

ENRICH After-School

After-School: A Critical Youth Development Strategy

After-school and out-of-school time programs are a critical component of youth education and development in Houston/Harris County. Youth that participate in after-school/out-of-school time activities are more prepared for success in school and life and less likely to commit or become a victim of crime.^{1, 2, 3}

ENRICH After-School (Evaluating the Out-of-School Time Needs, Resources and Initiatives in the Communities of Houston) is a regional effort, led by City of Houston Council Member, Vice Mayor Pro Tem, C.O. “Brad” Bradford, a 24 year veteran Houston Police Officer

who also served as Houston’s Police Chief for seven years, Cooperative for After-School Enrichment (CASE) and, funded in part, by Houston Endowment, Inc. Each stakeholder is invested in advancing the research needed to reengineer our after-school systems to ensure sustainability and access for all youth, especially youth without economic means.

Local after-school providers and supporters have observed improved participant outcomes and significant community returns from strategic investments in after-school programming.



“After-school programs are effective crime prevention strategies. We must find a way to give youth a sense of productivity from 3-6 pm, a time when most are unsupervised and in need of proper guidance, coaching and counseling.”⁴

However, these significant returns, such as

improved youth development and reduction in risky and criminal behaviors, which impact our region, are not yet fully understood.

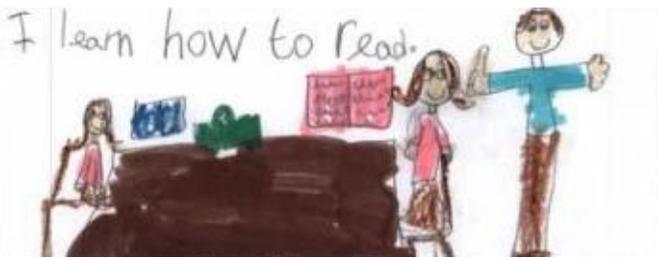
ENRICH After-School is on the cusp of changing the way Houston/Harris County perceives after-school/out-of-school time programming.

Our vision is to develop a systemized

community of engaging programs that positively impact Houston area students and their families.

What we have done—over the last year, leadership from 35 youth serving organizations and key stakeholders worked with ENRICH After-School to:

- Document federal, state, local and private funding for after-school/out-of-school time
- Construct our region’s first ever out-of-school time logic model and research questions to assess perceptions and crime trends



Harris County elementary youth reflection on their favorite aspect of their after-school program.

What we learned—in collaboration with over 50 experienced professionals that work with youth or deliver after-school/out-of-school time programming, ENRICH After-School found that:

- Providers believe that programming positively impacts youth, especially academic achievement and social-emotional stability
- Quality programming consists of project-based academic learning that connects to the school day and has social-emotional support, fitness, college/career readiness and family learning
- Most funding (70%) is time limited from federal sources and certain funds restrict participation after age 12, a critical time for youth

What is next—after-school/out-of-school time programs are significantly dependent on time limited public funds. Program closures, which increase every year and affect thousands of youth, especially those without economic means, is our greatest out-of-school time challenge. To fight program loss, ENRICH After-School commits to:

- Coordinating a return on investment study that looks at the resources invested in local after-school programming and what economic difference these investments make for Houston's communities
- Increasing awareness and expressing program need in underserved communities

ENRICH After-School collaborators have witnessed true impact that comes from consistent and engaging programming that equips youth with the skills to achieve lifelong success. For this to happen for all kids, all systems—city, county, schools, corporate and private funders and providers—must invest resources in after-school. If we unite to save programs that are closing every year, increase quality programs in underserved communities and maintain programming through the summer months, we will better prepare youth for their futures. The road many may take depends on what happens from 3-6 pm. Let's give our youth the opportunities to take the right road.



What you can do—ENRICH After-School is depending on Houstonians who care about after-school to strengthen our message to local politicians and key stakeholders. Go to afterschoolzone.org and join Houston's after-school movement. Every pledge helps us better understand what citizens would like to achieve through after-school/out-of-school time services.

¹ Afterschool Alliance. 2007. "Afterschool Programs: Keeping Kids — and Communities — Safe."

² Afterschool Alliance. 2009. "Afterschool and Workforce Development: Helping Kids Compete."

³ Afterschool Alliance. 2012. "Afterschool: An Ally in Promoting Middle School Improvement."

⁴ City of Houston Council Member, Vice Mayor Pro Tem, C.O. "Brad" Bradford, a 24 year veteran Houston Police Officer who also served as Houston's Police Chief for seven years.

