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Site	No. of Years	Coverage Goals	Results			
			Increase Access and Participation	Improve Quality	Collect and Use Data	Implement Sustainability Plan
Chicago	2.5	All teens	Teen campaign under way to increase participation and enrollment	Pilot under way for quality-improvement process (43 sites) based on professional development and standards	New MI systems operational and used by all youth-related agencies	No new sources
Washington, D.C.	2.5	All public schools	Programs in all DCPS schools Number of schools with OST programming prior to initiative is unknown	Professional development given to site coordinators Providers vetted	MI system already used by the Trust prior to Wallace funding DCPS tracking attendance through school system database for first time Mayor requests data at ICSIC meetings to track city progress	DCPS funds OST programming in all schools

additional funding for the efforts. Building on the AfterZone success, PASA began to support system-building efforts at the high school level.

In New York City, over the course of the initiative, DYCD moved programming to high-need areas, expanded the number of slots from 45,000 to more than 80,000, and set a uniform cost model. It required all providers to enter program and participation data into an MI system. Data from this system were used to hold providers accountable for participation, signal potential quality issues, and help garner additional funding for OST. In fact, New York City's sustainment plan was to use participation and evaluation data to prove the benefits of OST programming to attract increased city funding in an increasingly competitive environment.

In Boston, the PSS demonstration was folded into the activities of the Triumph Collaborative, a group of schools with a similar model of OST provision. In addition, Boston was just starting its complementary CLI. Participation increased in the PSS schools, as five of these schools had no OST program prior to the demonstration. In 2008, 927 students were enrolled in after-school programs across the ten PSS sites. The MI system was in development and there were no changes in how OST was funded or sustained.

All the major public agencies in Chicago had functional MI systems, and, in spring 2009, data from all agencies had been merged into a single data set to allow the agencies to review data across the entire OST system. Chicago had established a quality pilot that was under way in 43 sites, and the Chicago Public Library had led an active campaign to improve teenage participation. There was no change in how OST was funded or sustained.

In spring 2009, Washington, D.C., had OST programming in all its public schools, and each school had an on-site OST coordinator, funded by the school system. The Trust continued to use its MI system to track participation, and the school system tracked OST program participation using its school MI system. The mayor called on the schools, the Trust, and other agencies to regularly report on programs and participation.

We cannot comment on whether quality improved, as our study did not track program quality outcomes. However, each of the sites

had made efforts to improve the quality of OST providers, including adopting standards, observing program quality, and giving providers professional development.

## **Activities to Meet The Wallace Foundation's Goals**

Using proposal and interview data, we categorized the activities reported by the sites into the four goal areas. It is important to remember that New York City and Providence received their grants earlier; thus, one would expect to see more activities in the implementation phase in these sites. Greater detail on site activities can be found in McCombs, Bodilly, et al. (2010).

### **Goal 1: Increase Access and Participation**

Across the sites, a first order of business was to increase access and participation—in specific locations or for specific populations. Efforts varied, but common activity areas, as shown in Table 3.2, were to address transportation issues, increase convenience for students, increase the number of locations and available slots in the programs, increase enrollment, and ensure affordability.

#### **Address Transportation**

Adequate transportation was identified as a key issue in the sites, with the exception of New York City and Chicago. In New York City, with its very dense population and heavy reliance on public transit, students walked or used public transportation to get to and from programs. In Chicago, the focus was on teens who already used the city's public transportation independently. Thus, lack of transportation, while still possibly prohibiting access for some, was not seen as a key concern.

In other cities without convenient city public transportation routes to schools, children had to transit from the schools to the programs or from the school-based program to home. This required the running

**Table 3.2  
Sites’ Efforts to Increase Access and Participation**

Goal	Providence	New York City	Boston	Chicago	Washington, D.C.
Address transportation	Transportation to after-school programs and home provided	Public transit already available	School programs require parent pickup	Public transit already available	Public transit already available
Increase convenience	Provide middle school programs through school-based hubs	Open programs in schools and during summer and school holidays; provide programs in underserved areas; mandate that all programs are free	Placement in PSS schools convenient for some with transportation home Planning for community center provision under the CLI	No change planned	Programs established in all DCPS schools
Increase the number of locations and available slots	Expanded slots in middle schools	Programs moved to high-need areas Number of slots expanded over time	PSS sites expanded access to programs in 10 schools	No change planned	Programs established in all DCPS schools
Increase enrollment	Zone coordinators with school staff to encourage student enrollment AfterZones promoted in advertising, flyers, parent-teacher organization meetings, open houses, and fairs	Implemented a web-based program locator Implemented a marketing campaign targeted toward parents	Implemented a web-based program locator School site coordinators work to encourage student enrollment Planning to extend programs throughout the CLI	Implemented a web-based program locator Active teen marketing campaign	Implemented a web-based program locator School site coordinators work with school staff to encourage student enrollment
Ensure affordability	Free	Free	Low fee or free	Low fee or free	Low fee or free

of additional school district buses, especially on the homeward trip. In Providence, the only transportation costs incurred by PASA are to transport students from their home schools to programs that take place in off-site locations, such as at local recreation centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, or parks and museums.

In Washington, D.C., the original focus under the Trust was on programming in neighborhood middle schools, later extended to programming in all DCPS schools. DCPS buses special education students only. All other students walk or rely on public transportation. Nonetheless, parents did express concerns about their children returning from OST programs safely, and concerns were greatest during the winter when students would have to walk home in the dark. This led some middle school OST programs to operate under winter hours, so the program ended earlier. Issues of access remained when DCPS began operating programs in all public schools. As more children switched to charter schools and more traditional schools closed, the neighborhood patterns began disappearing. Planners worried that more children would feel unsafe on the return trips home if they had to cross unfamiliar neighborhoods, especially in areas where gangs were present.

Boston interviewees noted that transportation was an unsettled issue that undercut efforts to increase access. Boston public schools use an open enrollment plan in three regions for grades K–8, with open districtwide enrollment for high school students. Every school day, children in grades K–8 commute within their region to their schools of choice using district-provided transportation, while high school students take public transit. The mayor opened the schools to after-school programs in the late 1990s, but transportation home was not provided. Thus, children found their own way home from programs or relied on parents to pick them up. Because Boston focused its OST efforts on a school-based model as opposed to a neighborhood-based model, students coming from out of the neighborhood would have to find their own way home. Finding transportation home seemed to be a key to the initiative's success. Additional transportation was not provided in the planning or implementation proposals. Instead, the initial goal of PSS was to create after-school opportunities in the students'

home neighborhoods through CBOs without adding more bus routes, which would accrue transportation costs.

### **Increase Convenience**

In four of the five cities, the planners sought to increase the convenience of the programs, hopefully increasing access by moving programs closer to the children and running the programs for more hours. Providence adopted the neighborhood campus concept, with programs offered in or near the schools and running until 5:00 p.m. with transportation home.

New York City increased convenience by moving the programs closer to underserved populations. When it put out requests for proposals (RFPs) to vendors for more programs, it specified geographic areas of the city that had to be served. Providers stepped forward to deliver programs in those underserved areas, thus increasing the convenience to the children.

In Chicago, because furthering a plan depended on the development of MI systems, we did not uncover any coordinated efforts to increase convenience, aside from those that already existed. There were community centers and parks throughout the city that already offered programs, as did the schools. Thus, the planners felt that programs were already conveniently available. In some areas, population shifts had made the location of some parks and community centers less than ideal in terms of providing youth programming to high-need populations, but moving a park or a center was considered prohibitively expensive.

In Boston, the initiative initially focused on ten low-performing schools (PSS schools) in the first two years of the grant. Five of those schools had no after-school programming prior to the grant. The plan established programs in these schools that were open until 6:00 p.m. This set-up was convenient for those who had transportation home but not for those who came from other parts of the city and did not have easy access to transportation.

### **Increase the Number of Locations and Available Slots**

Three cities (Washington, D.C., New York City, and Providence) intended to significantly increase the number of children in after-school programs. These plans were heavily dependent on placing more quality providers into specific geographic areas and obtaining additional funding. While each worked to recruit higher-quality providers, they also aimed to recruit more providers or providers who could serve more students.

For example, leaders at the Trust concluded that it would be more effective to get small to midsized providers to agree to provide more slots than to get new providers to enter the field. This required a change in how the leaders of those small provider organizations thought about and managed their operations. The initiative in Washington, D.C., called Project My Time, established the Institute for New Leaders, New Communities, designed to train and coach leaders of small provider organizations to develop the managerial capacity to expand. Attendance at the institute would guide the CBO leader through the development of a strategic plan and actual implementation. About 60 providers were targeted for this training over a two-year period.

New York City and Providence spent considerable effort obtaining additional funding to increase the number of slots available. Providence successfully sought to get external funding through grants and federal 21st Century Community Learning Center funding for some of its AfterZones and provider organizations. AfterZones increased access among middle school children to OST programs. According to estimates provided by PASA, during the 2008–2009 school year, 34 percent of enrolled public middle school students in Providence participated in a PASA program—approximately 1,700 students. PASA estimated that only 500 middle school youth participated in OST programming each year prior to the creation of the AfterZones. New York City planners used the data they had developed to demonstrate to the mayor and city council both the need for more slots and their successes in placing more children. They were able to successfully advocate for greater funding allotments against competing programs because they could show data to support their claims. They successfully increased the budget available to DYCD for these purposes from

\$46.4 million in fiscal year (FY) 2006 to \$116.6 million in FY 2009, thereby increasing the number of slots from approximately 45,000 to more than 80,000.

Boston also increased the number of children participating in OST programming at its PSS sites. There was no OST programming in five of the schools prior to PSS. In 2008, 927 students were enrolled in after-school programs across the ten PSS sites.

### **Increase Enrollment**

Early planning surveys and other more general research indicated that many children and parents did not use after-school programs because they did not know about them. Thus, each of the sites undertook efforts to increase public awareness. Four sites (Boston, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and New York City) developed online “program locators” to encourage enrollment. On these websites, consumers could type in their address, zip code, or other location information and identify programs being offered in their area. In several instances, the program locator connected to the providers’ website so that consumers could read descriptions of the activities.

Others took additional steps. For example, New York City published a summer activities booklet and launched an advertising campaign. Providence used flyers, recruitment fairs, advertising, parent-teacher organization meetings, and open houses to get its message out. In Chicago, the public schools disseminated a guide to available programs, and the libraries led an active teen marketing campaign.

In Providence, Washington, D.C., and Boston, the role of the site coordinator was key to working with principals and teachers to ensure that they understood and actively supported the programs and encouraged enrollment and regular attendance by students.

### **Ensure Affordability**

A final potential stumbling block to enrollment might be cost or fees. In most of the cases here, the programs were available for free to the most in-need students, in part because of the strong efforts made by the agencies and intermediaries to obtain funding. For instance, in Providence, where there is very limited city funding for OST, PASA has



continuously sought federal, state, and philanthropic funding to support programming. In 2008, PASA's board voted not to collect any fees for its OST programming, and PASA chose to focus more on securing 21st Century Learning Center grants (federal dollars managed by the Rhode Island Department of Education) to fund the AfterZones.

PASA has been successful in bringing in additional grants and support for Providence's coordinated OST effort beyond The Wallace Foundation and 21st Century funding. Providence's mayor has helped PASA secure federal Community Development Block Grant funding and introduced a line item in the city budget for after-school programming for the first time. PASA was particularly successful in raising private funding from multiple sources. However, braiding these funds together took a concerted effort, and interviewees in Providence noted that long-term sustainability remains a challenge.

## **Goal 2: Improve Quality**

Leaders at the sites were aware that, prior to the initiative, some of the existing programming was not of high quality. Several sites concentrated significant effort on developing standards of provision, quality-assessment systems to monitor providers, and incentives and contractual mechanisms to ensure better provision, as well as on evaluating outcomes to drive improvement across the board (see Table 3.3). In addition, several sites invested in professional development for providers and the coordinators who were placed in the neighborhood schools to manage the programs. However, even after several years of effort, none claimed that the programs being offered were of universally high quality, nor could they demonstrate quantitative improvements in quality. Thus, while much was accomplished, work remains in this particular area.

### **Create Standards and Assessment Tools**

Three of the sites (Washington, D.C., New York City, and Providence) developed and implemented a new set of standards and tools to assess providers. For instance, in Providence, PASA leadership

**Table 3.3  
Sites' Efforts to Improve Quality**

Goal	Providence	New York City	Boston	Chicago	Washington, D.C.
Create standards and assessment tools	Created and publicly released	Used a modified version of NYSAN standards	New standards abandoned for existing Triumph Collaborative standards	Piloted newly developed standards in 2008–2009	Published guide to best practices in 2004
Monitor quality	Implemented in PASA and state providers	Implemented using NYSAN tool	New assessment abandoned for original PSS; now using existing Triumph Collaborative tool	Launched pilot in 2008 in Park District sites	Implemented for Trust-funded providers
Vet new providers	Through contract process	Through contract process		Through contract process	Through contract process 2009 in DCPS
Provide professional development	PASA provides professional development throughout state that is linked to the assessment tool	Given to all providers free of charge through intermediary contracted by city Intensive professional development provided to struggling providers	DELTA offers coaching and professional development	Offered to quality pilot sites only	Provided to coordinators Trained nonprofit leaders
Provide performance incentives		Provider payment tied to attendance targets			
Evaluate progress	External evaluation ongoing	External evaluation ongoing	Ended external evaluation after first year		Informal only

felt that it was vital to develop quality measures through a community effort and engaged various groups to accomplish this goal. Starting in November 2004, a workgroup was assembled to consider quality. A group of approximately 25 participants considered already established standards from other cities and adapted them to meet Providence's needs. Interviewees told us that this workgroup created buy-in from providers and created an identity for Providence's after-school programming at a critical time prior to the formal launch of the AfterZones. The established standards are now used across the state of Rhode Island.

After standards were chosen, it became necessary to develop indicators and assessment tools. A smaller team met in late 2005 and early 2006 to develop these indicators and to consider an assessment tool. Participants included representatives from advocacy groups, staff from professional development nonprofits, and city officials, as well as representatives from some provider organizations. The discussion of indicators occurred in concert with the selection of an assessment tool. According to respondents, there was tension between advocates of a totally homegrown tool, reflective of the community planning effort to create quality standards and indicators, and advocates of a well-known tool that had more widespread recognition and credibility. Eventually, a hybrid tool, the Rhode Island Program Quality Assessment (RIPQA), was developed. The tool uses the HighScope Youth Program Quality Assessment's Form A (a valid instrument designed to evaluate the quality of youth programs at the point of service), and the PASA-developed Form B, which assesses organizational capacity.

Boston also worked to develop standards and an assessment tool, but after merging the PSS schools into the Triumph Collaborative, it ended up relying primarily on existing standards and assessments already used by the DELTAS office.

Chicago began implementing a program improvement pilot initiative in September 2009 in 43 OST program sites: two Chicago Public School sites, four After School Matters sites, four library sites, eight Park District sites, and 25 Family and Support Services sites. The pilot consisted of peer coaching, a self-administered program assessment, and an external assessment. Based on these assessments, program staff and their coach developed and implemented a program improvement

plan. The program assessment tool used was a version of HighScope's Youth Program Quality Assessment that was customized for Chicago. The Chicago Area Project, a private nonprofit, focused on preventing delinquency and servicing disadvantaged urban youth, provided technical assistance and training to pilot sites, and oversaw the external evaluation process.

### **Monitor Quality and Vet Providers**

Cities developed different mechanisms for monitoring quality. In Providence, PASA and outside evaluators from OST providers across the city and state used the assessment tool to conduct observations of the programs and to provide constructive feedback. Respondents there said that this process benefited the programs and raised the observers' awareness. The entire process was viewed as assistance and was not used punitively to reduce funding or eliminate the provider from the effort. In fact, interviewees described the process as a professional development tool for the community of providers.

In New York City, DYCD program managers used a modified version of the New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) Program Quality Self-Assessment tool to measure program quality during two site visits per year as a way to monitor the progress of OST programs and to ensure that they received the support they needed. When a program was struggling, program managers referred it to PASE, the technical assistance provider, for additional assistance and follow up.

The Trust began conducting regular quality assessments through its Project My Time site directors and staff in January 2008, and quality scores became a key criterion for future funding in September 2008. Meanwhile, DCPS put in place a formal vetting process for the providers with which it would contract, including a review of their basic health and safety certifications and curriculum.

### **Provide Professional Development and Performance Incentives**

In Providence, professional development changed over the course of the implementation grant. Initially, professional development was not aligned with the developed program standards. Therefore, leaders thought it was not as effective as the more current offerings, although

it did build some goodwill with providers. There were monthly workshops on such topics as parent engagement and staff retention, along with a 32-hour youth development certificate program known as the BEST (Building Exemplary Systems for Training Youth Works) youth worker program. But more recent PASE professional development for after-school providers now aligns with the various modules of the assessment tool (RIPQA). Programs not participating in RIPQA can still benefit from the training, which emphasizes practices to improve program quality that can apply to all programs (e.g., providing a safe and supportive environment, ensuring positive interactions with youth, promoting youth engagement).

In New York City, DYCD made a substantial financial investment in improving the quality of staff in the OST programs it funds. As the result of an RFP process, DYCD awarded PASE a three-year contract and provided \$500,000 annually for a variety of training, technical assistance, and capacity-building opportunities for programs. These services were provided free of charge to organizations receiving DYCD OST funding. PASE offered a variety of professional development workshops and conferences throughout the year. In 2008, it also offered on-site training in Staten Island and Far Rockaway—two locations where participation by providers in centrally offered training had been low.

In New York City, interviewees noted that some programs were heavy users, or “frequent flyers,” while other programs took advantage of professional development opportunities to a lesser extent. Many of these offerings helped fulfill programs’ licensing requirements. PASE also solicited ideas for training from DYCD, OST program staff, and their consultants. In addition, PASE provided training and support for the use of MI systems.

For OST programs that failed to meet quality standards, PASE brokered targeted on-site technical assistance. After receiving a referral from a DYCD program manager, PASE would follow up with the program, conduct a needs assessment, and contract with one of its consultants to provide the needed technical assistance on site.

A new initiative in 2009 was to provide technical assistance in infrastructure and management to provider organizations operating

a large number of programs (i.e., organizations that ran ten or more OST programs) to improve their internal operations and thus provide stronger services to students.

In addition to giving direct providers professional development, as described earlier, the Trust offered training to leaders of OST non-profits to get them to think about how to provide quality programs on a larger scale. This required a change in how the leaders of those organizations thought about and managed their operations.

In Boston, DELTAS employed coaches to assist the school site coordinator in a variety of capacities (e.g., parent engagement, leadership and supervision, curriculum, supporting English language learners). Each coach was in charge of between five and ten schools. One respondent described the coach as “extremely good at helping to professionalize what we do here. . . . He comes to partner meetings, [and] I meet [someone] at a networking event, and my coach says, ‘Let me draft the MOU or work plan so there is a paper trail’—or other things that a lot of times schools or community organizations tend to gloss over.” Universally, interviewees found the coaching extremely helpful.

### **Evaluate Progress**

Finally, New York City and Providence hired outside evaluators to assess their efforts. Boston had also planned an outside evaluation but felt that it was too early for the evaluation, particularly considering the high turnover among key staff; thus, it ended its evaluation after the first year.

In Providence, the Center for Resource Management took an initial look at AfterZone outcomes in 2007 and reported on AfterZone participant demographics as well as linkages between school outcomes and AfterZone participation. Most significantly, the report showed that students who participated in PASA programs tended to have slightly higher rates of school attendance than nonparticipants. The report also indicated that PASA was not, in the words of one source, “skimming the cream,” or attracting an atypical group of students as compared to the total Providence middle school population. At the time of our last site visit to Providence in spring 2009, Public/Private Ventures was in the midst of a three-year longitudinal study funded by The

Wallace Foundation that included surveys of AfterZone participants and nonparticipants.

In New York City, DYCD contracted with Policy Studies Associates to conduct a three-year evaluation of the OST initiative. DYCD appeared to be an active user of information that emerged from the evaluation. For instance, after the evaluation found that parents particularly liked and needed summer programs, DYCD made summer programming a requirement in the next round of RFPs. Interviewees throughout the system—from all levels of DYCD and leaders in the field—mentioned and referred to the Policy Studies Associates study. In 2009, DYCD remained committed to continuing the evaluation even in the face of potential budget cuts. As one DYCD official noted, “It has been important to maintain the core mission and the component parts, and that is quality direct services and also evaluation. Very often you say, ‘Let’s throw out the evaluation, the capacity building.’ For us, that is not fluff; that is core.”

### **Goal 3: Develop Information Systems for Decisionmaking**

A major thrust of the initiative was to encourage the development of an MI system to track children and enrollment patterns. From the point of view of The Wallace Foundation, this was essential to understanding whether the programs were attracting children and whether the children’s participation was frequent enough to affect their development. The cities made varying progress in the development of MI systems for student tracking purposes, but, as the systems were developed, the cities found important additional uses for the information. Data-based planning and communication strategies adopted to improve access and quality had multiplier effects and often generated greater coordination and communication. Additional details on this subject can be found in McCombs, Orr, et al., 2010.

All five cities devoted considerable energy to developing MI systems to track enrollment, participation, and student demographics. For instance, Chicago dedicated the majority of its effort in the early years to developing and implementing an MI system for the Park Dis-

trict, Chicago Public Schools, Family and Support Services, and After School Matters. Each organization had a customized system, but data from each could be easily merged to provide a comprehensive view of OST enrollment and attendance in Chicago.

During this period, four of the cities adopted and used an MI system that tracked student enrollment, attendance, and demographics. The exception was Boston, where an MI system that could be linked to the public schools data system was in development. The use of MI systems to track student enrollment, attendance, and demographics represented a major step forward for these four cities. For the first time, they knew across a large number of programs how many students were enrolled and attending on a regular basis as well as the characteristics of the students.

This simple step was particularly important for Providence, where surveys during the early planning period had shown that parents were reluctant to send their children to after-school programs unless the provider could ensure the child's safety, including knowing where the child was at all times. PASA used the system to allow it to track the children into and home from the programs on a daily basis, including on the buses. In this way, PASA could immediately determine the location of a child upon parent request.

These same four cities also used these systems to collect information about providers, including the type of programming offered, and used these data to determine which programs were attracting the most students and where they were located. This was most advanced in Providence and New York City. Again, the centralized data system was a first for these cities.

Several sites then sought to go further with data collection. For example, Washington, D.C., hoped to merge information about students' academic backgrounds with after-school attendance data to determine whether the children who attended had associated improvements in academic outcomes. Additionally, some hoped to merge the attendance data with information about each student's involvement in the juvenile justice system or family services, believing that this information would allow providers to craft supports to meet the child's particular needs.



However, practical and legal barriers prevented this from occurring, including the agencies' need to protect student records as required under state and federal human subject protections. Other practical barriers had to be overcome to develop the systems to this point. Funding and expertise needed for data collection and analysis was in short supply across the sites. Interviewees reported institutional inertia and turf issues that led to each agency favoring its own system and an unwillingness to share data with other agencies.

Compared to site reports on what existed prior to the initiative efforts, by the spring of 2009, sites were developing and using information for a range of purposes. All the sites, except Boston, were using an MI system to track daily attendance in OST programs and to understand some basic characteristics of who enrolled by program type and geographic location in the city.

Three cities took a further step to understand why children were attending different programs. Providence conducted surveys of the children as they proceeded through the programs. It used a combination of the survey and attendance data to identify problematic programs and to work with them to improve, as well as to develop new programs to meet the interests of the children. PASA provided its student survey information to its evaluator for use in assessing the impact of the programs on student motivation, aspiration, and engagement in school. New York City and Washington, D.C., used program attendance as a proxy for quality, assuming that children would vote with their feet and that poor-quality programs would be visible by poor attendance. Analysts reviewed attendance records to determine which programs seemed to have the biggest draw and ensured that these program types were offered. This approach also focused attention on programs with poor attendance, helping to understand why this was happening. In New York City, program providers were held accountable for achieving specific attendance goals and were paid accordingly. Washington, D.C., was considering such action.

Interviewees in New York City and Chicago noted that the use of an MI system shifted the nature of contracting, enabling agency staff to monitor programs and provide assistance to them on an ongoing basis. Without an MI system, contract officers received atten-

dance reports on a quarterly or annual basis, and often on paper. Thus, it was difficult to identify struggling programs and impossible to provide assistance to help programs improve in a timely way. However, an MI system allowed agency officials to flag potential program problems early and intervene with assistance. OST providers also recognized this shift.

Finally, the ability to plan and advocate was seen by many as an important unforeseen outcome of the MI system development effort. In Providence, New York City, and Washington, D.C., information collected from the attendance systems and the surveys was used to effectively advocate for stable or increased funding for after-school programs. Armed with data and evidence that funds were being spent more efficiently but demand remained (i.e., that poor providers were being weeded out, programs were being located in the highest-need areas, and demand remained), agency heads and intermediaries began to argue for increased funding and city support. When city agencies that competed for funding could not show similar progress in moving toward accountability or proof of needed services, the after-school agencies won greater funding, especially in New York City and Providence. Seeing the data, the mayors could argue that they were fulfilling their campaign promises and began to demand these data.

In summary, the development and use of student tracking systems, student surveys, and provider information proved to be key parts of building a more coordinated effort to meet the initiative's goals. Information was used to support improved access by offering programs of interest to students and ensuring that they were located where students could access them. In Providence, it was also used to ensure that students were safe and supervised. The information was also used to improve quality by identifying programs with little student support and by providing professional development or needed training and holding providers responsible for improved attendance, as in New York City. In at least a few instances, such systems were responsible for providing needed data that could be used to argue for increased funding, and work on the development of the system itself encouraged collaboration and coordination that had not occurred before. In short, the

development and use of systemwide information that had been almost nonexistent prior to this effort added significantly to the initiative.

#### **Goal 4: Plan for Financial Sustainability**

*Sustainability* here refers to both sustaining the collaborative effort and sustaining the programmatic funding levels needed to meet the initiative plans for expansion, although we heavily emphasize the latter. We reviewed sites' plans for sustainment of both the collaborative effort and the funding. The activities they described fell into four areas (see Table 3.4). In planning and developing more stable funding or funding for growth, the plans talked of finding new funding sources and activities designed to maintain general public support. In ensuring that coordination was maintained, they pointed to clarifying roles across the organizations and activities or embedding coordination into the system's structures, such as MOUs or contractual relationships. The sites were struggling with issues of financial sustainment when the study ended. Several had sought new funding sources, such as local and national foundations or federal funds for 21st Century Community Learning Centers. However, all faced uncertain funding prospects in spring 2009.

The five cities used a combination of resources to support current programming but relied primarily on government contracts and foundation grants. PASA in Providence had moved to ensure stronger funding by helping several CBOs gain federal 21st Century Learning Center status through grant writing and providing data to support the proposal. New York City had increased funding based on the strong support of the mayor and the clear evidence of effectiveness. And discussions among ICSIC members in Washington pushed DCPS after-school program managers to reallocate some internal resources to increase funding.

At the time of our spring 2009 visit, the sites reported struggling with sustainment of program funding. Several of the cities were forecasting reduced budgets, and the various leads were pursuing the means to at least hold steady if not grow in the coming months.

**Table 3.4  
Sites' Efforts to Improve Sustainability**

Goal	Providence	New York City	Boston	Chicago	Washington, D.C.
Obtain new funding sources	National foundations 21st Century funding Fees from provision of services statewide	Successfully used new data to argue for increased city funding	Unsuccessfully sought city and local foundation funding		DCPS began to reallocate resources to support programming
Generate public support	Generate data and publicize success	Generate data and publicize success	Planning 2010 communication and presentation of program gaps	Planning outreach strategy to garner greater state support for OST funding	Generate data and publicize success
Provide clear organizational roles	Consistent lead and roles	Consistent lead and roles documented in MOUs	Shifting lead agencies	Consistent lead and roles	Shifting lead agency and roles
Maintain partner interest	PASA convenes city leads under mayor to address high school OST City agencies remain on PASA board and now have own steering committee to coordinate city resources	Contractual arrangements and professional development ensure buy-in MOUs ensure link with city's Department of Education and DYCD	Partner involvement evolving; new focus on CLI	MI system builds interest Partners actively engaged in creating new vision Steering committee remains active	Leads shift but partners remain interested because ICSC breeds partner interest in issues of concern to mayor

Three of the five sites thought in similar terms. Downturns in city budgets had occurred before, and agency leaders we interviewed thought that the best way to address them was to argue for the effectiveness of the programs in meeting important city goals, such as reduced crime and increased graduation. Therefore, in rough times, they thought that the data from the MI system and from any evaluation that showed increased effectiveness could be used to argue for the programs' value. Washington, D.C., New York City, and Providence, in particular, sought to generate information on both the effectiveness of the programs and the growing efficiency of their operations and to publicize these results. In addition, they sought to engage community leaders and parents in support of the programs to act as advocates with city hall. Mayors who were strongly supportive of the programs to begin with, armed with data showing their effectiveness, would see them through—or so these leaders hoped.

Chicago's sustainability efforts focused on securing dedicated funding for after-school programs at the state level. Given the state's budget crisis, this effort seems unlikely to bear fruit in the short term, although sources hastened to point out that it was still necessary so that after-school funding would someday be "first in line" when economic conditions and budgetary conditions improved. Boston's efforts to establish a sustainability plan were delayed due to reorganization of the initiative.

In terms of maintaining collaboration across organizations in pursuit of the initiative's goals, most interviewees in New York City and Chicago assumed their programs would survive as long as strong outcomes persisted because they had become embedded in the routine of government agencies. For example, New York City had established an MOU with its Department of Education, which provided school facilities free of charge to OST programs. The MOU helped ensure that this collaboration would continue into the future. In addition, New York City had embedded coordination in the contractual arrangements it made with providers, ensuring that providers were evaluated and received professional development to improve. Chicago was considering such options, and with its new MI systems and pilot-

ing of its quality standards was maintaining the interest of the various organizations.

Providence's efforts, however, were led by an intermediary organization. PASA chose to use its success to increase its presence and cement further relations at the state level and to begin offering its professional development and quality-assurance services at other sites across the state by pooling resources. In addition, Providence was moving toward expanding programming into the high school arena, with strong support from the mayor. A new coordinating group had been established in his office that brought together the major city agencies that might have the resources to support after-school programs, such as facilities or buses, in an effort to identify efficiencies that could generate additional revenues for provision. The coordinating role of the intermediary, with support from the mayor and other agency heads, appeared to sustain and support growth.

Boston and Washington, D.C., were also led by intermediaries, but these organizations had not been successful in leading the efforts for reasons discussed previously. In these two cities, the nature of further collaboration was unclear, as was the role that intermediaries would play. At the time of our visits in spring 2009, while work was under way in the public schools to improve coordinated services, the level of interorganizational coordination between city and noncity agencies was undergoing change. For example, in Boston, respondents were starting to focus on the CLI as the means to promote collaboration among schools, the libraries, and the parks and recreational centers. Respondents in both cities expressed uncertainty about how these types of coordinated efforts would be sustained.

In summary, we found all the sites struggling with issues of funding, several struggling with continued collaboration, and all preparing for a difficult year or two as budgets tightened.

## Summary

In this chapter, we described what the sites did to address the initiative's expectations regarding access, quality, use of information for decision-

making, and sustained funding. We reviewed the cities' progress made by comparing the statements from early proposals and interviewees aware of early efforts to later similar sources in spring 2009.

**Access.** Sites addressed issues of convenience and lack of access by locating additional programs in neighborhood schools, attempting to provide transportation, developing online program locaters, and marketing programs to target populations. The number of children served expanded in most of the cities. Further, the initiatives addressed transportation and convenience issues of parents, thereby increasing access in Washington, D.C., New York City, and Providence.

**Quality.** Several sites concentrated significant effort on developing standards of provision, quality-assessment systems for providers, and incentives and contractual mechanisms to ensure better provision. In addition, several sites invested in professional development for the providers and for coordinators placed in the neighborhood schools to manage the programs.

**Information for Decisionmaking.** A few cities invested in evaluations of their efforts, some of which included student outcomes, and all the cities devoted considerable energy to developing MI systems to track enrollment, participation, and demographics. Several developed systems to collect information about providers and to determine which programs were attracting students. While gathering program data of this type may seem commonplace, this was the first time these cities had such systems and could begin to plan more effectively to increase and improve provision. Data-based planning and communication strategies adopted to improve access and quality had multiplier effects and often generated greater coordination and communication.

**Sustainability.** The sites were struggling with issues of financial sustainment when the study ended. Several had sought new funding sources, such as local and national foundations or federal funds for 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Three of the sites used data to develop "success stories" to help maintain public support for programming. Sites attempted to maintain partnerships by delineating clear roles among organizations and embedding the coordination in an MOU, shared MI systems, contractual arrangement, and elsewhere.

However, all faced uncertain funding prospects in spring 2009 that might threaten further collaboration.



## Enabling Coordinated System-Building Efforts

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The Wallace Foundation's premise was that collaborative approaches across organizations within a city would help enable the creation of a more effective and coordinated OST program. Here, we discuss whether and how the sites used collaborative approaches to enable the initiative to move forward (answering research question 3). Similar to the approach in the previous chapter, we relied on the sites to tell us how they approached collaboration across organizations and agencies and what enabled it. We then placed that information into categories developed from the literature.

The sites used different means to achieve more coordination. Respondents thought that these collaborative mechanisms enabled progress, and, in several sites, the mechanisms became embedded in the new structures and policy supports of the evolving system. New and better-aligned structures, new MOUs, and data and analytic capabilities all became the part of the systems put in place to support the goals.

The interviewees were adamant about several factors that acted as enablers of coordinated system building, some of which were identified in the literature. These factors included whether the site created a common vision during the early planning phase; effectively collected and used data and information; received strong, supportive, stable leadership, especially in the mayor's office; and gained the active support of the schools. Wallace Foundation funding as an investment and the role of funding generally also enabled coordinated system building. We found that system-building activities bore fruit when all these fac-

tors were present. When the shared vision and the active support of the mayor were missing, we found that reported activities were stalled and courses of actions changed.

This chapter first discusses the use of general collaborative mechanisms to develop greater coordination and then highlights specific enablers and inhibitors raised during interviews at the sites.

## **How Cities Used Cross-Organizational Collaboration to Support Greater Coordination**

The literature described a set of activities that social service agencies have used in collaborative efforts to improve services. We adopted them to the OST setting and list them in the first column of Table 4.1. We then used the descriptions provided by the sites to fill in the cells with the specific activities undertaken in each site. Some of these points have already been discussed in prior chapters. For example, Chapter Two showed how early planning and coordination were crucial to identifying targets, consolidating resources and powers, and developing later plans. It also described how sites consolidated or changed structures to improve coordination. These are included in Table 4.1 as activities or mechanisms that enabled greater coordination.

Table 4.1 shows that Providence and New York City undertook many collaborative activities to promote coordinated system building. As discussed later, the early planning efforts described in Chapter Two brought agencies and stakeholder groups, such as providers and parents, into discussions about how the system could be improved and what the initiative would attempt. Interviewees noted that this built tremendous buy-in and goodwill for the initiative. Washington, D.C., undertook a similar effort in the early years when the Trust led the effort. However, with mayoral takeover, the lead role shifted to DCPS, and the nature of collaboration shifted from larger public engagement to intra-agency collaboration.

These three sites successfully put in place consolidation efforts or created new organizations to address OST issues, developed mechanisms to ensure regular meetings of interested parties, made significant

**Table 4.1**  
**Collaborative Mechanisms Used to Support Coordinated Systems**

Activity	Providence	New York City	Boston	Chicago	Washington, D.C.
Performed early cross-organizational analysis to identify needed citywide provision	Planning-year efforts involved all major stakeholders and identified middle school youth as most underserved	Planning-year efforts involved major stakeholders and identified locations in the city that lacked programs; supported by role of special adviser	Minimal early efforts identified low-performing schools but did not enjoin all stakeholders	Early efforts focused on city agencies that provided OST, with no broader community or provider input	Trust planning efforts involved all stakeholders and identified middle school provision as needing improvement
Worked collaboratively across stakeholders and agencies to build shared goals	Early forums aired issues and helped build stakeholder consensus on middle school students; now using same process to develop high school initiative	Mayor kicked off series of forums to discuss issues and build consensus among agencies and organizations around goals for OST	Not part of early efforts, which were confined to a few organizational leaders Later, mayor's subcabinet meetings begin to build collaboration CLI initiative beginning to involve three agencies to work on common goals	Worked across agencies to build MI systems using committee structure; now addressing quality-improvement processes through a pilot	The Trust initially led effort to engage external shareholders; mayoral takeover and formation of ICSC changed focus to coordination across city agencies
Consolidated functions or structures and clarified roles	New intermediary (PASA) created to lead	Consolidated city funded after-school programs for in-need youth in DYCD during planning period	Very little clarity of roles as the initiative restructured		

**Table 4.1—Continued**

Activity	Providence	New York City	Boston	Chicago	Washington, D.C.
Established regular, routine means to coordinate among organizations	Established coordination through PASA board, which meets regularly and includes stakeholder groups Later added city agency coordinating meetings	Established routine meetings of agencies involved led by the special adviser	Mayor established subcabinet meetings of youth-serving organizations	Established several cross-city agency committees that meet regularly	Mayor established and oversees regular ICSIC meetings
Developed information and means to share it to improve efforts	Developed, implemented, and shared, with new uses being found	Developed, implemented, and shared, with new uses being found	Under development	Data collected and structure developed, first run of system was about to be shared in spring 2009	Developed and placed in DCPS and shared with ICSIC agencies
Developed common incentives and supporting policies to ensure provider engagement in improvement	Established standards and implemented support policies to ensure quality improvement	Established standards, incentives, and supports for provider improvement	Offered professional development and coaching to Triumph Collaborative schools	Piloting quality-improvement standards and related training	Established standards and was beginning to use incentives in DCPS's and the Trust's efforts to improve provider quality
Sought and developed superintendent and principal buy-in/cooperation	Ensured through mayoral selection of new superintendent, who agreed with initiative Coordinators build principal buy-in	Ensured through the development and promulgation of MOUs with city's Department of Education	Worked to ensure principal buy-in for 10 PSS sites	OST programs already operating in schools, so not a major thrust of work	Coordinators hired by DCPS to build school buy-in work

progress in developing shared data that could be used in such meetings to discuss how to improve, and created standards, incentives, and training as a means of coordinating with providers. In addition, each recognized the need to continually engage the superintendent and school staff. Providence and Washington, D.C., developed the position of a site coordinator to interact at the site level with school staff and the provider in engaging students in the programs, ensuring that the programs ran smoothly. New York City established MOUs at the agency level to ensure availability of space for after-school programming in schools.

Due to the fact that one agency did not control the majority of OST programming in the city, all of Chicago's efforts required multi-agency coordination and cooperation. Planners specifically selected the development of MI systems as the focus of early efforts because the systems were viewed as a positive first collaborative project for the agencies and because they provided a very tangible reward to partners for their cooperation and commitment. Building from that success, Chicago moved to adopt a quality pilot that involved all of the agencies. However, as of spring 2009, the collaborative efforts had not taken on any potentially contentious issues, such as the allocation of OST resources throughout the city or potential consolidation of programs.

In the initial two years of the grant, Boston's collaborative efforts focused almost exclusively at the school level on the PSS sites—establishing on-site coordinators and other efforts to link after-school programs to the school day. However, it undertook few activities that effectively coordinated actors and organizations outside of the schools. In spring 2009, we saw evidence of increased collaboration that was led by the mayor's office—the CLI and the mayor's subcabinet.

## **The Importance of Establishing a Common Vision**

As part of the planning process, most cities worked to develop a commonly held vision of what they wanted to accomplish across stakeholders, including city agencies, the provider community, the schools and central office, and parents. In some cities, this process required

the active involvement of key stakeholders, and, in one, there was less stakeholder engagement with important negative consequences.

As an example of the former, during the planning phase, New York City formed working groups organized around key topics, such as professional development, quality, and cost. Each of the six working groups consisted of advocates, providers, academics, and funders. Each working group submitted reports to the city with its recommendations. Hundreds of people participated in this process. We were told that the goal was to make the planning process inclusive so that all stakeholders would have a voice. Based on the working groups' efforts and internal coordination, DYCD issued a concept paper on OST and solicited comments from the field. While not all stakeholders supported every aspect of New York City's OST vision, it was clearly communicated, and key stakeholders reported to us that their buy-in was high at the end of the process.

Similarly, Providence undertook an extensive community-based engagement effort during the planning process in which the mayor convened more than 100 after-school leaders, city officials, students, and parents. While some stakeholders were disappointed when the grant focused on middle schools, support for what was done was relatively high, and the goals were well understood. The mayor had established enough credibility in the community that his promise to move to high school provision next was viewed as credible, leading to continued support across the area's provider community.

Early efforts in Washington, D.C., prior to the new administration's mayoral takeover of the schools, resembled those in Providence, with a significant focus on consensus building. After the new administration came into office, broader sets of stakeholders were less visible in the coordination efforts that focused primarily on government agencies through ICSIC. Similarly, Chicago's efforts focused on governmental interagency coordination, initially around the MI system development.

In contrast, in the initial years of the grant, Boston Beyond did not engage community stakeholders in the development of its PSS model or develop a common vision of system building under PSS. Significant staff turnover during this period likely contributed to this lack of outreach. Because a systemic vision of PSS was not communicated,

respondents outside the PSS initiative said that they did not understand how PSS could be a system-building effort; instead, a few respondents described it as a “boutique” program found in a small number of schools. Respondents outside the PSS initiative also described resentment in the community that the grant money was not funding OST programs outside the PSS sites. Comments such as these showed the general lack of understanding of the purpose of the grant, as initiative funds were not allowed to be used for OST programming.

## **The Impact of Data and Information**

We discovered that cities’ efforts to gather data through needs assessments, market research, MI systems, and evaluation created greater coordination (organizations worked to gather and review additional data) and more data-based decisionmaking. Chicago and Washington, D.C., might provide the clearest examples of this phenomenon.

In Chicago, the effort to build MI systems that could easily merge all agencies’ data brought city agency staff together on a regular basis and, from this process, working relationships grew. Over time, interviewees indicated that they began to see a benefit in the coordinated efforts in terms of shared goals and potentially more effective resource allocation, although by the end of this investigation, that remained largely a vision and not yet a reality.

Similarly, ICSIC in Washington, D.C., along with the mayor’s budget office, ensured that the agencies worked together to develop a vision of strong OST services for youth. It was the data from the MI systems that allowed them to actually consider in concrete terms how to move forward and encouraged specific discussions about improvement.

In Providence, the use of the MI system helped the OST system flourish in that its practical uses allowed parents to feel comfortable sending their children to AfterZones, which likely encouraged student enrollment and participation. Using enrollment and participation data, along with student surveys, allowed the planners to begin addressing quality and programming issues, something that would benefit the

children. These benefits, along with a collegial approach to problem solving, kept the many stakeholders at the table and involved.

In several instances, data from the MI system and evaluations led to changes in program funding and better policies. The resulting availability of data and analyses then allowed several mayors to publicly proclaim some early successes, which, in turn, drove them to demand data analyses on a regular basis. This ensured that agencies would seek to maintain and use data analyses for decisionmaking.

Boston, on the other hand, had not generated much usable data as of spring 2009. It was still working to develop an MI system and had not continued with an evaluation. Thus, it is not surprising that we did not find evidence of data-based decisions or collaboration fueled by data and information.

## **The Crucial Role of the Mayor**

As noted previously, leadership and, particularly, the support and actions of mayors and their representatives were key enablers of system building. In New York City, mayoral support was critical to successful change within the bureaucracy. The OST initiative shifted resources between several agencies and demanded better coordination and communication among them. Because it was clear that the mayor wanted this initiative to succeed, agencies were forced to communicate, share information, and cooperate with one another. He signaled his interest in the initiative by designating a point person with the authority to coordinate the agencies' efforts. We were told by those involved in the planning process that the mayor's special adviser "was instrumental in pulling together [the commissioners] around a unified goal." When the planning process was over and the special adviser had stepped down, City Hall appointed a replacement to serve as a liaison among the agencies to keep the pressure on for coordination. The mayor also signaled his support for the initiative at press events and in state-of-the-city speeches. Perhaps the clearest signal was that he placed OST as a baseline item in the city's five-year financial plan.



PASA in Providence benefited from continued support from the mayor, who became a nationally recognized advocate of quality OST offerings. Respondents also noted that the leadership of PASA itself was capable, energetic, and committed. The mayor's reform agenda and support for integrated OST provision—in combination with well-qualified PASA leadership—was a significant factor in PASA's success. The chief of police and superintendent, both of whom were strong advocates and contributors to the system, joined the mayor in supporting OST.

Many interviewees in Chicago remarked on the value of having the city's first family initiate the effort through statements by the mayor and the role of the mayor's wife as head of After School Matters. There was, however, no push in Chicago to restructure, as there was in New York City. The coordination took place among agencies and focused initially on developing the MI systems on a largely voluntary basis. It seems that, because the multiple agencies involved in OST provision were all relatively powerful, interagency coordination was built on goodwill rather than a dictate from the mayor. It is difficult to tell whether greater active support by the mayor could have moved efforts further.

While a number of key leadership positions changed hands in Washington during the initiative (the mayor, superintendent, and president of the Trust), it still weathered these transitions and maintained supportive and productive leadership for OST. These changes altered the environment and priorities for OST in Washington, D.C., and made it difficult to implement the plan envisioned in the Wallace grant. The commitment toward expanding OST opportunities for students, however, remained high due to the involvement and actions of the new leadership in the mayor's office. In fact, many significant improvements in the OST system resulted from the focus of ICSIC, led by the mayor, and included the expansion of OST opportunities to students in all DCPS schools, a demand for data to drive the system, and the establishment of a vetting process for OST providers in DCPS schools.

In Boston, mayoral role both enabled and hindered progress. The mayor had always been a strong advocate for OST programming, and

he led the charge to create Boston Beyond. While he remained committed to OST in the city, we were told that in the first two years of the PSS initiative, his strategy and that of the then-executive director of Boston Beyond became unaligned. The result was a rift between the two, and some respondents said that people in the OST community perceived that the mayor lost confidence in the leadership of the intermediary. This lack of alignment and loss of connection made it difficult for Boston Beyond to lead system-building activities.

Since the business plan was revised and a new executive director of Boston Beyond was hired, the mayor's support of the intermediary and its leadership returned. Indeed, the collaborative mechanisms and work described in spring 2009—the CLI and the interagency subcabinet of youth agencies—were both developed from the mayor's office. In addition, the mayor made OST a top campaign issue in his reelection bid. However, it is not at all clear whether the approach taken by the other sites that encouraged early needs assessment, building of stakeholder buy-in, and the development of a unifying information system would be undertaken.

## **Buy-In of the Schools**

Most respondents in the sites emphasized that the role of the superintendent, central office staff, and principals was crucial to the effort, primarily because so many of the after-school activities would take place in the schools. After-school planners needed to ensure that providers had access to the schools, that facilities would be open, and that responsibility for maintenance, heating, cooling, and insurance would rest with the schools. They also needed to ensure that teachers and principals would work with the providers and encourage students to attend the programs. Thus, while active support by the superintendent or his or her office was desirable, at a minimum, planners needed basic support.

This was found in most sites, although in varying forms. For example, the MOU between the New York City Department of Education and DYCD guaranteed OST programs free access to a specific

number of schools during the school year and in the summer; the Department of Education would fund the extended-use fees (i.e., the cost of operating schools after hours and during the 20 school holidays when they would typically be closed), security, fingerprinting of staff, and snacks. However, the chancellor's office was not heavily involved in the conceptual work of the initiative. In Providence, after the initial superintendent left, the mayor ensured that the process for selecting a new superintendent would emphasize the need to support PASA and the operation of middle school programs. In Washington, D.C., after the mayoral takeover, the superintendent's office took on the lead in pushing for improved programming and access. It was this active championing that moved the effort forward in that city.

Thus, we conclude that there are many roles that superintendents and their offices can play, but, at a minimum, they had to support the idea of after-school programming in their buildings and ensure the cooperation of the schools.

The cooperation of and coordination with the schools was not guaranteed, even with active involvement of the superintendent. Thus, several cities, including Providence, Washington, D.C., and Boston, created the position of a school-level coordinator to ensure full school cooperation, active recruiting efforts for after-school programming, and coordination between school-day and after-school activities. From the point of view of the program planners, this role was essential in ensuring high-functioning programs. Administrators in all three cities pointed out the differences among schools in their buy-in and support contingent on the specific skills and talents of the coordinator and, therefore, tried to hire the best candidates for these roles and provided them with professional development.

While this type of position was not used across all sites, respondents tended to agree that cooperation from the schools, principals, and teachers was important to a strong after-school program and saw uncooperative staff as a barrier to overcome in pursuit of increasing access and quality.

## The Need for Investment and Other Funding Issues

Funding was and remains a crucial enabler of improving OST systems, and a lack of it remains a constant constraint. Each of the sites was struggling at the end of our study to deal with city budget deficits and possible reductions in philanthropic support that would affect their funding streams. This situation reflects the struggle faced by such programs on a regular basis, which is what motivated The Wallace Foundation's goal of addressing financial sustainability. None of the sites "solved" the financial sustainability issue. However, our study does provide some specific insights about funding issues, especially the need for investment funding, how it could be used, and the issue of stove-piped funding sources, which bedeviled some sites.

The Wallace Foundation made major investments in these cities, and interviewees were clear that without its support, in terms of funding and the challenge of the initiative, they would not have made as much progress. Each of these sites, unlike others throughout the country, received significant funding for needed large investments in personnel time and infrastructure. Site respondents reported that this was a major enabler, but using the funding in an effective manner was crucial as well.

Because all the sites received the funding and used it for a variety of purposes, we cannot say how much was enough. In general, funds paid for the time of market researchers, the administration of surveys, the running of community forums, development of quality assessment instruments, and professional development. It paid for the time of the early planners, coordinators, and leaders. In addition, it was used to develop the MI systems that proved to be a crucial step forward in four of the sites.

There were some contrasts in the payoff on sites' investments. For example, Chicago used much of the funding to build its MI systems, and New York City dedicated at least some of the funding to the role of the special adviser. Both investments appeared to pay off from the point of view of respondents. This contrasted with several investments in evaluation, a child assessment tool, and a set of quality standards made by Boston Beyond in the early years of the Boston

initiative, which went unused during later efforts led by DELTAS after the restructuring.

We described the result of The Wallace Foundation investment that helped cities develop some “system infrastructure,” but at the conclusion of the research, the sites were struggling for regular operating funds in the midst of a recession and considering whether they would need to cut back on slots or personnel in the near future. Clearly, lack of funding is a major constraint on improving programming, but several sites also noted the continuing challenge of “braiding together” funding from different sources that had dedicated uses. For example, the sites received funding from a variety of sources, including U.S. Department of Education Title I funds, U.S. Department of Education 21st Century Community Learning Center grants, federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, state and city funds, and philanthropic donations. Each has specific rules and regulations about what the funds can be used for and under what conditions. A considerable amount of personnel time went into figuring out how to effectively braid the funding streams in supportive packages. In other words, funding itself required significant attention to coordination and considerable adeptness in determining which programs could receive which funds or which student could receive which funds to make the overall system work. Planners felt that this fragmentation of funding was a major constraint on providing a more coordinated system and that this would continue to be the case.

## Summary

In summary, the sites used many different collaborative mechanisms to increase coordination across evolving systems. These coordination mechanisms acted as enablers of progress and, in some ways, became embedded in the new structures and policy supports of the evolving system of OST provision. New, better-aligned structures, new MOUs, data and analytic capabilities, and quality-improvement mechanisms all became the part of the system put in place to support the goals of better OST provision.

The cases provide numerous examples that other sites could follow to help build better system supports. While the investment funding provided by The Wallace Foundation was essential, alone, it was not enough to ensure coordination or progress toward the goals of the initiative: At least one site did not make significant progress despite the funding provided. Interviewees emphasized that a shared vision, early planning and the building of the MI systems, mayoral support, and buy-in from the schools were important enablers to move the sites toward the goals of the initiative. Lack of several of these posed significant challenges to coordination. Importantly, lack of funding or fragmented funding streams remained an important constraint to building more coordinated systems. While support from the mayor and superintendent and investments in coordination can, and did in several of these sites, pay off, the sites continued to face constant challenges to improvement.

The question then remains how to ensure that other cities have some of the enablers that these cities did. While we have documented clear steps to take—the actions of the mayors and the steps taken in the early days to ensure some consensus—we do not think that the process can be mechanistically replicated. The cases serve as examples of what can be done, but they are not blueprints. Further, we do not have insights into how other cities can obtain the investment funds needed. These cases do, however, hint at what other cities might be able to accomplish and the process they may want to undertake should investments be made.

## Lessons for Other Cities

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The comparative case study approach yielded rich details and increased understanding of the pathways, processes, and hypotheses that can be tested in the future. This analysis provided useful comparative information about what cities can do to address shortfalls in access or quality of after-school provision and how some cities have built MI systems and strived for sustainable funding. Our analysis showed that the context of each city mattered in what it chose to focus on. It also confirmed much of the literature in terms of what would prove to be important for progress. It provided evidence on very specific actions that mayors could take to push their efforts forward. The companion monograph on the building of MI systems, *Hours of Opportunity*, Volume 2: *The Power of Data to Improve After-School Programs Citywide* (McCombs, Orr, et al., 2010), makes clear how strong leadership manifests.

The descriptions herein, and those in McCombs, Orr, et al. (2010) and McCombs, Bodilly, et al. (2010), provide concrete examples for others to consider based on the approaches of The Wallace Foundation grantees, their reasons for taking these approaches, and the proximate result—the immediate effect on OST provision, structure, access, quality-assurance processes, information for planning, and sustainability. We now summarize some themes from the analysis that other cities might consider.

**Coordinated system-building efforts can work to improve access and quality.** The analysis showed that these cities' coordinated attempts at system improvement were effective in meeting several goals. Through their efforts, four cities increased the number of stu-

dents served by OST programs. For example, in Providence, OST program enrollment increased from 500 to 1,700 middle schoolers under this initiative, and New York City increased the number of slots from 45,000 to 80,000. Programs were located in all DCPS schools in Washington, D.C., and, in Boston, five schools began to offer after-school programs where none had existed before. In each case, these efforts targeted high-need student populations. Essential to this progress were early needs assessments, development of program locators for use by parents and students, and student tracking information to determine program demand and student locations.

While we cannot at this point determine whether quality improved, each of the cities used the investment funds to begin or put in place quality-assessment systems, including developing and promulgating standards, vetting and assessing providers against the standards, offering professional development to improve staff expertise and programming, and using contractual clauses to ensure that participation goals were met. Crucial to these efforts was the development and use of MI systems to track student demand for programs and the use of student and parent surveys to obtain opinions about quality.

While the sites made progress in obtaining more sustained funding (for example, by winning 21st Century Community Learning Center awards), unfortunately, this study took place at a time of great national financial upheaval. The sites struggled with ways to ensure steady funding, but uncertainty remained. Nevertheless, the respondents thought that their efforts to improve system building before the economic downturn put them in better positions to argue for sustained funding by allowing them to show progress toward outcomes, and more efficient use of resources was already under way.

This initiative provided a proof of principle—that organizations across cities could work together toward increasing access, quality, data-based decisionmaking, and sustainability. The final impact, however, remains unknown until the evaluations undertaken by the sites are published.

**Each city has a unique context that should drive what is attempted.** City context influenced the focus, scope, and lead for the system-building work. Early planning efforts revealed different needs



and challenges in the cities and influenced some cities to focus on a particular target population, such as middle school students.

Cities varied in organization of the effort, with some being led by intermediaries and others a government agency. In cities in which an agency provided significant funding for OST, a city agency was designated as lead. In cities with a low level of city funding for OST, an intermediary took on the lead role. These few examples do not lead us to view one approach as preferable to another. Instead, it seems that, again, context matters. The lesson for other cities is that the decision about who will lead the effort and the structure of coordination needs to take into account the assets at hand, the locus of control, and the skills and talents of leaders. It seems unlikely that the Providence intermediary-led model would have worked in New York City with its strongly independent, multiple, and uncoordinated city agencies. But neither would the New York City agency-led model work in Providence, which lacked city agencies involved in after-school programming.

In summary, each city's initiative differed due to its unique circumstances. Other cities will need to consider their own circumstances before deciding what might best propel their efforts forward.

**Investments in early planning and management information system development paid off.** These sites were given a unique opportunity because The Wallace Foundation investment allowed them to carefully consider what needed to be done across the city for improvement to take place. They deliberated the specific assets in place, the organizations involved, the challenges faced, and the funding available. Investments in the early planning phase paid high dividends in clearly identifying targets for improvement and beginning to develop a means of sharing information to promote better decisionmaking across the city.

Similarly, investments in MI systems and evaluations helped the actors understand whether progress was made and allowed them to argue more effectively for additional funding. Furthermore, all this work brought together different actors, often for the first time, to discuss how to build a better OST system. While building information systems was a major goal of the effort, these systems also became a

major enabler of further progress on access and quality as well as the glue that led to cooperation and coordination in a couple of cities.

Cities should definitely consider early data gathering to help inform their efforts. These sites offer examples of the types of information collected and how it could be used to propel efforts forward. The major caveat is that it must be shared across organizations and stakeholders to improve system-building efforts.

**Cities can consider an array of approaches to improving access and quality.** The sites we studied found an array of ways to meet their goals to increase access and improve quality. Some part of successfully improving access had to do with identifying underserved areas and students and finding the mechanisms to provide convenient access, such as placement of programs in neighborhood hubs, providing transportation to and from the programs, program locators, and free programs.

Cities attempted to improve quality through the adoption of standards, the use of the standards to assess program quality, provision of professional development, and evaluating their own efforts. A major difference among the grantees was whether the lead chose to use contractual means to hold the providers accountable for improving quality (as in New York City, with DCPS in Washington, D.C., possibly following suit) or whether the lead used more collegial means, such as significant professional development or joint reflection on quality, as in Providence, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., under the Trust. Again, this is an important choice and depends on city context. Importantly, Providence chose this path, as did the Trust, because its early planning efforts showed a scarcity of providers. Planners in these organizations thought that developing better existing resources was a more viable pathway to quality and access than driving poor providers out of the system.

Again, the major lesson is that context is important and should be considered carefully when developing approaches to increasing access and improving quality.

**Cities can consider an array of mechanisms for increased coordination.** The sites used an array of mechanisms to improve coordination. Efforts included early planning that brought multiple organizations together, engaging stakeholders to build shared goals, restructuring

and consolidating roles, establishing coordinating committees or steering committees, and other regular means to share information and decisions. One used the appointment of mayoral envoys to ensure interagency cooperation or the development of interagency MOUs. It was in the instance of Boston, which did not undertake these types of activities to the same extent in early years of the grant and which changed lead organizations, that coordination occurred in fits and starts. Several of these steps proved to be most important from the interviewees' point of view, and we describe them as enablers in the next section.

**Several enablers were important.** Interviewees agreed on several important enablers of collaborative efforts. They were the building of a common vision across stakeholders in the early planning period, effectively collecting and using data and information, supportive mayoral actions, the buy-in of the schools, and investment funding.

Wallace Foundation staff clearly recognized these potential enablers as they developed the initiative. The Foundation provided early planning grants to encourage sites to conduct early needs assessments and establish a shared vision for the work that informed their business plans. It required the adoption of MI systems to create an ongoing source of data for the cities. Indeed, cities with strong needs assessments, a strong vision shared by stakeholders across the system, and MI systems made significant progress toward their goals.

In addition, The Foundation selected cities based, in part, on evidence of mayoral support. Mayoral support was key to the progress made in these cities, but it took on forms far beyond simple encouragement and bully pulpit statements. Getting a mayor actively involved will be challenging in many cities. Educating the mayor early in the process about how he or she can affect the outcomes by reorganizing agency responsibilities or realigning funding sources and by demanding data on progress might be an additional strong investment with a high payoff later.

Ensuring the support of the schools appeared to be a complex process and one that was ongoing, taking significant time and resources. Not only was it necessary to ensure the cooperation of the central office to allow access to schools free of charge, it was necessary to ensure that principals and staff actively supported the programs and encouraged

children to attend. This process took concerted effort and was aided in several cities by a school site coordinator whose job, among other tasks, was to actively engage the school staff. The capabilities of these coordinators were crucial in enabling effective program offerings and operations. Thus, a solution was found, but it was dependent on further resources.

Finally, the funding provided by The Wallace Foundation was an essential ingredient for supporting cities as they developed their OST systems. Whether other cities can move forward effectively without this degree of outside support remains an open question, as does cities' ability to maintain progress in the face of an unrelenting squeeze on funding. Some cities were challenged to weave together different sources of funding while trying to build more coherent programming—a challenging task in flush times but one far more difficult in the midst of budget cuts.

While The Wallace Foundation funding pushed progress forward and the lack of it would constrain progress toward the initiative's goals, there was nothing in these case studies that indicated that progress was impossible without it. For example, the market research was not a significant expense and could be undertaken by many cities. Strong actions by mayors can lead to significant restructuring and consolidation, as was shown in Washington, D.C., and New York City. Mayors control funds that can be used to build MI systems, they can appoint special advisers, and they can demand accountability—all without adding significant financial burden.

Thus, other cities should consider what actions they can take within the confines of their specific environment. Small steps forward can add up over time to significant improvements for underserved children.

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