

Why After-School Matters:

How After-School Supports and
Enhances Student Success



What School Leaders Can Do to Support

Children and youth spend only 20% of their waking hours in school. How they spend the remaining 80% has profound implications on their well-being and future. After-school programs provide positive experiences for school-aged children and youth and are also effective in preventing school drop-out, helping kids achieve school success, connecting schools and communities, and supporting working families who experience considerable stress when their children are out of school and unsupervised.

In 1988, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) conducted a survey of 1,175 elementary and middle school Principals and found an overwhelmingly high response rate of Principals saying their students needed more supervision before and after school. Of the surveyed



Annual performance report data from 21st CCLC grantees across the country demonstrates that students attending 21st CCLC programs improve their reading (43%) and math grades (42%). Students who attend 21st CCLC programs more regularly are more likely to improve their grades and their performance on state assessments.

(Learning Point Associates, November 2007)

Principals, two-thirds agreed that schools, given the resources, should provide this care but at that time, only 22 percent of the respondents had such programs in their schools.

Thanks to the growing number of organizations focused on increasing access for children and youth to high quality programs, today, you can find after-school programs in communities across the country. These programs provide many benefits for children, youth, families, schools, and communities at large, including:

- helping students and families develop a strong connection to the school and the surrounding community;
- providing culturally relevant programming that compliments the learning going on inside the classroom;
- personalizing learning to fit individual student

“ For many children, without after-school programs, the streets or zombie-hours watching TV or playing video games are the only options. After-school programs help children experience success in school and help them belong.

It is no exaggeration to say that after-school programs

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needs and learning styles;

- providing academic and homework support;
- getting students ready to learn every morning by providing nutritious snacks and physical activities;
- providing holistic services that embrace social, emotional and academic learning;

After-school programs also play a critical role specifically for middle and high school youth in fostering essential skills for the 21st century workplace including math and science concepts, creative thinking, problem solving, teamwork, value for diversity, communication, leadership and use of technology.

Superintendents, principals, and other school leaders play a vital role in building strong partnerships with after-school programs. There are many things school leaders can do to create, foster and nourish these partnerships and help to build a movement for a seamless education system that supports learning before, during and after the school bell rings.

The NAESP guide entitled “Leading After-School Learning Communities” provides great tools for Principals in taking steps to engage after-school programs. The guide elaborates on the following six unique roles for Principals to play:

- Expand the vision of learning to include high-quality experiences during out-of-school time.
- Act as a catalyst in the community to develop quality after-school programs.
- Collaborate with after-school site directors to



manage resources that support the full learning day.

- Support linkages, connections and relationships between the school day and after-school learning that ensure program content meets community, school and student needs.
- Work with after-school directors to evaluate after-school programs to ensure they achieve defined outcomes.

86,100 children in Washington State
between the ages of 5-14 care for
themselves before and after school, and
during school vacations.

*(Based on national self-care estimates and
Washington State census data)*

choices they face after the school day ends are stark: the games in an empty home...Strong after-school programs help to the right kind of clubs, nurturing and uplifting.

Programs save lives. ”

- Rick George, Principal, Henkle Middle School, White Salmon Valley School District

“ Extended learning opportunities benefit all children. Some need catch-up time and others need advanced options. After-school programs can be designed to offer either or both of these. ”

- Carol Whitehead, Superintendent, Everett Public Schools



Online Resources for School Leaders

The NAESP has a variety of publications on after-school, including a comprehensive workshop guide for school communities to use in building partnerships and implementing the NAESP Principles for Principals.

www.naesp.org

A recent article in the National Association of Secondary School Principals' May 2008 publication of "The Principal's Research Review" highlights the benefits of after-school programs and the role of Principals in supporting these programs.

www.nassp.org

The Afterschool Alliance is a national organization working to raise awareness around the importance of after-school and provides research publications, policy updates on federal level activity related to after-school, funding information, and other great resources.

www.afterschoolalliance.org

Visit www.schoolsoutwashington.org today!

Learn more about starting up or partnering with an after-school program, grant and funding resources, and the latest research and information about the after-school field at the School's Out Washington (SOWA) website.

Additionally, our resource library, located at our office, has over 1,100 resources on after-school. We have books written for providers, educators, parents, children, youth and administrators on a variety of topics. If coming to our Seattle office is not convenient for you, you may have books mailed to you within Washington State. Our library catalog is accessible online on our website in the Resources Section.

To learn specifically about our advocacy work to raise awareness around the importance and benefits of after-

school programs, visit the Washington Afterschool Network section of our website. The Washington Afterschool Network is the action arm of School's Out Washington and serves as a formal statewide collaboration designed to improve the quantity and quality of after-school programs in Washington. We are one of 38 states nationwide with an after-school network.

For more information about School's Out Washington, contact:

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