

What does the Houston Community Believe about After-School?



STUDY CONDUCTED BY:

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Commissioned By:

Enrich After-School Community Committee
Facilitated by Cooperative for After-School Enrichment

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After-School Programs Increasingly Popular



- ✓ **Decrease juvenile delinquency, increase positive and reduce negative behaviors, and decrease the exposure of youth to violence;**
- ✓ **Produce work-ready secondary and college graduates to contribute to the economy through**
 - ✓ enhanced educational performance;
 - ✓ decreased health care costs related to childhood obesity; and
 - ✓ reduced parental stress about children's safety after-school and the impact on lost job productivity and health care costs;
- ✓ **Help youth develop a positive set of skills critical to their development into fully functioning adults**

Background



- Study result ENRICH efforts to develop *future strategies* to enhance after-school opportunities in Harris County.
- Several challenges face the *future development, funding and enhancement* of after-school program efforts in Houston.
- Addressing challenges will be critical to the *quantity, types and quality* of after-school programs that are available in the future. Among challenges:
 - Responding to *accountability pressures* that uphold academic improvement as the primary measure of success.
 - Creating *collective mechanisms* to provide *adequate funding* for after-school opportunities.
 - Creating a *shared information platform* to better communicate work being done in the after-school field.

Study Purpose



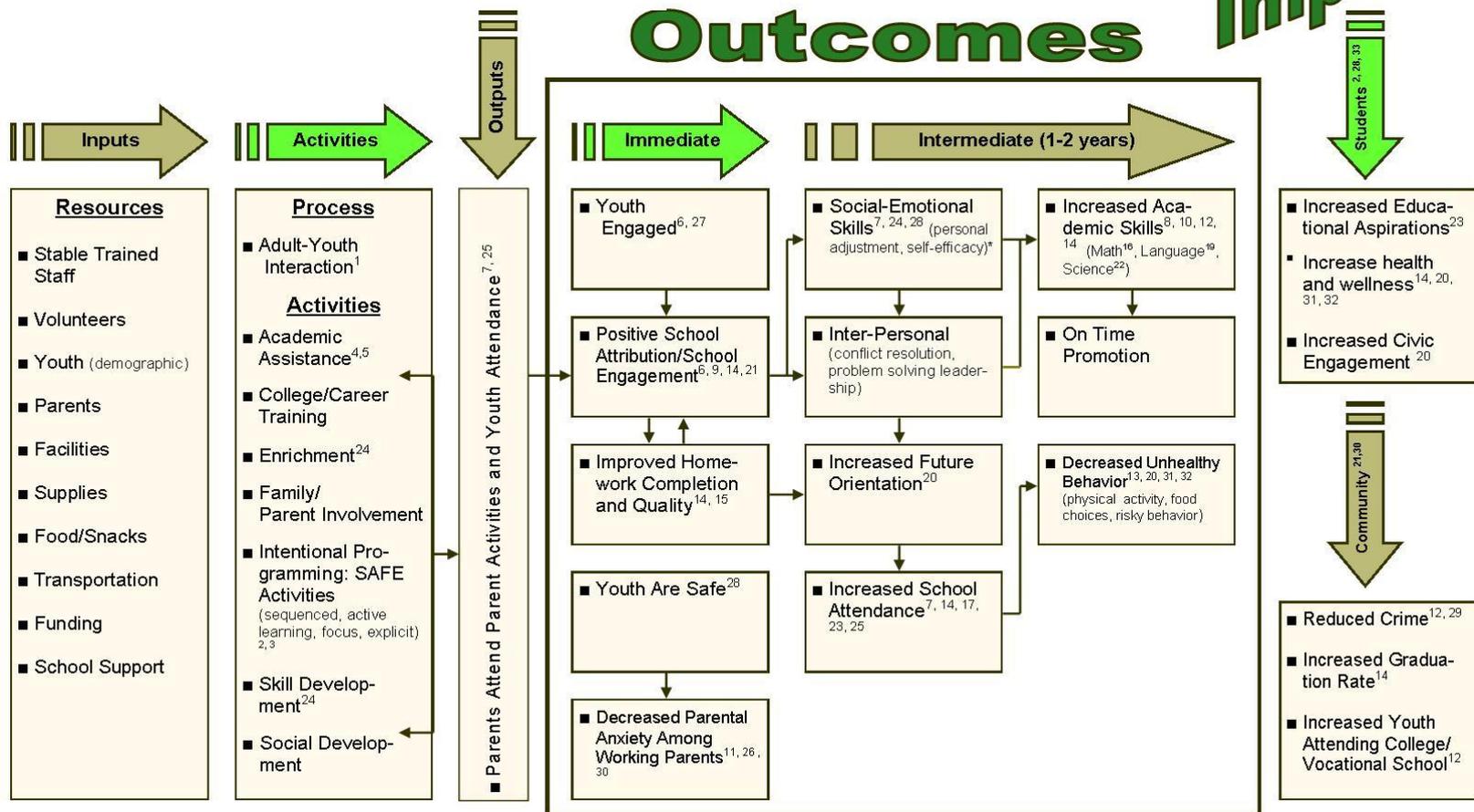
- Do stakeholder groups differ in their views of the goals and outcomes associated with after-school programs and the characteristics of what constitutes quality after-school programming?
- Gain information concerning perceptions of
 - *benefits* of after-school programs and
 - *program processes* necessary to support the development and sustained offering of programming.
 - *need* for after-school program services

Safe LEARNING active engaged Character confidence Children and youth

ENRICH After-School

Evaluating the Out-of-School Time Needs Resources and Initiatives in the Communities of Houston

Impact



Data Collection



- Survey data from the following stakeholders:
 - *program staff* (site supervisors, members of the South East Texas After School Association, program vendors and front-line staff);
 - *school Principals/Directors*;
 - *parents*; and
 - *after-school program participants* (elementary--4th grade and up-- middle, and high school).
- *Focus group*
 - panel of community leaders including representatives of community organizations, school boards, city councils, county judges, etc.

Question Areas



- Four categories of questions...stakeholder perceptions of:
 - *the need for after-school programs:*
 - What issues exist in the Houston community that drive the need for after-school programs?
 - *the goals of after-school programs.*
 - What outcomes should be addressed through the provision of after-school programs?
 - *importance of various types of program activities as components of an overall quality after-school program.*
 - How important are each of a series of activities (e.g. physical activity, homework help, art activities) as part of a “great” after-school program?
 - *importance of various program elements as components of a quality after-school program.*
 - How important are each of a series of program elements (e.g., program being led by teachers from the school; giving children opportunities to have fun; helping children think to solve problems) as part of way after-school activities are conducted?

Study Methods



- 34 schools (Randomly selected)
 - Boys and Girls Club (2)
 - CASE 21st Century (8)
 - CASE Partnership (7)
 - YMCA Center and Fee-Based (17)
- Online surveys for principals (Harris County list)
- Site supervisors (YMCA, ASAP, B&G, HCDE lists)

Conclusions



- *Considerable agreement in the Houston community* regarding the need for after-school programs, desired program outcomes and key program components and elements that should make up a quality after-school program.
- Even where differences between stakeholder groups, means indicated *high positive ratings* for the importance of identified outcomes, and key program components and elements.



- Responses indicated that the need for after-school programs is focused around:
 - *facilitating student safety;*
 - enabling working parents to have *safe, affordable and quality programs* for their children after-school;
 - providing opportunities for students to receive *homework assistance/tutoring*; and
 - enabling students to participate in *enrichment activities*



- Responses also characterized quality programs as
 - *low cost* (affordable),
 - with opportunities for children to receive help with *homework*,
 - participate in *physical activity*,
 - helping students *do better in school*,
 - participate in a variety of different *enrichment activities*, including those that children don't get to participate in during the school day.
 - *quality leaders* (well trained and committed),
 - consulting with participants about activities in which they would like to participate (*youth voice*)
 - program planning (*intentional and goal oriented*), quality and meaningful activities, and
 - where possible, *parent involvement*.



- Given wide-spread positive agreement:
 - *Houston community should be able to move forward with confidence in seeking community-wide approaches to enhancing after-school programming opportunities.*
 - *CASE, Project ENRICH and key community leaders have done a good job of trying to understand the after-school landscape and deal with critical issues that face the further development and enhancement of after-school programming.*

Some Issues However



- Funding issues (amount and consistency from year to year),
- Hiring qualified staff, and
- Creating improved opportunities for staff training.

Major Recommendations



- 1) *Create a blueprint for future funding of after-school programming in the Houston area*
- 2) *Create and evaluate the collective impact of after-school program efforts in Houston*
- 3) *Conduct ROI studies*
- 4) *Continue efforts to look at staff training*

Return on Investment Study



- Recent studies of high quality programs show positive return-on-investment, though they often use only a partial list of benefits and/or sometimes conservative estimates of the benefits of different outcomes. For example,
 - A UCLA analysis of an afterschool program in Los Angeles estimated benefits of \$2.50 for every dollar spent, but counted only reduced crime benefits.
 - A Minnesota study estimated \$2.72 of benefits per dollar of spending on quality youth mentoring programs.
 - Another Minnesota study estimated \$4.89 of benefits per dollar of spending on quality early intervention programs with high-risk youth.

<http://www1.extension.umn.edu/youth/docs/economic-return-afterschool-programs.pdf>