Growing Together, Learning Together: Lessons Learned from Building Afterschool Systems in Support of Improved Youth Outcomes

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Four main questions

- What is the value of out-of-school time (OST)?
- Why take a systems approach?
- What is an OST system?
- What are some of the key elements that support OST systems?
Value of OST

Build critical skills for college, work, and life

“Recent studies indicate that high-quality, well-managed, and structured Out-of-School-Time opportunities can help youth develop critical academic, social, and emotional attributes and skills, especially if offered consistently and persistently over time.”

-- Hours of Opportunity, The RAND Corporation, 2010
Why a Systems Approach?

1) Ensure equal access

- **Unequal Participation:** “Poor kids are three times as likely as their non-poor classmates to participate in *neither* sports *nor* clubs (30% vs. 10%).”

- **Widening Gap:** “From 1997-2012, the ‘extracurricular gap’ between poor kids and non-poor kids (aged 6-11) nearly doubled.”

In a 2007 meta-analysis of 73 evaluations, afterschool programs on average had positive effects on:

- Attitudes toward school
- Social behavior
- School grades and achievement tests
- Reduced problem behaviors from aggression

But programs without specific quality features had NO effect.

“The Impact of Afterschool Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills”
Durlak & Weissberg (2007)
Afterschool systems—
from fragmentation to integration

BEFORE...
• Waste of city resources
• Uneven program quality
• Fewer children participate
• Public skepticism
• Children lose

CITYWIDE COORDINATION THROUGH AN AFTERSCHOOL SYSTEM

AFTER...
• Smarter use of city resources
• Program quality improves
• More children participate
• Public support
• Children gain
Coordination *can* work

“This initiative provided a proof of principle – that organizations across cities could work together toward increasing access, quality, data-based decision making and sustainability.”

-- *Hours of Opportunity*, The RAND Corporation, 2010
How many cities are coordinating?

More than half of cities surveyed are coordinating afterschool: 59-77 percent

Number of agencies, organizations involved in coordination: median of 20

From *Is Citywide Afterschool Coordination Going Nationwide? An Exploratory Study in Large Cities* September 2013: fhi360
The four elements of afterschool system building success

**LEADERSHIP**
There is no substitute for a committed mayor or superintendent, but for a system to thrive long term, all the major players need to “own” the effort to some degree.

**COORDINATION**
A system can be coordinated by a single public agency, multiple agencies working together, a nonprofit intermediary or a network of partners, depending on local needs.

**DATA**
Gathering and sharing data on a large scale takes both technology to track and organize information and a skilled staff to interpret and act on it.

**QUALITY**
Cities must decide what quality means to them, how “high stakes” to make their assessments and how to support continuous improvement of programs.

Strong leadership
Coordination that fits local context
Effective use of data

Children Under Age 18 Living in Poverty

- 0% - 8%
- 9% - 21%
- 22% - 39%
- 40% - 57%
- 58% - 100%
- No Data

Denver Neighborhoods
Programs Free to Families and Serve Food

Source:
Community Partnership System
9-16-2013
Comprehensive approach to quality

From *Building Citywide Systems for Quality*
Nicole Yohalem
Forum for Youth Investment, 2011
Lessons on afterschool systems and more

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- After School
- Arts Education
- Summer and Expanded Learning
- Audience Development for the Arts
- Advancing Philanthropy

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- Adult Literacy
- Libraries
- School Counseling
- Teacher Recruitment
- Urban Parks

School Leadership
Principals are key to turning around city schools. Districts, universities and states all play major roles in helping them succeed.

After School
Coordinating the work of nonprofits, schools, parks and other groups can strengthen learning and enrichment for kids beyond the school day.

Arts Education
School districts can work with cultural organizations and other groups to provide more and better arts education to all kids.

Summer and Expanded Learning
School districts and nonprofits can “think outside the clock” to give kids more time for learning during summer and the school year.

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