

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNING

“...providing children and youth with wholesome places for learning beyond the school day is a worthy goal for all cities to pursue.”²⁶

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

Schools and their leaders and teachers can't do the whole job alone. Cities and school districts can work together to extend and reinforce learning beyond the school day and year by:

- Creating more high-quality after-school and summer opportunities;
 - Mobilizing and effectively coordinating other enrichment resources in communities, including libraries, arts and cultural institutions and parks; and
 - Developing and using data to monitor attendance and program quality and to determine what parents and children really want in out-of-school time learning programs.
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- **Promote coordination between and among school systems and youth-serving organizations to increase the availability of learning and enrichment opportunities beyond the traditional school day.**
 - To achieve such citywide coordination, the following factors are key: the commitment of top public and private leaders throughout the system; research to understand where existing resources are; and the development and use of data to track student participation and program quality.²⁷
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- **Conduct community mapping to reveal underserved areas, under-resourced programs or inequitable resource distribution, thereby helping to mobilize support for addressing those needs.**
 - New York City used neighborhood-by-neighborhood mapping to correlate the distribution of city-funded after-school programs with population data on high-needs children. As a result, the City's Department of Education was able to identify more than 500 schools mostly in underserved neighborhoods and opened them up, free of charge, to new city-funded after-school programs.
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- **Use attendance data and surveys of parents and kids to reveal the needs and preferences for services both during and after the school day, whether those needs are being met, and barriers to participation.**
 - There are stark differences in the ways poor and minority families and better-off families perceive the availability of programs, as well as what they want from them. Poor families are far more dissatisfied with the availability and quality of programs and much likelier than more well-off families to want academically oriented after-school and summer programs for their kids.²⁸
 - A number of cities have also been using market research to identify what parents and kids want in out-of-school learning. Such research in Washington, D.C., for example, found the greatest demand for arts and cultural programs and for homework help, while also revealing widespread anxiety about safety both at program sites and in getting to and from programs.

²⁶ The Wallace Foundation, *A Place to Grow and Learn: A Citywide Approach to Building and Sustaining Out-of-School Time Learning Opportunities*, 2008, 14

²⁷ See *Revitalizing Arts Education through Community-Wide Coordination*, RAND, 2008; *Increasing Arts Demand through Better Arts Learning*, The Wallace Foundation, 2009; *A Place to Grow and Learn*, The Wallace Foundation, 2008.

²⁸ Public Agenda, *All Work and No Play? Listening to What Kids and Parents Really Want from Out-of-School Time*, 2004, 11-12

- **Match resources to results and target funding toward high-quality services that combine strong attendance, program effectiveness and good management.**
 - To support high-quality afterschool programming, a number of big cities – New York City, Chicago, Denver, Louisville, San Francisco, Boston and Providence, for example – have created Management Information Systems that can, for the first time, provide both citywide and program attendance data.

- **Significantly improve summer learning programs.**
 - Summer learning loss is well documented, along with its consequences in worsening the achievement gap. The problem tends to be more severe among lower-income families for whom engaging non-school activities are less available.²⁹
 - Research has identified a handful of programs that have reduced summer learning loss in reading achievement or math.³⁰ But those programs have not yet been successfully brought to scale.

²⁹ Ron Fairchild et al., *It's Time for Summer: An analysis of Recent Policy and Funding Opportunities*, National Summer Learning Association, Johns Hopkins University, June 2009, 3

³⁰ Mary Terzian et al., *Effective and Promising Summer Learning Programs and Approaches for Economically-Disadvantaged Children and Youth: A White Paper for The Wallace Foundation*, Child Trends, 23. The successful programs cited in this research included: Louisiana Summer Youth Opportunities Unlimited; Building Educated Leaders for Life (B.E.L.L.); and Read to Achieve. The Louisiana program and B.E.L.L. reduced summer learning loss in both reading and math.