county agencies, and local or regional nonprofit youth-serving agencies. The data are linked individually across sources and over time to create a longitudinal record of each youth's schooling, program participation, and services received.

Using identifiers such as name, address, birth date, grade, and school, we linked school records individually to participation data from the Boys & Girls Club. District data contain detailed information on students' demographic and socioeconomic characteristics as well as academic performance. Program data include days of participation collected by each program site.

We examined the effects of students' program participation on their English language development in the subsequent year. Since such an analysis relies on consecutive years of data, we included only students who were enrolled in the district at least two consecutive years, concentrating on students who attended the program up to eighth grade. Using data from four academic years, we identified a total of 1,941 instances where a student was enrolled in the district in consecutive years and participated in the program one or both years. Program participants attended an average of 48.5 days per school year, mainly at the Redwood City club.

English Language Milestones

Analyses first considered program participation and then examined the effects of participation and its extent ("dosage") on students' subsequent English language gains, as measured by the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). The CELDT—which is administered in the fall of each academic year—assesses English proficiency in four areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In each area, students receive a proficiency level of Beginner, Early Intermediate, Intermediate, Early Advanced, or Advanced. Their overall proficiency level is derived by equally weighting the four subtests. K–1 students are tested only on listening and speaking. Students are considered "English proficient" when they earn an overall score of Early Advanced or higher, with a score of Intermediate or higher on each subtest.

Students with a primary language other than English and no previous history of English proficiency testing must take the CELDT within 30 days of entry into a California school district. Students who score at the "English proficient" level on entry are classified as Initially Fluent English Proficient (IFEP); those not meeting this requirement are designated as English learners and must retake the CELDT annually until they meet the requirements to become Redesignated Fluent English Proficient (RFEP). Being "English proficient" is not the same as meeting the RFEP requirements; RFEP requires English proficiency as well as demonstrated language ability on standardized tests and approval by teachers and parents. Students who have English as their primary language are referred to as English only (EO).

Our analysis considered three language milestones. Two of these milestones, set out in Title III of No Child Left Behind, are the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) that school districts must meet. The third is redesignation.

- **AMAO 1** measures the annual progress of EL students, requiring that students whose overall scores are Beginning, Early Intermediate, or Intermediate improve one level by the following year. Those who score Early Advanced or Advanced must attain or maintain "English proficient" status.
- **AMAO 2** measures the percentage of EL students who have achieved "English proficient" status among those who could reasonably be expected to have reached this status, as defined by the California Department of Education.
- **Redesignated Fluent English Proficient (RFEP)** students meet all three of the following criteria: attaining "English proficiency" on the CELDT; achieving a minimum score on the California English Language Arts Standards Test, which is administered in English; and being evaluated as ready for reclassification by both teacher and parents.

Methodology

We first used logistic regressions to model the determinants of program participation among district students, controlling for a host of demographic and school-related factors. We then examined the effects of program participation on English proficiency gain. Program participation was voluntary, and students who attended could have other unobserved characteristics, such as motivation for learning or a desire to learn English, that would have facilitated earlier English proficiency gain than their peers even if they had not attended the program. As will be discussed below, we modeled several versions of the participation regressions in an attempt to better understand this issue. We were also unable to control for other potentially important characteristics that might influence participation and outcomes such

Figure 1. Percent of Redwood City Students Attending BGCP

Grades 1–7
2004–05 to 2007–08

- English Only (N=9,204): 3.0%
- Initially Fluent (N=1,757): 8.2%
- Redesignated (N=2,785): 10.5%
- English Learner (N=10,974): 11.2%
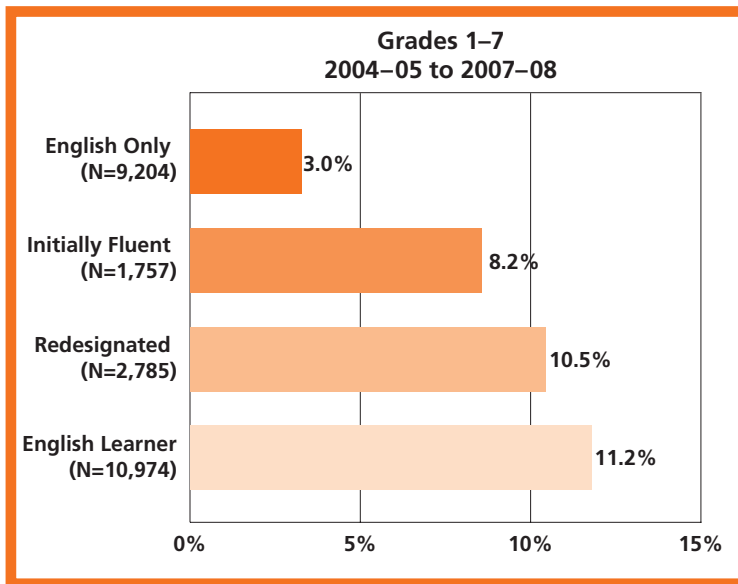
Table 1. Characteristics of Redwood City and BGCP Students Grades 1–7 in 2004–05 to 2007–08

	ALL STUDENTS	STUDENTS ENROLLED IN BGCP
ENGLISH PROFICIENCY		
EL	44.4%	63.5%
RFEP	11.3%	15.0%
IFEP	7.1%	7.4%
EO	37.2%	14.1%
AVERAGE GRADE LEVEL	4.0	4.0
GENDER		
Female	49.4%	43.9%
Male	50.6%	56.1%
ETHNICITY		
Latino	64.7%	89.9%
White	25.4%	4.0%
Asian	6.5%	2.5%
African American	2.2%	2.6%
Native American	0.3%	0.1%
Free or reduced- priced lunch	60.8%	87.2%
Special education	14.6%	15.8%
Parents' education less than HS	32.6%	48.9%
Entered U.S. schools after age 6	11.2%	10.8%
Number of students across four years	24,720	1,941

as whether students with working parents were more or less likely to participate in the program.

We supplemented these quantitative data with qualitative data in an attempt to understand better what was happening at the program and how activities might help students to learn English. Information was gleaned through interviews and observations at two of the program sites, including the site that most participating Redwood City students attended. During fall 2007, we interviewed or held focus groups with seven club staff members, 20 students, and six parents about reasons for youth attendance, types of services received, program evaluation and satisfaction, and effects on students' educational outcomes.

Program Participation

Overall, 7.9 percent of students in the district attended the afterschool program during one or more of the years we studied. Rates of participation were higher among English learners and those who were redesignated than among other students, as illustrated in Figure 1. Table 1 compares all students in the district to those who attended the program. Program participants were more likely to be Latino (89.9 percent compared to 64.7 percent of students in the district) and EL students (63.5 percent compared to 44.4 percent). Program participants also had lower socioeconomic status, with 87.2 percent receiving free and reduced price lunch, compared to 60.8 percent of all Redwood City students. Almost half of program participants (48.9 percent) had parents who did not complete high school, versus 32.6 percent for all district students.

Table 2 (page 26) shows very little difference in the level of afterschool program attendance across the four language proficiency groups. On average, students who attended at least one day were present at the program 48.5 days in the school year. English only (EO) and Initially Fluent English Proficient (IFEP) students had slightly higher average attendance than English learner (EL) and Redesignated Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) students.

We also looked at the extent of participation, thinking that students who attended with greater frequency might experience more pronounced effects on their English acquisition, as has been shown in the literature with other academic gains. Overall, nearly a quarter (22.0 percent) of program students attended 90 or more days during

Table 2. Extent of Program Participation by EL Group

GRADES 1–7 IN 2004–05 TO 2007–08					
	All Students	**EL**	**RFEP**	**IFEP**	**EO**
Average days attended	48.5	48.0	47.2	52.2	50.5
% Attended 1–89 days/year	78.0%	78.5%	76.7%	77.1%	77.7%
% Attended 90+ days/year	22.0%	21.5%	23.3%	22.9%	22.3%
Number of students across four years	1,941	1,232	292	144	273

Table 3. Determinants of Program Participation with Three Participation Measures

GRADES 1–7 IN 2004–05 TO 2007–08			
	Participation Odds Ratio	**Attendance 90+ Days Odds Ratio**	**Number of Days Coefficient**
IFEP	1.358	1.535	3.238
RFEP	0.971	0.867	-9.496
EL	1.028	0.563*	-14.635**
Female	0.843*	1.102	4.410
Latino	3.838**	1.581	-14.449
Free lunch status	1.730**	2.136**	6.847
Reduced-price lunch status	1.966**	2.306	6.764
Parents' education less than HS	1.332	1.140	-3.268
Parents' education HS graduate	1.373*	1.475	2.083
Attends school with BGCP on site	11.527**	31.933**	40.789**
Number of students across four years	24,670	24,670	1,940

*Notes: * p<.05, **p<.01. Regressions also include the following variables: African American, Asian, grade-level dummy variables, age of entry to U.S. schools, special education status, and year. Standard errors have been adjusted for multiple observations per person using the Huber-White correction.*

dance outcomes that are measured as *yes* or *no* and linear regressions for the number of days attended, which is a continuous measure. The first two columns show the logistic regressions for characteristics associated with an increased likelihood of attending the program (column 1) and of attending the program for 90 or more days (column 2). These columns report odds ratios, which explain the effect of each control variable on the outcome variable in terms of increased or decreased odds. An odds ratio greater than 1 means that students with this characteristic were more likely than students without this characteristic to attend the program or to attend the program for 90 or more days. An odds ratio of less than 1 means that students with this characteristic were less likely to experience the outcome than were other students. An odds ratio near 1 indicates no difference in outcomes for students with and without the characteristic. The third column shows a linear regression that examines the factors associated with the total number of days attended among those who are attending. In this column, the coefficients show whether students with the specific characteristic had more or fewer average days of attendance.

After controlling for ethnicity, we found that language status had no effect on overall participation (column 1). EL status had a negative and significant effect both on whether the student attended 90 or more days and on the number of days attended. Other factors than language proficiency were stronger predictors of whether a student ever participated in a Boys & Girls Club. Students who were male, Latino, or enrolled in the free and reduced-price lunch program were all significantly more likely to participate, even after controlling for whether students attended the school that had a Boys & Girls Club program on site. As would be expected, attending the school where the club was located substantially increased both the odds of attending and the number of days attended. Students who attended that school frequented the club approximately 40 more days per school year than did other students.

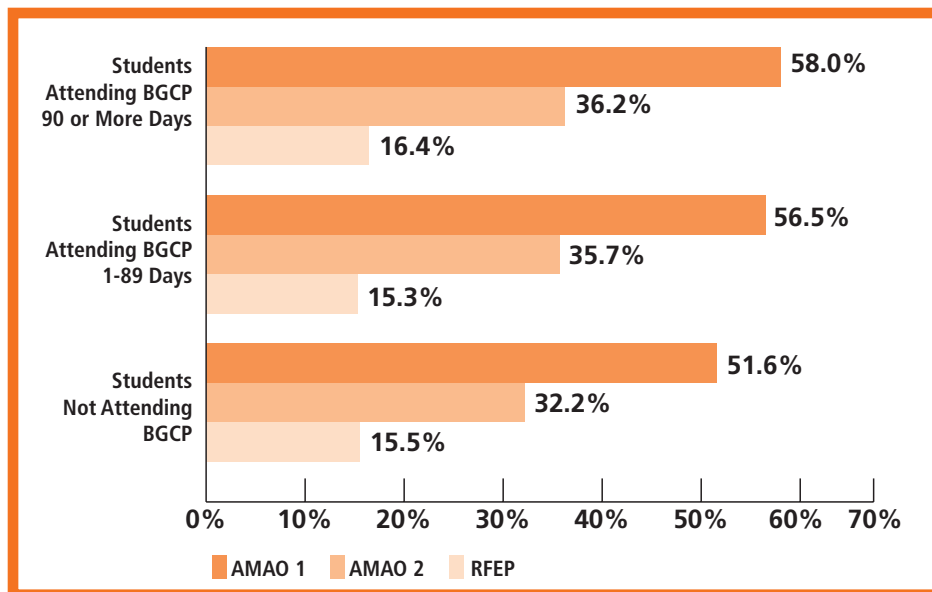the school year; this level of participation was similar across all four language proficiency groups.

To understand the factors associated with program attendance, we used three different regression models, shown in Table 3. We used logistic regressions for atten-

Figure 2. English Language Outcomes for BGCP Participants and Non-Participants

Program Participation and English Language Outcomes

We next focus on understanding how attending an afterschool program like the Boys & Girls Club might be associated with English language development among EL learners. Tabulations shown in Figure 2 indicate that EL students who attended the program had higher rates of achievement on the English language milestones AMAO 1 and AMAO 2 than did non-participants. Among EL students who did not attend the program, a total of 51.6 percent achieved AMAO 1, indicating that they progressed in their CELDT score between the prior and current years. A higher percentage of afterschool participants achieved this milestone in the same period: 56.5 percent of students who attended for 1–89 days and 58.0 percent of those who attended 90 or more days, respectively. AMAO 2

measures whether the student reaches English proficiency and is calculated only for students who might reasonably be expected to attain proficiency, as defined by the California Department of Education. A total of 32.2 percent of students who did not attend the program reached AMAO 2, whereas 35.7 percent and 36.2 percent of those who attended 1–89 or 90 or more days achieved AMAO 2.

However, we found no association between afterschool program participation and the status of Redesignated Fluent English Proficient (RFEP). Participants attending for 90 or more days were only slightly more likely than those not attending at all to be redesignated in the year after attendance, at 16.4 percent compared to 15.5 percent; the difference was smaller than for the AMAO outcomes.

These tabulations do not allow us to assess whether these differences in English language milestones are associated with program participation or with differences between students who did and did not attend the program. The first three columns of Table 4 present results from logistic regressions that examined the association between program participation and AMAO 1, AMAO 2, and redesignation. These regression models control for a host of background characteristics so that we can begin to isolate the specific effect of afterschool program participation on

Table 4. Determinants of English Language Milestones among EL Students

	AMAO 1	AMAO 2	RFEP	IMPROVEMENT IN SPECIFIC SUBTEST		
				Reading	**Writing**	**Speaking/ Listening**
	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio
Attends BGCP 1–89 days	1.238*	1.023	0.811	1.077	1.142	1.174
Attends BGCP 90 or more days	1.354	0.875	0.703	1.096	1.183	1.080
Number of students across four years	9,974	4,901	4,901	8,073	8,073	9,690

*Notes: * p<.05, **p<.01. AMAO 1 indicates improvement in the CELDT test over the prior year. AMAO 2 indicates English proficiency achievement among a set of students who might be expected to reach proficiency. RFEP indicates that the student was redesignated from English learner to English speaking among a set of students who might be expected to reach redesignation. Regressions also include all the variables listed in Table 3. Standard errors have been adjusted for multiple observations per person using the Huber-White correction.*

English language outcomes. However, we are unable to fully account for factors such as student motivation to learn English. We can include only observable characteristics that are present in the district database.

The results show that, after controlling for a host of demographic and school-related outcomes, attending the program for 1–89 days, relative to no participation, increased the odds of reaching AMAO 1 by 1.24, a statistically significant effect. Attending 90 or more days was associated with slightly larger but not quite significant effect—an increased odds of 1.35. The second and third columns of Table 4 explore the determinants of reaching AMAO 2 and RFEP. Whereas every EL student is subject to AMAO 1, which measures annual progress on the CELDT, AMAO 2 and RFEP are based on the subset of EL students who are reasonably expected to reach English fluency. For neither AMAO 2 nor RFEP did we find that attending the program had a measurable effect on reaching the milestone. Students were redesignated based on several factors, including those that factor into determining AMAO 1 and AMAO 2, but any English gains students made at the Boys & Girls Club did not appear to be assisting them in being redesignated more quickly than their peers who did not attend the program.

Through the fieldwork we conducted at two program sites, we learned that the afterschool programming was not specifically focused on English language attainment. Why then would we see an improved chance of attaining AMAO 1 among students who participated? We propose two possible explanations. First, it may be that youth who attended the club gained skills in specific aspects of language, but not in others. For instance, although program staff members were all bilingual, adult volunteers were mostly English speaking. Students who attended the club were put in situations that required them to speak English and follow instructions in English. If this exposure helped them to understand or speak English better, they may have improved more in the speaking and listening portions of the CELDT but perhaps less in the reading and writing portions. Second, selection biases associated with who attended the program and who attended more regularly may be driving the results. We controlled for factors such as family economic and educational background, but we were unable to observe important factors such as student motivation or family drive for educational success.

> Although afterschool programming has been linked to a host of positive academic outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged youth, our results establish one of the first links between afterschool participation and language development among EL students.

To examine the aspects of language acquisition in which students were making progress, we looked separately at scores on the reading, writing, listening, and speaking portions of the CELDT, all of which are considered in AMAOs 1 and 2. The second set of three columns in Table 4 report odds ratios from a set of logistic regressions examining the determinants of improvement for each of the subtests. Attending the program for 1–89 days was associated with increased odds of 1.17 of improving the speaking and listening portions of the test. Attending for 1–89 or 90 or more days was positively associated with improvements in the writing portion. However, none of these odds ratios reach statistical significance, so they cannot be distinguished, statistically, from a zero effect.

Policy Implications

Using data from one elementary school district and a large afterschool program provider in California's San Francisco Bay Area, we analyzed the effects of afterschool program participation on English language development of EL students in grades 1–7. Consistent with the literature on the effects of afterschool programming on academic outcomes, we found some evidence that participation in the program's various activities, and possibly at higher levels of engagement, was associated with one measure of improvement in English language development as measured by the test used statewide to assess EL students. We found this result when we examined improvements in English development overall, but program participation did not appear to be affecting students' English proficiency or their redesignation to Fluent English Proficient. Some evidence suggests that afterschool participants may have made more gains in the listening and speaking portions of the test than in reading and writing, but these results are not conclusive.

Our work suggests several policy-related conclusions. First, although afterschool programming has been linked to a host of positive academic outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged youth, our results establish one of the first links between afterschool participation and language development among EL students. In states with large immigrant populations like California, where one quarter of the public school population is designated as not proficient in English (Williams et al.,

2007), understanding the processes of language development both in and out of school is critical in helping students progress. The geographic context of this work offers an important frame. Students in Redwood City, particularly at the school in which the afterschool site is located, live in communities that are heavily concentrated with Latino immigrants. Students' social networks are likely to encourage the use of their primary language; the afterschool program may be one of the few places outside of school where students can try out their English listening and speaking skills.

Finally, the value of linking disparate sources of data in ways that allow for new cross-agency analyses has many policy implications. The Youth Data Archive model of tracking individual young people across the various institutions that serve them throughout the community can be applied to a variety of policy areas to answer a host of questions about how we are and should be serving youth both in and out of school. Cross-agency data sharing with the goal of supporting youth in communities offers tremendous potential in documenting the mechanisms for creating positive youth outcomes.

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self-assessment of high-quality academic enrichment practices

by Jenell Holstead and Mindy Hightower King

Since its inception, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program has been one of the fastest-growing federal programs. In 2008, its budget of over $1 billion funded 9,930 centers (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). The program provides grants to schools and community organizations to expand education services beyond the regular school hours. The tutorial services and academic enrichment activities of 21st CCLC programs are thus often designed to help youth meet local and state academic standards in subjects such as reading and math.

Because there are so many 21st CCLC programs, accountability systems and impact studies have become an important focus. However, research findings have been mixed. While some studies find a positive association between afterschool participation and the develop-

ment of academic and social skills (Cosden, Morrison, Albanese, & Macias, 2001; Huang, Gribbons, Kim, Lee, & Baker, 2000; Klien & Bolus, 2002; Mahoney, Lord, & Carryl, 2005; Posner & Vandell, 1994; Welsh et al., 2002), other research has found no effects or has found negative associations between achievement and afterschool participation (Bissell, Dugan, Ford-Johnson, &

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Jones, 2002; James-Burdumy, Dynarski, & Deke, 2007; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network, 2004; Pettit, Laird, Bates, & Dodge, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 2003). The discrepancies may be due to sample characteristics, most notably socioeconomic status (Marshall et al., 1997; Posner & Vandell, 1994), and to lack of methodologic rigor in many evaluations of afterschool programs (Scott-Little, Hamann, & Jurs, 2002).

Recently the focus of research on afterschool programs has shifted to better understanding which programs are successful in effecting academic gains in students and why (Beckett et al., 2009). This research has suggested a number of program practices that help students make academic gains. Assessment procedures can help afterschool programs increase the effective implementation of these practices and can inform ongoing improvement efforts.

External assessments, often conducted by third-party organizations specifically trained in evaluation, can provide program staff with an outside perspective on program quality. These assessments generally require significant financial resources and tend to focus on outcomes such as grades, test scores, and survey data. They often place less emphasis on the practices that influence the afterschool environment and the program activities youth experience—the "point of service" aspects of afterschool quality.

Self-assessment is an often-overlooked alternative to external assessment. Program staff can use self-assessment processes to systematically review the quality of their afterschool programming and to facilitate discussions on ways to enhance it. Self-assessment of point-of-service activities, which can provide a wealth of valuable information regarding program quality (Akiva & Smith, 2007), should be used regularly to enable ongoing program improvement.

Despite the fact that researchers have reached some consensus regarding point-of-service elements that support student academic gains, most self-assessment tools for afterschool programs still do not consistently include these elements. Because a major goal of 21st CCLC programs is to improve participants' academic performance, this gap in self-assessment tools can leave programs without essential information on program quality, even when they use such tools frequently. This article reviews program elements shown to effect academic growth and examines the extent to which available self-assessment tools measure these practices. None of the available self-assessment tools measures the extent to which programs include all of the point-of-service elements that support academic enrichment. Therefore, standardized self-assessment tools for afterschool programs should be enhanced or developed to include evidence-based practices known to be effective in improving academic achievement.

Features of High-Quality Programs That Contribute to Academic Outcomes

Self-assessment instruments to be used by programs seeking to improve academic achievement should measure the program practices and characteristics that have been linked to students' academic success. In the past 10 years, a number of studies have attempted to discover what these practices are (Farber, 2007; Fashola, 2005, Hartry, Fitzgerald, & Porter, 2008; Lauer et al., 2006; Miller & Hall, 2007; Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray, & Foster, 1998; Shumow, 2001). The studies have identified a number of structural components and capacity elements that are associated with increased academic achievement, including supportive and educated staff, environments in which children can learn new skills and exercise choice, adequate resources, and good relationships with school personnel. Point-of-service practices observed in programs that were successful in helping students make academic gains included offering homework help, providing one-on-one tutoring, and linking afterschool activities to the school day.

More recently, the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences (IES) developed a practice guide, *Structuring Out-of-School Time to Promote Academic Achievement* (Beckett et al., 2009), which includes a set of recommendations for afterschool programs to help students benefit academically. The guide, developed by a panel of experts in out-of-school time programs who examined high-quality experimental and quasi-experimental studies to identify program practices associated with positive academic outcomes, includes only those practices that were supported by adequate levels of empirical evidence to warrant broad-based recommendations. The guide's five recommendations inform our examination of self-assessment tools. They are:

- Aligning the out-of-school time program academically with the school day
- Maximizing student participation and attendance
- Adapting instruction to individual and small-group needs
- Providing engaging learning experiences
- Assessing program performance and using the results to improve program quality (Beckett et al., 2009)

Of the practice guide's recommendations, we examine only elements that occur at the point of service, when youth are participating in activities at the program site

(Granger, Durlak, Yohalem, & Reisner, 2007), as these are the elements that can be evaluated through observation and self-assessment. In addition, point-of-service practices are particularly important because they directly affect youths' decisions to attend the program and the benefits participants gain. The last recommendation of the practice guide, regarding using data to improve the program, is not an observable point-of-service element, but it could be addressed by the self-assessment process itself.

Align the Out-of-School Time Program Academically with the School Day

Typically, effective afterschool programs directly and purposefully connect academic program components to the school day (Policy Studies Associates, 1995). In fact, the IES practice guide suggests that aligning the afterschool program with the school day is a necessary component of academic improvement (Beckett et al., 2009). Academic alignment can often be directly observed at the point of service delivery.

Coordinating curriculum is one example of this alignment. To achieve coordination, afterschool staff may do one or more of the following: use school curricula directly, provide homework assistance and activities that promote basic skills, or develop activities consistent with district and state learning standards. Afterschool programs can reinforce critical skills and knowledge by offering activities that complement, but are different from, school activities.

Another way to achieve alignment is frequent and ongoing communication between school and afterschool staff. Teachers' information about school day instruction or individual student needs can help afterschool staff plan programming (Beckett et al., 2009). The communication can occur both informally, such as in hallway conversations, and formally in regularly scheduled meetings and ongoing updates on students' progress.

Maximize Student Participation and Attendance

Many studies have demonstrated that students who participate in afterschool programs frequently and for longer periods of time are more likely to demonstrate social and academic benefits than those who do not (Department of Education, University of California at Irvine, 2001; Huang et al., 2000; Johnson & Jenkins, 2000; Welsh et al., 2002). For example, the evaluation of LA's BEST program, conducted over a ten-year period, found that regular attendance of at least 150 days per year for more than one year was necessary for positive impact on academic performance. The highest gains in standardized math, reading, and language arts scores were found in students with four years of regular participation (Department of Education, University of California at Irvine, 2001). The evaluation also found that regular attendance over multiple years was related to better school attendance, increased engagement in school, and higher aspirations to finish school and go to college (Huang et al., 2000).

To maximize student participation and attendance, Beckett and colleagues (2009) suggest examining important factors including location, program offerings, transportation, timing, length, and frequency of services. Programs should be easily accessible and convenient for youth; program offerings should be engaging and interesting. In addition, addressing the changing developmental needs of older youth helps to keep them engaged in afterschool programming (Deschenes, Little, Grossman, & Arbreton, 2010). Program staff should assess the extent to which students attend the program and the level of engagement students exhibit at the point of service delivery.

Adapt Instruction to Individual and Small-Group Needs

Individualized instruction is an important feature in improving student performance (Lauer et al., 2004). Because afterschool program time is significantly shorter than the school day, instruction must be focused and targeted (Beckett et al., 2009). Afterschool instruction and activities must therefore be adapted to meet the needs of individual participants. Instruction that is aligned and paced to individual student needs results in improved academic performance (Slavin, 2006). To provide individualized instruction, program staff must be aware of each child's strengths and weaknesses (Beckett et al., 2009). An activity that is not cognitively stimulating for some students could be too difficult for others. Program staff should therefore use formal and informal assessment data to learn what adaptations are necessary (Beckett et al., 2009).

A number of studies have reported that afterschool programs that affect academic performance provide opportunities for students to interact in small groups (Rosenthal & Vandell, 1996) or offer one-on-one tutoring support (Baker, Gersten, & Keating, 2000; Beckett et al., 2009). Lauer and colleagues (2004) reported that one-on-one tutoring improved the reading levels of at-risk students. In addition, Zuman and Miller's (2005) evaluation of afterschool programs in Massachusetts found that program quality was closely linked with small group sizes and low student-to-staff ratios. Taken together, these studies suggest that afterschool programs should use one-on-one or small-group tutoring to provide targeted as-

sistance to students who need help beyond what they receive during the school day (Beckett et al., 2009).

Provide Engaging Learning Experiences

Studies indicate that programs that improve student performance provide highly engaging activities that incorporate academic content (August, Realmuto, Hektner, & Bloomquist, 2001; Borman, Goetz, & Dowling, 2008; Karcher, Davis, & Powell, 2002). Afterschool programs typcially offer a diverse blend of academic pursuits, fine arts and crafts, and physical or recreational activities. Although offering such variety is considered to be best practice (Fashola, 1998; Rosenthal & Vandell, 1996; Vandell et al., 2004) and appears to be important in capturing youth interest and maintaining involvement, research demonstrates that games, recreation, and field trips are ineffective in improving academic performance when they are independent of the academic component of the program (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). In order to ensure gains in student achievement, the engaging activities that interest and motivate students must be explicitly connected to academic learning activities (Beckett et al., 2009).

> Few self-assessment tools include domains representing the elements that have been found to improve academic achievement, as identified in the IES practice guide.

Another essential ingredient of improved academic outcomes is active learning (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Specifically, programs must actively engage children by generating opportunities to practice new skills through hands-on experiences, practical examples, cooperative learning experiences, and real-world activities; instruction must be connected to student interests (Beckett et al., 2009). In fact, Noam (2003) concludes that in order to avoid "having the children and staff experience [afterschool] projects just as more school," afterschool programs should strive to serve "as a creative extension of learning that is more hands on, more participatory, and more community-focused" (p. 136). Afterschool program activities should involve fewer large-group lecture activities and more opportunities for youth to engage in hands-on learning activities.

Review of Standardized Self-Assessment Tools

The many available standardized self-assessment tools for afterschool programs offer a number of benefits. *Measuring Youth Program Quality: A Guide to Assessment Tools* (Yohalem, Wilson-Ahlstrom, Fischer, & Shinn,

2009) compares a number of different tools. Its authors point out that standardized self-assessment tools can be user-friendly and require little training. When training is needed, it can often be provided through in-person or Internet sessions with the tool's developers. Using a standardized tool means that afterschool staff do not need to have the expertise necessary to score and interpret the assessment. In addition, many standardized tools are free or low cost (Yohalem et al., 2009).

Although they were developed by many different researchers and practitioners, the various standardized self-assessment tools for afterschool programs share a common core of effective practices (Yohalem et al., 2009). They generally are based in youth development principles, emphasizing interactions among youth and staff. They tend to assess safety, skill-building opportunities, social norms, and program routine or structure (Granger et al., 2007)—factors that are important to students' overall development but may not build academic skills. Few self-assessment tools include domains representing the elements that have been found to improve academic achievement, as identified in the IES practice guide (Beckett et al., 2009).

In spring 2010 we conducted a review of nine standardized self-assessment instruments identified by Yohalem and colleagues (2009) to determine which tools assess the four recommended practices. The nine tools we examined are:

1. Assessing Afterschool Program Practices Tool by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (2007)
2. Out-of-School Time Observation Tool by Policy Studies Associates (Pechman, 2008)
3. Program Observation Tool by the National Afterschool Association (2010)
4. Program Quality Observation Scale by Vandell and Pierce (2006)
5. Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool by the New York State Afterschool Network (2005)
6. Promising Practices Rating Scale by the Wisconsin Center for Education Research and Policy Studies Associates (2005)
7. Quality Assurance System by Foundations, Inc. (2010)
8. School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute and Concordia University, Montreal (2010)

9. Youth Program Quality Assessment by the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality (Smith & Hohmann, 2005)

The review involved analyzing each self-assessment tool individually, using a matrix that aligned the domains assessed by each instrument tool with the point-of-service practices recommended in the IES practice guide (Beckett et al., 2009). The review used the following criteria:

- **Alignment with the school day.** The tool assesses whether afterschool programs used school curricula or academic standards and whether the programs involved school personnel involved directly or indirectly.
- **Student participation and attendance.** The tool includes items on the number of students participating, attendance trends, or whether activities are based on student interest.
- **Adapting instruction to individual or small-group needs.** The tool asks questions on individual or small-group tutoring or on adapting instruction to individual student needs.

- **Engaging learning experiences.** The tool not only measures the extent to which youth are engaged but also assesses academic content. A number of the tools measure "activities" or "engagement," but we coded a tool as assessing engaging learning experiences only if activities were grounded in academic goals.

As shown in Table 1, none of the self-assessment tools incorporates all four of the point-of-service practices recommended by IES. Indeed, three of the nine instruments we examined do not assess any of the IES point-of-service practices. Two tools, SACERS and YPQA, address one of the four practices, while two other instruments, OST and PPR, address two of the four.

Two of the nine self-assessment tools we examined address three of the four IES elements. The Afterschool Program Practices Tool (APT) from the National Institute on Out-of-School Time and the Massachusetts Department of Education (2007) incorporates a review of the quality of learning activities including homework time and targeted academic skill building activities, in which youth practice reading, writing, mathematics, sci-

Table 1. Summary of Self-Assessment Tools and IES Practice Guide Recommendations

	ALIGN THE OST PROGRAM ACADEMICALLY WITH THE SCHOOL DAY	MAXIMIZE STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE	ADAPT INSTRUCTION TO INDIVIDUAL AND SMALL-GROUP NEEDS	PROVIDE ENGAGING LEARNING EXPERIENCES
APT: Assessing Afterschool Program Practices Tool	-	X	X	X
OST: Out-of-School Time Observation Tool	-	X	X	-
POT: Program Observation Tool	-	-	-	-
PQO: Program Quality Observation Scale	-	-	-	-
QSA: Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool	X	X	-	X
PPRS: Promising Practices Rating Scale	-	X	-	X
QAS: Quality Assurance System	-	-	-	-
SACERS: School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale	-	-	-	X
YPQA: Youth Program Quality Assessment	-	X	-	-

ence, and social studies skills, as well as youth participation and engagement and individualized support. The Program Quality Self-Assessment (QSA) Tool by the New York State Afterschool Network (2005) focuses on three of the recommended elements. It examines the quality of learning activities by assessing the extent to which activities provide academic support including tutoring or homework help, are age-appropriate, and are experiential. It also assesses youth participation and alignment with the school day, including links to state and local performance benchmarks, connections with the school curriculum, and communication between school staff and afterschool staff.

> The next generation of standardized self-assessment tools for afterschool programs should include evidence-based practices found to be effective in improving academic achievement.

Making Self-Assessment Work

Self-assessment, especially assessment of point-of-service program practices, can be a powerful tool to provide valuable information regarding program quality (Akiva & Smith, 2007). Presently, however, none of the available self-assessment tools assess the extent to which programs implement all of the point-of-service practices geared towards improving academic achievement recommended by the IES practice guide (Beckett et al., 2009). The next generation of standardized self-assessment tools for afterschool programs should include evidence-based practices found to be effective in improving academic achievement.

Until enhanced standardized tools are available, afterschool programs may want to supplement available tools with customized scales that address important practices shown to increase academic achievement. For guidance in developing customized tools, programs may refer to the Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool and the Afterschool Program Practices Tool. These tools measure a number of the point-of-service program practices recommended in the IES practice guide (Beckett et al., 2009). They may also help program staff understand how to develop relevant items for their customized assessments.

Homegrown self-assessment tools have their weaknesses. They do not have the reliability and validity needed to ensure accurate results, even when based on best-practice literature. Although customized self-assessment tools may help staff to critically examine their program's strengths and weaknesses, such tools may not accurately measure program quality. Caution should be used when interpreting results collected with customized self-assessment tools, and results should not be used to compare one program with another. In addition, users and developers of customized instruments should use practices that help maximize reliability, such as thoroughly training self-assessors and providing scoring rubrics with clear standards.

Self-assessment can be a valuable tool to enhance program quality and facilitate discussions among staff about program strengths and challenges. Encouraging program staff to be observant of and reflective about key areas of practice at the point of service will help ensure that programs provide the best possible services to participants. This process can generate meaningful formative feedback on program implementation even if program staff customize formalized self-assessment tools. The process of self-assessment can promote continual reflection and increase the program's ability to help students achieve positive academic outcomes.

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don't you want to do better?

Implementing a Goal-setting Intervention in an Afterschool Program

by Amy Hallenbeck and David Fleming

Sam (a pseudonym) sits quietly at an empty desk. It is 3:15 p.m.; all of the fourth-grade afterschool students are in one room. "Okay, everyone, let's get started on your homework," Ms. Wall says. Boys and girls take books, paper, and pencils out of their backpacks and place them on their desks. After looking at one student's agenda, Ms. Wall reads the homework assignment aloud: "Write a sentence with each vocabulary word. Underline the word in your sentence." Students begin to write. A few minutes later, Ms. Wall realizes that Sam's desk is still empty and he is not working on his homework. "Sam," she says, "why aren't you writing your sentences?" Sam shrugs and avoids her gaze. Ms. Wall steps over to his desk and asks, "Why aren't you doing your homework, Sam? Don't you want to do better?"

Goal setting is not an innate skill. Adults who are successful at reaching their goals have learned to set realistic goals and to plan to attain them. Afterschool programs, because they have latitude in their curricular offerings and program elements, can provide strong backdrops for goal-setting initiatives. While studies have shown that goal setting is a behavior elementary-age children can accomplish (e.g., Murawski & Wilshinsky, 2005), they do not examine goal-setting initiatives in afterschool programs.

This paper describes a goal-setting intervention implemented in a 21st Century Community Learning Centers afterschool program serving students in grades 1–5 at two school sites. We structured the goal-setting intervention using the Transtheoretical Model, which depicts behavior change as a process that evolves through a

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Figure 1. Visual Model of the Stages of Change

5. MAINTENANCE	• Working to keep on track
4. ACTION	• Working to make changes
3. PREPARATION	• Actively preparing to make changes
2. CONTEMPLATION	• Thinking about making changes
1. PRECONTEMPLATION	• Just starting to think about changes

STAGE 5: MAINTENANCE Student has made changes, and it is lasting longer than 6 months.
STAGE 4: ACTION Student has made changes, but it has not been very long (less than 6 months).
STAGE 3: PREPARATION Student is intending to change very soon, and there is/are specific action(s) that demonstrates this.
STAGE 2: CONTEMPLATION Student is intending to change sometime soon.
STAGE 1: PRECONTEMPLATION Student is not intending to take action in the foreseeable future.

series of stages (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1984). We believed that use of the Transtheoretical Model, and specifically its Stages of Change construct, could provide elementary afterschool students with a method of setting and achieving goals. With the assistance of afterschool teachers as the goal-setting facilitators, we wanted to discern:

- Is there a difference in the pre-intervention and post-intervention scores of the Stages of Change among students participating in the afterschool intervention?
- How does an afterschool goal-setting intervention affect students' goal-setting behaviors?
- How does an afterschool goal-setting intervention affect intervention facilitators?

Our results show that the intervention offered benefits for both students and teacher-facilitators. We used our data to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the goal-setting intervention in order to improve its implementation.

Conceptual Framework
Goal Setting
Schunk (1984) identifies three critical elements of goal actualization: "goal specificity, difficulty level, and proximity" (p. 15). *Specificity* is illustrated by a study in which fifth- and sixth-graders who made greater improvements to their texts when told to "add information" rather than simply to "revise" (Graham, MacArthur, & Schwartz,

1995). Several studies (e.g., McTigue, Washburn, & Liew, 2009; Peterson & Davis, 2008) demonstrate the importance of appropriately *challenging* goals so that students are neither overwhelmed nor under-stimulated. Goal *proximity* is related to how quickly a goal can be achieved. While adults may be capable of dividing a large goal into smaller components and foreseeing eventual completion, many children are not (Bandura, 1977). Bandura and Schunk (1981) found that third-graders who were given instructions on how to divide a large set of materials and complete a task in specific increments had higher motivation and completion rates than did students who were simply told to work productively.

Goal effectiveness appears to be influenced by many factors, among them feedback, rewards, realistic but challenging goals, and participation in the goal-setting process (Schunk, 1984). In addition, many students need facilitators to provide guidance and modeling in order to achieve their goals (e.g., Margolis & McCabe, 2004; Shilts, Horowitz, & Townsend, 2004).

The Transtheoretical Model and Stages of Change
The Transtheoretical Model is a commonly used theoretical framework for behavior change (Hutchison, Brecken, & Johnston, 2009). It was initially used in changing addictive behaviors such as smoking (Prochaska, 1979; Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992). Research revealed that change proceeds through a series of stages (DiClemente & Prochaska, 1982). Each of these Stages of Change has identifying characteristics (Prochaska et al., 1992), as illustrated in Figure 1, which also shows the specific descriptors for the stages that we used with facilitators and students.

Although the Transtheoretical Model has served as the basis for change intervention and exploration in contexts ranging from voice therapy (van Leer, Hapner, & Connor, 2008) to physical activity and exercise (Marshall & Biddle, 2001), most studies have involved adults. Some studies have used the model with adolescent participants

(e.g., Davey, Richards, Lang, & Davies, 2006; Hausenblas, Nigg, Downs, Fleming, & Connaughton, 2002; Willoughby & Perry, 2002) or with children (e.g., Topp et al., 2009).

Framework Synthesis

Afterschool programs have proven to be valuable venues for academic support and improvement, character building, positive social and physical development, and development of non-academic skills and interests (Zhang & Byrd, 2006). Precisely because they are not required to focus exclusively on academic objectives, afterschool programs can and do include non-academic program components addressing personal issues such as values, self-esteem, health and physical fitness, social skills, and emotional wellness (e.g., Bruening, Dover, & Clark, 2009; Deerin, 2005; Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Gacherieu, 2004; Hishinuma et al., 2009; Payton et al., 2008). Developing students' goal-setting skills is thus congruent with the broad objectives of many afterschool programs.

We hypothesized that the Transtheoretical Model's Stages of Change (SoC) construct could give the afterschool students and their adult facilitators a means of establishing student-focused goals, monitoring behavior change, and fostering movement toward actualizing those goals. Using a visual model of the SoC and monthly meetings between facilitators and students, we hoped to reveal how elementary-age students navigate the goal-setting process. We believed that the process of helping students establish and work toward goals using the SoC construct could also positively affect facilitators. The convergence of the afterschool program, the goal-setting intervention, and the SoC construct provided a unique combination of factors with which to examine the viability of goal setting as a beneficial element in afterschool programming for elementary students.

Design and Structure of the Goal-setting Intervention
Setting

Located in two rural schools in the southeastern United States, the afterschool program where we implemented the goal-setting intervention was a partnership between the school district and a nearby university. The intervention took place in the second year of the program's operation. The two sites had 145 regular participants during the 2009–2010 program year, with 73% of regular attendees receiving free or reduced-price lunch. School staff, program site coordinators, and the program's project director selected students for the program based on factors that placed the students at risk, such as low grades

or test scores, teacher recommendations for academic assistance, living in a single-parent household, and being a "latchkey child." Program foci were homework help, academic enrichment, and goal-oriented performance. The 40 part-time staff members included certified teachers, non-certified teachers, and students majoring in education at the partner university.

The program not only stressed homework and academic enrichment but also provided activities students might otherwise not have experienced such as a performance by the partner university's a cappella choir and an interactive presentation on rocks and semi-precious gems. The goal-setting intervention, implemented in the program's second year, had been specified in the 21st CCLC grant application. As principal investigator for the grant and project director of the program, we wanted to teach goal setting because we believe that:

- Students often want to "do better" in academic and other areas.
- Students often do not know *how* or *what* to do in order to "do better."
- The parents or guardians of at-risk students may have neither time nor skills to teach their children how to "do better."
- Students can learn how to "do better" if they are taught to set and work toward goals.

We knew that the goal-setting intervention had to be intentional and include all students. We decided to use a visual representation of the SoC construct so students and teacher-facilitators could literally *see* how working toward a goal could help students achieve it. We provided one-on-one time between facilitators and individual students so that students would receive the guidance they needed in order to change their behaviors. We thought that students who participated in establishing their own goals and action plans and who received positive feedback from teachers could be successful in actualizing their goals.

Training and Implementation

Prior to the September start of the program, all staff were required (and paid) to participate in a two-hour training and orientation session. Goal setting was addressed in a 25-minute breakout session in which we discussed the purpose of the goal-setting intervention, gave an overview of the SoC construct, showed a visual SoC model, used examples to demonstrate how the model works, and gave teachers the student goal-setting forms we had designed (see Figures 2 and 3). We assigned each facilitator a group

Figure 2. Teacher Directions for Student Goal-setting Form

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

December (You will also need a copy of your November assessment submitted to the Site Coordinator):

• In direct consultation with the student, please refer back to the original goals for each of the categorized areas established in November. Write a short (1–3 word) description of the original goal in the space provided for each (e.g., math grades). Review any strategies the student has used to meet that goal since identification in November. Write (in their own words when possible) the strategies and examples of evidence for reaching toward that goal. If no strategies or examples can be given, simply put "none." In any case, please provide a short "teacher suggested strategy" for them to use as a vehicle for improvement by the next review in January.

• If a goal needs to be adjusted, changed, replaced, or omitted, please do so and mark appropriately on the evaluation sheet.

• Upon completion of the review of goals and their current efforts, please reassess each on the scale provided. Upon completion of the sheet, please submit to your respective Site Coordinator before the holiday break.

Figure 3. Student Goal-setting Form

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – DECEMBER

Student Name _____ **Grade** ___ **Teacher Name** _____ **Date** _____

SCHOOL GOALS

Goal #1: (short description) _____
How much are you currently working on this? Examples? _____ Current Stage: ___
Teacher Suggestions: _____
Goal #2: (short description) _____
How much are you currently working on this? Examples? _____ Current Stage: ___
Teacher Suggestions: _____
Goal #3: (if applicable) _____
How much are you currently working on this? Examples? _____ Current Stage: ___
Teacher Suggestions: _____

COMMUNITY GOALS

Goal #1: (short description) _____
How much are you currently working on this? Examples? _____ Current Stage: ___
Teacher Suggestions: _____
Goal #2: (short description) _____
How much are you currently working on this? Examples? _____ Current Stage: ___
Teacher Suggestions: _____
Goal #3: (if applicable) _____
How much are you currently working on this? Examples? _____ Current Stage: ___
Teacher Suggestions: _____

HOME GOALS

Goal #1: (short description) _____
How much are you currently working on this? Examples? _____ Current Stage: ___
Teacher Suggestions: _____
Goal #2: (short description) _____
How much are you currently working on this? Examples? _____ Current Stage: ___
Teacher Suggestions: _____
Goal #3: (if applicable) _____
How much are you currently working on this? Examples? _____ Current Stage: ___
Teacher Suggestions: _____

Table 1. Frequency of SoC Scores by Goal Type and Month

	GOAL	NO GOAL RECORDED	NO STAGE ASSIGNED	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5
November N=107	School 1	5	16	**40**	29	10	7	0
	School 2	28	23	**31**	18	5	1	1
	Community 1	43	13	**27**	19	4	1	0
	Community 2	54	11	**24**	11	5	2	0
	Home 1	22	16	**31**	23	10	5	0
	Home 2	33	19	**26**	17	7	4	1
December N=60	School 1	2	12	3	**19**	11	11	2
	School 2	22	9	1	**17**	5	6	0
	Community 1	19	12	2	**14**	8	5	0
	Community 2	43	4	5	3	0	3	2
	Home 1	8	12	2	**17**	9	11	1
	Home 2	34	4	3	**8**	4	6	1
January N=99	School 1	2	2	7	13	21	**50**	4
	School 2	30	2	9	15	19	**19**	5
	Community 1	15	7	7	19	**25**	23	3
	Community 2	58	3	**11**	10	7	8	2
	Home 1	13	5	6	15	26	**31**	3
	Home 2	43	2	8	17	6	**20**	3
February N=85	School 1	1	9	0	10	17	**37**	11
	School 2	26	7	1	8	15	**23**	5
	Community 1	13	6	3	14	10	**36**	3
	Community 2	49	4	4	6	6	**14**	2
	Home 1	6	12	3	9	16	**31**	8
	Home 2	41	4	2	9	10	**14**	5
March N=36	School 1	2	9	0	2	3	**12**	8
	School 2	14	6	1	3	1	**9**	2
	Community 1	6	7	0	3	3	**15**	2
	Community 2	25	1	1	1	0	**6**	2
	Home 1	6	7	1	2	2	**13**	5
	Home 2	24	2	0	2	1	**7**	0

of six or seven students, with the idea that the groups would remain constant for the program year. We asked facilitators to meet individually with each group member once a month to complete goal-setting forms and to help students work toward their goals. Subsequent required training sessions in October, November, and February included 15- to 20-minute portions on goal setting.

During the first one-on-one meetings in November, students worked with their teacher-facilitators to establish goals in three areas: school, community, and home. Each month, facilitators met with their students, using the goal-setting forms first to establish action plans and then to discuss progress and modify action plans. Facilitator instructions therefore changed slightly with each month's forms based on the needs we anticipated and our review of the previous month's student forms. Facilitators were asked to support students in working toward their goals and to ascertain what stage students had reached in the

SoC model. Students' goal-setting forms were kept in group notebooks, which we collected monthly for review.

Methods

We collected quantitative and qualitative data on the goal-setting intervention. Student forms provided SoC scores as well as qualitative information concerning specific goals, supporting actions and activities, and facilitator-student interactions. The project director conducted one structured in-depth interview with a teacher-facilitator. The remaining qualitative information came from informal discussions with facilitators at year's end, an end-of-year survey with ten open-ended questions for facilitators, and notes from a meeting between the project director and two site coordinators.

Project Findings
Students

We did not study students' perceptions of the intervention. However, teachers generally believed the goal-setting intervention had a positive impact on students. They believed that it helped students learn how to establish and work toward goals. For at-risk students like those in this afterschool program, positive individual attention from an adult may well have had further-reaching effects than student forms could reveal.

Frequency counts of students' SoC scores for each month of the intervention, each goal category, and each goal within each category reveal behavior change and progress toward goals, as shown in Table 1. In November, the first month of the intervention, the number of SoC scores in Stage 1, Precontemplation, was at its highest for all three goal types. SoC scores in home goals tended to be in Stage 4, Action, by January; in school and community goals the scores tended to reach Stage 4 by February. The SoC scores show no indication that, once students moved into the Action stage, they relapsed into a previous stage. We saw variation in the number of goal-setting forms that were completed and returned, with March, the last month of the intervention, showing the largest drop-off.

Changes in student goal-associated behaviors were also evident in the comments facilitators re-corded on the goal-setting forms. In response to the question, "Is there a school subject you would like to improve in, and what changes would you like to make to do so?" Brea, a second-grade student, replied, "Math. It's different than last year." Her initial school goal was to "improve math skills." Though the goal itself lacked specificity, Brea took more specific intermediate steps to achieve it. When asked how much she was currently working on her goal, she answered, "I'm paying attention and trying to listen to my teacher." In a later month, she said, "I practice when I get home after school. . . . It's my favorite subject now." In the final month, Brea commented, "Sometimes I ask the teacher to help me. I always try, and I practice at night when I have a test on those things."

Charlie, a fourth-grader, made significant progress toward his community goal: "Make changes in the way I treat my friends." He initially reported getting mad and yelling at his friends, walking away when people tried to talk to him. In fact, the situation seemed so dire to Charlie that, when asked if there were other changes he would like to make, he replied, "I wish I could move because there is nobody to play with." The following month, Charlie commented that he was "still working on this a lot." By February, Charlie was reporting more positive results; by March, the final month of the intervention, Charlie had made a substantial change (see Figure 4).

The teacher-facilitator we interviewed at the end of the year described several students who had achieved their goals. One student in particular had made significant progress toward improving her math grade. Belle had a low math grade for the first and second nine weeks because she did not know her multiplication facts. Together, the teacher and Belle determined that Belle's school goal would be to "Earn an A in math." They planned for Belle to work on multiplication prac-

Figure 4. Charlie's February and March Goal-setting Forms

tice at home with her grandmother every school night. The teacher said that, as a result of the practice:

> The third nine weeks she had pulled it up to an A. Just. . . knowing that she's getting it [multiplication practice] with us here, and then she's going home and they're focusing on at least 10 or 15 minutes every night. . . has allowed her to say "Well, if I do this. . . I can bring my grade up!"

Many students, like Belle, not only accomplished their goals but also gained a sense of pride from their accomplishment. For example, a first-grade student who had a long history of disruptive behaviors learned to "raise my hand and not blurt out." A fourth-grader whose goal was to improve his reading earned enough points to "march in the school-wide Accelerated Reader parade." He was so excited that he asked his parents to come to school for the event. Some goal-setting forms demonstrated students' awareness of and responsibility for the people and the world around them in such goals as "not fighting with my brother" and "recycle more to help the planet."

Teacher-Facilitators

We talked with teacher-facilitators at the end of the program year about implementing the goal-setting intervention. In conversations and year-end questionnaires, teachers frequently used favorable statements to describe the intervention, its impact on students, and their personal perceptions and experiences.

An extensive interview with one third-grade teacher, Claire, revealed that at first she was unsure about the intervention and how to implement it:

> Honestly, at first I felt overwhelmed with what we would be taking on, and would the kids be able to respond to what they understand. I guess once I saw on the pyramid level [the visual figure], then it kind of clicked and made sense. I was first thinking it was just the goals, but then when we got into the training and we could see that you know this level was [students'] thought process, and this was their ideas, and the next level was thinking what they were going to do to accomplish this goal, then it kind of clicked for me.

Claire said she had questioned whether teachers and staff would be able to facilitate the intervention in light of everything else that took place, and sometimes took precedence, during the afterschool program. She was equally unsure of the students' abilities to understand and respond to the idea of setting goals and working on them.

Claire also reported positive outcomes for the students. She thought the intervention "was a good thing" because it allowed her both to hold students accountable and to show them how to be accountable. She also believed that blending goal setting with existing components made the afterschool program more complete: "We've got the academics, the homework, the academic enrichment, and we've got the computer time and the recreation time, that's just all being able to be pulled together." Claire believed that goal setting had the potential to harmonize all of the program activities, a possibility we had not considered.

When asked about benefits of the goal-setting intervention, Claire remarked that she perceived changes in her relationships with students. She believed that the process "allowed [students] to see that we [teachers] are real people." The one-on-one meetings provided opportunities "to get to know the students on a more personal level." "They're students," she said, "and we need to see them as people as well, and they have problems, and they have issues outside of the school that really come into play and affect what they're doing in the classroom." A specific benefit for her was "spending that time giving one-on-one attention." Claire saw further implications:

> We're here to try to help them in school, but we're also wanting to. . . create productive citizens one day. So not only are we here to teach them academics, but we're here to teach them that. . . if they're not excelling and they're not to the level they want to be, then there [are] things that we can do to help them get to where they want to be.

On the year-end questionnaire, not all teachers were enthusiastic about the goal-setting intervention, but several reported positive experiences. Some reported enjoying the opportunity to become more familiar with the students and the non-academic aspects of their lives. For example, one teacher responded, "It helped me get to know the students better in regard to their lives outside of school." Another teacher wrote that it helped her "to understand what the kids prioritized in their lives." Teachers generally saw the goal-setting intervention as mutually beneficial: they developed stronger relationships with the students and could see the progress students were making, while students could also see their own progress toward achieving their goals.

Lessons Learned

Goal setting can be a viable activity in an afterschool program, even with elementary-age children. Despite some

teachers' initial misgivings, the goal-setting intervention helped students make behavioral changes that allowed them to progress toward, and in some cases achieve, their goals. The data we gathered give us tools with which to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the goal-setting intervention, raising several issues to be considered in planning and implementation. Though we became aware of some of these issues in the midst of the intervention, we did not ask facilitators and students to change goals midstream.

Logistics and Timing

Careful planning and preparation are essential, from determining the sizes of the goal-setting groups to designing forms that reflect the desired outcomes. Providing specific places for facilitators and groups to meet, storage locations for student forms, and a protocol for dealing with student absences were critical elements of the intervention.

Teachers were enthusiastic about the way the goal-setting intervention was eventually organized. Initially teachers were asked to meet with students once a month, with at least three weeks between meetings. With these loose guidelines, many teachers rushed to do the December goal-setting forms and often did not complete them. After we established a specific week each month for the intervention, during which homework was the first priority and goal setting second, forms were completed more thoroughly and consistently. Designating a specific window of time for the monthly meetings allowed facilitators to focus on working with students on goal setting.

Staff Training

Teachers' feedback demonstrated that thorough understanding of the goal-setting intervention, its goals and terminology, and the theory and rationale behind it are crucial if teachers are to properly execute the intervention. Providing research information about establishing goals and fostering goal actualization can help teacher-facilitators understand how to teach the process of goal setting while supporting students as they work to attain their goals. These issues should be addressed in the initial goal-setting training and emphasized in subsequent trainings.

Although we held four training sessions, we found that teachers did not always understand the theory and

> Teachers generally saw the goal-setting intervention as mutually beneficial: they developed stronger relationships with the students and could see the progress students were making, while students could also see their own progress toward achieving their goals.

practice of goal setting. For example, in response to a question about seeing behavior change in her students, one teacher interpreted the word *behavior* to mean obeying rules and acting as one should in school. She indicated that she saw no behavior change, even though she had indicated changes in SoC scores on student forms. On her year-end questionnaire, this teacher wrote, "The teachers don't need to be trained; the students need to understand what goals are and what setting goals means." Facilitator training should work toward helping teachers understand that they are responsible for teaching students about goals and goal setting, especially when the students are very young. Proper training would help teachers to see the entire intervention as a process—not simply as a desired outcome.

Teacher training needs to be real and meaningful, modeling what teachers are being asked to do with students. Teachers suggested that staff training should have included better explanations and visual models. As Claire expressed:

> During the teacher training, I think I would put it on more of a personal level with the teachers [to help] us learn what we need to do with the kids. Maybe we could go through the process and write goals for ourselves.

Facilitators need to experience the process of setting a goal that is specific, appropriately challenging, and complex. In spite of the research we had gathered concerning goal specificity and proximity, we did not have training time to discuss how to assist students in constructing specific, realistic goals. Sometimes student goals were too broad, such as the student who wanted to "get a better grade in science." While getting a better grade is an appropriate desire, the student and facilitator need to indicate what "better" means in terms of the starting grade so they can gauge the student's progress. A more appropriate goal might have been "to earn a B in science." Other students chose inappropriate goals such as "eat more pizza and macaroni and cheese."

Effective training should include examples of student goals that need to be modified through facilitator questioning. One fifth-grade girl set a goal "to have sis-

ters." Being the only girl in her family prompted her choice, but she chose a goal over which she had no control. A student whose initial goal was to "paint the inside of my house one color" could have been asked whether she could accomplish this goal without assistance, who would help, and how likely she was to reach the goal. Perhaps this student could modify the goal to make it something she can attain, such as painting pictures during afterschool time that she can use to decorate her room. Good facilitating leads to better goal setting and actualization. Training might include role playing to help facilitators prepare for one-on-one meetings with students.

Other areas in which teachers needed more help were in using SoC scores and helping students develop specific steps toward their goals. A first-grade student's initial community goal was "to recycle paper and glass bottles." When he told the facilitator that he "had a recycling bin," the facilitator marked him at Stage 3, Preparation. However, having a recycling bin did not necessarily mean that the student was actively preparing to make changes. In other instances, facilitators did not record specific suggestions to help students attain their goals. Since the research shows that students are more successful in achieving goals when given specific small steps to follow, this factor should have been emphasized in staff training.

Student Orientation and Motivation

Students need to be introduced to the idea of goal setting, not simply to be told that they are going to set goals and work toward them each month. Facilitator one-on-one meetings are vital to the success of the intervention, but by themselves they are not sufficient. We did not specifically instruct facilitators to introduce goal-setting concepts to the students; we believed that the facilitators, many of whom were certified teachers, would naturally move to introduce the ideas prior to beginning the goal-setting process. Though some teachers may have led an initial lesson or activity, the lack of understanding shown in the goals some students established and the forms that contained no teacher suggestions for steps toward the goals indicated that the introductions either did not occur or were not highly effective. Students should practice goal setting in whole-group, small-group, and partner activities and discussion before they establish personal goals. They need opportunities to examine sample goals, discuss the extent to which the goals are or are not realistic and specific, and then modify the goals so that they are appropriate.

We did not consider rewarding students for taking specific actions toward their goals. Claire suggested that rewards could foster student motivation:

> I think that if we let them know, yeah, they're all working towards a goal, and not only are they going to get the satisfaction of reaching that goal but just some little celebration—nothing major, but just, you know, we're. . . having a goal celebration.

Family Participation

We did not design the intervention to involve parents and caregivers. However, goal-setting forms included "home" as a goal category, and completed forms frequently contained recommendations to "practice at home." Community goals such as "recycle paper at my house" and "pick up trash in my neighborhood" tacitly required the permission or cooperation of parents. In addition, some goal-supporting activities needed to be completed at home, such as eating more vegetables in order to "get healthier." Indications of how much a student had worked at home toward a goal relied solely on student self-reporting. Teachers commented that, without parent input and participation, follow-through was difficult: "It was easier to track the academic goals and the goals at your school. Maybe a downfall that we need to look at [is] how we can include the parents."

Curriculum

Possibly the most significant change that could improve the goal-setting intervention for teacher-facilitators and students would be adding a written curriculum that would include lessons and activities to introduce students to the process of goal setting. Teachers asked for support materials to use with individual students and for the other students to work on during one-on-one sessions. One teacher noted on a goal-setting form that the student "had *much* difficulty understanding concept" [teacher's emphasis]. One teacher reported using materials "on teamwork, tolerance, and self-esteem," but indicated that materials specifically for goal setting would have been helpful.

After teachers are introduced to the intervention and have themselves established a goal and planned actions to accomplish it, they need a curriculum that takes students through the same learning process. Such a curriculum might have relieved some of the frustration our facilitators appeared to feel. The curriculum should be flexible to adapt to the needs and personalities of facilitators and students but include core elements such as key terms and sample goals that students can practice with and modify. Each class or group could establish a group goal so that

discussions and activities could include a concrete goal and action plan with which all students are familiar. Individual, partner, and group activities that call for short stories, role playing, reading about famous individuals who have accomplished goals, drawing a picture of oneself reaching a goal, writing a poem about one's goal, and other creative activities could be included. The curriculum could also include templates for parent involvement materials such as letters to parents about the initiative, general ways that parents can help at home, and specific information about student goals and action plans. Resources both for facilitators and for parents could also be provided.

Ongoing Success

Periodic collection and review of student goal-setting forms allowed us to address some concerns and to support facilitators and students in the midst of the intervention. However, more frequent discussions with facilitators might have revealed additional problems and concerns—or successes—that might not be evident from a review of documents or interviews and questionnaires conducted at the end of the intervention.

In addition, facilitators need opportunities to share successes and challenges with one another. As we talked with teachers and reviewed student forms, we saw that some facilitators were very comfortable with goal setting and innovative in their approaches. Others may have benefitted from hearing and seeing what these facilitators were doing. Motivation over time should also be considered; rewards for students (and facilitators) who accomplish a goal can provide additional incentive.

Our afterschool program is continuing the goal-setting intervention. We have written a curriculum, redesigned our teacher-facilitator training, and modified the student forms. Though our program has struggled to get parents involved, we are trying to use the goal-setting intervention as a conduit to request parent input. We opted to have first- and second-graders participate in setting a group goal and action plan rather than individual goals. We have planned incremental rewards for students who make significant progress toward their goals. Finally, we are actively seeking input from facilitators and students on a regular basis.

Sam sits quietly at an empty desk. It is 3:15 p.m.; all of the fourth-grade afterschool students are in one room. "Okay, everyone, let's get started on your homework," Ms. Wall says. Boys and girls take books, paper, and pencils out of their backpacks and place them on their desks. After looking at one student's agenda, Ms. Wall reads the homework assignment

aloud: "Write a sentence with each vocabulary word. Underline the word in your sentence." Students begin to write. A few minutes later, Ms. Wall realizes that today Sam's desk is not empty, and he is working on his homework. "Sam," she says, "you are writing your sentences!" Sam glances up at her and, without missing a beat, says, "Yes, Ms. Wall, my goal is to make an A, so I need to do my homework."

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growing boys

Implementing a Boys' Empowerment Group in an Afterschool Program

by Georgia Hall and Linda Charmaraman

The process of establishing a healthy male identity can be difficult for many boys. The limited definitions of masculinity available to boys and men are generally characterized by competition, repression of fear and emotion, and physical and emotional strength. Boys of color and those of lower economic status tend to encounter even fewer healthy alternatives for defining their maleness than do their white and better-off counterparts (Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, 2010).

In *Real Boys,* William Pollack (1998) says that our schools are failing to meet the needs of male students by paying too little attention to boys' issues and the challenges boys face in school. Adolescent boys whose communities are characterized by violence can be particularly vulnerable to aggressive and risky behaviors. According to Latzman and Swisher (2005), "Community violence destroys the notion that homes, schools and communities are safe places, and youths exposed to community violence have higher rates of emotional, behavioral, and cognitive problems" (p. 357).

Boys who need support in choosing positive and healthy pathways could benefit from an intervention that gives them space and time to share information, to work and play cooperatively, and to grow healthy identities. While inclusive grouping is an important part of building community in a youth development program, common-interest groups such as girls' or boys' empowerment groups can help members grow and support one another.

We conducted a case study of one such group, an afterschool empowerment group for middle school boys. Using elements of ethnographic study, we examined participants' reactions to the work they did together in the empowerment group and explored the characteristics that made the group leaders effective in facilitating that work. Our goal was to discover how a boys' empowerment group could help participants avoid risky behaviors such as joining a gang or engaging in interpersonal violence, while instead making healthier choices that could lead to positive growth.

Setting and Methods

During the 2009–2010 school year, we documented the experiences and interactions of a boys' empowerment group in an afterschool program located in a middle school in a large Northeastern city. This group began as

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part of an in-school healthy behaviors initiative sponsored by the city school district and later became part of an existing afterschool program in the same school building. At the time of our study, the empowerment group had been in existence for three years. It included about 15 boys ages 12–15 who, like the school population as a whole, were mostly African American. Facilitated by two young men whose positions were funded by the school district initiative, the group met weekly, providing group learning experiences, team-building activities, and special outings. Former members who had graduated were encouraged to return in order to mentor current members and to build on their relationships with the facilitators.

Between November 2009 and May 2010, we conducted five observations of group meetings and events, taking field notes that we later analyzed for emerging themes. We also interviewed two youth members and both staff members as well as conducted two focus groups with participants. We analyzed the transcripts of these meetings as we did the field notes. We obtained consent from both the youth and their parents for their participation, and we rewarded youth for their participation with a gift card to a local store.

Changing Participants' Mindsets

Boys in the empowerment group reported many positive impacts from their participation. Some boys said that group discussions and activities helped them reflect on their image in and out of school and on the tone of their relationships with teachers and peers. For example, one youth commented:

> You have to make a line for yourself and make a good track record. Last year in seventh grade, my track record was "big attitude/bad person." So I wanted to change my track record. Say something comes up missing in school; I am the first person they [the school administrators] will come up to. Or say someone comes to school with a black eye and doesn't want to tell how it happened because they are scared of saying, they will come to me. So that's what I realized… you have to change your track record and make yourself a better person.

Another boy explained how he was rethinking a negative interaction with a school day teacher.

> We were supposed to have a [boys' group] session, so that was the only thing on my mind, and I forgot about detention. So fifteen minutes into the session, my teacher came down and said, "You skipped detention today, and you skipped my class today." So I just start-

ed yelling. Then he [the group leader] put his hand on my leg and told me to calm down. So, once the teacher left, he asked me why I did that. I used to think that, when you're having an argument with someone, the harder you talk, the more right you seem or something like that. So he showed me a different way of dealing with that. If I had said, "Oh, I'm sorry. I forgot. I'll serve that detention. I hope you forgive me," she might have changed her mind.

In interviews and focus groups, the boys consistently identified several ways that participation in the empowerment group had affected them. They believed the group had helped them to:

- Gain respect for authority figures
- Establish personal integrity and consistency among their values, actions, and principles
- See a path toward future success
- Manage their anger or pride
- Improve their academic performance
- Take responsibility for peers and help them stay out of trouble
- Build and maintain healthy friendships and relationships

The Right Leaders

One key to creating an empowerment group that can make a lasting difference in the development of adolescent boys is selecting the right adult leaders. In interviews, focus groups, and casual conversations, we asked empowerment group participants to describe the positive qualities they saw in their program leaders. Their responses were frequently embedded in stories about what it was like to be invited into and involved in the program or about how the facilitators helped them in a time of need. The boys said that their leaders:

- Showed their honest emotions
- Acted like fathers to us
- Understood our different moods, interests, abilities, and personalities
- Always had hope in us
- Were open to learning from us and valued our perspectives
- Got familiar with our struggles both in and out school
- Gave us one-on-one time
- Showed gentleness but also tough love
- Made us feel that we belonged and that we were special
- Made us feel it was a privilege to belong to the empowerment group

Finding the right adult leaders for an empowerment group can be challenging. The staff leader may be either an outside specialist who joins the afterschool program just to lead the empowerment group or a member of the regular program staff. In addition to general employment qualifications, program directors may look for additional personal and professional credentials as outlined below.

Demographic Characteristics

In order to communicate authentically and to receive emotional and social support, youth need to perceive a genuine and natural connection to group leaders. As a starting point, group leaders' gender, ethnic identification, and community background should reflect those of group participants. While these similarities do not guarantee effective group functioning, they provide a foundation on which to construct youth-staff relationships.

Experience in Creating Informal Curriculum

The boys' empowerment group we observed engaged in a loosely formed curriculum consisting of workshops, guest presentations, outings, and team-building exercises. This informal curriculum was well coordinated yet remained flexible in order to stay attuned to the group's development. Experienced facilitators can package an engaging and informative set of activities that will sustain the boys' attention and increase retention, while simultaneously giving participants opportunities to build confidence, interpersonal skills, and resiliency to help them avoid risky behaviors.

Communication Skills

Empowerment group leaders generally will be better prepared if they have experience working with young people as discussion group leaders, counselors, or coaches. The facilitator of a boys' group needs to be able to communicate with participants in an authentic way that will address boys' emotional and cognitive needs. At the same time, leaders need to manage group exercises, which often produce "teachable moments" in which facilitators must provide the boys with a safe space in which to explore their feelings and experiences. Wide-ranging familiarity with both one-on-one and group relationships, including conflict management skills, is a useful qualification.

Connections to Outside Resources

Knowledge of and experience in the local community position a group leader to leverage additional resources to benefit youth. Ideally, facilitators not only will understand that it takes a village to prevent youth violence and risky behav-

iors, but also will work to connect youth with community mentors. A facilitator's personal connections with other youth- and family-serving organizations can make youths' transitions between support networks less intimidating. For instance, the facilitators in the group we studied invited the boys to local church services with the approval of the parents. These connections gave the boys access to more adults who could "look out for them" in the neighborhood. A facilitator's experience with local organizations and willingness to serve as a bridge can help youth to make meaningful connections in their local communities.

Experience as a Participant

Our study made it clear that "leading with the heart" plays a role in effective group facilitation. Group leaders recalled stories of how caring organizations and devoted mentors helped them through their own adolescent struggles in an environment similar to that of group participants. These memorable formative experiences gave facilitators firsthand understanding of how critical a supportive network of mentors can be in a boy's development. These group leaders had hope for, and could inspire hope in, the boys they worked with because of their personal experiences.

Making a Difference in Boys' Lives

Establishing and supporting a boys' empowerment group in an afterschool program has its challenges. Good facilitators can be hard to find, and building the necessary group environment can take time. Our findings on the benefits of participation in a boys' empowerment group suggest that these steps are valuable and worthwhile. Boys in the empowerment group we studied lived daily in a delicate balance between safety and harm across a host of domains—physical, emotional, social, academic. We saw some of them experience dramatic changes in their attitudes toward school and relationships. When a boys' empowerment group is done right—and has the right leadership—it can change lives.

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science in the making at the margin

Rahm, Jrene. (2010). *Science in the making at the margin: A multisited ethnography of learning and becoming in an afterschool program, a garden, and a math and science Upward Bound program.* **Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.**

Reviewed by Sara Hill, Ed.D.

These days, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) learning is a hot topic in afterschool education. For a field with a paucity of curricula, we have a surprising abundance of material that aims to help staff implement afterschool science programs. (See, for example, SEDL's *Afterschool Training Toolkit for Science* and TASC's *Science Afterschool: How to Design and Run Great Program Activities*.) For a field also marked by a lack of organized networks, we have a robust group of organizations that share information and resources on out-of-school time (OST) STEM learning—for example, the Informal Learning and Science Afterschool project run by the Program in Education, Afterschool, and Resiliency at Harvard University. I believe this emphasis results from a variety of pressures—the achievement gap in underserved and minority communities, for example, as well as the expectation that OST programs should help struggling schools raise their scores in this age of high-stakes testing and accountability.

What, exactly, goes on during afterschool science, is still "inside a black box." Few studies have looked closely at programs and curricula in operation in order to analyze *how* these programs are helping, or not helping, youth become more skilled in STEM. Jrene Rahm's book *Science in the Making at the Margin* attempts to shed light on the actual workings of OST science programs.

Because it is an ethnography, the book provides a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of three science programs, two in Canada and one in the U.S. One is a girls-only science afterschool program run by a community-based organization, another a gardening and science program located at a botanical garden, and another a mentoring program affiliated with the science division of a university. As is typical for ethnographic researchers, Rahm collected data from a range of sources over an extended period of time—in this
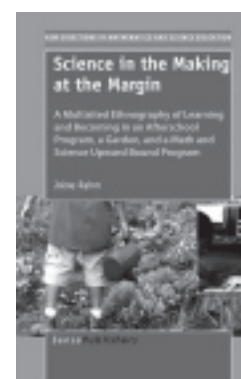
case, years. In several instances, she played the role of participant-observer in program activities, developing relationships with several of the youth and following them across OST programs. Again in line with the ethnographic method, Rahm focused on the *cultures* of the programs, studying "participant structures" and how the youths' discourse displayed how "science was talked into being" (Rahm, 2010, p. 33). Rahm used similar methods in an article published in this journal some years ago (Rahm & Grimes, 2005).

Rahm's research questions included, among others, "What do *doing science* and *meaning making in science* look like?" Rahm wanted to observe how science and meaning making in these three programs were achieved through youths' interactions with others and the "artifacts" or tools of science. The theoretical framework, highly appropriate in this context, was drawn from socio-historical theory, whose premise is that learning is a socially organized, cultural process that is highly dependent on supportive structures and guidance (also called *scaffolding*). Socio-historical theory is also the genesis of notions of *communities of practice,* a concept that framed Rahm's focus on how youth appropriated the language and skills of the community of scientists as they engaged in that community's practices, used its language and tools, and became members of it.

The major findings of this study will not be surprising to those who are currently implementing STEM programs in OST. However, the findings are important in that they substantiate experiences with youth and point to ways that programs can improve offerings and better understand the challenges of implementation. Some of the most relevant findings are these:

- Programs need qualified staff who can go beyond the superficial in science education. OST staff could be trained in science, or scientists could learn to work with youth in OST settings as do teaching artists and other disciplined-based OST instructors.
- Science projects require extended time. For example, one project Rahm documents was a study of an area of forest devastated by fire. The multiple-year program allowed youth to document patterns of re-growth that they would not have been able to observe in a shorter-term program.
- Youth need to acculturate to a new culture: that of the community of scientists. The youth Rahm observed

had to acquire new terminology. For example, youth in one program had a hard time articulating hypotheses, a habit of mind particular to science. In addition, the youth had to learn new values and behaviors, such as "ways of seeing." This learning involved practice and deep engagement in the process of making science, along with relationships with scientists and the scientific community.

- Young people's prior knowledge of science comes from school-based experiences, which tend to be narrow and scripted. Because OST science programs are often inquiry-based, youth have to re-conceptualize their understandings, to learn that science "in real life" is often tentative and emergent.

The audience for this book will be primarily graduate students in science education or OST education. The book could have been better edited; the amount of "thick description" buries many of the findings and important insights, and some sentences are awkwardly constructed. In addition, some sections seem less relevant than others; a chapter on motivation, for example, could have been a separate article. Nonetheless, this is an important study that ultimately makes a valuable contribution to our field. A shorter piece consolidating its findings and pitched at youth practitioners would be valuable.

> For example, youth in one program had a hard time articulating hypotheses, a habit of mind particular to science. In addition, the youth had to learn new values and behaviors, such as "ways of seeing."

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Afterschool Matters

Call for Papers
Spring 2012 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 Spring 2012 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 Spring 2012 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.
- Descriptions and analyses of youth-centered participatory action research projects.

Submission Guidelines
- Deadline is July 22, 2011, for the Spring 2012 issue of *Afterschool Matters*.
- Submissions should be submitted electronically 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.
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