POLICY STUDIES ASSOCIATES, INC.

**Evaluation of the New York City
Department of Youth and Community Development
Out-of-School Time Programs for Youth Initiative**

Implementation of Programs for High School Youth

Christina A. Russell
Juliet Diehl Vile
Elizabeth R. Reisner
Christina E. Simko
Monica B. Mielke
Ellen Pechman

June 2008

Contents

Summary

This report describes program implementation and youth experiences in programs for high school youth delivered through the Out-of-School Time Programs for Youth (OST) initiative of the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). In particular, this report describes OST programs and youth participants under the initiative's Option I funding category, which is the largest and most comprehensive of the initiative's three program options and is designed to fund OST programs in neighborhoods across New York City. The data reported here were collected over the initiative's first two years and the beginning of the third year, covering the period September 2005 through December 2007.

OST programs served large numbers of high school youth during this time, enrolling 8,332 participants in 122 programs in the 2005-06 program year and 13,097 participants in 122 programs in the 2006-07 program year. At the beginning of program year 2007-08, 8,790 participants were enrolled in 111 programs, with additional programs and participants expected later in the program year. More than 3,000 high school participants enrolled part-way through the 2006-07 program year, and equivalent numbers were expected to be added in the latter half of the 2007-08 program year. Since the initiative's inception, a total of 24,944 New York City youth have participated in OST high school programs.

In general, high school youth participated in OST programs at high levels relative to attendance expectations set by DYCD, with many youth meeting or exceeding DYCD's minimum participation standards. On average, high school participants attended 97 hours of OST programming during the first year of the initiative and 105 hours in the second year. Overall, participants in center-based OST programs attended more hours of OST programming than did participants in school-based OST programs, consistent with the greater number of program hours offered by center-based programs. Reflecting the common challenge of recruiting and retaining older youth in out-of-school time programming, OST programs generally struggled to achieve both high enrollment and high attendance rates for high school participants. Program directors reported varied strategies for recruiting and retaining youth in OST programs, including the use of stipends, the encouragement of strong staff relationships with participants, youth-friendly outreach methods, and development of strong relationships with schools.

High school OST programs offered activities intended to appeal to the interests and needs of participants. Over half of high school OST programs offered a wide range of program activities, while the rest tended to focus in a single area, which most often reflected the sponsoring organization's core mission or expertise. Across all OST high school programs, academic enhancement activities and recreational activities were most commonly offered. These and other activities frequently incorporated opportunities for both formal and informal youth leadership and input. Programs also provided opportunities for youth to learn about careers and college, participate in internships, and gain understanding of both their local and global communities. Program activities were typically led by professionals, including teachers and program specialists, and were supported by young staff members trained to work with high school youth and to deliver enriched activity content. In order to hire these staff members and offer high-quality programming, program directors often entered into partnerships with other organizations.

Participants reported positive experiences in their OST programs. A majority said in surveys that they felt a strong sense of belonging in their OST program environment and that they forged positive relationships with both peers and staff members. Participants also said that their OST programs exposed them to new, beneficial experiences, which promoted their social development and also led to improvements in their grades and educational performance. Youth generally reported that the social-development benefits of participation were somewhat greater than the academic benefits.

Programs focused in two main areas in their efforts to build their internal capacity for successfully serving high school youth: (1) improving staff skills and expertise and (2) maximizing program resources through funds development and external partnerships.

Based on these findings, the evaluation identified four OST program features that were typically present in programs that were especially successful in reaching and serving older youth. These features included:

- Use of creative, age-appropriate strategies to recruit youth and encourage their continued participation

- Employment of staff who could relate to youth and staff with expertise in activity content areas

- Activities designed to meet the developmental needs of older youth, for example, through the provision of career- and college-oriented activities and leadership opportunities

- Program partnerships to increase the fiscal and other resources available to the program

Background on This Study

Study Rationale

Established in 2005, DYCD's OST initiative supports programming for youth of all ages, including high school youth. DYCD set expectations for OST high school programs with recognition that recruiting and retaining high school participants in out-of-school time programming presents challenges to programs as they compete with other venues in which youth can spend their out-of-school time and with family and employment responsibilities. Since the OST initiative began, several new reports (Arbreton, Bradshaw, Melz, Sheldon, & Pepper, 2008; George, Cusick, Wasserman, & Gladden, 2007; Hipps & Diaz, 2007; The After-School Corporation, 2007) have cited program characteristics of successful high school OST programs. These characteristics include:

- Involving youth in the design and operation of program activities

- Accommodating and supporting friendship groups, especially in outreach and recruitment

- Permitting varied attendance patterns to accommodate participants' other responsibilities and interests

- Hiring staff who are trained to work with teenage youth and can support their academic learning

- Providing youth with opportunities to earn academic credits, prepare for college or jobs, and hold an internship

DYCD's vision for high school programs is grounded both in an understanding of the challenges of providing out-of-school time services to older youth and also in a knowledge of the types of activities and services that may be most beneficial and appealing to high school participants. Under OST Option I, high school programs are expected to offer at least 108 hours of programming to participants during the school year, with flexibility to offer programming on weekends, and are funded at a maximum level of $540 per participant (the equivalent of $5 per hour per participant). DYCD's 2005 RFP stated that high school programs should offer programming focused on topics such as careers, job training and placement, preparation for post-secondary education, and life skills/transition to independent living. The RFP also recommended that activities be structured as clubs, workshops, or activity modules and that they incorporate project-based activities with opportunities for youth to choose or create projects according to their interests. High school programs were required, at a minimum, to address the following goals of the overall OST initiative:

- Provide a healthy, safe environment

- Foster high expectations for participants

- Foster consistent and positive relationships with adults and peers and a sense of community

- Support healthy behavior and physical well-being

- Support the exploration of interests and the development of skills and creativity

This report describes the implementation of high school programming under the DYCD OST initiative over the first two and a half years of the initiative. It describes the scope of services provided to New York City high school youth through OST Option I as well as the features adopted to engage youth and foster developmentally appropriate activities and practices. Specifically, the report describes (1) youth engagement in OST high school programming, (2) the features and program approaches associated with social and educational benefits for youth, and (3) strategies used to build program capacity. Brief profiles of each of the eight programs visited for this study are included in the appendix. Throughout the report, the authors have used pseudonyms in place of the actual names of the provider organizations operating the OST programs visited by the evaluation team.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection. Findings in this report are based on data collected from the following sources:

- **DYCD Online.** Evaluators analyzed patterns of enrollment and participation in high school OST programs that had entered data into DYCD Online, the agency's participant tracking system, over the first two years of the initiative and the fall of the third year (through December 14, 2007). Data were available on 122 programs in each of the 2005-06 and 2006-07 school years and on 111 programs in operation in fall 2007. (As determined in December 2007, eight of the 122 programs had closed, and three had not yet begun programming for the year.) Evaluators also examined program-level data from DYCD Online on the types of activities that programs offered and the number of hours available for each type of activity.

- **Survey of OST program directors.** Evaluators analyzed the survey responses of the 110 Option I high school program directors who responded to the program-director survey in spring 2007.

- **Survey of participants.** Evaluators also analyzed data from the spring 2007 survey responses of 1,238 Option I high school participants. These data represent the responses of the high school participants attending 29 of the 43 randomly selected high school programs in the evaluation's participant-survey sample (67 percent of sampled programs). All respondents had parental consent to participate in the evaluation.

- **Site visit interview and observation data.** The study team visited eight Option I high school programs between November 2007 and February 2008. These programs were each managed by a different provider organization. Three of the high school programs visited were part of the randomly selected in-depth sample of 15 Option I programs identified during the first year of the OST evaluation. Evaluators selected five additional high school programs to visit based on information available from DYCD Online and from DYCD program managers indicating that the programs used varied program models and activity strategies. During site visits, members of the research team conducted interviews with program directors, staff, and youth participants and observed program activities.

Analysis approach. For each comparative analysis of quantitative data included in this report, findings are statistically significant at the $p<0.05$ level. In addition, for each comparative measure reported, the evaluation computed an effect size to measure the magnitude or strength of the finding. For analyses of continuous variables, the evaluation selected an independent samples t-test and computed a Cohen's *d* measure of effect. For categorical data, the evaluation conducted chi-square analyses and reported a Cramer's *V* effect statistic. Conventions for educational research suggest that effect-size values between 0.10 and 0.20 indicate a "small but

meaningful" association, between 0.21 and 0.50 an "important" association, and 0.51 or higher an "impressive" association (Cohen, 1988; Lipsey, 1990). This report focuses on findings with an effect size of at least 0.10; comparisons below this level were considered too weak to warrant reporting.

Youth Engagement in OST Programming

High School Program Enrollment and Participation

Program participation is considered an important indicator of the success of an OST program in meeting youth needs and contributing to positive youth outcomes. DYCD computes attendance rates at the program level based on the number of hours of service delivered to each participant per contract year. The agency has set an initiative-wide expectation of 108 hours of service per program year for each OST-funded high school participant. Using DYCD Online data, this rate is computed for each high school program by dividing the total hours of programming received by all participants in the program (capped at 108 hours per participant) by the number of contracted participants times 108 hours.

$$\text{Program Attendance Rate} \quad = \quad \frac{\text{Sum of hours attended by OST program participants}}{\text{Number of contracted participants} \ \times \ 108 \ \text{hours}}$$

Using this formula, DYCD expects high school programs to achieve a rate of 70 percent participation or higher. The formula allows flexibility for programs to serve small groups of participants across multiple cycles of programming within the program year. Analyses of DYCD Online participation records confirmed that, collectively, OST high school programs achieved reasonable attendance levels, although individual programs struggled to attain their enrollment and attendance targets, as described below.

Enrollment. In each of the first two years of the OST initiative, 122 high school programs received Option I OST funding, including 60 school-based programs and 62 center-based programs. In fall 2007, 111 high school programs were in operation, including 56 school-based programs and 55 center-based programs; at least three additional programs were expected to begin offering services later in the program year.[1] In addition, as noted below, based on patterns of enrollment from previous years, the total enrollment of high school participants was expected to increase during the second half of the program year. Future reports of the OST evaluation will examine data for the full 2007-08 program year.

Overall, high school OST programs have served large numbers of youth over the course of the initiative. High school programs enrolled a total of 8,332 participants in the 2005-06 program year, or 97 percent of the targeted 8,621 youth. Enrollment increased to 13,097 participants in the 2006-07 program year (98 percent of the targeted 13,299 youth). In fall 2007,

---

[1] The drop in number of high school programs operating in fall 2007 compared to the previous two years is attributable to the following changes: five programs consolidated under a single OST contract, five programs ceased operations, and two programs had unknown status but were believed by the evaluators to have ceased operations. Some programs were expected to start in winter or spring 2008, in part, because DYCD had taken steps to find replacements for several programs that were no longer operating.

8,790 participants were enrolled, and patterns from previous years suggested that enrollment numbers would move closer to the targeted enrollment of 12,193 for all of 2007-08. During the same time period in fall 2006, 121 programs had enrolled 9,807 youth; more than 3,000 additional high school participants enrolled later in that school year. Since the initiative's inception, a total of 24,944 New York City youth have participated in OST high school programs supported under Option I.

Individual programs experienced mixed success in meeting or exceeding their targeted enrollment during the first two years of the initiative: 53 percent of programs enrolled at least their targeted number of participants in 2005-06, as did 57 percent of programs in 2006-07. In fall 2007, 34 percent of programs had met their targeted enrollment levels for the year, which was similar to the enrollment levels during the same time period in 2006 (33 percent). Of the eight programs visited in fall 2007, four had met their enrollment target, and four had not (see appendix for details). The difference between initiative-wide success in recruiting large numbers of high school students and mixed success at the program level can be explained in part by program over-enrollment. DYCD policy allows high school programs to over-enroll by as much as 30 percent in order to meet participation requirements.[2] As illustrated in Exhibit 1, in fall 2007, 31 percent of high school programs were over-enrolled, some by a substantial margin, and 66 percent were under-enrolled.

Participation. Evaluators adapted the rate of participation for which DYCD holds programs accountable as a tool for analyzing the participation patterns of high school youth enrolled in OST programs. According to DYCD's expectations, each high school participant is expected to attend 70 percent of 108 hours, or 76 hours per year. For fall 2007 data, evaluators adjusted the expected number of hours of participation to 27 hours, in order to reflect the approximately 3.5 months of program operation at the time of data extraction (December 14, 2007).

As shown in Exhibit 2, participants in high school programs have exceeded, on average, their targeted number of hours of participation throughout the OST initiative.[3] In 2005-06, participants attended an average of 97 hours, and, in 2006-07, participants attended an average of 105 hours, compared to the 76 hours of minimum expected participation.

---

[2] Programs are held accountable only for contracted service levels. For example, if a program is contracted to serve 100 youth and actually enrolls 130, its rate of participation is computed based on an enrollment of 100. Using the formula above, the program would be expected to provide at least 7,560 service hours to its 130 enrolled youth in order to achieve the minimum 70 percent attendance rate, based on its contracted enrollment of 100 participants.

[3] Analyses of participation rates exclude participants who attended programming for fewer than 5 days in 2005-06 and 2006-07, and fewer than 3 days in fall 2007.

Exhibit 1
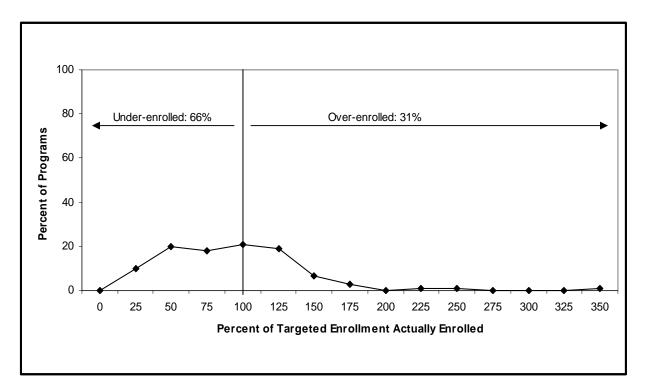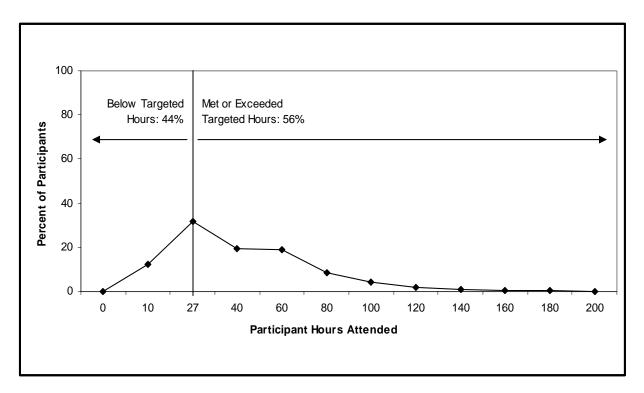**Actual Program Enrollment Compared to Targeted Enrollment, Fall 2007**

Exhibit 2
Targeted Hours and Actual Mean Hours of Attendance
by High School Participants, by Year

Hours of Attendance	2005-06 (*n=5,411*)	2006-07 (*n=9,941*)	Fall 2007[1] (*n=8,790*)
Targeted Hours	76	76	27
Actual Mean Hours	97	105	38
School-based	79	100	32
Center-based	116	111	46

[1] Targeted hours and mean attendance, as of December 14, 2007, in the 110 programs reporting participant data

     The percent of participants attending at the minimum expected level or above increased from 39 percent in 2005-06 to 53 percent in 2006-07. Similarly, in fall 2007, high school participants attended programming, on average, for 38 hours, higher than the expected 27 hours of participation; 56 percent of high school participants met or exceeded this participation expectation and were on track to reach the targeted annual attendance. These rates of attendance may reflect the challenges noted by program directors of engaging the contracted number of youth on a regular basis: while a core group of high school participants may participate for well above 108 hours in a year, only about 56 percent of enrolled youth meet or exceed the participation standard, as shown in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3
Percent of Participants Meeting Targeted Hours of Participation, Fall 2007

In the first two years of the initiative and the third part-year, participants in center-based programs averaged more hours of attendance than did participants in school-based programs. In 2005-06, the mean hours of attendance for participants in center-based programs was 116 hours, compared to 79 hours for participants in school-based programs ($d=.32$). In 2006-07, the gap narrowed, with participants in center-based programs attending an average of 111 hours and participants in school-based programs attending 100 hours ($d=.10$). The gap appeared likely to grow in 2007-08, based on part-year data. The gap between center-based and school-based programs may in part be due to the difference in the number of hours offered by the programs. Center-based programs planned to offer 373 hours of programming, on average, in 2007-08, compared with 286 hours of programming anticipated in school-based programs.

In addition to analyzing the number of hours of participation, evaluators also examined the rate of daily attendance, defined as the percent of days on which a participant was assigned to an activity that he or she actually attended. These analyses revealed that the average attendance rate of high school programs increased over time, as illustrated in Exhibit 4. In fall 2007, the rate of attendance was 58 percent, greater than the average attendance rate in the 2006-07 program year (52 percent). During the 2005-06 program year, participants attended at a lower average rate of 40 percent. This computation of the attendance rate is based on an expectation that participants should attend all scheduled sessions for activities in which they are enrolled. However, some high school programs employ a "drop-in" model with a different expectation of activity attendance. In these programs, youth may be enrolled over the course of the week and

may choose to attend any of the enrolled activities to accrue their 108 yearly hours. Therefore, the computed attendance rate may be artificially deflated for participants in these programs.

Exhibit 4
Average Attendance Rates of High School Participants,
by Year, in Percents

School Year	Attendance Rate
2005-06 *(n=5,411)*	40
2006-07 *(n=9,941)*	52
Fall 2007[1] *(n=8,790)*	58

[1] Average attendance rate, as of December 14, 2007, in the 110 programs reporting participant data

Finally, evaluators supplemented analyses of participation at the youth level by examining program-level patterns of participation, determining the degree to which all participants within a given program were achieving participation targets. Similar patterns of increasing participation emerged when examining these program-level attendance data. In the first year of the initiative, 54 percent of high school programs met their targeted hours of attendance. This percent increased to 69 percent of programs during the second year of the initiative and to an estimated 81 percent of programs during fall 2007, as shown in Exhibit 5. In the eight programs visited in fall 2007, at least three-quarters of participants had met their expected hours of participation in four programs. In three of those programs, more than 90 percent of participants had met their targeted hours of attendance in fall 2007.

Exhibit 5
High School Programs Meeting Targeted Attendance Hours,
by Year, in Percents

School Year	Programs Meeting Targeted Attendance
2005-06 *(n=89)*	54
2006-07 *(n=104)*	69
Fall 2007[1] *(n=110)*	81

[1] Percent of programs meeting targeted attendance hours, as of December 14, 2007, in the 110 programs reporting participant data

Program breadth versus depth. Although some programs struggled with achieving high levels of both recruitment and retention, program directors who were interviewed generally agreed that DYCD's 108-hour minimum expectation for participation was reasonable. As one director remarked, "108 hours, over the course of the year, is not unreasonable. It's fairly minimal, in fact. Although we have students [who] don't reach that, it is not unreasonable to expect for high school students."

However, programs also reported that they were challenged to achieve the balance of program breadth versus depth dictated by their OST funding levels. Some of the directors who were interviewed expressed a desire to invest more resources in those youth who were deeply

engaged in OST, exceeding the 108 hour requirement. These directors sensed a pressure to provide broad-based services for as many youth as possible rather than in-depth programming for a smaller number of students. For instance, the director of one of the programs visited, Young Lawyers, explained that the program is highly structured, and all of the students exceed the 108-hour requirement by mid-year. However, because DYCD funding is capped at 108 hours per student, their OST grant runs out well before the year is over.

This director pointed out that a high dosage of programming is essential to the provider's mission: recruiting talented youth from poor communities and preparing them for the nation's most competitive colleges over the course of their four years in high school. Bridging the gap between participants' skills upon entering ninth grade and the skills they will need to gain admission to top colleges requires a major investment of time and staff resources. The director explained, "DYCD would almost have to double their numbers to fund [this] program [at the current level]," and suggested that the funding structure implicitly "discourages extra dosage in this case." The program's deputy director added that the DYCD funding structure is not uncommon among grantmaking organizations: "We have quality versus quantity discussions all the time with foundations," he said. He believes that "the funding should go to the quality programs and grow them, rather than giving the programs with the numbers the money and trying to get them to do the job well." This view is reasonable in light of this organization's mission, but other organizations have missions that involve engaging as many youth as possible. These differences suggest that no single agency standard is likely to satisfy all OST providers.

Recruiting and Retaining Participants

Challenges in recruitment and retention. Reflecting the enrollment and participation numbers described above, many high school programs reported challenges in attracting youth to enroll and participate regularly. In interviews, one director noted that it is "incredibly difficult for teenagers to attend [programs] consistently." High school youth may need or want to earn money during the out-of-school hours or may have responsibilities at home, such as caring for younger siblings, which take priority.

Program directors who responded to the survey faced challenges in recruiting and retaining high school OST participants: more than half of directors reported that youth do not attend the OST program regularly enough to have enriching experiences (56 percent), that youth dropped out of the program because they lost interest (56 percent), and that directors are unable to recruit enough youth for their program (55 percent). Comments from youth participants provided insights into the challenges to regular OST participation for high school students:

I've told people to come, but it's hard. Lots of them have other commitments. Some have jobs; a lot of times they have to go home to take care of their sisters or brothers, or maybe they are in sports, and sometimes kids just like to hang out. It's different for me, I like being here with the other kids.

It's a long day. I can see my days getting longer and longer. My day starts at 5:30 in the a.m. and I'm here until 7:30 p.m.…. That's where my determination comes in again

and in learning to apply yourself. You have to apply yourself. It all comes down to [having the motivation and] coming here regularly.

You can bring people here, but you can't force them to stay; if you have to force them, sometimes the program is not right for them.

Program recruitment efforts are also influenced by the quality of the program's partnership with the host school and with other agencies that are working with youth. Programs rely on strong partnerships to generate energy and a positive reputation for their program, and they sometimes struggle to recruit youth participants when those partnerships are weak. For example, at one of the programs visited, the program director reported that, despite both formal and informal efforts at recruitment, her program was falling far behind their target enrollment for the third year. In fall 2007, the program had enrolled 16 students, far short of the 100 target goal, and on average participants had attended only 10 hours with none meeting the attendance goal. Various factors may have contributed to the program's recruitment problems. For example, the provider organization did not have experience offering out-of-school time services prior to the DYCD OST contract and was therefore working to develop and establish the program in the community and school. After two tumultuous years at their original host school, the program had moved to a new school site and was working to establish a relationship with the school administration in their new home. While the administration's attitude toward the program was generally positive, the school administration and the program had not yet developed a strong working relationship, which would aid recruitment efforts.

The lack of strong support from the host school in this instance may have constrained recruitment efforts. The program launched its formal recruitment effort when it provided demonstrations of its two flagship activities in the host school's cafeteria at lunch. The demonstrations generated enthusiasm from the crowd. According to the director and her staff, about 75 students picked up applications. However, only a few students actually followed through and began to attend programming. The program director said, "You ask; they tell you what they want; they still don't come." A participant reported that her own efforts at recruitment had been unsuccessful: "I tried, but they always have an excuse. I try as much as possible. I want them to come up here on their own. It goes in one ear and out the other."

Successful recruitment and retention strategies. Data from site visits and interviews with staff and participants suggest that the following elements may promote successful recruitment and retention:

- ■ Awarding youth stipends for work, volunteering, and/or meeting attendance thresholds

- ■ Developing strong, positive relationships between youth and program staff

- ■ Appealing to youth through youth-friendly outreach methods

- ■ For school-based programs, developing strong working relationships with host schools and becoming fully integrated into the school environment

Stipends. Several programs visited for the evaluation use stipends as part of a strategy to inspire student participation and reward youth for work performed in the program. Often, stipends are contingent on a certain number of hours of participation or a certain amount of work or volunteering. The low-participation program described above paid stipends to two student aides, which encouraged their attendance. One of these aides said that the stipend was essential to his participation in the program: "Otherwise [if I were not a paid student aide], I don't think I'd come," he said.

However, while a stipend can facilitate and encourage participation of high school youth, it was not sufficient to attract and retain students. The content of the program itself needs to appeal to participants' interests and needs to promote high rates of participation. For example, the After-School Works program, another program visited in the evaluation, offers stipends of up to $350 for a 12-week job-training and leadership program. Participants receive training in child development and conflict management. They then apply their training by working as staff assistants in the provider's after-school programs for younger children. Stipends are adjusted based on participants' levels of involvement, and are only awarded to youth who achieve at least 70 percent attendance. One staff member remarked that participants not only develop "professional skills" and build their resumes but also benefit in more subtle ways as they step into a mentoring role with children.

> *[The program] teaches them professional skills, responsibility, besides the stipend. [It also helps] with their resume. For me, a resume in high school, I didn't even know what that was. For them to even have an opportunity to put this down for their college and future, this is an extracurricular activity they can put down.... They also get attached with the children they are teaching. The same way they see us as role models, the little children see them that way also. They realize that.*

Because After-School Works wants to attract participants who want to work with younger children and train for a job, a recruiter for the program said he emphasizes these aspects of the program more than the end-of-the-year stipend. He said, "A financial award at the end [ups the ante]. I try not to tell them that at the beginning. [I tell them,] 'You will get work experience [and] be role models for children. We'll help you get a job at the end of this. You will go on certain trips. At the end you will receive a stipend….' That would bring them in. We try to leave the stipend part to the end." The program recruits youth primarily by promising job training and opportunities to obtain a part-time job in an after-school program. Once youth begin participating in the program, the stipend acts as an incentive for them to attend trainings and volunteer more often. After-School Works offers opportunities through the year for participants to make up hours of training or volunteering at programs in order to meet the 108-hour attendance threshold and earn a stipend. As a result, in fall 2007, participants in this program had on average attended 46 hours of programming, with 94 percent of participants meeting or exceeding the expectation for participation.

In other programs, however, the amount of funding available for participant stipends did not make a noticeable difference in recruitment or retention for many enrolled participants. While some programs found that the stipend was enough to motivate and/or enable students to participate regularly, others discovered that the amount of money available for stipends was not

enough to make a substantial difference in their recruitment and retention numbers because it did not approach the amount that high school youth can expect to make in a part-time job.

> *Yes, it [a stipend] is an incentive, but it is not the only thing that will bring them or not bring them. It is how they connect with the facilitators that is the key. That first connection.*

For instance, in the program operated by Culture Connections, in which 44 percent of participants met the expected number of hours for fall 2007, the director reported that the $150 stipend offered did not yield the enrollment and participation benefits expected. The small stipend was not enough to allow the program to compete with the allure of a part-time job and/or the need to bring in extra income. "One hundred and fifty dollars is not much these days," she remarked. She explained further:

> *Money is the issue. We don't have adequate funding…. We have to compete technologically for these kids. Kids, the poorest kids, show their self-worth by what they wear, what they own. Work, buy fancy things, keep self-esteem intact. In order to compete with that, kids need stipends. But real stipends that almost equate to work. So they can give up that job at McDonalds and come to the organization. Then, the rest is up to the quality of the program.*

In this program, the director believes that the positive relationships that participants and staff develop—rather than the stipends—are the key to keeping a core group of youth coming on a very frequent basis; in fall 2007, the program had exceeded its targeted enrollment of 69 and, on average, participants had engaged in 42 hours of programming.

Youth relationships with staff and peers. Other directors confirmed that having strong relationships with staff and with each other encourages youth to remain in programs. In interviews, program directors emphasized the value of personal outreach to youth in increasing participation rates. According to the program director at Young Lawyers, "When students see that you are concerned about them as a person, they open up and they form a relationship. Extra calls and emails do have an effect…. We literally call students if they miss class or are running late." A participant in Young Lawyers said, "We have resources here. There is no limit to how much help the staff give you." Another participant said, "The greatest part is intimacy. The base of Young Lawyers is the intimacy. We are so close to each other." As a result, the program achieves high rates of enrollment and participation. In fall 2007, the program exceeded its target enrollment of 70 by 24 participants, who on average attended 69 hours of programming; 90 percent met or exceeded the expected number of hours of participation.

Similarly, After-School Works hires AmeriCorps volunteers as outreach specialists, whose central task is to keep in close contact with high school participants. Outreach specialists call, text-message, and email the participants they oversee to remind them of upcoming trainings and to observe them when they are teaching at after-school programs. These outreach specialists are young adults, closer in age to the participants than other adult staff, and they model the mentoring relationship that participants try to develop with the younger youth they teach in after-school activities. One outreach specialist commented, "Overall, you end up being a role model to them. I am constantly in communication with them. Site visits, phone calls, emails. I am on

the front line all the time. [I ask,] 'How are you, how's school?'" On a visit to a Harlem elementary after-school program, the outreach specialist observed two After-School Works participants facilitating a sports activity, in order to provide the participants with feedback on their work with the children. His interaction with the participants was friendly and warm.

Program directors said that providing activities that meet the social as well as academic needs of youth fostered high levels of engagement. When staff reach out to youth and build strong relationships based on an understanding of high school students, they are able to keep participants engaged in the program. A Culture Connections staff member explained:

> *Why do youth keep coming? They get what they want. Everyone wants something different. Some want math help; others want friends; others want career advice. Some want a comfortable place to come, and still others want role models. Our goal is to make sure they get what they want.*

Youth-friendly outreach methods. Programs reported success with engaging youth through outreach efforts that used both traditional and innovative methods. Programs often relied on connections with their host school or an affiliated school and with links to other services of the provider organization in order to inform youth and their families about the OST program. A staff member from Culture Connections explained, "I make sure that we send flyers, and we send constant reminders so they are aware of all of the stuff going on here." Recognizing that youth frequently communicate through new technologies, including text-messaging and social networking sites such as My Space and Facebook, Culture Connections has used these mechanisms for recruiting and retaining its participants. "Technology is a powerful outreach tool; students contact us electronically and our outreach staff reach out to youth."

Program directors reported that youth themselves often served as the most effective recruiters for the program: "The kids recruit kids," said the director at Community Council, a program that struggled to achieve high enrollment levels but maintained high participation, with participants on average attending 96 hours in fall 2007, 92 percent of whom exceeded the participation expectation. The program director at Youth Workshop, which exceeded its fall 2007 enrollment target of 150 participants, noted "The members we have are continuously recruiting their friends.… We use our youth staff as outreach, because they are so committed." She continued, "Keeping them here is the challenge, but when you let them have a meaningful contribution and it is their program… it's not a problem." Similarly, youth in Learn International described the effectiveness of being recruited by their peers. One participant said, "First, have a core group of people who are interested in the topics or the organization and people that are committed to it. Once you get the core group, they can outreach to the rest of the school. I knew Anna, she was part of Learn International, and she recruited me into it, and I started to love it." In this small, specialized program, 79 percent of the 25 enrolled participants met their participation target in fall 2007.

Host school relationships. Finally, for school-based programs, a strong relationship with the host school helps promote the program. Cooperation between a host school and the program is fertile ground for successful recruitment and retention efforts. At a program sponsored by Advance After-School, the school co-sponsors the after-school program with the provider, requiring all ninth-graders to enroll in a freshman seminar offered as part of the program. The

14

school also hosts a club fair at the beginning of each program session in which youth leaders of each of the program's clubs reach out to their fellow students. According to a youth participant, the young people "make their club seem glorious to attract people.... We [the participants] know how youth are.… Part of recruitment is highlighting the aspects of your club that interest the majority of students." In addition, the OST clubs are typically supervised by school-day teachers recruited by the youth leaders, further facilitating the school/program connection to create a seamless day. These recruitment strategies resulted in high levels of enrollment: in fall 2007, the program enrolled 247 participants, exceeding its goal of 200, although it struggled with achieving high rates of attendance for all participants. On average, participants attended 33 hours of programming in fall 2007, with 62 percent meeting the expectation for attendance.

Participant Characteristics

In surveys, almost all high school program directors (94 percent) reported that they open program enrollment to all interested youth.[4] A majority of OST-funded high school programs are available to any students in the host school or the community. Even though almost all of the programs visited had open enrollment—only one was selective—the background, characteristics, and needs of the participants in the programs varied. As could be expected, program approaches to recruitment as well as activity content differed depending in part on the needs and characteristics of the participating students.

For instance, one of the school-based programs visited for the study served a selective public school in Manhattan with the mission of preparing students for college. The program director noted that there were striking differences between the students enrolled in her program and the students enrolled in other OST programs offered by the same provider, because the school only admits a particularly motivated group of youth. "[The] difference is that [the school] doesn't use a lottery system," she explained. "[Their admissions] criteria are few absences, [strong] grades, how students rank in school. [When making admissions decisions, they] look at middle school grades, Regents, high proficiency in English, math, science, [and] history." The school itself has extensive community partnerships and well-established structures for preparing students to gain admission to college and succeed once they arrive. For instance, students can enroll in a mentoring program where a Columbia University undergraduate provides guidance in their college admissions process. The student population is ethnically diverse, but students share the common denominator of academic motivation. Program staff describe the students as driven, involved, and articulate.

Programs in locations without competitive admissions criteria work with different youth populations. For some programs, the focus is on keeping students in school and helping them gain the academic skills they need to graduate. In many cases, programs are working to engage

---

[4] Even so, some programs reported particular outreach efforts to certain groups. Forty-seven percent of program directors said they targeted students who were recommended by school-day teachers or counselors; 37 percent targeted youth who participate in other programs offered by the provider organization; 36 percent targeted youth who were recommended by the provider organization; and 35 percent targeted youth with siblings already attending the program. Fewer than 25 percent of programs targeted youth who scored below proficient on city or state assessments, youth identified by their school as needing special assistance in reading and/or math, English-language learners, or free and reduced-price lunch recipients.

students who have previously been disconnected from their schools, rather than to prepare students who are already academically focused to compete in the college admissions process. Many participants require intensive assistance to achieve success in their high school courses.

Although most high school participants across the OST initiative at least "agreed a little" that they were motivated to succeed in school, responses to items asking youth about their academic motivation revealed only moderate levels of motivation, suggesting that programs appealed to a range of youth with diverse school experiences. As illustrated in Exhibit 6, slightly more than half of participants agreed a lot that they generally try hard in school (54 percent). Fewer than a third, however, "agreed a lot" that they enjoy school and finish their homework (32 percent each). Combining these items into a scale measuring academic motivation, high school participants on average rated their academic motivation 3.11 on a scale of 4. Similarly, participants in the eight programs visited as part of this study reported moderate levels of academic motivation, with average scale scores ranging from 3.03 to 3.41 (the latter rating at Community Council) on the 4-point scale.

Exhibit 6
Participant Reports of Academic Motivation *(n=1,238)*

Program Features Associated with Social and Educational Benefits for Youth

Organizational Features of High School Programming

Activities. The high school programs visited in fall 2007 were guided in large part by the goals and vision of their provider organizations, with program activities designed to meet the

organization's goals for their participants. These goals frequently focused on opportunities for youth input and leadership and on opportunities to become aware of community issues and to learn about and prepare for colleges and careers.

For example, the director of the Learn International program said that his program's content was driven by the mission of the provider organization "to strengthen youth skills and engagement in the world, including their research skills, computer skills, and communication skills." The mission of Young Lawyers focused on recruiting talented youth from underserved New York City communities to support them through high school and prepare them for the country's most competitive colleges; in that provider's OST program, all activities, including internships and mentoring opportunities, were designed with a focus on college preparation.

Evaluators used activity data entered by program directors in DYCD Online to analyze the programming planned for OST high school programs during the 2007-08 school year. On average, high school programs expected to offer 13 distinct activities during the school year, with the average activity occurring over a period of 25 weeks. As shown in Exhibit 7, across all high school programs, the most commonly offered types of activities included academic enhancement activities (78 percent of programs) and recreation activities such as sports and games (68 percent). Fifty-eight percent of high school programs offered activities in life skills and activities related to arts and culture. About half of high school programs offered community building activities (51 percent) and career and work activities (47 percent). There were few notable differences between the activities offered by school-based programs and center-based programs, with the exception of arts and culture activities, which were offered in 68 percent of school-based programs, compared to 47 percent of center-based programs ($d=.42$).

Exhibit 7
Distribution of High School Programs Offering Activities
by Activity Category, 2007-08 School Year, in Percents

Activity Category	Programs Offering Activity *(n=111)*
Academic enhancement	78
Recreation	68
Life skills	58
Arts and culture	58
Community building	51
Career and work	47

Analyses of DYCD Online data also suggested that OST high school programs may be implementing two distinctive models of programming, reflecting approaches identified in previous research (The After-School Corporation, 2007). Some programs offered a comprehensive array of programming with a wide variety of activity choices, while others offered targeted

> ***Example of an Activity Plan***
> ***for a Targeted Program***
>
> For half the school year, participants spend every other Saturday learning how to facilitate one of four content areas in after-school programs: literacy, sports and fitness, college planning, or science. During the week, participants facilitate activities in their content area at after-school programs around the city.

programming focused on a specific content area or type of activity. For this analysis, the evaluation defined targeted OST programs as those that either dedicated 60 percent or more of their activity time to one type of activity or that focused all activity time on one or two types of activities, based on the activity categories in DYCD Online. Comprehensive programs dedicated less than 60 percent of activity time to any one type of activity and offered three or more types of activities, including academic enhancement, career and work, life skills, community building, arts and culture, and recreation.[5]

As shown in Exhibit 8, both comprehensive and targeted approaches to programming were used by OST high school programs in fall 2007, with 49 programs offering activities targeted on specific content areas and 62 programs offering a comprehensive range of program activities spanning at least three content areas. The distribution of comprehensive and targeted programs was approximately equal across center- and school-based high school programs, although average attendance rates varied. Among targeted programs, school-based OST programs had an average fall 2007 attendance rate of 67 percent, compared to 52 percent for center-based programs ($d=.55$). In contrast, center-based comprehensive programs had a higher attendance rate than did school-based comprehensive programs (63 percent, compared to 52 percent; $d=.37$). Although the reasons for these differences are unknown, one hypothesis is that school-based targeted programs appeal to youth who consider the program activity to be a conveniently located enhancement of their school-day subjects, while center-based comprehensive programs attract youth looking for a safe space to spend their time away from school and desiring activity choices.

> **Example of an Activity List for a Comprehensive Program**
>
> - Classes for credit
> - Peer tutoring
> - Open library
> - Freshman seminar
> - Sophomore, Junior, and Senior councils
> - ASPIRA club (Latino youth organization)
> - International Alliance (Leadership)
> - Weight training
> - College counseling
> - Aerobics
> - Cheerleading
> - Drama club
> - Dance team
> - Culture student club (race awareness, cultural awareness, film, photography)

Exhibit 8
Enrollment and Attendance in School-based and Center-based Programs
Across Targeted and Comprehensive Models, Fall 2007

Program Location	Targeted (n=49)			Comprehensive (n=62)		
	Number of Programs	Enrollment	Attendance Rate	Number of Programs	Enrollment	Attendance Rate
School-based (n=56)	27	1,908	67%	29	2,697	52%
Center-based (n=55)	22	1,969	52%	33	2,216	63%

---

[5] Evaluators developed this definition of comprehensive and targeted programs based on examination of the distribution of activity data in DYCD Online and tested the definition against qualitative data about program activities collected during site visits to the eight programs.

Staffing patterns. According to program directors' survey responses, high school OST programs hired an average of seven staff members. These staff members tended to be well-educated: 61 percent of program directors reported hiring professional specialists in activity areas (e.g., a professional artist or coach) and 44 percent of programs hired certified teachers. In addition, 70 percent of programs hired other adults with college degrees. These staff were supported by a cadre of younger staff members, including college students (hired by 50 percent of programs) and high school students themselves (employed by 30 percent of programs). Programs also hired other adults without college degrees (46 percent of programs) and paraprofessionals or school aides (16 percent). Only 23 percent of high school programs did not hire either certified teachers or professional specialists, and only 4 percent of programs did not have any college-educated adults on staff.

These staffing structures varied to some degree by program location. School-based programs were more likely to employ certified teachers or other school-day staff, while center-based programs tended to rely more on college students or teen staff and other activity specialists. For example, 61 percent of school-based programs had certified teachers on staff, compared with 32 percent of center-based programs with teachers (*V*=.29). In addition, 64 percent of center-based programs employed college students, compared with 33 percent of school-based programs (*V*=.30).

These patterns were reflected in the high school programs visited. Both center-based and school-based programs typically staffed their programs with a combination of qualified specialist staff who guided activity content and instruction (whether certified teachers or professional specialists) and younger staff members who typically served in outreach roles to connect participants to the program.

Social and Developmental Benefits

High school participants responded positively to survey questions about the social benefits of their OST programs. In general, they agreed that their programs gave participants opportunities to engage in new experiences and develop a strong sense of belonging. Participants also reported that they forged positive relationships with peers in their programs. These reactions are based on high school participant survey responses in Year 2 of the OST evaluation and on interviews conducted in the eight high school programs visited in fall 2007. Future reports of the OST evaluation will analyze additional sources of data on youth benefits and outcomes, including indicators of educational performance from DOE databases.

Sense of belonging and relationships with peers. In general, high school participants expressed a strong sense of belonging in their OST programs. Survey responses revealed a pattern of personal connection to the program, as illustrated in Exhibit 9. More than two-thirds of participants agreed a lot, for instance, that they felt safe in their program (69 percent), and more than half felt like they belonged (59 percent), they mattered in their program (56 percent), and they felt like they were successful in the program (53 percent). Combining these indicators into an attitudinal scale measuring youth sense of belonging in the program, OST high school participants reported, on average, a strong sense of belonging (3.43 on a 4-point scale). In the

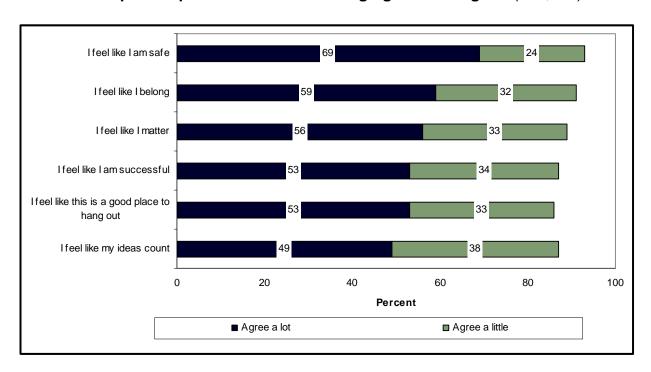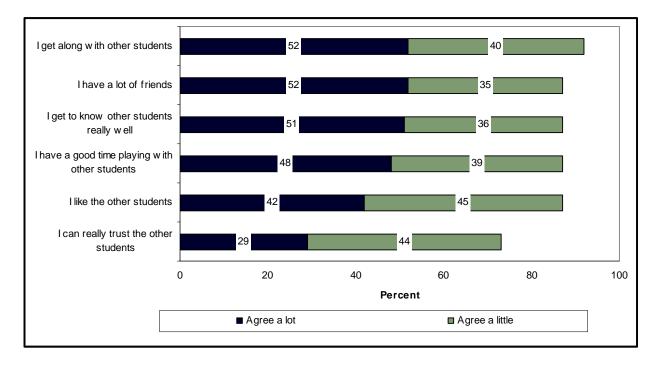programs visited for this study, the average rating ranged from 3.38 to 3.91 (at Culture Connections).

Exhibit 9
Participant Reports of Sense of Belonging in the Program *(n=1,238)*

High school participants also reported developing positive relationships with peers in their OST programs, as shown in Exhibit 10. More than half agreed a lot that they get along well with other participants in the program (52 percent), have a lot of friends in the program (52 percent), and get to know the other participants in the program well (51 percent). On average, high school participants across the initiative rated their interactions with peers at 3.27 on a 4-point scale. This rating ranged from 3.06 to 3.82 (at Young Lawyers) in the eight programs visited.

In the program where youth rated highest on the sense of belonging scale, youth described the center-based program as a welcoming and safe environment: "Friends always say, 'Meet you at [Culture Connections]!' and all I have to say to my parents is, 'I'm going to [Culture Connections]' and they know it's okay." Similarly, a participant from Community Council, a program that also scored high on both the sense of belonging and social interactions with peers scale said:

> *My best friends are all in the program, and we all go to teen council together. It helps because they're so close, and I know they're there to talk to. I have a different set of friends here that are not from my school. There's definitely always someone to talk with here.*
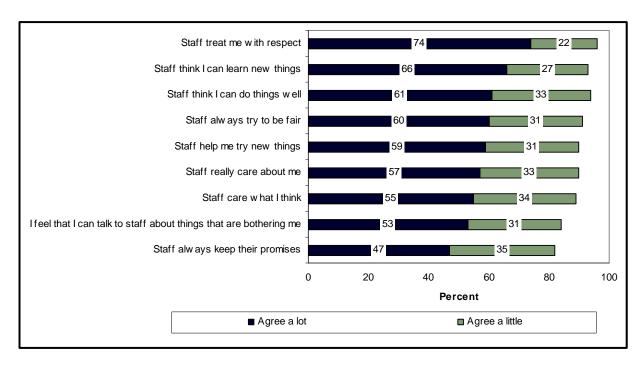
Exhibit 10
Participant Reports of Interactions with Peers *(n=1,238)*

Chart data:

Statement	Agree a lot	Agree a little
I get along with other students	52	40
I have a lot of friends	52	35
I get to know other students really well	51	36
I have a good time playing with other students	48	39
I like the other students	42	45
I can really trust the other students	29	44

Relationships with staff. Programs fostered a positive atmosphere that promoted healthy social development in part by hiring staff members who could relate to and effectively reach out to youth. For example, staff members in several programs that were visited said that they intentionally talked with youth about their personal lives, their grades, and provided individual contact to encourage them to come to the program. "We text all the time, and that brings them in," said one outreach leader; youth confirmed that they come regularly because the staff "text me all the time. How can I forget to come, because he calls and asks 'why are you not here?'" Another youth reported: "The staff are really cool—very close to our age. You can really talk with them. They're like a counselor and a friend too." Youth also reported strong personal ties with staff, noting that staff "can give me advice and understand what I'm going through."

This pattern of positive relationships with staff was consistent across the OST initiative. In general, high school participants overwhelmingly reported that they had positive relationships with staff. Two-thirds or more agreed a lot that staff treated them with respect and felt that they could learn new things, as shown in Exhibit 11.

Exhibit 11
Participant Reports of Relationships with Staff *(n=1,238)*

	Agree a lot	Agree a little
Staff treat me with respect	74	22
Staff think I can learn new things	66	27
Staff think I can do things well	61	33
Staff always try to be fair	60	31
Staff help me try new things	59	31
Staff really care about me	57	33
Staff care what I think	55	34
I feel that I can talk to staff about things that are bothering me	53	31
Staff always keep their promises	47	35

Activity content fostering social development. Some program activities explicitly focused on promoting positive youth development. For instance, the Advance After-School freshman seminar is heavily focused on building relationships and fostering social development among participants. As one of the current instructors explained:

> *I try to relate what's going on in their lives and going on in society right now…. It's a lot about their own personal experience. That's the main thing. Making it personal to them, talking about their own stuff…. [I try to] get that personal connection, get to know the students better. [I] told my students they could come talk to me whenever; I'm another person they have in the*

**Example of
an Activity Promoting Social Development**

Three trained high school students lead a discussion on positive communication strategies using a Relationship Abuse Prevention (RAP) curriculum. They ask the freshman participants to model positive interpersonal communication strategies through skits and demonstrations.

The group is attentive both to the lesson within the exercise and to the discussion that follows each demonstration skit. Youth raise serious questions about the practical difficulties of putting the recommended strategies to work in real-life contexts. The leaders respond, acknowledging that it is "harder to do in reality than to just stand up here and model it," and they appreciate their peers' candid critiques.

A professional social worker and a trained RAP leader stand aside while young leaders conduct the activity without any adult intervention. It is evident from the exchanges that the staff has imbued the youth leaders with a strong content foundation and with confidence in their knowledge of the content and processes they are using.

building…. They learn how to socialize, how to interact well, how to have conversations with people. [It's] interesting because [they] see they can communicate with others, and talk about things that are important, and that people actually value what they say.

Youth leadership. In some instances, programs also encouraged strong youth connections to the program by providing both formal and informal opportunities for youth to take leadership roles or provide input into programming. In survey results, while 58 percent of participants reported that they had been asked by staff for their ideas about the program or an activity, fewer youth had actually helped plan or implement programming directly. Forty-eight percent of youth reported that they had led an activity, and 44 percent had helped plan an activity. Thirty-eight percent had helped out on a youth council, advisory group, or leadership team for the program, and 38 percent had helped out in the office. Twenty-eight percent of youth had helped with meetings for parents or community members.

Even so, interviews revealed that the eight programs in the site visit sample provided youth with varied opportunities to exhibit leadership. While some programs established youth councils, youth were more typically given day-to-day opportunities to plan, make decisions, work independently, and lead activities and projects, using their own initiative and creativity. For example, in Learn International, youth planned the provider organization's annual youth conference—deciding on the theme, the session topics, and preparing to lead each session, while also working on the logistics involved in organizing a one-day event for 600 youth. In the Advance After-School program, youth could propose an activity plan and help recruit participants as well as a staff member (typically a school-day teacher) to advise the activity. In this program, the director reported that "students become leaders because there is so much they're involved in…. They lead community service projects, peer tutoring, they help each other with academics.… They learn from each other." The Culture Connections program built in ongoing opportunities for youth to become invested and have a voice in their year end project. According to the program director:

> *Example of a Youth-led Activity*
>
> The step team captain, a young woman who is enrolled in the program, leads members of the team in their routine. The activity specialist, a male college student who is a member of a competitive step team, speaks up at intervals with instructions, feedback, or advice for members of the team. When team members have trouble catching on, the captain calls on small groups to perform segments of the routine, so that she can watch each individual more closely. She offers constructive feedback: "You've got it" or "A little too slow." The instructor occasionally offers his own instructions or encouragement: "You guys have got it; you just need to have more confidence with it."
>
> There is much laughter and camaraderie in the room. In interviews, members of the step team report that the group is tight knit. As to why she attends the program, the captain says, "I like the girls on the step team. They're cool. [They] seem like family. Another family away from home [where I can] be myself and have fun with people." One team member enthuses, "Same thing—the girls, the coach. It feels so warm and welcoming. If you mess up, there's always [someone] there to fall back on."

[The young women] have to put together a final project at the end of the year. They have almost an entire semester to do it. Engage, meet deadlines, plan…. Discussions brought the group close together. [We did] ice breakers, building as a team. Everyone was on board when they wanted to build a final project. They were invested in what had happened during the year.

OST high school programs also regularly sought out youth input on activities, helping to keep youth committed to and engaged in the program. Programs reported that they successfully engaged youth in activities by soliciting ideas from youth to help determine program content:

> *I also approach students to ask about what kinds of programs they want. I did an informal focus groups of students to see what they would like.*
>
> *We are trying above all to teach them to express their opinions. We want them to come away with certain information, but we are not trying to tell them what is right or wrong.*
>
> *[We spend time] finding out what their needs are and what activities they want. We have a youth leadership and development component. We do open discussion and forums. We allow them to help develop the programs of interest. Because they're actively involved, it keeps them committed.*

Staff in the programs that were visited promoted youth leadership by serving as facilitators rather than as direct instructors. They emphasized the importance of giving youth personal support and providing them with opportunities to identify and develop their interests:

> *I try to have them talk as much as possible, explain to me what they mean. I have them keep journals, and we go around the room and talk about their journals, give them a chance to express themselves.*
>
> *[We tell youth], "This is your space, this is your time. What do you want to talk about?"*
>
> *We have a holistic approach … we have a lot to offer, not just academics…. We listen to them. We are flexible. We use different means of communication. We try hard to figure out how to go that extra mile.*

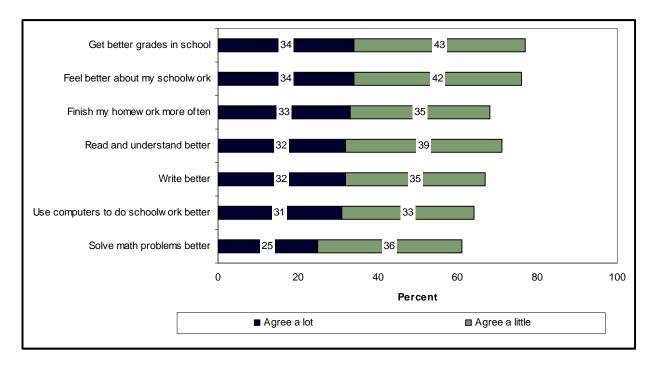Youth appreciated the input into programming:

> *We can make change happen within [the program]. We tell staff what we want to do and they let you go with it within the limits of [the program]. Our roles are not limited … More opportunities and choices are opened up by being here.*

Educational Benefits

Across the OST initiative, survey findings suggested that about a third of high school youth agreed a lot that participation in an OST program helped them improve their academic capabilities or performance, as shown in Exhibit 12.[6] On an academic benefits scale combining these indicators, high school participants scored on average a 2.86 out of 4. In the eight programs visited, these scores ranged from 2.41 to 3.31 (at Young Lawyers).

---

[6] This report focuses on educational benefits as reported in youth survey responses. Future evaluation reports will also examine DOE data on educational performance of OST participants, including school attendance, credits accumulated, and performance on the Regents tests.

Exhibit 12
Participant Reports of Academic Benefits *(n=1,238)*

Get better grades in school: Agree a lot 34, Agree a little 43
Feel better about my schoolwork: Agree a lot 34, Agree a little 42
Finish my homework more often: Agree a lot 33, Agree a little 35
Read and understand better: Agree a lot 32, Agree a little 39
Write better: Agree a lot 32, Agree a little 35
Use computers to do schoolwork better: Agree a lot 31, Agree a little 33
Solve math problems better: Agree a lot 25, Agree a little 36

Percent (x-axis: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100)

■ Agree a lot   ■ Agree a little

This pattern of responses, seen in comparison to the social-development data, may reflect the fact that many high school programs did not specifically aim to provide direct academic support to youth, but rather hoped to build skills indirectly by providing engaging experiences that support learning. For example, one program director reported, "We give them the opportunity to come up with their own ideas, address issues and concerns that are important to them, and work on projects to help them develop confidence." In another program, staff collected student report cards and regularly checked student grades, especially for those youth who take on added leadership responsibilities in the program. The director said, "We want to make sure that students can juggle all that is expected of them by the program."

The program director at Young Lawyers, where youth reported the highest levels of academic benefits, said that program activities asked youth to "defend their own thinking … students are questioned about their thought processes, which develops the critical thinking skills that they will need for the rest of their lives." This program "creates a culture of learning" for youth and uses an internship model to engage youth as leaders. Youth in this program confirmed that participation in the OST program activities gave them confidence to take on challenges and improve their skills:

*I know I don't have any more problems taking on
challenges and overcoming them.*

*[The SAT prep class] shows us how much we can
improve our skills in a short amount of time. This
is the program where we take the biggest leaps.*

These sentiments were echoed by highly engaged
youth who were interviewed in other programs:

> *It teaches you a sense of persistence. You fall,
> and it hurts, but you have to do it again. As much
> as you might hate writing an essay, you know you
> need the grade, and you have to get through this.
> Every teacher wants you to know how to go from
> there to here.*

> *I think it helps us with our grades … but that's
> not the most important thing. The [staff]
> following up with us on everything. They also
> ask, "What is new with you? Do you need college
> essay help? What about help looking into financial aid for college?"*

> *My grades are going up. Maybe it's because I don't hang out with my friends as
> much…but [being here] has helped [my grades] a lot.*

> *If I'm having trouble at school, I can find someone here to help me.*

> *It helps us in class, too. In my law and government class, I already know about current
> issues. We bring what we learn in [the program] into our classrooms [at school] … It's
> opened my eyes. I used to be oblivious, in my own bubble, and now I have a more world-
> wide view.*

Exposure to new experiences. High school participants typically agreed that their
programs provided exposure to new experiences, which may open up ideas about possible career
opportunities and provide motivation to do well in school. As shown in Exhibit 13, for example,
just over half of high school agreed that participation in the program gave them a chance to do a
lot of new things. Across the initiative, high school participants on average rated their exposure
to new experiences at 3.20 on a 4-point scale. In the eight sites visited for this study, the average
scale rating varied from 3.01 to 3.89 (at Culture Connections).

In interviews, high school participants described ways in which participation in OST
programming opened their eyes to new ideas or helped them to develop new skills. For example,
one participant in Learn International said:

**Example of
an Academic Enhancement Activity**

"Can you cancel a few terms? Yes, you can."
The tutor talks a participant through a series of
math problems, using scaffolding techniques
in her questioning. "OK, now reduce the
whole thing to the lowest fraction. What
comes next?" The tutee asks questions and
explains her understanding to the tutor, who
corrects and summarizes what the tutee says.
As she works on the problems, the tutor
watches each step and corrects the student
when necessary.

The relationship between the tutee and her
tutor is trusting. It is evident that they know
each other, have worked together before, and
are comfortable with each other. The tutor is
patient, kind, and encouraging throughout the
lesson. She praises the participant verbally
when she provides the correct answer. They
have an easy rapport but are serious and
focused on the problems at hand.

I never used to read the newspaper or watch the news. I gained a global perspective and curiosity about what the rest of the world thinks on various issues. Now I know what our stance is on issues, and I know what other nations think too.
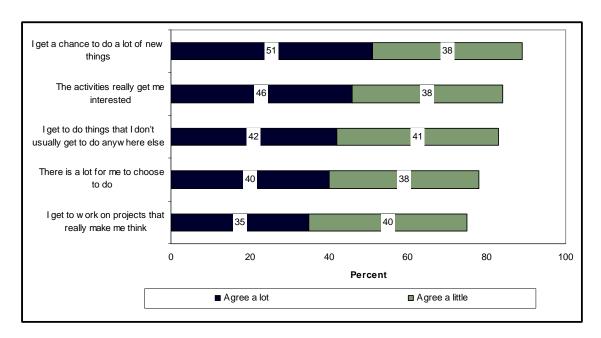
Exhibit 13
Participant Reports of Exposure to New Experiences *(n=1,238)*

College preparation. Several of the eight programs visited as part of this study offered services to help youth prepare for college. For example, programs offered students assistance with SAT preparation and preparation for the New York State Regents exams, helped them with college searches, and provided staff support to assist with college application. Across the initiative, program directors reported this priority in survey responses, with 69 percent of high school programs offering field trips to college campuses. One staff member who helped students prepare for and apply to colleges described the supports provided to program participants:

I make sure that through fliers and through constant reminders that they are aware of other stuff going on [at the program.] Our college event, our scholarship day.... We help them with college applications.... The volunteers and I know that they are making their lists in September. December, they are working on essays. We know in January that they are worrying about financial aid. We inform them that that information is there, and say this session is happening. I do have a list of students who are juniors, and I keep track of where they are [in the application process].

In Young Lawyers, another program with a strong focus on college preparation, youth participated in SAT preparation and were assigned mentors to help them gain acceptance to a competitive college. Direct and personal assistance was given to each youth to ensure they identified, applied to, and were accepted to a competitive college. Staff from this program noted that college acceptance was one of their primary goals for youth: "We have an interest in kids

becoming something that will make them and their family proud." Staff also said, "Ninety-nine percent of participants go to college."

At the request of their host school—a small school in a traditionally underserved Bronx community—Bronx Rhythm began offering a Regents preparation course for the Global History exam. Although there were only three students enrolled in the course when evaluators visited in January, school administrators anticipated that a substantial number of students would not pass the test at the end of the month and planned to encourage them to enroll in the Bronx Rhythm course. The program director said, "The assistant principal has already approached me about students who won't pass the Regents. I told her there was plenty of room." Because many of the students in the school are not on target to graduate, the administration has tacked on an extra period at the end of the day for credit recovery, which Bronx Rhythm can provide. The principal also allows students to earn a gym credit for membership on the step team and a music credit for participation in the djembe ensemble.

Internships. In Year 2 survey responses, OST high school program directors reported offering many career-related activities. Eighty-three percent of directors reported that their program offered career exploration activities to high school participants, and 79 percent provided orientation to job search and basic employability skills. In addition, 57 percent engaged students in internships or apprenticeships. Of those programs that offered internships and apprenticeships, 70 percent reported that most or all of the enrolled youth participated. About a third of programs (35 percent) offered field trips to local businesses.

Internships were a common feature among the programs visited. For example, the After-School Works program was based entirely on an internship model designed to teach high school students to be effective youth workers in after-school programs by providing training, job placement, and follow-up. Young Lawyers offered a systematic curriculum designed to help youth become academically and socially prepared to serve as legal interns after one year with the program. In addition to developing participants' writing skills during the school year, youth in this program were assigned professional mentors to help prepare them to work in law offices using necessary communication and presentation skills, including learning how to "dress like an attorney." Mentors hosted participants in their homes to teach them etiquette in preparation for the summer internships, and volunteered their time throughout the school year to continue their relationships with students. Some of the participants formed strong bonds with their mentors. One participant remarked, "The attorneys we work with in the internship can become our mentors. It's unique to have someone to talk to as a mentor and have that person be in the field that you want to be in someday." Another added, "The best thing about the five weeks [of the internship] was the interaction with the attorneys."

Programs visited in the evaluation helped to involve youth in external internship opportunities by advertising available opportunities in the community or provider organization and by hiring youth leaders to serve as assistant staff members within the OST program.

Discussions of community issues. A majority of programs offered high school participants opportunities to engage with their community through activities or discussions. Seventy-one percent of program directors reported in surveys that their programs conducted service projects, and 54 percent reported that they conducted service projects locally, in the neighborhood or nearby schools. Eighty percent of programs held discussions of issues, events, or problems in their communities in their high school OST programs. One such discussion, highlighted in the text box to the right, occurred at Learn International among participants active in the program. According to an adult facilitator, the goal of the program is to increase participants' awareness of "human rights issues and global issues of concern, and to give them opportunities for voicing their opinions. They have some background knowledge." She continued, "It causes our students to be more sensitive to what is happening globally. Some have not been out of New York City." A participant in Learn International said the program has indeed broadened her outlook: "It's opened my eyes. I used to be oblivious, in my own bubble, and now I have a more world-wide view."

Example of a Community Awareness Activity

Youth sit in a circle and discuss possible international and political issues to be covered in an upcoming youth conference that they are planning. They talk about the commonalities among some of the topics and how the topics could be grouped together. All topics relate to building community and global awareness. An adult facilitates the discussion by asking probing questions: "How can racism fall under politics?" Youth discuss how various political decisions can be influenced by race. "How can you connect AIDS in Africa with politics?" Youth discuss the procedures and difficulties in getting generic AIDS drugs to people in Africa. One says, "A lot of developing countries depend on the US government for aid." Later, another youth draws a comparison between (1) government hierarchies and power struggles and (2) hierarchies in gangs. Almost all youth in the group contribute actively to the wide-ranging discussion.

Strategies to Build Program Capacity

Program Staffing Strategies

Most of the programs visited by evaluators selected staff members with appropriate qualifications to design and implement activities and directed high levels of financial resources to ensure they were hiring the best possible staff. According to one program director, "We view them [staff] as educators. Not just people going in to run after-school. Many have master's degrees." This program director described a rigorous interview process in which candidates for staff positions are asked to conduct a demonstration lesson. "We try to simulate a typical class and see how that person handles the situation." Youth in this program commented on the quality of the staff members in the program:

> *They do a good job selecting their staff. We see that they're well-trained. I've sat in on some of the interviews. At first, we look at the topic they choose to do their small workshop on, to see how well-versed they are in the topic they chose. If they did water scarcity, [we] would expect them to know a lot about that. We look at how confident they were with the students or who they were doing the workshop for.*

Hiring experienced staff members for the high school programs resulted in relatively high wages. In 87 percent of high school programs, directors reported that certified teachers on staff

earned at least $21 per hour; they earned at least $31 per hour in 61 percent of programs. Compensation for specialists varied widely, although in 79 percent of programs, they earned at least $16 per hour. Wages of young staff who complemented the experienced staff members—teens and college students—were lower. In 10 percent of programs, the teen staff were volunteers, although in most programs (76 percent) they earned between $6 and $10.99. College students earned between $6 and $15.99 per hour in 77 percent of programs. In particular, the program director from Learn International commented on the cost implications of hiring highly qualified staff to work with high school participants:

> *We have full-time staff that we keep year round. We spend a lot of time and effort training them, and we work together as a team. They are educators, not just temporary people who are going in to run after-school programs. Many have master's degrees, and all have at least their BA's. We need to pay them a decent salary but the challenge is that our costs go up every year, but our grant money stays the same. We want to give raises and cost of living increases every year, but where is that money coming from?*

In addition, program directors reported in interviews that resources to provide extensive professional development for staff were limited and that they relied on internal program-improvement methods. While the majority of program directors attended professional development and training activities, there were fewer resources available to send staff to external training opportunities. Eighty-nine percent of directors reported attending a workshop, 73 percent attended an institute or conference, and 55 percent received on-site consultations. In comparison, 80 percent of staff had attended a workshop, while 43 percent attended an institute or conference and 43 percent participated in an on-site consultation.

One program director said, "We don't have resources to train staff, but we do conduct meetings to make sure everyone is on the same page. They are clear about what our expectations are." Programs set expectations for staff through ongoing internal capacity-building meetings and individual feedback to staff:

> *The expectations are laid out in the staff training. We talk about our typical students and describe problems we've seen. There's a very clear picture of what our staff expectations are and what messages we want to convey to the students. You know it has to be consistent.*

> *I do rounds three times during the after-school program ... I walk around, pop into activities to see what they're doing, [and] open communication to talk about the challenges as the year progresses.*

Strategies to Maximize Resources

Funding challenges. High school program directors frequently reported that obtaining adequate funding for their programs was a formidable challenge. They said that DYCD OST funding represented only a portion of the resources needed to offer high-quality activities and to hire experienced, qualified staff members.

High school is more expensive than other types [of OST programming] because of the type of staff, and the [ambitious] outcomes we strive for as an organization. [We emphasize] what the students are going to be able to do and what they need to learn about. You need funding to back that [kind of program up].

These challenges were consistent with those reported by high school program directors in survey data. Sixty-six percent of directors reported that they could not afford to offer the competitive salaries needed to hire qualified staff, and 58 percent said they could not offer potential staff enough hours of paid employment to make a position in the OST program attractive to them. In addition, 64 percent of high school directors reported that they did not have sufficient funds to provide high-quality programming.

Funding challenges were particularly salient for programs offered by relatively small providers, or providers who were new to the after-school field and thus were only beginning to build their reputation in the community. Even so, the availability of OST funds enabled new programs to get off the ground. A unique feature of the OST initiative is that contracts were not awarded solely to large, established providers of out-of-school services. Small and/or new organizations also received funding to launch new programs. Indeed, the Bronx Rhythm OST program was conceived when the program director read the RFP and was inspired to design an entirely new arts program for youth. Although Bronx Rhythm reported problems in becoming established in the school site, their story suggests that DYCD support provided the opportunity for small organizations to plant the seeds for new programs that may eventually expand and flourish. Sometimes, these programs operate in schools or communities that were not previously served by more established providers. For instance, the Bronx Rhythm OST director reported that, other than some basic tutoring services, there were no other out-of-school time programs offered on the campus of small schools where the Bronx Rhythm OST program operates.

Leveraging additional funding. Even though DYCD funding was not sufficient to cover costs for most programs, some organizations found that the DYCD contract opened the door to additional opportunities. Some directors from programs visited for this study reported that they used their DYCD OST funding to leverage additional funding from external sources. Directors said that receiving government funds can serve as an eligibility criterion for some donors in making their own granting decisions and that OST funding plays an important role of "legitimizing the program." The impact of the OST funding was particularly important for small and new organizations. As the Learn International director explained:

There are good things about OST funding. First, it is multi-year and you're not guessing from year to year as to what you might be getting. You get your grant; you are going to have it for three years…. What's also good is the way that DYCD has streamlined the funding. It has allowed organizations like [ours] to access city funds. We're not an organization that has been around for 40 years. With the RFP, it allowed smaller organizations to have access to city funding…. It has allowed us to expand our presence among city agencies…. It has allowed us to get our name out and to leverage other funds as well.

The Culture Connections director expressed similar sentiments. She explained that, although she was disappointed that the DYCD grant was too small to cover many of their costs,

it has also opened doors to new funding sources. Their affiliation with DYCD has made it easier for them to build a reputation in the community and obtain other sources of funding that cover their costs when DYCD does not. She explained:

> *DYCD has been funding [programs offered by the provider organization] almost since its inception. [DYCD funding is] important but very small in terms of the dollar amount. But it opens up other doors for other funding…. That, to me, is an example of how the game works in New York…. It has given us a clout that it would have been difficult for us to achieve on our own.*

The programs that were most readily able to navigate the challenges of participant and staff recruitment and to provide a balance between breadth and depth of services were those that drew on multiple funding streams. This allowed organizations to build partnerships with community organizations and expand both their financial base and their program offerings.

Program partnerships. High school OST programs relied on other organizations for more than just funding, however. Often, programs worked to establish ongoing partnerships with other community organizations to supplement DYCD funding. These partnerships also helped programs to provide students with added breadth of experiences.

Program directors' survey responses revealed the extent to which these partnerships were central to programming. More than half of program directors reported that external partner organizations provided the following:

- Special programs, activities, or services for youth (72 percent)

- Additional funding through grants or contracts (57 percent)

- Participant referrals to the OST program (55 percent)

- Donations of materials or supplies (54 percent)

- Special programs, activities, or services for parents and families (54 percent)

In interviews, directors described soliciting foundations, law firms, financial services companies, and other businesses and non-profits throughout New York City to contribute resources as well as mentors and internships for youth. For instance, several large law firms partner with Young Lawyers to provide internships, mentors, and opportunities for youth to attend cultural events. The partnership is multifaceted, with the law firms providing both financial and human resources to the program. The law firms compensate the youth for their work during the summer internship program, and attorneys from the partner firms volunteer with the youth throughout the year.

Programs also relied on the networks and resources available through their provider organization to supplement the DYCD funding they received: "[Our provider] contributes a significant amount of money to these programs. In no way is it wholly funded by OST. Every year, [the provider] puts in its own funding sources."

Some programs drew on the resources available to them through their provider organizations to provide services to parents and families. For example, the program sponsored by Advance After-School helps to connect parents and families with other supports available through the agency, in addition to inviting them to workshops and culminating events at the OST program.

Overall Reflections

As with most out-of-school time initiatives targeting high school youth, the OST high school programs have struggled at times with attracting participants and maintaining high rates of attendance. Nevertheless, both enrollment and participation rates have increased over the first three years of the OST initiative. In addition, program participants report positive experiences and both social and educational benefits as a result of their involvement in OST programs.

Future evaluation analyses and reports will continue to investigate specific program features that contribute to positive youth outcomes in OST programs. Based on data currently available, including interviews with program directors, staff, and participants as well as program observations, the evaluation identified program approaches that appeared to be especially successful in reaching and serving high school youth:

- **Creative outreach strategies.** Program directors used creative, age-appropriate approaches for reaching out to current and potential program participants. For example, some programs offered stipends for participation, while others relied on youth-to-youth outreach and technology tools, such as text-messaging and social networking sites.

- **Experienced, well-trained staff.** Program directors described the value of hiring experienced professionals to guide activities for high school youth and support the work of younger staff members. Program directors intentionally built the capacity of staff members through ongoing feedback and internal training.

- **Developmentally appropriate programming.** Whether part of a comprehensive array of program offerings or an element of a targeted program schedule focused on a particular content area, program activities that engage high school youth were aligned to their developmental needs, especially in terms of preparation for college and careers. Activities offered opportunities for youth to influence program offerings, take leadership roles, experience internships, and prepare for college and careers.

- **Program partnerships.** Partnerships that high school programs or their provider organizations established with other organizations helped leverage resources to improve the quality and depth of programming for high school youth.

Programs reported certain areas of ongoing challenge, particularly related to participant recruitment and program funding. Directors said they struggled to provide continuing and in-

depth program content to high school participants and to hire experienced, professional staff members to lead these activities.   When possible, they used resources available through their provider organization and through external partnerships to supplement their DYCD OST funding.

The evaluation also identified emerging models for high school programs. In addition to variations in program location, with center-based programs in general achieving higher levels of participation than school-based programs, high school programs took varying approaches to the content they provided. OST high school programs included both comprehensive programs, which offered activities to youth in many content areas, and targeted programs, which offered more focused activity content. The multi-year OST evaluation will continue to examine these program models and will report on differences in implementation and outcomes.

References

Arbreton, A., Bradshaw, M., Metz, R., Sheldon, J., with Pepper, S. (2008, March). *More time for teens: Understanding teen participation—frequency, intensity, and duration—in Boys & Girls Clubs*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences,* 2nd ed. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

George, R., Cusick, G.R., Wasserman, M., & Gladden, R.M. (2007, January). *After-school programs and academic impact: A study of Chicago's After School Matters. Issue brief.* Chicago: Chapin Hall for Children at the University of Chicago.

Hipps, J., & Diaz, M. (2007). *California 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) Program.* San Francisco, CA: WestEd.

Lipsey, M. (1990). *Design sensitivity: Statistical power for experimental research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

The After-School Corporation. (2007). *Meeting the high school challenge: Making after-school work for older students.* New York, NY: The After-School Corporation.

High School Program Profiles

ADVANCE AFTER-SCHOOL
Manhattan

Project Overview
Location: school
Program type: comprehensive

Activities
Activities and activity space available
Monday-Friday, 9 am-6 pm
Classes for credit
Peer tutoring
Open library
Grade-level seminars and councils
ASPIRA club
International Alliance (leadership)
Weight training, aerobics
Drama club, dance team, cheerleading
Culture student club (race awareness,
cultural awareness, film,
photography)
College counseling

Enrollment and Participation
in Fall 2007
Grades served: 9-12
Groups targeted: All students at host school
Slots in 2007-08: 200
Enrolled: 247
Attendance rate: 86 percent
Met targeted hours: 62 percent
Average hours attended: 33

This program is integrated into the life of a selective community high school in Manhattan. The ethnically diverse student population shares a commitment to academic success. The school admits students with promising academic records and is focused on preparing its students to gain admission to selective colleges.

Advance After-School offers academic support courses (both credit and non-credit), enrichment clubs, and recreational activities developed in collaboration with school staff and a representative body of students. Drawing on an extensive network of community partnerships, the program provides a comprehensive set of activities, including dance, health and nutrition, and fitness activities. Some activities are student-driven, reflecting the fact that the program is designed to give students a substantial voice in programming. A staff member reported that students consistently initiate and carry out community service projects.

A hallmark of the program is the freshman seminar, which is required of all students who enter the school. It is held after school hours, and its design is a collaborative effort between the program provider and the school. One of the seminar instructors explained that the seminar is a major tool for recruitment: "Freshman seminar entices them to sign up for other after-school activities. They're a captive audience for a whole semester, [and they] learn about the other activities that Advance After-School offers," she said. Using its community partnerships and its relationship with the school, the program enrolls large numbers of youth and inspires them to attend consistently.

AFTER-SCHOOL WORKS
Manhattan

Project Overview
Location: center
Program type: targeted (career
      development)

Activities
Saturdays all day for 12 weeks; after
      school a few times a week
Participants are trained to teach in
      the following areas:
College preparation
Sports
Literacy
Science

**Enrollment and Participation
in Fall 2007**
Grades served: 9-12
Groups targeted: any NYC high school
      student
Slots in 2007-08: 500
Enrolled: 140
Attendance rate: 21 percent
Met targeted hours: 94 percent
Average hours attended: 46

The After-School Works program prepares high school students to work in paid after-school internships by developing their understanding of youth development, teaching, learning, and group collaboration. The program trains participants to facilitate four activities in after-school programs, using curricula developed by the provider: college prep, sports, literacy, and science. Youth are trained every other Saturday by AmeriCorps volunteers and professionals who are experienced in teaching these four areas. The lead facilitators are after-school educators with expertise in working with youth.

During training sessions, participants model the work they will do as classroom assistants. They engage in active learning and working in groups, just as they will with their younger students. After participants have begun training, they are placed as staff volunteers in after-school programs that already use the four curricular foci. Participants' training continues as they practice what they learn at these after-school programs.

Participants can earn stipends of up to $350 for the 12-week program. Stipends are adjusted based on participants' levels of involvement and are only awarded to youth who achieve at least a 70 percent attendance rate. After-School Works helps participants create resumes and, once the training is complete, to apply for jobs with after-school programs. After-School Works also offers college trips, SAT preparation, and assistance in preparing college applications.

BRONX RHYTHM
Bronx

Project Overview
Location: school
Program type: targeted (arts)

Activities
Monday and Tuesday, 3-5 pm
Step team
Djembe drumming ensemble
Regents preparation

**Enrollment and Participation
in Fall 2007**
Grades served: 9-12
Groups targeted: all students in host school
Slots in 2007-08: 100
Enrolled: 16
Attendance rate: 81 percent
Met targeted hours: 0 percent
Average hours attended: 10

The Bronx Rhythm program at this high school has two overarching goals: building talent in the arts and connecting the arts to academics. Bronx Rhythm offers a step team and a djembe ensemble, both of which are instructed by qualified specialist staff. The step instructor performs on a competitive college team, and the djembe instructor is a professional who has trained in West Africa. The program director has strong networks in the arts community in the Bronx. Through her connections, she has arranged for the step team and the djembe ensemble to offer public performances. "Our goal is always to get them [the participants] to the point where we can put them in the professional realm [in the arts] as soon as possible, either as an intern or a paid gig."

In addition to arts programming, Bronx Rhythm offers a Regents test preparation course for the Global History exam, taught by a teacher who regularly substitutes in the host school. Although the Regents test prep course is their least popular activity, the program director firmly believes in the importance of academics: "We…instill in them that in order to be able to do these things [performing arts], you must, must, must have good grades." Even so, participants have the freedom to choose which activity or activities they will attend.

Bronx Rhythm has confronted two major challenges: establishing a positive relationship with the host school and recruiting participants. In Fall 2007, the program moved to a new host school—another small school on the same multi-school campus—where the administration is more supportive of the program. Although both participants and staff have attempted to recruit participants and the program director has arranged step and djembe demonstrations during the school's lunch period, the program still struggles to attract students. The program director believes that the program would be better attended if it could offer students a monetary incentive. "For high school students, they need money. … They're always looking for some money." Although Bronx Rhythm employs two student aides, it does not have the budget to offer employment or stipends to additional youth.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Queens

Project Overview
Location: center
Program type: comprehensive

Activities
*Monday-Friday, 3-10 pm; occasional
        weekend activities*
On-the-job training/job placement
Peer mentoring
SAT preparation
Academic enrichment/tutoring
Sports/basketball leagues
Teen council
Culture club
Recreational activities

**Enrollment and Participation
in Fall 2007**
Grades served: 9-12
Groups targeted: All high school students in
        the Northeast Queens and Western
        Nassau communities
Slots in 2007-08: 240
Enrolled: 61
Attendance rate: 86 percent
Met targeted hours: 92 percent
Average hours attended: 96

Community Council seeks to connect youth with school, the provider's center, and neighborhood religious organizations. Activities are strongly tied to community service, leadership opportunities, recreation, academic support, and college and career preparation. The major goals of the teen program are to provide a safe environment, help youth develop socially, provide recreation activities, match youth with mentors, and provide community service opportunities.

By training youth as after-school workers and offering experience in organizing service projects, the program provides opportunities for youth to prepare for careers, particularly social service careers. On-the-job training includes students working for Community Council in its fee-for-service after-school program and students working off-site. The youth in Teen Council are involved in service projects such as clothing drives, intergenerational programs such as delivering food to the elderly, Thanksgiving dinner for those in need, basketball buddies involving students with autism, and tutoring students with disabilities.

CULTURE CONNECTIONS
Queens

Project Overview
Location: center
Program type: comprehensive

Activities
Center open Monday-Friday, 3-6 pm
Tutoring
College prep
Basketball
Girls group
Internships

**Enrollment and Participation
in Fall 2007**
Grades served: 9-12
Groups targeted: South Asian youth
Slots in 2007-08: 69
Enrolled: 77
Attendance rate: 56 percent
Met targeted hours: 44 percent
Average hours attended: 42

Culture Connections provides youth development, cultural, and supportive services to high school students. Using an assets-based youth development approach, this center-based program (housed within a church) provides cultural connections, academic support and enrichment, college preparation assistance, internships and mentoring, recreation, and opportunities for leadership development. The Culture Connections founder recognized the need for a program that addressed the particular needs of immigrant and first-generation youth. According to the founder, going to a center staffed by young adults from their culture with whom they can easily relate enables participants to forge strong, positive relationships.

Activities at the Culture Connections center operate on an eight to ten week schedule. Participants choose to attend activities that interest them (e.g., basketball, girls' group). Youth are drawn to the project-based nature of some activities: in the girls' group activity, participants discuss issues that affect them, including for example, their cultures' expectations for women. They create skits, conduct interviews, and film their performances. By participating in activities at the center, youth establish contacts with the program's other resources such as tutoring and college prep. Staff at the center follow participants' progress in school and keep participants informed of college application procedures.

This program uses technology, such as MySpace, Facebook and text messaging, to recruit youth. While the program has tried to use stipends to retain youth, they have not found them to be particularly effective. According to staff, youth stay in the program not for the potential monetary payment but because the activities fit their interests and needs. The program has an open environment, meaning that, even if a student is not in an activity on a particular day, the space is there for them to relax and socialize in a comfortable setting.

LEARN INTERNATIONAL
Queens

Project Overview
Location: Queens
Program type: targeted (civic
      leadership/global citizenship)

Activities
*75 minutes at the end of the school
      day, once a week*
In-class workshops on global and
      international issues
Internships
Planning committees

**Enrollment and Participation
in Fall 2007**
Grades served: 9-12
Groups targeted: all students at host schools
Slots in 2007-08: 30
Enrolled: 25
Attendance rate: 87 percent
Met targeted hours: 79 percent
Average hours attended: 28

Learn International teaches awareness of global issues and encourages participants to engage with the world. Using interactive methods to educate youth about critical international and foreign policy issues, Learn International provides students with opportunities for civic and global engagement. The Learn International workshop format builds participants' communication, problem-solving, and planning skills. The program also aims to develop youth leaders and to prepare youth for college entry and college success.

Highly educated and experienced Learn International staff created the curriculum on which facilitators base their day-to-day Learn International classes in schools around the city. The curriculum is continually updated in response to current events. While pairs of facilitators select the topics they cover in their classes, the curriculum helps them to approach their chosen topic in a way that promotes active learning. One participant said, "We have a lot of interactiveness. We play a lot of [learning] games, and that's how they teach us about different issues." The classes are called workshops and employ problem-solving techniques, active reading, discussion, debate, and role playing.

During the school year, Learn International operates in many schools throughout New York City and holds events and classes at its central office. The environment and needs of the partner school determine how extensive the Learn International program at that school will be: sometimes students participate in Learn International three times a week after school, while in other sites Learn International is a class held during the regular school day. The program visited as part of this study is less extensive than Learn International programs at other schools: the class is held 75 minutes once a week for a semester as an elective or club. Participants can choose to attend Learn International for more than one semester, although many try another activity. Participants from any Learn International program are eligible to participate in central Learn International activities, such as summer leadership internships at the United Nations and Council on Foreign Relations as well as the summit at the end of the year for all Learn International participants. Participants who are active in Learn International volunteer each year to plan the summit and attend a planning retreat.

YOUNG LAWYERS
Brooklyn

Project Overview

Location: center

Program type: targeted (academic and college preparation)

Activities

School Year: Monday-Friday, 3-7 pm; Saturday, 10 am-2 pm

Summer: Monday-Friday, 9 am-4 pm

Study and tutorial center

Academic and life skills workshop

Writing class

Mentoring program

Social/cultural programs and events

SAT preparation

College selection/preparation

Honor council

Constitutional law debates

Enrollment and Participation in Fall 2007

Grades served: 9-12

Groups targeted: talented youth from poor Brooklyn communities

Slots in 2007-08: 70

Enrolled: 94

Attendance rate: 54 percent

Met targeted hours: 90 percent

Average hours attended: 69

Young Lawyers was established to recruit talented youth from underserved Brooklyn and Manhattan communities to prepare them, over four years of high school, to access and succeed in competitive colleges. The program uses intensive basic skills development, tutoring, and homework help, in conjunction with debate training, mentoring, and experience working in New York's top law firms, to inspire and motivate students to remain with the demanding program throughout their ninth- through twelfth-grade years. Over the four-year program, students benefit from individualized support and assistance. During their senior year, staff oversee college applications and decisions.

Young Lawyers offers numerous activities, all of which are mandatory except for the social clubs. Activities are grade-specific, with courses designed to address academic skills and needs and to prepare students to be ready for the internships, debate activities, writing requirements, and college application processes that are mandated program components. Each year, students take a progressively more advanced writing course, in which instructors support students in taking the lead in the teaching process. The program also offers classes in understanding, analyzing, and interpreting the law, beginning with criminal law and advancing to constitutional law. Freshmen take life skills courses, which include four units (colleges and careers, study skills, sex and sexuality, and conflict resolution). As of 2006-07, all participants who were old enough to do so had graduated from high school, 99 percent had gone to college, and 38 percent had gone to graduate school.

YOUTH WORKSHOP
Brooklyn

Project Overview
Location: school
Program type: comprehensive

Activities
Monday-Friday, 5-9 pm
Basketball
Step team
Youth council
Youth leadership team

Enrollment and Participation in Fall 2007
Grades served: K-12
Groups targeted: all students at host schools
Slots in 2007-08: 150
Enrolled: 154
Attendance rate: 99 percent
Met targeted hours: 70 percent
Average hours attended: 45

The Youth Workshop high school program operates alongside other DYCD-funded programs in the same school. The provider also operates as a Beacon site and, for the last eight years, has been known in the community simply as "the Beacon." The provider has two additional OST programs at the same location, which serve elementary- and middle-grades youth.

Distinct opportunities exist for high school students within the program structure, including a substantial voice in programming decisions and both paid and volunteer positions working with the younger children on site. In order to participate in the youth leadership component of the program, which allows participants to help shape program activities, participants must volunteer a minimum number of hours with elementary- or middle-grades students. Once participants have established themselves as reliable volunteers, they are eligible to apply for one of the program's paid student positions.

Program staff emphasize that they take youth's opinions and suggestions seriously. As the program director explained, "We've never had a problem with recruitment. … Keeping them here is the challenge, but when you let them have a meaningful contribution and it is *their* program…it's not a problem." Engaged participants often recruit their friends.

Although the program is funded only by DYCD, the Beacon's longevity in the community has led to what the program director describes as many rich partnerships with other organizations. Some of the partnerships have allowed high school youth to conduct service projects: for example, they fund-raised for a breast cancer walk and organized a haunted house for younger children. The program has also offered workshops addressing health issues.