



Beyond School Bells

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**Building Local
Partnerships &
Sustainability**
Additional Resources



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Building Partnerships: *Creating a Shared Vision*

Potential Partners and why they care about sustaining after school...

Families desire safe places for their children, with supervision by caring individuals when the school day ends and before the workday does. They want afterschool programs to support their children's educational, physical, social and emotional development, a variety of settings that reflect diverse family and community cultures, languages, values and work schedules, and to be included in designing and evaluating programs in which they have a stake.

Government at all levels is expanding investment in afterschool programming and activities. Partnerships allow governments to enhance services and programs by offering complementary services, such as training, technical assistance and public efforts, to foster public support. Governments also look to private-sector initiatives and leadership to provide continuity when elected and appointed public-sector leaders change.

Educators want children to succeed in school and see afterschool initiatives as one way to help. Afterschool community school programs can supplement scarce resources. Educators see afterschool initiatives as a way to bolster student achievement and academic success. Facing a new wave of high-stakes tests and an emphasis on accountability, educators see AFTERSCHOOL initiatives as one way to help enhance educational outcomes. In schools that serve students with multiple educational and social service needs, AFTERSCHOOL programs can also supplement scarce resources. Whether the motivation is remediation or enrichment, many educators are turning to AFTERSCHOOL initiatives as a way to bolster student achievement and academic success and to support the transition to higher education or the workforce.

Employers and Local Business Addressing the needs of their employees is a way for businesses to attract and retain qualified workers. Employees focused on work and not worried about their children are more productive. Investments in afterschool programs are an investment in the workforce of the future. Long-term well-being depends on the economic viability of their communities, and quality supports and services for children and youth, such as afterschool programs, are an important element of economic vitality. **Employers** have several motivations for participating in AFTERSCHOOL partnerships. First, addressing the needs of their employees is a way for businesses to attract and retain qualified workers. Second, employees focused on work and not worried about their children are more productive. Third, employers are often unsatisfied with the level of education and training new employees bring to the job; investments in after school services are an investment in the workforce of the future. Finally, employers understand that their long-term well-being depends on the economic viability of their communities, and quality supports and services for children and youth, such as afterschool, are an important element of economic vitality. Although many employers are enthusiastic partners in efforts to create and improve AFTERSCHOOL activities, their resources are limited and they, too, seek the benefit of sharing resources (dollars, ideas, and expertise) with other employers and public-sector partners.

Philanthropic organizations seek to leverage their investments by fostering systemic changes that may improve the way that states and communities address the needs of children and their families. For example, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation provides training and technical assistance to the growing number of 21stCCLC grantees that receive program support from the federal government. Philanthropic organizations are expanding and looking for ways to sustain investments in programs for school-age children and youth.

Youth development organizations seek to ensure healthy social, emotional and cognitive development of school-age children and youth. Youth development organizations find ways to engage them in activities that help connect them to school and assist with their transition to the labor force and find ways to share knowledge and resources to help improve their quality of service.

Community, youth-serving and civic organizations have been pioneers in creating and expanding quality afterschool initiatives as an important strategy for attracting and retaining businesses; preparing children for a productive future in school and work; reducing future dependence on public assistance; and reducing crime. Their experience, knowledge and know-how can aid new partners looking to expand or improve afterschool opportunities.

Police and other law enforcement agencies know that most juvenile crime occurs between 3:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M. They see afterschool programs as a way to lower crime rates and provide children and youth with alternatives to risky behaviors.

Child welfare authorities, hospitals and clinics, faith-based institutions, local universities and colleges, libraries, arts and cultural institutions, community development groups are some of the many other potential partners with vested interests in better outcomes for children and youth.

How Businesses Can Partner with ELO Programs

Business partners can assist afterschool programs and advocacy efforts with securing resources that would otherwise not be made available. By investing in after school programs, businesses are helping to prepare their future workforce. Many businesses also benefit from building relationships with programs that can provide afterschool services to local employees. These relationships are often beneficial to both business and afterschool providers.

Providing Technical Assistance directly to programs can be extremely valuable to improving the quality of the management and administration of afterschool programs.

Providing merchandise and equipment to afterschool programs can have a large impact on the quality of programs available to youth. Donations may include: Supplies for STEM projects/curriculum, academic materials, art supplies, games and sports equipment, furniture, technology, office supplies. There are many donations that are specific to a particular business that are needed and benefit youth (i.e. a grocery store donating food items).

Providing in-kind donations. Allowing employees to volunteer time in teaching after school classes is an invaluable partnership—this allows students to be exposed to and learn specific skills from those employed by a business. For example, an IT company could provide allow employees to teach a computer coding class for three hours a week. Providing meeting space for programming is another valuable resource.

Serving on the program's board of directors or advisory group

Providing financial support can be hugely important to the sustainability of afterschool programs. Businesses can underwrite annual giving, fundraising events or purchases which can greatly improve a program's outcomes for youth.

Why Business Should Support ELO Programs and STEM

Economic Transformation

The 21st Century's information economy is creating more jobs that require not only a college education but also some expertise in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math – collectively known as STEM. The last several decades have seen America's industrial- and manufacturing-based economy shift to a service economy fueled by information, knowledge and innovation. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, between 1996 and 2006, the United States lost three million low-tech manufacturing jobs. In that same timeframe, however, 17 million service sector jobs were created, specifically in the areas of health care, education, environment, security and energy. From 2008–2018, many of the fastest-growing jobs in the service sector are and will be STEM-related, high-end occupations that include doctors, nurses, health technicians and engineers. Industries projected to have the most employment growth are in scientific, technical and management consulting; high-tech manufacturing; computer systems design; and other STEM-related services.

Preparing the next generation to succeed in school and in life

Science and technology underpin nearly every aspect of today's society, making STEM skills necessary for all students, regardless of whether or not they eventually pursue careers in STEM. We need a STEM-literate citizenry to make informed decisions about energy sources, health care, transportation, communication, and even food development and nutrition. To become the innovators, scientists, technologists and engineers of the future, youth must be exposed to and master STEM skills. Unfortunately, there is a growing body of research suggesting Americans students are falling behind their peers internationally in their understanding of key math and science concepts.

It's All About Time...

All segments of our society have a role to play in helping to turn these dangerous trends around. Schools will continue to have a vital role. However, to prepare youth for today's challenges, we must think about STEM learning opportunities beyond the traditional school day. Combining STEM learning with out-of-school time programming can offer students of all ages fun, challenging, hands-on introductions to the skills they will need to be successful in school, college and the workplace. Research shows that when young people have meaningful, high-quality STEM experiences during non-school hours that support their classroom instruction, they are much more likely to succeed in STEM careers. Innovative school-community partnerships with strong private-sector participation can provide youth with out-of-school time learning opportunities to become the excited, engaged and inspired STEM learners that America needs.

Adapted from Afterschool Alliance, Issue Brief #44: Afterschool and Middle School STEM, September 2010

Strengthening School Partnerships

Strengthening your program's relationship with the principal:

- Familiarize yourself with the school improvement plan—identify ways in which your program can help achieve the schools' goals. Utilize this language in your program materials.
- Set up a regular meeting time to discuss the program, check-in.
- Ask the principal (or assistant principal) to be a part of the program's advisory group.
- Request that program leaders/site directors be included in school planning team meetings (data team meetings, curriculum meetings, school improvement plan meetings, etc).
- Agree/decide upon respective responsibilities of the school principal and program leadership.
- Meet with the principal over the summer months to plan for school year.
- Ask for program information to be included in the school monthly newsletter.

Strengthening your program's relationship with the Superintendent/School Board:

- Build upon your relationship with your principal in connecting with the district office.
- Schedule a meeting with the superintendent once a semester to discuss your program.
- Ask the Superintendent and/or a School Board member to serve on your Advisory Board.
- Annually present at a School Board meeting.

Strengthening your program's relationship with the teaching staff:

- Send out monthly emails/newsletters to teaching staff as a means of sharing information.
- Host a breakfast (quarterly or semester) for teachers—discuss program information, success stories, outcomes.
- Program director and/or site directors attend school staff meetings—try to be a regular part of the agenda.
- Attend grade level planning meetings once a month/quarter—discuss students in your program, any individualized support needed for specific students.
- Develop consistent protocol for site directors and teachers to communicate changes evidenced in a student's academics, behavior, attendance.
- Invite teachers to provide professional development/training to program staff on certain academic content.
- Ask teachers to recommend/refer students to your program.
- Develop mutual agreement on shared classroom space: cleaning, replacing items, check-ins.
- **Express appreciation on regular basis to teachers who share their classroom space for your program (flowers, thank you cards, recognition in newsletters, etc).**

STRENGTHENING YOUR NEW AND EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS

Honor your partners

It is important that you recognize the important contributions that your partners make toward sustaining and enhancing the quality of your afterschool programs.

- Recognize your partners at events, such as *Lights On Afterschool!* You can acknowledge them in materials promoting the event, or you can also invite them to take part in the celebration.
- Submit a letter to the editor or op-ed to your local newspaper, acknowledging your partners' support.
- Feature your partners prominently on your website, on event fliers and in your informational brochures. Be sure to ask your partner if they have a logo that you could use.
- Create an afterschool "wall of fame" at your program, where you can feature all of your partners and their contributions.
- Nominate a partner for a community service award.

Thank your partners for their support

- You can send a letter of thanks to the organization, as well as the program's board of directors.
- Offer to make a personal appearance at their board meetings to acknowledge their contributions.
- Have students write thank you notes, expressing the positive impact of the after school program on their lives.
- When thanking your partners, be specific about how their contribution has supported your program. For example, if a partner has donated use of a vehicle for transporting students to and from your program, mention how many students have been able to attend your program as a result of this donation.
- Provide your partners with tangible reminders of what they've supported. Provide partners with pictures of program activities. Have the students create a "trophy of appreciation" that they could display in their office. Another idea is to offer to have your students share their work from projects supported by your partners at their annual meetings or conferences.

Research on Sustainability of Afterschool Programs

Since the first 21st CCLC grants were awarded in June 1998, the Afterschool Alliance and National Center for Community Education have learned some valuable lessons about sustainability through a series of studies on the early 21st CCLC grantees.

- The studies revealed the following tips for successfully sustaining an afterschool program:
- **Create a sustainability plan for your program.** As you are establishing or expanding your program, addressing how it will be sustained in the long-term needs to be a part of your planning from the very beginning. Planning for sustainability should not be an after-thought or an add-on to your program planning.
- **Create a working group to address sustainability in a consistent and ongoing manner.** Sustaining a program should not fall on any one person or any one organization's shoulders, and is not a one-time effort. Ask program partners to share responsibility for sustaining the program.
- **Engage your program's community partners in actively pursuing other funding for the program.** A wide variety of community partners may increase your program's access to various funding sources. For example, if your program's fiscal agent is a school, a nonprofit community partner may be eligible for funding not available to schools or other public entities.
- **Capitalize on your program's history and achievements when pursuing funding.** Be sure to emphasize your program's or your community partners' history in providing high-quality afterschool programs, even if your current programs are different than they were in the past. Even for a new program, demonstrating your community partners' long-term commitment to afterschool can bring credentials to your program's request for support.
- **Use tried and true avenues of funding.** School-based programs should look first to tap education funding streams, such as Title I, reading initiatives, school district budgets and state assistance to schools. School districts have expertise, and often personnel dedicated solely to grant writing and in tapping federal and state education funds. Community-based organizations are adept at securing grants in line with their organizational missions. City agencies know how to navigate their budgetary processes and shift or maintain funding for different priorities. Maximize your program partners' individual strengths in securing resources.
- **Pursue other funding sources before your initial grant expires (and 21st CCLC funding decreases).** Given the time required to identify, write, submit and be notified of grants, as well as unforeseen shifts in public budgets and other such changes, you should pursue additional sources of funding in the early stages of your initial grant cycle. Additionally, to ensure the continuance of your program beyond your initial grant, you should aim to have been awarded at least one additional source of funding half way through your initial grant cycle.

*Afterschool Alliance, 2014