

Closing the Gaps Through Afterschool and Summer Programming

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Solutions
to the Dropout Crisis

Agenda

- The Gaps
- What Good Programs Look Like
- Partnerships
- Sustainable Resources



“We are shortchanging our future by ignoring the potential of more learning and enrichment time and more people to help our children and communities get ahead. We must maximize every opportunity to engage successfully in the international marketplace of ideas and commerce”

- Richard Riley

United States Secretary of Education, 1993-2001

Vice-Chair, Carnegie Foundation, 2003-Present



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New Demands for Better Education

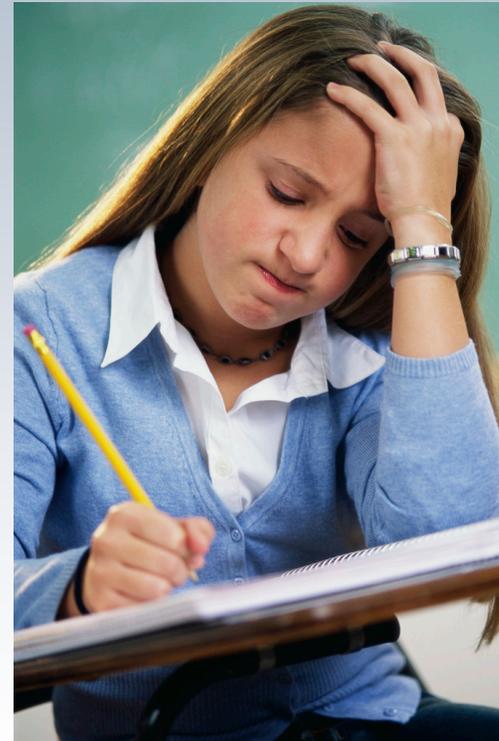
Many students and their families need more skills, enrichment and connections for success *in life* and *in jobs (and many need to be able to access them nearby in an afterschool or community learning center)*:

- Better reading, math, and science skills
- 21st Century Skills (e.g., learn to work in teams and creatively solve problems)
- Pathways to finish secondary school (or GED) and acquire some technical training and college courses
- Easily accessible opportunities to keep on learning for a lifetime



The Gaps

While demands on students are raising, many have “gaps” that limit student potential.



The achievement gap has become a major concern, but three other gaps contribute to the achievement gap:

- ✓ The time gap
- ✓ The experience and opportunity gap
- ✓ The caring people, hope and support gap

Good and effective afterschool and summer programs and community-oriented schools need to help address these gaps.



The Time Gap

15 million K-12 students are on their own after school each day--4 million of these are students in the middle grades

Hours between 3-7 pm have the highest juvenile crime rate during the school week

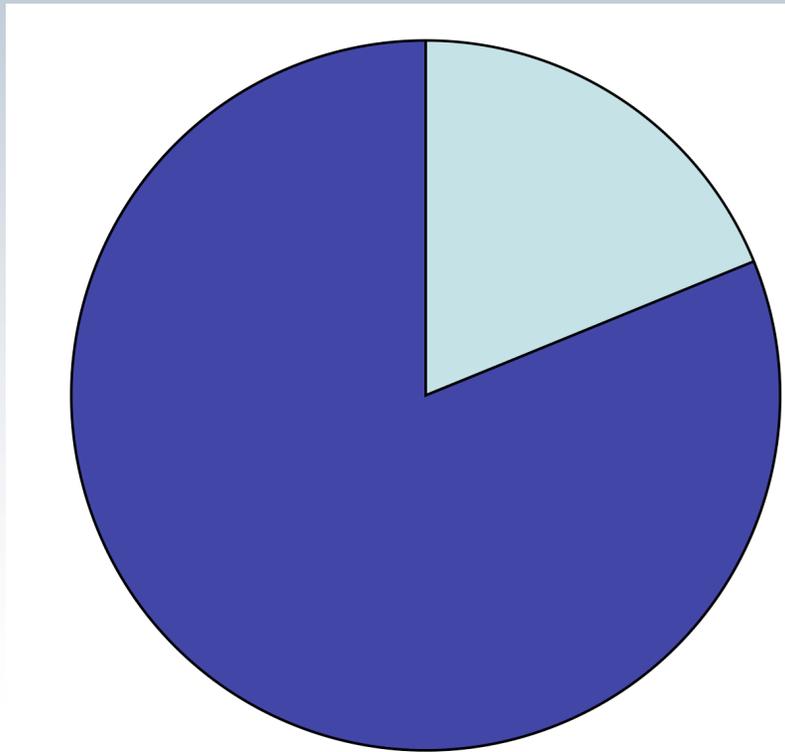


-Afterschool Alliance (2009)

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“Teachable” Hours



- Students spend 1020 hours in classes per year (green) compared to 4380 hours awake and not eating (blue).



Summers and Lost Learning Time

The typical low-income child loses 2-3 months of achievement each summer.

This equals 2-3 years of lost learning over 12 years of school

Center for Summer Learning, John Hopkins University, 2009



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The Experience or Opportunity Gap

Children who lack broad, meaningful learning experiences are more prone to school failure, poor social functioning, and dropping out of school.



Many parents sense the need for broader experiences and opportunities in quality afterschool programs:

- Learn new skills and additional languages
- Catch up and keep up with the basics and school work
- Arts, music, and technology opportunities
- Learn and serve the community
- Be able to recover course credits and take additional courses for high school credit (or a GED) and acquire college credit



The People, Hope & Support Gap

Adult mentors provide concrete role models for living meaningful lives.

Time spent with caring adults, (e.g., tutors and mentors) gives children a sense that someone takes an interest in them and increases their motivation for achievement.



Because afterschool programs are more flexible and can be more connected to the community, they can help engage families from diverse backgrounds.



Academic Achievement Gap

- Students performing below grade level
- Academic failure a warning sign that students are at risk of dropping out
- Academic support, including homework assistance, outside school hours can help students stay on grade level with their peers



There is a growing body of evidence that well designed *afterschool programs delivered by caring and energetic staff are part of the solution to address these gaps* and help schools and students be more successful.



For example, one study found:

- Higher participation in the afterschool program led to better school attendance, which in turn resulted in improvements in standardized test scores.
- Afterschool programs helped students maintain friendships, develop social skills, and find mentors.
- Parents had higher expectations with regards to education for their children, and over half of participants expected to attend college.

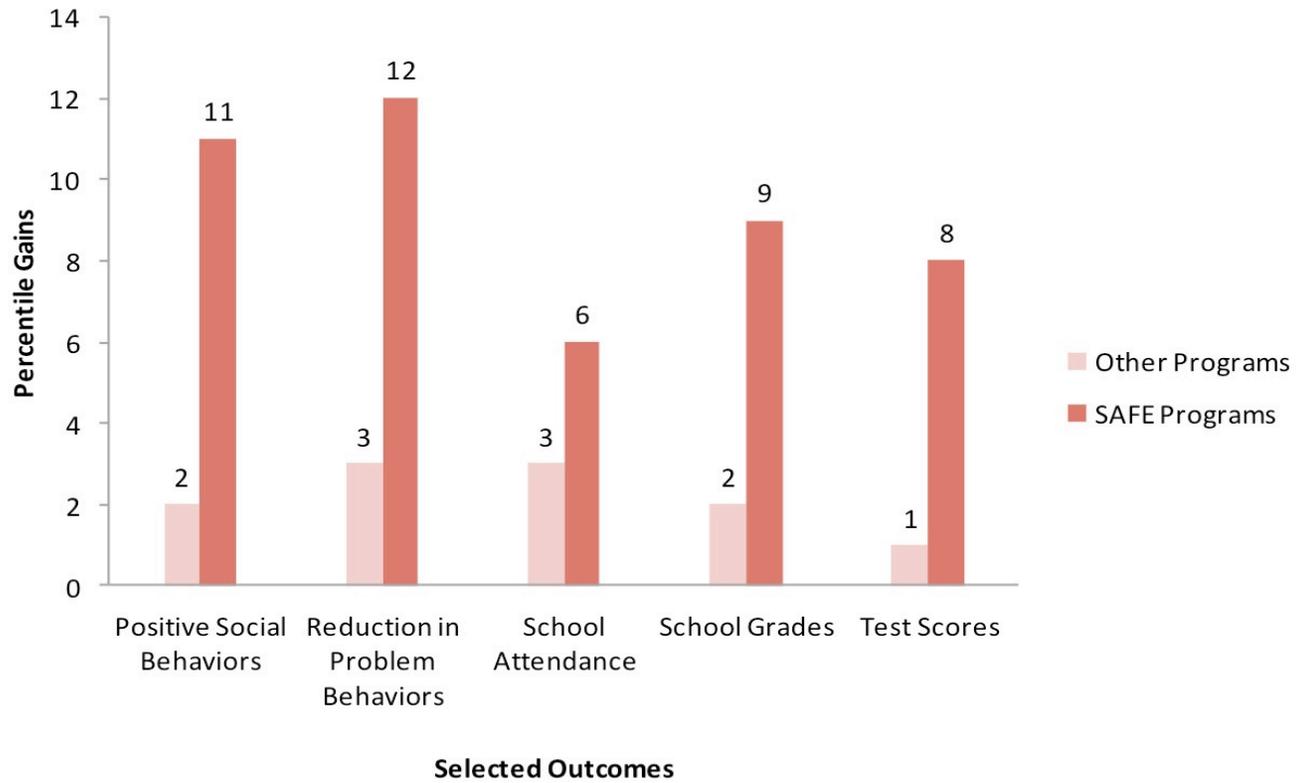
UCLA's National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing



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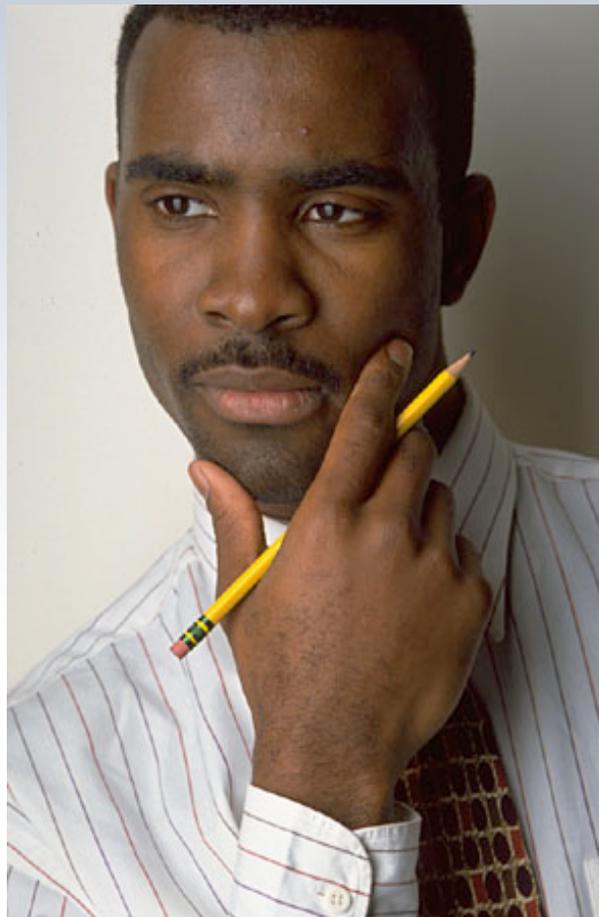
Impact of Quality



Dulak and Weissberg, 2012



What Do Good Programs Look Like?



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Program characteristics of academic focused elementary and middle grade programs.

- Majority of programs offer 3 or more activities a day
- Combine academic content with homework help, tutoring and some form of enrichment such as the arts and social development
- Literacy and math generally 2-4 times a week, 30 minutes to 2 hours in length

National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning



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Other Characteristics

- Clear goals and program and content aligned to meet goals
- Established relationship with day school and linkage to standards *but is different from the regular day*
- Maintain some form of evaluative structures
- Staff keep students motivated, engaged and maintain high expectations

National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning



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Well-Designed Enrichment Afterschool Programs

Don't necessarily focus only on academics, yet contribute to better academic achievement.

They offer:

- Opportunities for skill building and mastery
- Intentional relationship building with host schools, participants, and families
- A strong, experienced site coordinator
- Support from a sponsoring organization



Older students are not going to learn what they failed to learn by repeating the same things over and over.



They need some new context, new medium, practical problems to solve and connections to jobs, course credit or college access.



Recommendations for Older Youth

- Strong partnerships – CBOs and school administrations
- Blend of structured activities, informal social time, skill development, relationships with adults and peers
- Youth input on program planning
- Strong adult leaders and skilled staff relating to youth and with expertise in subject matter



Piha and Siniski, 2012

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Partnerships

- Win-Win partnerships are some keys to solid afterschool and summer learning and enrichment.



Different sectors of the community
that can help our youth learn and
stay safe afterschool:

Employers

Faith-based Organizations

Cultural Institutions

Senior Citizens

Colleges and Universities



Employers

Encourage and make it easier for employees to be involved as tutors and mentors, and bring students to the businesses for “job shadowing.”

The relationship between learning and future employment and future education is emphasized.



Faith-based Organizations

Can reach out to and help parents, teachers, and principals work together. A powerful messages about the importance of community collaboration in education and graduation are sent.



Cultural Institutions

Bring the excitement of art and music to the in-school and community learning experiences. Art and music deliver a powerful message about the importance of creativity in learning, problem solving, and communication, especially when it is linked to technology.



Senior Citizens

Can be used to teach some of their crafts and oral history...as well as become loving tutors and mentors.

Powerful connections between generations can be made.



College Faculty, Staff and Students

- Provide professional development for afterschool leaders and staff on best practices
- Help activate and coordinate community resources
- Supply tutors, mentors, and specialty content faculty
- Help link afterschool to pathways to college
- Provide assistance in sustaining funding



Sustainable Resources Are Needed, Too

- Afterschool and summer learning are in time and spaces that no one agency or institution have full responsibility for operating.
- So a portfolio of funding sources will need to be constantly developed as well as multiple partnerships cultivated and coordinated.
- And the program has to be engaging, have high expectations, and energetic/ knowledgeable staff.
- The 6 “E’s” of quality ingredients and the portfolio of resources offer a checklist of possible promising strategies for success.



What are some promising strategies to secure more resources, allies, partners, and funding for expanding learning time and opportunities to address these gaps?

Grantees from a sample of 21st Century Community Learning Centers nationwide rated a set of strategies that can potentially lead to success for your efforts.

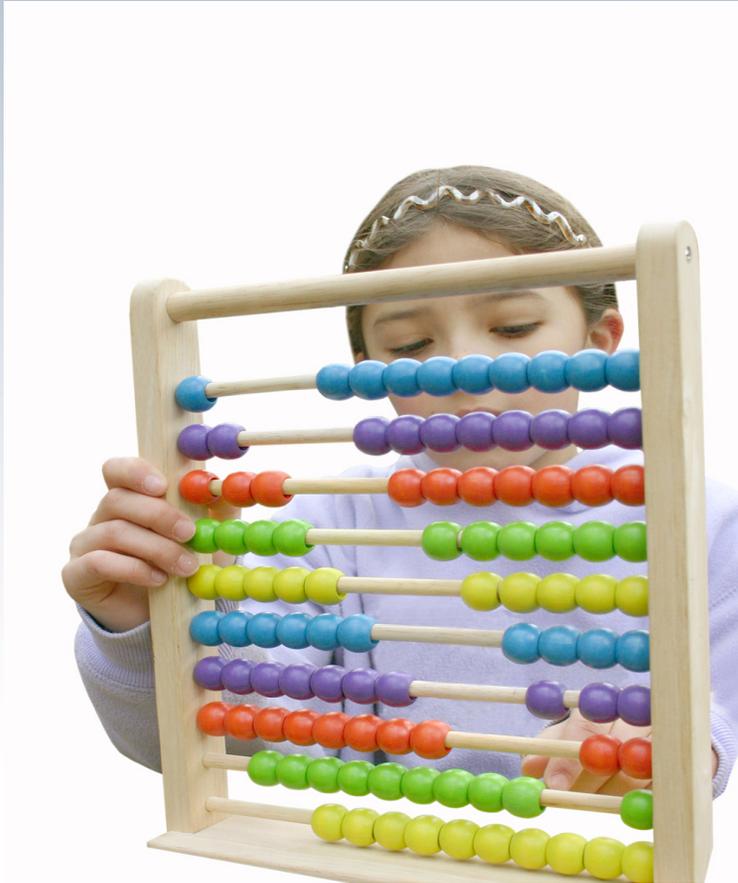


Top Five Strategies Merit Attention

- In-kind resources from a school district (e.g., space, supplies)
- A half-time (or full-time) coordinator paid for by the school district
- A meaningful contribution from a local foundation
- Financial support from city or county government



Major Federal Resources



- Title I
- School Improvement Grants
- Supplemental Education Services (SES) Flexibility



21st Century Community Learning Increase



- There is typically an annual state competition for funds at the state level from grants running out and new federal funds.



National Service Opportunities

- AmeriCorps, VISTA, and SeniorCorps positions could expand learning time and help build community partnerships.



“It must be borne in mind that the tragedy of life does not lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy of life lies in having no goal to reach. It isn't a disgrace not to reach the stars, but it is a disgrace to have no stars to reach for.”



Dr. Benjamin Mays



Thank You!

Dr. Terry Peterson

Afterschool Alliance

<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org>



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