Advancing After-School Programming

Since 1996, Denver Public Schools (DPS) and community partners have provided after-school programs to help students develop healthy minds and bodies. The school doors remain open, and the students keep learning — through academic support, technology training, creative activities and physical education. Since 2003, the Lights On After School initiative has offered funding and program support to all DPS elementary and middle schools. Schools with fledgling after-school programs can use these funds to fill gaps in their programming, explore new partnerships and streamline their program coordination. Lights On After School is supported by three funding partners — Denver Public Schools (DPS) Foundation, Mile High United Way and the City of Denver who work closely with the DPS Department of Extended Learning.

Meeting the Need

As articulated by parents, teachers and young people themselves, elementary and middle school students need a safe and enriching place to be after school hours. All students need opportunities to engage in positive youth development through quality activities that foster the growth of the whole child. Positive relationships with caring adults nurture this development and are a hallmark of quality after-school programs.

Quality after-school programs are designed to meet specific needs of the students they serve. Students with limited financial resources can enjoy the benefits of low-cost or free programs. Community partners can help redefine a school building as a place not only for education, but for fun, enriching activities that spark students’ imagination.

After-School Programs In Denver

“Denver is committed to advancing after-school programs as an effective strategy to enhance academic achievement. After-school programs create an important bridge between academics and enrichment, bringing real-world relevance to school lessons.”

— Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper

“It’s simple, if I didn’t attend the afterschool programs ... I would be in a gang. The classes kept me out of trouble and helped me establish goals.”

Josh, 13
After-school Participant at Catholic Charities’ Rishel Beacon Program
Demonstrating Impact

Results of a 4-year longitudinal study\(^1\) have consistently demonstrated positive impact on student engagement and academic achievement, with increased school-day attendance and higher standardized test scores on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) for participating students.

2006-2007 Evaluation Results

Students participating in after-school programs performed statistically better than non-participants, specifically:

- **elementary participants** had higher reading CSAP scores (540 compared to 531)
- **middle school participants** had higher reading CSAP scores (595 compared to 563) and higher writing CSAP scores (511 compared to 482)
- both elementary and middle school participants have higher regular school-day attendance (an average of 2-3% higher)

Impact of Afterschool Programs Over Time

Students participating for multiple years in varied after-school programs perform higher on their CSAP test scores.

Writing CSAP Scores for Participants

(The same pattern was also observed for reading and math.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>One year</th>
<th>Two years</th>
<th>Three years</th>
<th>Did not attend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>494</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>511</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>519</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>511</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Three-year group was not analyzed in 2003-2004 and in 2006-2007 due to small sample size.

Average School-day Attendance for Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Did not attend</th>
<th>Attended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Denver Public Schools Department of Extended Learning and Community Schools Out-of-School Time Evaluation Report 2006-2007 School Year October 2007 Prepared by JVA Consulting, LLC
Three Levels of Quality School-based Programming

Quality comprehensive programs represent the ideal after-school programming, serving a large number of students daily throughout the school year, with a variety of activities.

Programs of all sizes have value — not all schools have a need for comprehensive-level programming. However, all students can benefit — the importance of keeping students safe, and also providing creative, academic and social challenges cannot be underestimated. The majority of school-based programs provide youth with free/low cost programming in one or more of five basic program areas: Academics, Arts/culture, Technology, Leadership and Recreation.

In 2006, Denver collected information on more than 700 program locations. Information is available in a searchable database at www.denvergov.org/denvermaps/afterschool.

BASIC
Limited, intermittent classes operate independently
Low level tracking (attendance)

MODERATE
At least 2 types of program areas
Some continuity throughout school year
At least one community-based organization partner
Classes loosely coordinated by designated staff person
Mid level tracking system (attendance, surveys)

COMPREHENSIVE
Programming throughout school year and summer
Dedicated program coordinator
Partnerships between school, school district and community-based organization(s)
Links to various city and state wide groups, initiatives, etc.
Professional, independent evaluation measures program impact
Programming 5 days/week, at least 36 weeks
Elementary School programs offer 3 - 5 core areas, and 15+ hours/week
Middle School programs offer 5 core areas, and 20+ hours/week
Program Costs

Program models and costs vary. To serve 100 elementary students with comprehensive after-school programming, costs range between $100,000 - $200,000. It costs approximately $300,000 to serve 300 middle school students.

These costs include the comprehensive after-school program, a summer camp and parent education. The costs per student range from $5.60 - $11.20/day. These programs have a diversified funding base, with support from federal, state, and local government, as well as foundations, business and private donors.

Making Great Things Possible

An investment in comprehensive school-based after school programs delivers opportunities - providing high quality academic support and enrichment to youth and keeping them safe and actively engaged during the crucial out-of-school hours. Youth who could not otherwise afford these opportunities can also enjoy quality summer camps. Their families can benefit from much-needed language acquisition support and parent training.

How Funding is Allocated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Services</td>
<td>$180,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent/Family Services</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Operations</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

How You Can Help . . .

Support quality programming by encouraging parents, businesses and others to volunteer in after-school programs and by encouraging youth to participate in programs.

Advocate by informing your neighbor, colleague, community leader and/or elected officials about the benefits and impact of after-school programming.


Contributions may be eligible for the Colorado Child Care tax credit.

To Learn More About . . .

Lights On After School programs – contact the Denver Public Schools Department of Extended Learning at 720-424-8256.

For City of Denver partnership information, contact 720-913-0900 or visit www.denvergov.org/after schoolinitiatives.