Quality Afterschool
National Partnership Study

Collected data from 55 sites with promising practices in math, reading, science, the arts, technology, or homework help across the U.S.

Sites were:
- Urban and rural
- School- and community-based
- Operational for minimally 3 years
- Increases in student achievement over 2-3 years
Data Collected

- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Surveys
  (645 afterschool staff, 524 teachers and 2600 parents)
- Student achievement
- Observations
- Document review
- Program Coordinators
- Site Coordinators
- Instructors/Teachers
  (afterschool and regular school day)
- Principals
- Parents
- Community Partners

ILLINOIS QUALITY AFTERSCHOOL
Findings: Staff Education and Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yrs Experience in Afterschool</th>
<th>Instructors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 to 2 years</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 to 5 years</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 to 9 years</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10+ years</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did not report</td>
<td>4%</td>
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</tbody>
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Findings: Internal Structure

- Provide academic content instruction for 45 – 105 minutes daily, on average 3 – 4 days a week
- Goal oriented programs with strategic plans to achieve goals
- Emphasis on academic improvements, particularly basic skills
- Focus on developing higher order thinking skills
- Emphasis on exposures, enrichments and personal experiences
Findings: Building Relationships with Students

Engage the students through activities

- Provide students with opportunities for social development (groupings, collaborations, cooperative learning)
- Provide democracy in the classroom
- Provide motivational support
- Provide character building program
- Provide high expectations
- Provide consistent rules

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Findings: Instruction

- Show broad knowledge of and alignment with standards
- Use intentional cross-content integration of curriculum
- Use hands-on methodology and project-based learning
- Use scaffolding techniques correlated with grouping strategies
- Constantly shift instructional strategies
  
guided work → group → pairs work →
self-paced work → guided work

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Findings: Instruction cont.

• Focus on actual practices to motivate student interest and make learning fun

• Emphasize students making connections on their own

• Use “real world” approach to infuse learning process with cultural and social experiences relevant to students’ lives
Findings: Links to School Day

- Mostly casual forms of communication with day school teachers on an "as needed" basis
- Some more intentional, especially with district run programs
- Homework is usually the key topic
Findings: Professional Development

- Most common: discipline and classroom management training
- District related programs generally had more PD opportunities
- Staff reported training was useful
- Training most useful when it was directly applicable to afterschool setting
Findings: Professional Development cont.

- Over 50% of programs offered training more than four times/year
- Only 10% of staff participated in trainings two or more times
- 58% – 78% never participated in PD offered by program
  - 32% rarely participated
- Technology had the highest participation rate (50% of staff participated two or more times a year, 42% never did)
Findings: Family Engagement

- Program communicates with families using a variety of strategies
- Program staff offer programming for families designed to increase engagement
- Families feel positive about program’s information sharing
- Families have high value for the program
Findings: Community Involvement

- When program content emphasis on math, reading, and homework there was minimal connection with community (service learning, trash recycle, volunteers, etc.)

- When program content emphasis on arts, science, and technology connect with community through resources (arts residence program, dell computers, bring in science experts, etc.)
Findings: Evaluative Structure

- External evaluations program-wide, but infrequent
- Little rigorous evidence
- Internal evaluation for program improvement, included:
  - monitoring student progress
  - measuring program growth
  - researching program needs
  - defining areas for professional development
  - gauging program impact
- Content-based evaluation non-existent
- Student assessment informal, i.e., spot checking, questioning, and observing student understandings

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