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ABSTRACT

As part of a series of multimedia resources providing relevant information on important topics facing education leaders today, this booklet and accompanying audio compact disks focus on how extended learning programs and services after school can ensure that all students meet academic learning standards. The booklet includes an overview of the need and demands for additional instructional support for underperforming students based on school and societal conditions, describes a statewide summer school program and a district-level after-school program with demonstrated achievement results, and provides information about tools and resources intended to help meet the challenge of proficiency for all students in reading and mathematics through successful extended academic support. Two accompanying audio compact disks provide the viewpoints of various leaders in education who have worked closely with issues related to extended academic support. Included on the disks are interviews with executives of research institutions and for-profit and nonprofit educational associations, administrators of organizations responsible for extended-day or after-school programs, and a state commissioner of education. (Contains 22 references.) (KB)

Viewpoints

After-School Learning and Beyond

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Viewpoints No. 10

After-School Learning and Beyond

After-School Learning and Beyond

Introduction

Viewpoints is a series of multimedia resources intended to provide relevant information on the important topics facing education leaders today. Volume 10, "After-School Learning and Beyond," focuses on how extended learning programs and services can ensure all students meet academic learning standards.

This booklet presents information about why and how the federal government as well as states and local districts are searching for ways to support struggling learners by making the most of out-of-school time. It also provides examples of effective programs, an overview of available resources, and tools to help educators and policymakers meet the goal of helping all students achieve proficiency in reading and mathematics by 2013–14.

The accompanying audio CDs provide the viewpoints of various leaders in education who have worked closely with issues related to extended academic support. Their comments reflect the many perspectives that surround these issues.

THE ISSUE

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 mandates that by 2013–14 all students will reach high standards, at minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002). The NCLB legislation establishes a worthy goal for public education, but it also raises incredible challenges for educators. No longer can the achievement of any student be overlooked or masked by the performance of others. Standardized test scores must be disaggregated by racial and ethnic status, socioeconomic status, disability status, and limited English proficiency, to monitor the progress of students in all groups; the consequences for schools, districts, and states are rigorous if lower-performing students do not reach proficiency. Constraints within the school day make it difficult to provide some students the time to become proficient learners. Providing high-quality extended academic support to struggling learners can help to ensure success for all students.

THE BOOKLET: A GUIDE TO CONTENTS

The essay "Ensuring Success for All Students: Extended Academic Support for Struggling Learners" serves as a companion to the CDs. This essay presents an overview of the need and demand for additional instructional support for underperforming students based on school and societal conditions. While the jury is still out on whether after-school programs positively impact student achievement, there are specific strategies that show great promise if implemented with integrity. The essay also features specific programs that have demonstrated results at the national, state, and district levels. In addition to the success stories of these programs, this booklet provides information about tools and resources intended to help meet the challenge of proficiency for all students in reading and mathematics through successful extended academic support.

Ensuring Success for All Students: Extended Academic Support for Struggling Learners

By Sheryl Poggi

The Need and Demand for Additional Instructional Support

SCHOOL AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Districts today are faced with increasing pressure for schools to improve and students to achieve. The number of schools identified by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act as "in need of improvement" and the results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress have caused decision makers to seek solutions that will boost academic performance, and one of the places they are looking is outside the regular school day.

Although states have been required to identify schools in need of improvement for several years, the release of the NCLB legislation increased the scrutiny by which schools would be identified (NCLB Act, 2002). The focus shifted from looking at aggregate student scores to looking at student performance in specific content areas (reading and mathematics) and by subgroups (racial/ethnic, low-income, students with disabilities, and limited-English-proficient groups). These new requirements made it impossible for states, districts, and schools to overlook the performance of some students by averaging the scores of all students.

Nationally, too many children fail to read at grade level. In 1998, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 38 percent of our nation's fourth graders failed to read at the basic level. Sixty-four percent of African-American and 60 percent of Hispanic-American fourth graders read below the basic level (Donahue, Finnegan, Lutkus, Allen, & Campbell, 2001). Results from the 2000 NAEP mathematics assessment show overall gains in fourth, eighth, and twelfth graders' average scores since 1990. However, from 1996 to 2000, the percentage of twelfth graders reaching the *basic* level declined (Braswell, Lutkus, Grigg, Santapau, Tay-Lim, & Johnson, 2001).

Conditions during the school day may contribute to lack of achievement for some students. Nearly every state has adopted standards for what all students must know and be able to do, and assessments used to measure these standards are the same assessments used to identify schools in need of improvement. However, the degree to which administrators and teachers have embraced these standards varies. For example, Illinois was one of the first states to adopt standards (1997), but after five years, only 43 percent of teachers participating in a multiyear study reported that they were transitioning to a standards-led education system (DeStefano & Prestine, 2002). This lag time between adoption of standards and assessments to measure standards, and the degree to which teachers are incorporating standards into their day-to-day lessons and instructional activities is not uncommon.

Methods of instruction is another in-school condition that may contribute to students' low performance. Differentiated instruction suggests that all learners can be challenged by providing materials and tasks on the standard at varied levels of difficulty, with varying degrees of scaffolding, through multiple instructional groups, and with time variations. Teachers can encourage student success by varying ways in which students work. Yet, teachers often rely on practices that do not allow for differentiated learning.

Time for learning, or lack of it, is a common concern voiced by educators. Twenty years after *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) recommended extending the length of the school day to seven hours and instituting a 200- to 220-day school year, most schools still use a five- or six-hour day and a 180-day school year. The factor most consistently linked to higher levels of learning is academic learning time during the school day. However, in schools academic learning time is often interrupted for organizational maintenance activities (for example, attendance and announcements), transitioning between regular and special programs, and schoolwide or classroom activities that are ancillary to the instructional program (for example, assemblies and contests). The amount of time devoted to teaching in the content areas is mandated by 24 states, but these mandates can restrict a district's or a school's ability to adjust the amount of time needed for each student to master the skills and concepts necessary to be proficient.

Societal conditions also influence the need for extra academic support. Today, more than 28 million school-aged children have parents who work outside the home. *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Nonschool Hours* brought to light the need to address the growing crisis in youth development. The report revealed that 42 percent of an adolescent's waking hours are discretionary, most of which are unstructured, unsupervised, and unproductive (Task Force on Youth Development and Community Programs, 1992). Safety and security are American voters' main reason for supporting after-school programs, according to the findings of the 2002 Nationwide Poll of Registered Voters on Afterschool Programs (Afterschool Alliance, 2002). Most voters continue to believe there is a need for some type of organized activity that provides children a safe environment and opportunities to learn. To a lesser extent, the influx of students who are non-English speaking, family mobility and student motivation are also noneducational variables that have created the demand for after-school programs.

FEDERAL MANDATES FOR EXTENDED ACADEMIC SUPPORT

There are several requirements in the NCLB legislation that call for extended academic support for struggling learners. The broadest requirement calls on school districts, when appropriate, to provide additional educational assistance to students and to coordinate and integrate this assistance with other district or school services. Approximately 40 percent of Title I schools use some portion of Title I funds to contribute to extended academic support. Other mandates of the law require that supplemental academic programs are grounded in scientifically based research, and that such programs are included among services to the homeless (NCLB Act, 2002).

Most challenging to districts and schools is the section of the law that outlines steps to be taken by schools not achieving adequate yearly progress. After two years, in addition to offering parents school choice, schools must offer supplemental services from a state-approved list of providers. The U.S. Department of Education defines supplemental services as tutoring or other extra educational services that provide academic assistance to students outside the regular school day. NCLB states that supplemental services must be high quality, research based, and designed to increase academic achievement of eligible children. The number of schools required to offer

supplemental services for the 2002–03 school year is fairly small; however, states and districts are anticipating a significant increase in the number of schools required to offer supplemental services in the 2003–04 school year. Table 1 lists tutoring services and after-school program providers operating in states served by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL), along with two additional national providers who are serving states within the region.

Table 1. Supplemental Service Providers*

	Number of Approved Providers	Princeton Review	Brainfuse	Lightspan	Sylvan	Tutor	Kumon	HOSTS	Boys/Girls Clubs	Voyager	Huntington	Kaplan	SCORE!
Illinois	13	x	x		x					x	x	x	x
Indiana	47	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	
Iowa	9			x						x			
Michigan	18				x	x	x					x	
Ohio	52	x			x	x	x	x			x	x	
Wisconsin	48	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	

*Based on Council of Chief State School Officers August 2002 list; also includes others common to state education agency (SEA) lists.

Note. Minnesota data was not available from the SEA.

A section of the law that relates specifically to extended learning is Title IV, Part B, 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLCs). The focus of this program is to provide expanded academic enrichment opportunities for children attending low-performing schools. Tutorial services and academic enrichment activities are designed to help students meet local and

state academic standards in subjects such as reading and math. In addition, 21st CCLCs provide youth development activities; drug and violence prevention programs; technology education programs; art, music, and recreation programs; counseling; and character education to enhance the academic component of the program.

STATE MANDATES AND LOCAL PROGRAMS

In addition to federal programs (Title I, 21st CCLC, and supplemental services), many states and local districts have established and funded after-school programs as a means of improving academic achievement. At least 26 states plan to increase funding for extra learning opportunities. California's $85 million After-School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnership Project, Kentucky's $37 million Extended School Services, Illinóis' $26 million Summer Bridges Program, and Maryland's $10 million After-School Opportunity Fund are just a few examples. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is actively advancing state efforts for extended learning, particularly in relation to its work in low-performing, high-poverty schools in need of improvement. Two publications, *Extended Learning Initiatives: Opportunities and Implementation Challenges* (CCSSO, 2000) and *Extended Learning Opportunities in Fostering Academic Achievement: Selected School Profiles* (CCSSO, 2002), offer information about how state and local programs are responding to mandates to serve struggling students.

Districts are also finding that they have to make difficult choices due to budget deficits and lack of local evaluation data that show academic benefits. In Broward County, Florida, the district decided it got better results in the after-school and Saturday programs and has eliminated summer school. On the other hand, in many cities including New York, private philanthropic and municipal funding have resulted in approximately $116 million invested over three years in collaborative programs, bringing community-based organizations into more than 143 schools. San Diego's "6 to 6" extended-school-day program expanded from $1.7 million in general funds in 1998 to a current budget of more than $15 million that comes from multiple funding sources. The result: programming in every elementary and middle school in San Diego.

Research and Studies on Academic Improvement in After-School Programs

We know that in order for students to succeed in school, be prepared for more advanced courses in high school and college, and participate in the high-skill workplace of the 21st century, they need good reading and mathematics skills. But, do we know if after-school programs result in improved learning? The one word that best portrays the research and evaluation field on after-school programs, particularly as they relate to student achievement outcomes, is "emerging."

Several studies on linking after-school programs to increased student achievement show that students who are behind in reading can catch up to grade level with additional reading instruction and tutoring after school and in the summer. *Working for Children and Families: Safe and Smart After-School Programs*, issued by the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, cites several studies which conclude that children whose out-of-school time includes 20–35 hours of constructive learning activities do better in school. The report gives multiple examples of studies and data on how after-school programs lead to better grades, higher academic achievement, and increased interest in and ability to read. In the Ferguson-Florissant School District in Missouri, data from standardized test scores at four underachieving schools showed that by extending instructional time from 175 to 200 days, the number of students scoring in the lowest levels of the state test decreased by 24 percent over the last four years (Chung, 2000).

Recently published research by Dr. Robert Blum (as cited in CCSSO, n.d.), which stems from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, shows that two of the strongest predictors of adolescent substance abuse and behavioral problems are academic difficulties in school and unsupervised time after school. The strength of these predictors was much greater than race/ethnicity, income, or family structure. Being at academic risk was nearly universally associated with every health risk factor. This extensive study supports the importance of young people having a safe, supervised learning environment during the critical after-school hours.

Summer Bridges

A Statewide Summer School Program With Demonstrated Achievement Results

(www.isbe.net/sos/resources/summerbridges.htm)

Overview	Started in 1999, Summer Bridges serves 30,000 prekindergarten through sixth-grade students at risk of academic failure by providing a 90-hour concentrated curriculum in reading and writing during the summer. Through a partnership of the Illinois State Board of Education, the governor's office, and 120 public school districts, the program not only serves students but also provides 30 hours of professional development for participaing teachers.
Academic Program Design and Curriculum	The curriculum framework requires each teacher to provide daily instruction in reading comprehension, fluency, word study/ vocabulary, and writing, in a literacy-rich learning environment that emphasizes individual and small-group instruction.
Funding/Costs	In 2000, $26 million in state funds were provided; cost per child is under $500.
Assessment of Academic Student Needs	All students are pretested and posttested, using an individual reading inventory aligned to state standards.
Staffing	Staff members are certified teachers; preference is given to those with reading training.
Class Size	For prekindergarten and kindergarten, maximum is 1:10; for Grades 1–6, maximum is 1:15.
Communication Between Extended and School Day Staff	In their applications to the state, districts are asked to explain how a student's Summer Bridges progress will be reported to the student's regular classroom teacher at the start of the upcoming school year.
Achievement Results	The 2001 evaluation report showed that more than two thirds of the sample of students assessed by their districts and submitted to the state education agency gained at least one grade level. Ninety-two percent of the students originally recommended for retention were able to meet criteria for promotion by the end of the program. Ten percent or more of the students in each grade gained two or more grade levels. These results are similar to those of the first two years of the program.

In a special issue on evaluations of after-school programs, the *Afterschool Advocate* newsletter provided data on the California Afterschool Learning and Safe Neighborhood Partnerships Program, which began in 1998 and was studied by the Education Department of the University of California at Irvine from 1999 to 2001. The evaluation used data supplied to the California Department of Education and concluded that SAT-9 scores of participating students increased faster than those of students statewide, and gains were closely related to individual students' levels of participation in the program (as cited in Afterschool Alliance, 2003). Another longitudinal evaluation, this one conducted by Policy Studies Associates, studied programs funded by The After-School Corporation (TASC). It concluded, after three years, that students who actively participated in TASC programs for more than one year showed significantly greater gains on citywide math tests than did similar nonparticipating students (as cited in Afterschool Alliance, 2003). San Diego's "6 to 6" Extended School Day Program released two evaluation studies in 2001, one conducted by WestEd and the other by Hoffman Clark and Associates. Among the findings of WestEd was that 57 percent of participating students increased their reading scores, and 44 percent of students increased their SAT-9 math scores over the course of the studied year; SAT-9 reading scores also increased (as cited in Afterschool Alliance, 2003). Other similar studies in Ohio (Ohio Urban School Initiative School Age Child Care Project), Massachusetts (Massachusetts After-School and Other Out-of-School Time Grant Programs), and California (YS-CARE After School Program for California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids) offer similar findings (as cited in Afterschool Alliance, 2003).

Harris Cooper (2001), a leading expert on summer school research from the University of Missouri-Columbia, reports in a SERVE Policy Brief on the implications of summer learning loss. He cites data from a 1996 meta-analysis that indicated summer learning loss equaled at least one month of instruction. The meta-analysis further suggested that summer loss was more pronounced for math overall than for reading overall. While family economics had little influence on the amount of learning loss in math, substantial economic differences were found for reading. A meta-analysis of summer school research conducted by Cooper and his colleagues in

2000 summarized the results of 93 program evaluations. They drew five principle conclusions from the research:

- Summer school programs that are focused on lessening or removing learning deficiencies have a positive impact on the knowledge and skills of participants.
- Summer school programs that are focused on acceleration of learning or on other goals have a positive impact on participants, roughly equal to programs focusing on remedial goals.
- Summer school programs have more positive effects on the achievement of middle-class students than on students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Remedial summer programs have a larger positive effect when the program is run for a small number of schools or classes or in a small community, although even the largest programs showed positive average effects.
- Summer programs that provide small group or individual instruction produced the largest impact on student outcomes (Cooper, 2001).

A lack of scientifically based research and limited longitudinal data make it difficult to unequivocally state that after-school programs result in raising student achievement. A paper published in the *American Journal of Evaluation*, titled "Evaluations of After-School Programs: A Meta Evaluation of Methodologies and Narrative Synthesis of Findings," (Scott-Little, Hamann, & Jurs, 2002) reported only moderate compliance with the Program Evaluation Standards established by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation due to limited use of research designs that support causal conclusions and insufficient information to allow for meta-analysis of program effects. From an original pool of 138 articles, conference presentations, reports, and dissertations, only 23 met the authors' criteria for analysis, and only 15 of the 23 collected some type of data on student outcomes. Yet, the authors found reason to report that "results from the synthesis on after-school evaluations yielded encouraging, but certainly not conclusive, evidence for the effectiveness of after-school programs" (Scott-Little et al., 2002, p. 410).

The recent release of data on the success of 21st CCLC programs to improve student achievement has raised some doubt about the program's

impact on student achievement. *When Schools Stay Open Late: The National Evaluation of the 21st-Century Community Learning Centers Program*—which presents first-year data for a four-year study funded by the U.S. Department of Education with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation—reports limited academic impact of this widely popular federal program. At the elementary-school level, reading test scores and grades in most subjects were not higher for program participants than for similar students not attending the program. In addition, on average, programs had no impact on whether students completed their homework or completed assignments to their teachers' satisfaction (Dynarski, et al., 2003).

For middle school students, grades in most subjects were not different from those of similar students not attending the 21st CCLC program. Grades for math were higher for 21st CCLC participants, but the overall difference was small. A subgroup analysis found larger grade-point improvements for black and Hispanic middle school students, and their teachers reported less absenteeism and tardiness compared with nonparticipants. Teachers for middle school students were more likely to say assignments were completed to their satisfaction, although program participants were not more likely to complete the homework assigned. Another subgroup analysis found that students who attended programs more frequently, both at the middle school and elementary school levels, did not have higher academic outcomes compared with students who attended less frequently (Dynarski et al., 2003).

With elementary school students, the authors found few differences between participants and nonparticipants on such indicators as homework completion, time spent reading for fun, and behavior in school. Elementary participants were also no more likely than nonparticipants to say they got along with their peers, were good at teamwork, and could set a goal and achieve it (Dynarski et al., 2003).

Other program-specific studies may support the 21st CCLC evaluation first-year results. A study by the Consortium on Chicago School Research on Chicago's mandatory summer school program for struggling students includes a mixture of findings about the first four years of the district's six-year-old program to end social promotion. Under social promotion, schools

move students to the next grade even though they appear academically unready. The researchers found that the summer school program produces significant short-term gains, which allow many students to raise their test scores and win promotion, but delivers little long-term improvement in school performance (Roderick, Engel, & Nagaoka, 2003).

And yet, other longitudinal studies such as those conducted on the NAEP show that completing moderate amounts of homework is associated with higher scores, and having a positive attitude toward math is related to student achievement (Braswell et al., 2001). Higher scores can be attributed to reading 11 pages or more daily and having a variety of reading materials available (Donahue et al., 2001). Although NAEP does not specifically evaluate after-school programs, many of them offer homework help and encourage reading for pleasure.

The influence of extended academic support on the regular school day has not been widely studied. Dynarski et al. (2003) found that programs established modest links to the regular school day. Most 21st CCLCs in the evaluation operated in supportive atmospheres within their host schools, although the programs functioned in tandem with the schools and not as integrated components. Two factors that may influence this relationship are who provides instruction during the extended day and how closely the curriculum is aligned during and after school. This same report indicates that approximately one-third of the extended day instructors were teachers during the school day, and while homework completion was offered in approximately two-thirds of the programs, only one-third provided tutoring or other non-homework academic programs or services.

NCREL's highly acclaimed *Beyond the Bell®: A Toolkit for Creating After-School Programs* provides valuable advice and tools to help develop after-school programs. An entire chapter is dedicated to integrating after-school programs with the traditional school day. Specifically, responsibilities for administrators, relationships among staff, links to curriculum, and allocation of space and materials are discussed in depth, and templates and tools are provided to foster a culture of trust between the two organizations. Further, this document shares ideas for aligning after-school activities with the school day (Caplan, McElvain, & Walter, 2001).

Components of Effective Extended Academic Programs

A great deal has been written about the components of effective after-school programs. Standards for after-school programs published by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (1999) were developed over 10 years ago, and numerous organizations, such as the National Governors Association Center for Best Practice, have identified components of effective programs. Such work often focuses on the management and administration of the program, while less attention traditionally has been given to program design and curriculum to support improved academic performance. This is not surprising since the original focus of after-school programs was on having access to safe and supervised after-school activities that can help develop academic, personal, and social skills, and on building stronger relationships between schools and communities.

Recently, however, programs have refocused on supporting schools in providing school-based academic support (homework help and tutoring) after school and during other times when schools are not in regular session, such as on weekends, intercessions, and during summers. And most recently, primarily due to NCLB, the focus on extended academic support is targeted toward giving students the knowledge and skills they need to meet state standards. In fact, 83 percent of parents surveyed as part of the national evaluation of 21st CCLC programs said the major reason for sending their children to after-school programs was to help them improve their academic performance (Dynarski et al., 2003).

Given the stronger emphasis on academic performance and current resource constraints, what do we know about programs that are able to produce this desired result? The five essential elements for effective extended academic support programs identified here have been culled from a review of several documents and articles on effective programs as well as NCREL's extensive experience working with these programs.

First, programs need to be designed based on individual students' academic needs revealed by the school's student assessments and teacher reports. Individual student data can inform instruction and also be used to

evaluate whether the program is adding value. The regular classroom teacher should regularly share the specific needs of individual students—skills that should be learned more completely—with after-school staff.

Second, staff need specific content knowledge and instructional strategies to facilitate learning. This does not mean that all staff must be certified teachers. It does mean that if the goal is to improve reading comprehension, then staff need to know specific strategies that will help students comprehend what they read. It is not enough to have staff that simply supervise homework completion.

Third, class sizes need to be small. An *American School Board Journal* article on summer school programs indicated that small class size is one of the characteristics of effective summer school programs (Harrington-Lueker, 2000). Generally, a ratio of 1:15 or lower for younger students seems to be ideal.

Fourth, there needs to be consistent, formal, and specific communication between extended and regular school day staff. Dynarski et al. (2003) reported that 71 percent of teachers in middle grade programs occasionally or frequently communicated about student academic needs or progress, and 60 percent discussed individual learning issues. Daily planners and academic communication logs can serve as vehicles for student-led conferencing among students, staff, and parents.

Finally, programs need to be evaluated for their effect on raising student achievement. This means collecting pre- and post-assessment data and conducting longitudinal studies on the effects of extended academic support.

Although there now is a stronger emphasis on academic achievement, it does not mean that other recreational and cultural experiences should not be provided. Such opportunities can build on school day lessons by using the less restrictive environment and time constraints available after school. They also can provide enrichment experiences, which serve to build the prior knowledge that is so important to student academic success.

Issues and Challenges Faced by Decision Makers

Similar to other large education initiatives, programs providing extended academic support often suffer from weak implementation. Challenges remain for how best to develop policies and allocate resources to build effective, high-quality extended learning opportunities and to build capacity in the implementation and maintenance of such programs. Policymakers and program designers need to answer several questions in order to more effectively use out-of-school time to increase student academic performance.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM?

The district and/or school must decide what the goal of its academic component is: (a) to improve the school day performance of the participating students, through academics tied to standards; (b) to provide academic enrichment activities; (c) to increase individual student learning skills and knowledge; or (d) to meet minimum competency requirements or repeat failed courses or grade levels. If the academic program is directly connected to what happens during the school day, then curriculum designers must carefully align after-school curriculum with standards and the local curriculum and assessment practices.

WHO WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM?

Generally, after-school programs are open to any student whose parent enrolls him or her in the program. Though there often is an emphasis on serving students who are not meeting standards, these may not be the students who choose to participate. Targeting specific students has both positives and negatives. If students are targeted, these students may be labeled or characterized negatively. Students may view this as punishment. Program results may not be as positive, due to low enrollment or participation, less active parent involvement, or because it may be more difficult to show improved student achievement. On the positive side, students who are in greatest need have a greater chance of receiving services. Schools can focus resources on areas that have the greatest likelihood of improving student achievement. Opening a program to all students also has positives and negatives. The benefits of peer learning or peer tutoring are well established. Enrollment and participation may be more consistent, and there may be greater community support. The district and school must decide who is eli-

gible to participate, what the incentives to participate are, and what the consequences for nonparticipation are.

WHO PROVIDES PROGRAM SERVICES?

Content taught during the extended learning period must be taught by qualified instructors who are familiar with and can be held accountable for improving student achievement. One of the criteria for supplemental service providers is that providers must offer evidence that competent staff is employed for delivering the services. NCLB does not require that supplemental service provider staff be certificated teachers. Some states, such as Illinois, while not requiring teacher certification, do require that all individuals meet the requirements for paraprofessionals under NCLB.

In addition to determining the qualifications of staff to deliver services, decision makers must decide what type of organization should provide the program. NCLB requires, under the supplemental services provisions, that providers submit evidence of improved student achievement. Of those providers approved by states (see Table 1), many are from national for-profit providers, such as Sylvan Learning Systems, Huntington Learning Centers, Kaplan, Kumon Math and Reading Centers, and The Princeton Review. Few nonprofit national tutoring programs exist. Some states have created their own statewide tutoring programs; Pennsylvania, for example, has ClassroomPlus. A few state-based after-school programs partner with organizations such as YMCA/YWCA or Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Some large cities have partnered with local community-based organizations or developed their own programs, for example, LA's Best, New York City Beacons Program, and Chicago Summer Bridges. Other curriculum providers such as Lightspan partner with district- or community-based organizations. And finally, several districts are developing their own tutoring and extended support programs and have received approval from their states to be on the approved provider list. The caveat for districts that have schools in need of improvement is that the district cannot be the supplemental service provider. Whichever type of organization provides extended academic services, decision makers need to make informed judgments by considering the following:

- □ Can the district and/or provider produce evidence of effectiveness, that is, demonstrate improved student achievement for the same type of population that will be served in the program?
- □ Is the program balanced? If the program simply teaches to the test, the benefits may not last.
- □ Can the district and/or provider achieve the goals of the program?
- □ How much time and effort will be needed from district staff to ensure program success?
- □ How will student progress be monitored and communicated?
- □ How will consistently qualified and effective staff be recruited and supported?
- □ Where will funding come from, and is it sustainable over time?
- □ What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with for-profit organizations, nonprofit organizations, and district-developed programs?

WHO IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR RESULTS?

Despite the fact that districts must contract with providers of supplemental services that can produce results in the form of improved student achievement, the only consequence to the provider is to be removed from the state-approved list. NCLB is clear that consequences apply to districts and schools. The consequences for a school that continues not to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) can after a period of fours years become quite severe, to the point of replacing staff, management by an outside entity, or state takeover. Similarly, each state must identify districts for improvement if, after two consecutive years, the district has failed to make AYP. Similar to school requirements, districts must submit a plan that includes actions that have the greatest likelihood of improving student achievement. One of the components of the plan calls for the incorporation of activities before school, after school, during the summer, and during an extension of the school year. Therefore, it is incumbent on districts and schools to design extended academic support programs that are tied to performance on state assessments and demonstrate that they provide enhanced learning that is not short lived.

There are three main reasons why evaluations are important. First, they enable informed management decisions about what is working and what is

A District-Level After-School Program With Demonstrated Achievement Results

(www.lasbest.org)

Overview	LA's BEST (Better Educated Students for Tomorrow), started in 1988, provides 18,000 students in 105 Los Angeles schools with academic tutoring and instruction; a safehaven for enrichment and recreation; and an opportunity to develop self-discipline, self-confidence, and interpersonal skills. The program is a partnership of the Los Angeles Unified School District, the City of Los Angeles, the state department of education, and private sector companies. It runs Monday through Friday, after school until 6 p.m., serving children in neighborhoods vulnerable to gangs, crime, and drugs.
Academic Program Design and Curriculum	The design is aligned to the district reading program, Open Court, and to the SOAR assessment program.
Funding/Costs	In 2002, funding was $15 million; cost per child is under $5 per day.
Assessment of Academic Student Needs	The academic needs of participating students are determined by their norm-referenced test results and SOAR.
Staffing	A combination of teachers and paraprofessionals makes up the staff.
Class Size	Twenty or fewer students are assigned to one teacher.
Communication Between Extended and School Day Staff	Daily communication between staff is an integral part of the program.
Achievement Results	In June 2000, the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation (CSE) released the results of the latest study on LA's BEST. Titled *A Decade of Results: The Impact of the LA's BEST After School Enrichment Program on Subsequent Student Achievement and Performance*, the evaluation examined 20,000 students from 24 elementary schools in the program. Results revealed that, when compared with non-LA's BEST students, participating students have fewer days of absence and show positive achievement on standardized tests in mathematics, reading, and language arts. As supported by a regression analysis and confirmed in a path model, intensity of participation in LA's BEST is the key factor to the future success of program participants. (The complete *Decade of Results* UCLA CSE report can be downloaded as a pdf file [www.lasbest.org/learn/uclaeval.pdf]). Previous CSE evaluations also yielded promising academic results: (1) grades in every subject improved; (2) overall grade-point averages in math, science, social studies, reading, and written composition increased after the second year in the program by 28 percent, with a 24 percent to 32 percent range of increase by subject; (3) science grades showed the most improvement.

not working, where improvements are needed, and how resources should be allocated or reallocated. The second reason for evaluations is to demonstrate accountability for return on investment. And the third reason is to build a case for sustainability. Policymakers should require rigorous formative and summative evaluation of program outcomes. Credible evaluations provide the accountability needed to justify expenditure of public funds. The Harvard Family Research Project (2003) has developed a series of briefs, issues, and opportunities in out-of-school time that highlight current research and evaluation work in the field. More about their work can be found at www.hfrp.org. The Harvard Family Research Project and The Finance Project have collaborated on a brief titled *Documenting Progress and Demonstrating Results: Evaluating Local Out-of-School Time Programs.* This guide provides practitioners with techniques, tools, and strategies they can use to improve their programs and track their effectiveness over time. It also provides information about multiple aspects of evaluation (Little, DuPree, & Deich, 2002).

HOW WILL THE SERVICES/PROGRAMS BE FUNDED IN TOUGH BUDGET TIMES?

As mentioned throughout this essay, money is limited. And often, the first things to go when budgets are tight are those areas that do not show results and those that are not core to the everyday teaching and learning process. The cost for extended academic services during the school year ranges from $5 to over $100 per hour per student. If a school is required to offer transportation for choice and supplemental services under NCLB, up to 20 percent of a district's Title I budget can be drained. More and more school districts are finding themselves on state financial warning lists. If schools or districts believe that extended academic support can raise student achievement and close achievement gaps, then they must consider these programs essential and reallocate resources to provide the services. This may mean changing staff schedules by alternating starting and ending times, redesigning the school day for specific students, or abandoning programs that are not able to demonstrate results.

Conclusion

As pointed out in the essay "Identifying and Eliminating the Achievement Gaps: A Research-Based Approach," the myth that disadvantaged students cannot attain the same successes as their more advantaged peers is no longer a viable one (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2002). Research has shown that it is possible to erase the achievement gaps. Extended academic support for struggling students offers promise for increasing student achievement and for closing the achievement gaps. To be effective, decision makers will need to make different, and likely more difficult, decisions about reallocation of resources and about program redesign. □

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The CDs provide various perspectives on schools and after-school learning.

CD 1 – INTERVIEWS *(in order of appearance)*

1. **Introduction**

2. **Judy Caplan** is a senior program associate at Learning Point Associates and, for the past nine years, has worked with schools and community groups in partnerships designed to improve child and family well being. A member of the 21st Century Community Learning Center's national training task force, she has developed and trained many of the 1,600 grantees funded under that program. She is also coauthor of *Strengthening Connections Between School and After-School Programs* and *Beyond the Bell®: A Toolkit for Creating Effective After-School Programs.*

3. **Mark Dynarski** is a senior fellow at Mathematica, a research institution in Princeton, New Jersey, and coauthor of *When Schools Stay Open Late: The National Evaluation of the 21st-Century Community Learning Centers Program.*

4. **John Leichty** is the assistant superintendent for extended-day programs for the Los Angeles Unified School District.

5. **Jean Grossman** is senior vice president at Public-Private Ventures, a social policy think tank in Philadelphia. She is also on the faculty of the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton where she teaches program evaluation. She recently completed an extensive study of four exemplary after-school models for the Wallace Readers Digest Fund.

CD 2 – INTERVIEWS ***(in order of appearance)***

1. **Rhonda Lauer** is the CEO of Foundations, Inc., a nonprofit organization that has run successful after-school programs in Philadelphia for some years. Today, Foundations also manages a handful of public schools in that city.

2. **Sally Quinn** is with the Children's Aid Society of New York, one of the nation's oldest social welfare agencies. Children's Aid runs community-based enrichment and athletic programs, as well as school-based programs.

3. **Nick Blatchford** also works for the Children's Aid Society of New York where he runs the New Heights Program for Student Athletes. The adults at New Heights leverage children's love of sports and organized competition to keep them engaged in school and on task. The program also leverages parents' love of their children's triumphs into interest in their children's school work.

4. **Carla Sanger** is president and CEO of LA's BEST, a partnership of business leaders, youth-development agencies, and the school district, brought together in the mid-90s by the mayor of Los Angeles. The program pays for and runs elementary after-school enrichment programs in some of the city's neediest neighborhoods.

5. **Edward Gordon** wrote several books on tutoring, including *Tutor Quest: Finding Effective Education for Children and Adults*; *Centuries of Tutoring: A History of Alternative Education in America and Western Europe*; and *Educator's Consumer Guide to Private Tutoring Services*.

6. **Margaret Flynn** is a researcher at the Finance Project, a nonprofit organization that helps community programs sustain themselves financially.

7. **Nicholas Donohue** is the commissioner of education in New Hampshire, a state with a large number of rural schools and high academic standards.

8. **Matt Lupsha** is the vice president of educational services for Kumon North America, one of the most popular for-profit tutoring vendors in the country.

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