

Koy Kunkel_SC

From: applications.administrator@capitol.local
Sent: Friday, February 12, 2021 11:10 AM
To: Senate Redistricting
Subject: INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input
Attachments: ENRICH OST Best Practice Study by UH 10_2_15.pdf

Date: 2021-02-12
First Name: Diane
Last Name: Olmos-Guzman
Title: Precinct 27 Chairperson
Organization: Greater Houston LULAC Council 4967
Address: [REDACTED]
City: Houston
State: TX
Zipcode: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: ALL

Message:

The State Board of Education should be redistricted for more Latino representation in Senatorial District 6. My concern is that we lack Equitable, Quality, Education and exemplar Out-of-School Time programming for our neighborhood public schools.

Since 2016, I have provided youth enrichment services in HISD and with the Harris County Department of Education in neighborhood public schools only to realize a great disparity and inequality, or a minimal amount of quality programming that expose our students to new educational content offering the skills required for college and career success.

For this reason and with the attachments herein, I request redistricting of the State Board of Education for more inclusion of Latino representation to affect the lives of students attending neighborhood schools.

Sincerely,
Diane Olmos-Guzman

[REDACTED]

**BEST PRACTICES IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL
PROGRAMMING IN HARRIS COUNTY:
A CASE STUDY OF ENRICH PARTNER
SITE SUMMER AND AFTER-SCHOOL
PROGRAMMING**

Catherine Horn and Toya Conston

September 2015

Institute for Educational Policy Research and Evaluation
University of Houston, College of Education

About the Institute for Educational Policy Research and Evaluation

The Institute for Education Policy Research and Evaluation (IEPRE) at the University of Houston's College of Education is a group of scholars and educational decision makers focused on improving P-20 education. IEPRE engages in evaluation of P-20 educational policy initiatives and translates research into evidence-based practice for decision makers, paying particular attention to the needs of historically underserved populations. Through its research, policy evaluation, and dissemination of evidence-based practice, IEPRE hopes to improve educational quality and student success from preschool through college. For further information, visit <https://www.coe.uh.edu/research/institutes-centers/iepre/>.

About This Study

This study was undertaken through funding provided by the Harris County Department of Education. All results and conclusions are strictly the authors'.

About the Authors

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Best Practices in Out-of-School Programming in Harris County: A Case Study of ENRICH Partner Site Summer and After-School Programming

Catherine Horn and Toya Conston

Institute for Educational Policy Research and Evaluation, University of Houston College of Education September 2015

Introduction

Out-of-school programming serves an essential role in the lives of young people. While much is known about the positive effects of such programs and the associated contributions leading to those outcomes, it nonetheless remains important to continue to document best practice, especially in a localized frame.

Objective

The purpose of the study was to identify and describe the best practice strategies and program practices used by a sample of six out-of-school programs in Harris County. Specifically, this evaluation sought to answer three questions:

1. Currently, what are the best practices being delivered by the primary after-school service models throughout Harris County?
2. What strategies are being used to collect data, align service delivery with areas of need, operate cost-effective programs, and effectively measure outcomes based on five program elements?
3. What can be learned from these conditions toward the dissemination, replication, and possible scaling of best practices?

These programs were selected via a multi-step process and represented a peer-assessed group of programs having demonstrated “best practices.”

Major Findings

The sites in this study developed and nurtured student strengths through their active and collaborative connections with the families, communities, and schools they serve. Further, they have carefully attended to maximizing program awareness in ways that have proven advantageous in maintaining a fully subscribed enrollment rate. This study also affirms the importance of designing and implementing a curriculum that provides diverse opportunities (both academic and social) that align with and extend the school day learning that students experience. In sum, while each of the case study sites included in this study has a unique mission and purpose – and opportunities to continue to grow – they share a fundamental commitment to align resources with the programmatic and staffing contributions needed to achieve desired outcomes.

Recommendations

The findings from this case study also suggest areas that other sites interested in improving practice of this study might concentrate.

- Programs interested in high quality programs must set clear goals and empower staff to carry out those goals with independence and authority.
- High quality organizations seek to hire staff with a diverse set of experiences and relevant and complimentary sets of expertise.
- Most of these exemplar after-school programs placed a strong emphasis on the completion of homework and tutoring.
- It is important to utilize summer staff and volunteers to help facilitate program goals.
- The relationship cultivated with schools is invaluable because of the amount of information that can be relayed between the school day and after-school program.

Best Practices in Out-of-School Programming in Harris County: A Case Study of ENRICH Partner Site Summer and After-School Programming

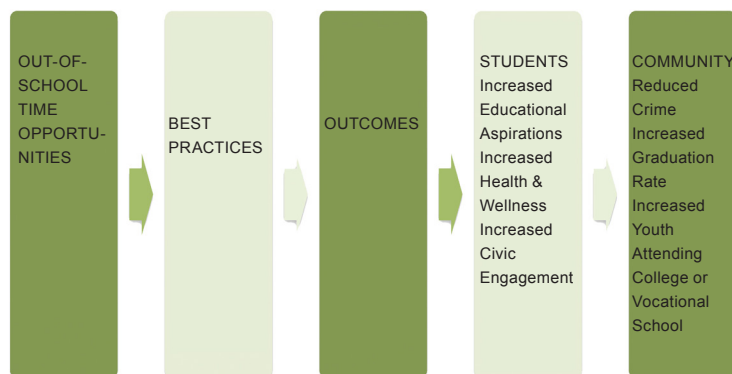
INTRODUCTION

Out-of-school¹ programming serves an essential role in the lives of young people. As summarized by the Afterschool Alliance (2014), among the many positive outcomes associated with after-school and summer programs, participation is linked to improved school attendance, behavior, and coursework (e.g., Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010) and reduction in self-destructive behaviors (e.g., drug use, underage drinking) (e.g., Heckman & Masterov, 2007; Harvard Family Research Project, 2003). Moreover, both anecdotal and empirical studies document the particular importance of out-of-school programming for traditionally underserved students (e.g., Afterschool Alliance, 2014). While much is known about the positive effects of such programs and the associated contributions leading to those outcomes, it nonetheless remains important to continue to document best practice, especially in a localized frame. Said differently, because after-school and summer programs are, in most cases, “primarily local institutions intended to respond to local needs” (Fitzpatrick, 2012, p. 11), careful context-based assessment is continuously warranted to understand what works, in what ways, and under what conditions. To that end, this evaluation sought to answer three questions:

1. Currently, what are the best practices being delivered by the primary² after-school service models throughout Harris County?
2. What strategies are being used to collect data, align service delivery with areas of need, operate cost-effective programs, and effectively measure outcomes based on five program elements?
3. What can be learned from these conditions toward the dissemination, replication, and possible scaling of best practices?

The study’s focus on best practices builds from two important frames used by the Harris County Department of Education’s (HCDE) Center for Afterschool, Summer, and Expanded Learning (CASE for Kids). CASE for Kids’ mission, “to strengthen, support, and sustain, after-school,” focuses on developing opportunities for the greater Houston community to work collaboratively toward these ends. As part of that effort, the CASE for Kids began ENRICH – Evaluating the Needs, Resources, and Initiatives in the Communities of Houston – to assess how out-of-school programming in Harris County impacts participants, their families, and the broader community (HCDE, n.d.). The ENRICH project has sought to understand, in a variety of ways, the incremental contributions of out-of-school programming toward broad individual and social outcomes of interest and, as Figure 1 represents, the integral nature of documenting best practices.

Figure 1: Contributions of Best Practices to Enhancing the Student and Community Impacts Through of Out-of-School Opportunities



Source: HCDE (n.d.)

¹ The term, “out-of-school” is used throughout the document to represent “formal and structured opportunities for school-aged youth that can complement the regular school day” (United Way, 2011). Where studies cited in the review of literature focus specifically on after-school (versus other out-of-school opportunities), that term is used accordingly. The term “summer program” is used throughout the document to represent school-based, community-based, fee-based, non-tuition based, for-profit, and national organization affiliated programs that are administered during the months of June, July and August. The term “after-school program” is used throughout the document to represent school-based, community-based, fee-based, non-tuition based, for-profit, and national organization affiliated programs that are administered during the academic school year (August through May).

² The term “primary” is used to reflect the broad categories of service provision types in the area including school-based, community-based, fee-based, non-tuition based, for-profit, and national organization affiliated.

Similarly, the work of ENRICH has also been guided by a literature-based understanding of the contributions of best practices toward enhancing student and community impacts associated with out-of-school opportunities (Figure 2). This study, then, used both to dictate the questions being asked as well as the analytical lens used to interpret findings.

Figure 2: Contributions of Best Practices to Enhancing the Student and Community Impacts of Out-of-School



Source: Harris County Department of Education (n.d.)

This document is organized as follows. First, a synthesis of the related literature is presented with particular focus on what is empirically known nationally with respect to best practice in out-of-school programming. Next, a description of the participating sites is presented followed by a detailed description of the data collection strategies and methodological approaches. The study then presents its findings followed by a discussion centered on key components necessary for after-school programs to implement best practices as well as considerations of scalability of the case study program findings

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Especially in the past decade, there has been an increase in research focused on two areas related to out-of-school programming: 1) outcomes associated with participation in out-of-school programs (see, for example, the meta-analytical work of Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010 and the review of literature by the Harvard Family Research Project, 2003); and 2) best practice strategies that, when implemented with efficacy, contribute to positive outcomes (see, for example, Huang & Dietel, 2011). This review of literature, then, organizes around those two areas and provides a synthesis of the related empirical findings. Two caveats are important here. First, while the literature on best practices and outcomes is treated in the study as discrete, the two in fact intertwine in important ways. Second, this review is not intended to be an exhaustive representation of the literature but instead a summary of consistent key findings.

OUTCOMES ASSOCIATED WITH OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNING

Broadly described, empirical work identifies that structured after-school time has a positive influence on the development of youth (Gayl, 2004). Specifically, research in the field highlights the positive effects of after-school programs related to academic outcomes, prevention outcomes, and overall youth development (Cross, Gottfredson, Wilson, Rorie, & Connell, 2010; Harvard Family Research Project, 2003).

Improved Academic Outcomes

Table 1 presents a summary of the academic outcomes linked to participation in out-of-school programming. In general, these results reflect increased performance in and enhanced attitude toward school as well as reductions in academically-related disciplinary challenges.

Table 1: Positive Academic Outcomes Empirically Associated with Participation in Out-of-School Programming

Better attitudes toward school and higher educational aspirations	Better performance in school, as measured by achievement test scores and grades.
Higher school attendance (as measured by attendance and tardiness)	Less disciplinary action (e.g., suspension, expulsion)
Academic involvement	Academic motivation
College attendance	Homework completion
Lower rates of course failure	

Harvard Family Research Project (2003)

Using qualitative survey data, standardized test scores and school grades, Cooper, Valentine, Nye, and Lindsay (1999) studied the responses of 424 students in middle and high school. Their findings demonstrated that increased time in extracurricular activities and other structured groups was associated with higher test scores and class grades. A study by Posner and Vandell (1999) demonstrated that involvement in afterschool activities positively affected student academic performance and emotional adjustment over time. They discovered that students who participated in after-school programs spent more time on academic and extracurricular activities compared with students with no structured after-school programming. Shernoff (2010) used grades as a predictor of academic success and found that engagement in after-school programming contributed to higher grades in math and English over involvement in activities outside of afterschool programming. Additionally, out-of-school programs have proven to have strong positive effects on low-achieving or at-risk students specifically in reading and math (Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp, Snow, & Martin-Glenn, 2004).

Improved Prevention Outcomes

Table 2 similarly presents a summary of the prevention outcomes associated with participation in out-of-school programming. Taken together, studies have documented reductions in a broad range of risky behaviors, including unsafe sex practices as well as abuse of drugs and alcohol. Many after-school programs provide structured opportunities for students to engage with their peers and other adults in positive ways. This supervised time after school leads to positive health outcomes for its participants.

Table 2: Improved Prevention Outcomes Empirically Associated with Participation in Out-of-School Programming

Avoidance of delinquency (including criminal arrest)	Avoidance of drug and alcohol use (including cigarette smoking)
Avoidance of sexual activity	Avoidance of violence
Knowledge about drug and alcohol use (including perceived social benefits)	Knowledge of sexuality issues (including attitudes toward sex)
Reduced pregnancy rates	Use of safe sex practices

Harvard Family Research Project (2003)

Vandell, Reisner, and Pierce's (2007) study on the outcomes linked to high-quality afterschool programs, for example, reported that participating elementary school students demonstrated reductions in misconduct over a two-year period. The same study also showed significant reductions in the drug and alcohol use of middle school students participating in after-school programs. Reaching similar conclusions, Njapa-Minyard (2010) found that with older youth, involvement in after-school programming decreased the likelihood of risky behaviors such as the use of recreational drugs and teenage pregnancy.

Overall Youth Development

Table 3 represents a summary of the youth outcomes associated with participation in out-of-school programming. Importantly, these skills reflect both technical and psychosocial skills.

Table 3: Improved Youth Development Outcomes Empirically Associated with Participation in Out-of-School Programming

Communication skills	Community involvement
Computer skills	Confidence/self-esteem
Conflict resolution	Decision making
Decreased aggression	Desire to help others
Exposure to new experiences	General well-being
Goal setting	Interactions/relationships with adults
Interactions/relationships with peers	Job experience/skills
Leadership skills	Maturity
Money management skills	Opportunities for leadership roles
Overall happiness/well-being	Performance skills (e.g., music)
Planning/organizing	Positive attitude about the future
Positive behavior	Problem solving
Productive use of leisure time	Projected success in career/the future/college
Public speaking skills	Respect for diversity
Respect for others	Social/interpersonal skills
Task Orientation	Understanding of a value system
World view broadened	

Harvard Family Research Project (2003)

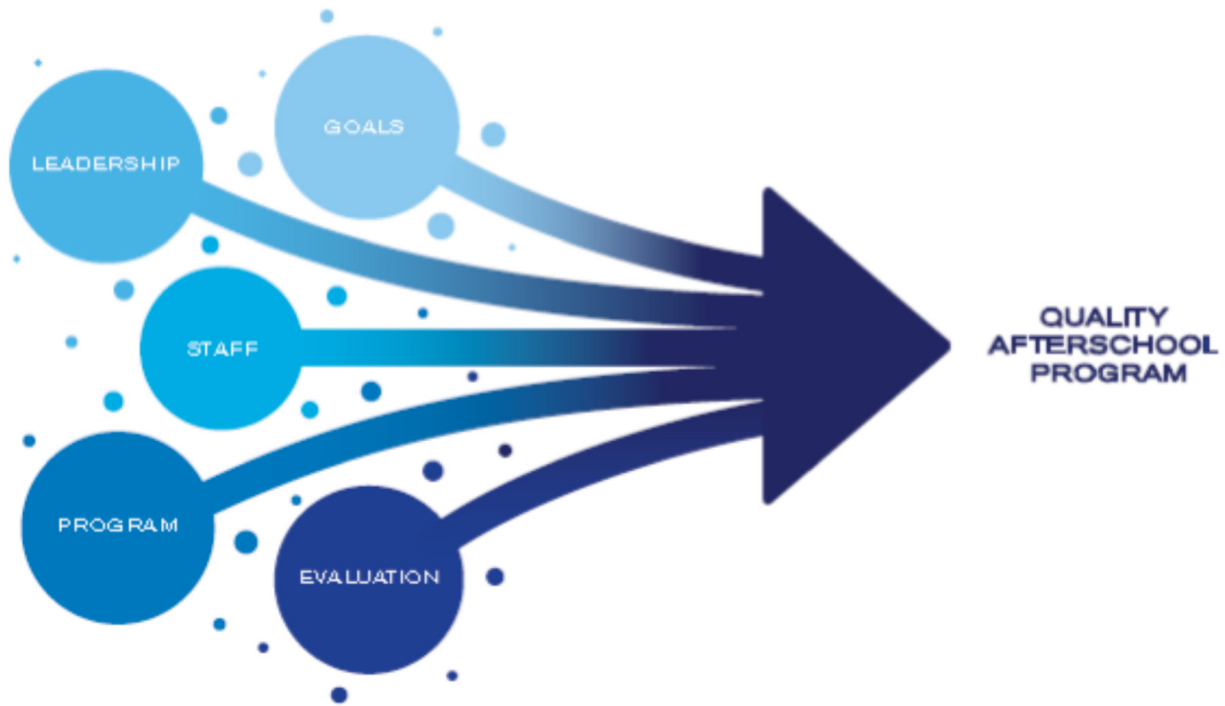
Weiss, Little, Bouffard, Deschenes, and Malone (2009), for example, found that exposure to out-of-school programs built motivation, engagement, social skills, and the overall health of the students involved. In their study, Durlak and Weissberg (2007) discuss that youth who demonstrated involvement in after-school programming showed positive social behaviors. Shernoff (2010), as another example, found evidence to support that participants engaged in after-school programs showed better psychosocial adjustment and social skills than nonparticipants.

Taken together, then, the literature assessing the outcomes associated with formal out-of-school programs suggests that well-executed opportunities lead to strong positive outcomes for students. In considering the process that results in those outcomes, the study now briefly reviews the literature related to best practices for out-of-school programs.

BEST PRACTICES FOR AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Across empirical studies, several practices have consistently emerged in successful programs (Figure 3). In summary, these programs have 1) clearly articulated and supported goals and experienced, effective leadership and staff to carry them out, 2) curriculum design that provides opportunities for students to study and learn, and 3) use of reflective practice for continuous program improvement through the use of both formative and summative evaluations.

Figure 3: National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) Afterschool Program Quality Model



Huang and Dietel (2011)

Clear Goals and Effective Personnel

In order to run effective after-school programs, empirical evidence documents that it is crucial to have clearly articulated goals, a plan for reaching them, and the fiscal stability to enact that plan (e.g., Birmingham, Pechman, Russell, & Mielke, 2005). Huang and Dietel (2011, p. 3), for example, found across several studies that the best programs had clearly defined goals in a written plan, curricular design and specific practices aligned to program goals, and regular opportunities for formative and summative reflection on the extent to which goals were being met. In support, best practice programs also had trained and competent individuals carrying out these goals. Such staff had, for example, higher degree attainment and lower turnover relative to their peers and access to professional development, particularly in high need areas such as reading and math. In a research project on implementation quality and positive experiences in after-school programs, for example, Cross et al. (2010) concluded “staff quality might be the single most important characteristic of program success because the quality of program staff seemed to affect other aspects of implementation” (p. 378). The same study observed that well-trained, highly educated staff members created a positive social environment, delivered engaging content, and established effective management practices.

QUALITY CURRICULUM³ AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

As the Harvard Family Research Project (2008) summarizes, quality curriculum includes several common components. First, the curriculum provides the appropriate structure and supervision as the critical antecedent to students benefitting from the opportunities to learn. Quality curriculum also provides opportunities to both align with and in many cases move beyond the school day curriculum. As an example, Birmingham et al. (2005) found that for many of the students involved, the most effective programs were ones that exposed them to experiences they otherwise would not have encountered. These included activities in the arts, career exploration, and organized sports.

³ While outside the scope of this review, an important line of research concentrating on the relative influence of exposure or “dosage” to a curriculum is also emerging. See, for example, Durlak, Weissberg, and Pachan (2010).

As another example, Durlak and Weisberg's (2007) meta-analysis found that effective programs utilized strategies characterized by the following (Harvard Family Research Project, 2008, p. 8):

- sequenced (using a sequenced set of activities designed to achieve skill development objectives)
- active (using active forms of learning to help youth develop skills)
- focused (program components devoted to developing personal or social skills)
- explicit (targeting specific personal or social skills).

“Moreover, the researchers found that, as a group, programs missing any of these four characteristics did not achieve positive results” (Harvard Family Research Project, 2008, p. 8). Finally, research on best practice has identified the importance of opportunities to engage in reflective practice, including both formative and summative assessment as well as internal and external evaluation. Such efforts are often built from important and strong partnerships with schools, families, and the community (e.g., Huang & Dietel, 2011). With this review as frame, then, we turn to a description of the current study.

METHODOLOGICAL AND ANALYTICAL APPROACH

The purpose of this study was to document best practices at a variety of out-of-school sites. This section provides a synopsis of ways in which participating sites were identified and data were collected as well as the analytical approach used.

PARTICIPATING CASE STUDY SITES

The goal of the study was to identify and describe the best practice strategies and program practices used by a sample of six⁴ out-of-school programs (also referred to as sites) by observing the summer and afterschool programs, interviewing site coordinators, and administering surveys to staff. These programs were selected via a three step process. First, sites available for participation were categorized by program type. Sites represented a variety of out-of-school types, including school-based, community-based, fee-based, non-tuition based, for-profit, and national organization affiliated. Second, a total of 50 sites were invited to attend an informational meeting that described the study and the level of involvement that would be required to participate. Participants self-selected to attend the informational meeting, creating a convenience sample. Third, a peer review comprised of HCDE staff was conducted to identify programs that have displayed “best practices.” These sites were invited to participate, and a self-selection process determined the programs included in this study. Sites were invited to participate in the study using the following protocol:

- Introductory meeting with Harris County Department of Education Research Administrators
- Follow-up e-mails to identify site coordinators for site visits and to identify a key local contact staff member to assist with site-visit arrangements
- A follow-up e-mail that included a brief summary of the study and a sample site-visit agenda and schedule
- Communication with school personnel regarding the site-visit scheduling preferences and questions or concerns about site visits

Through this process, the final program sites to be included in the study were ultimately identified.

DATA COLLECTION AND INSTRUMENTATION

During the summer and fall of 2014, researchers visited the 6 sites and collected data through observations⁵, interviews, surveys⁶, and Members of the site-visit team prepared summary reports that described each site's organizational structure and processes as well as key program strategies and characteristics. Using these summary reports, survey responses from staff, and related interview results, researchers developed case profiles that summarize promising practices as well as strategies employed for recruitment, retention, and community involvement.

OBSERVATIONS

Multiple hour observations at each site were conducted during the summer and fall. (A list of scheduled dates and visits can be found in Appendix A.7.) Observations were conducted using the Out-of-School-Time (OST) Observation Instrument. This instrument provides a tool for measuring observable indicators of positive youth development and OST program features known to contribute to positive youth outcomes.

⁴ There were no fall observations for the Fee-based/Recreation Center location because they did not offer after-school programs at their site; however, researchers were redirected to observe, administer the survey and interview the site coordinator at a second site of the same type in the fall.

Specific information that was gathered from observations included the following:

- General background information on the after-school program
- Staff and student background information (e.g., numbers of each, number of parents present)
- Program physical environment (e.g., space, materials)
- Subject-area tutorial activities observed
- Subject content areas covered
- Instructional practices used
- Non-tutorial academic activities observed (e.g., project-based learning)

The OST Observation Instrument can be found in Appendix B.

INTERVIEWS⁸

During the final wave of data collection, individual interviews with site coordinators (or staff leadership responsible for the implementation of the program) were scheduled. Interviews were conducted at an off-site location of the site coordinator's choice and were conducted using a protocol modified from the TEA. Interviews took approximately 60-90 minutes to complete. A total of 4 interviews were conducted. A list of interview questions can be found in Appendix C.

Interview topics covered the following areas:

- Program background and demographic information
- Experience and primary responsibilities of site coordinator
- Content and delivery knowledge, methods, and alignment
- Organizational structure (e.g., staffing, scheduling, management, resources and budget)
- External communication and support (e.g., school, parents, community)
- Student/adult interactions
- Program outcomes.

SURVEYS OF SUMMER AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM STAFF

All staff during both summer and fall 2014 were given an opportunity to complete a survey of their experiences working at their designated site. The surveys were modified versions of The After-School Corporation (TASC) survey instruments used in the National Partnership study (Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2004). One version of the survey was for summer staff, and another version was for fall after-school staff. A version of the survey can be found in Appendix D.

Surveys were administered during June and July 2014 for the summer wave of data collection and October and November 2014 for the fall waves of data collection. Surveys were available in paper as well as electronic format. In the summer, sites that preferred paper surveys had the researcher administer the survey during the second site visit. Site coordinators received the survey link and administered it to their staff if they preferred the electronic version.

Participants received incentives for completing the survey in fall. Once surveys were completed in the summer and fall, data were compiled and input into Survey Monkey. The number of surveys distributed at each center varied depending on the size of the after-school program and availability of respondent populations. Site coordinators, who administered the survey link, were encouraged to collect as many surveys as possible. The survey sample, therefore, was treated as a convenience sample, and the response may not be representative of the entire population of staff at the sites. Overall there was a 100% response rate for summer out-of-school program staff and 87% for fall after-school program staff (total N=71).

⁵ All data collected and analyzed for this project followed procedures approved by the University of Houston's Committees for the Protection of Human Subjects, protocol number 14287-01. See Appendix F.

⁶ For interested readers, individual item responses disaggregated by summer and fall respondents can be found in Appendix E.

⁷ There were no fall observations for the Fee-Based Recreation Center Program because they did not offer after-school programs at their site; however, researchers were directed to observe, administer the survey, and interview the site coordinator at the Fee-Based Program Provided at School Campus in the fall.

⁸ The site coordinator for the School-Based Program Run by an External Partner had scheduling conflicts with the interview schedule; therefore, the interview data did not contribute to case study summaries. The Fee-Based Program Provided at School Campus had co-site directors; therefore, they were interviewed together, and their combined responses contributed to case summaries and recommendations for future practices.

ANALYTICAL APPROACH

This study used a qualitative case study approach to analyzing the data collected across multiple sources. Specifically, the study applied the approach of naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and began with a review of data within each case to develop emerging themes. Successively connected and refined themes across cases were identified in order to ultimately understand the interrelated categories and their interpretations. The study worked to ensure “trustworthiness” through the use of triangulation with multiple sources of data and through member checking among team members.

In this context, then, we first present a brief introductory description of each program based on artifacts collected from each site (i.e. website and brochures), interviews with site coordinators, and on-site observations.

AT A GLANCE - SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAM RUN BY AN EXTERNAL PARTNER

The School-Based Program Run by an External Partner in this best practices study is located in a suburban middle school setting where participants have access to school facilities, including the cafeteria, library, several classrooms, and the grounds, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the fall and from 9:00-6:00 in the summer. There is a morning program that is administered during the summer; however, morning programs were not observed in the fall. Children from the resident middle school are either dropped off or bused to the site in the summer. In the fall, children from the resident middle school are typically released from class at 2:50 p.m. to the cafeteria for the afterschool program. Parents are either required to pick up their children or arrange for bus transportation from the summer and afterschool programs. Certified teachers and college students, who serve as instructors, provide the summer and afterschool instruction. On average, the student to instructor ratio is about 20:1 with mixed-grade groupings.

General Background and History

- This School-Based Program Run by an External Partner is administered through the federally funded 21st CCLC Program to provide academic enrichment opportunities, including instruction in core academic subjects and a broad array of enrichment activities, to complement regular academic programs. These broad-based after-school programs have a core academic component and additional components in areas such as art, music, drama, technology education, and counseling (Parsad, Lewis, 2& Tice, 009, p. 1).
- This program model provides academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children (U. S. Department of Education, 2015).

Program Structure and Process

- HCDE’s CASE department administers the grant by providing program guidance, supervision, professional development and technical assistance and general grant oversight.
- During the summer, the center provides a varied schedule that consists of academically related and enrichment activities, including arts, sciences, physical exercise, and social studies.
- During the fall, the center provides approximately 1 hour of homework assistance, 1 hour of academics, and 1 hour of enrichment.
- Certified teachers and college students serve as instructors.
- On-site activity and implementation decision-making is described as centralized, with the site coordinator making decisions based on the guidance, supervision and professional development provided through CASE.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- The summer and afterschool programs use a balance of academic and social learning with a strong emphasis on enhancing what the students learn at their grade level.
- Homework assistance is the main vehicle to align school day⁹ and afterschool efforts.
- The after-school program provides academic sessions in core subject areas.
- Enrichment activities include sign language, hip-hop dance, and art.

⁹ The term, “school day,” refers throughout the study to the primary elementary or secondary campus a student attends for his/her formal educational experiences.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- Recruitment and retention are not viewed to be a challenge. There has been an increase in student enrollment and low student turnover.
- Government officials, local universities, and various community vendors were observed to be involved with the summer and after-school program.

In Their Own Words¹⁰

The {School-Based Program Run by an External Partner} provides after-school programs and academic enrichment for ... students on weekdays throughout the school year and early summer.

In addition, through a partnership with Pearland's Adult Reading Center, the after-school programs will provide numerous services for students' families, including reading and financial literacy programs and GED and ESL classes.

{The Program} also offers literacy, math and science enrichment, tutoring and homework help.

AT A GLANCE - FOR-PROFIT CHILDCARE PROGRAM SERVING SCHOOL AGE YOUTH

The best-practice organization representing for-profit childcare (FPCC) serving school-age youth is in a suburb of Houston, Texas. The programs are located in the on-site facility, which includes a cafeteria, several classrooms, and playgrounds. Since this FPCC is a corporately operated entity, all facilities maintain the same facilities layout. The after-school program is open from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. The center opens its doors for the summer program from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Children from the local elementary schools are bused to the community center for the afterschool program. Parents are required to pick up their children from the afterschool centers. On average, the student to instructor ratio is about 12:1 with mixed-grade groupings.

General Background and History

- Fee-based stand-alone day care programs refer to after-school day care for which parents paid fees. These programs operate primarily to provide adult supervision for students after school, although the programs may incorporate homework help, recreational activities, and cultural enhancement activities such as arts and crafts.
- These programs may not have an academic focus or goals (although some may); instead, they emphasize recreational and cultural activities. They are seldom aligned with academic instruction provided during the regular school day, although many do provide homework assistance (Parsad, Lewis, & Tice, 2009, p. 1-2).
- The period of operation for typical, fee-based, day care programs is between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. This site provides facilities and effective educational programs for children 6 weeks through 12 years of age.
- Licensing is required for day care program staff, and many also require child development associate degrees.
- Students served vary by cultural and ethnic background with approximately 50% of students at this site described as low-income.

Program Structure and Process

- The summer program has a designated curriculum that is created out of their corporate office.
- During the fall, each center provides 1 hour of homework assistance, 1 hour of academics, and 1 hour of enrichment.
- Adults and some college students serve as staff and instructors at the site.
- Decision-making is described as centralized, with major decisions being handed down from the corporate office or from the site director

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- During the summer, the curriculum used is based on the integration of science, math, and reading.
- The strongest emphasis in the afterschool program has been on improving academic skills by focusing on homework help and tutoring.
- The use of specific projects and experiments to illustrate concepts is common.

¹⁰ Here and throughout the paper, the web pages cited for the "In Their Own Words" sections will remain unlisted to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- Recruitment and retention are not viewed to be a challenge. There has been an increase in student enrollment and low student turnover.
- An advisory board is being established to increase community involvement

In Their Own Words

{The For-Profit Childcare Program} strives to provide young children with a solid foundation to help them achieve their full potential. They foster a balanced curriculum that incorporates the latest in technology and education research to prepare their students for today's dynamic world. They recognize these are the formative years in a child's life and will therefore work with teachers, parents and the community to academically, socially, emotionally and physically develop our children in a stimulating and loving family-style setting.

{The For-Profit Childcare Program} provides an environment where children and adults are respected and valued. Their student population is culturally diverse, while parents and staff members promote cultural awareness as well as gender understanding, encouraging respect for others and personal self-esteem.

At A Glance - Social Service Community Center Providing After-School Programming

The social service community center (SSCC) best practice site is located in Southwest Houston, Texas. Summer and after-school programs are located in the main facility and have access to basketball courts, a number of classrooms, a computer lab, and designated lunch areas. The community center opens its doors at 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. during the summer. The community center opens its doors to the after-school program from 2:50 p.m. to 6 p.m. In the summer, high school and college students, who serve as instructors and instructional tutors, administer the curriculum. In the fall, college students and adult instructors provide homework assistance and after-school instruction. On average, the student to instructor ratio is about 15:1 with mixed-grade groupings.

General Background and History

- Center-based afterschool programs generally take place in apartment or social service communities. These centers are a safe haven for the youth and strive to be a liaison between families and resources (YMCA, n.d.). This SSCC provides academic-focused after-school care for children and intensive homework help and mentoring for teens. As vital resource centers within the apartment communities & schools they serve, such sites also offer adult support groups, parenting classes, case management and food distribution.
- As is sometimes the case in like programs, this SSCC invites community members to their program planning sessions. SSCCs may also include them as teachers for some of the classes and activities. These individuals may be associated with churches, private and public corporations, law enforcement agencies, parent groups, businesses, members of the armed forces, and other groups. In some cases, they make the afterschool program a hub of community activity, and over time, the program and the school may begin to have a broad impact on the community.

Program Structure and Process

- The summer program has a designated curriculum that is created out of their corporate office.
- During the fall, each center provides 1 hour of homework assistance, 1 hour of academics, and 1 hour of enrichment.
- Adults and some college students serve as staff and instructors at the site.
- Decision-making is described as centralized, with major decisions being handed down from the corporate office or from the site director.
- The Center started as the largest Asian-led social service agency in Texas.
- The organization has been in existence over 33 years.
- Students served are mostly of Asian descent and may be from households where English is not the primary language.

Program Structure and Process

- Adults, college students, and high school volunteers serve as instructors and instructional tutors.
- Decision making is described as centralized with the site coordinator making most major decisions; some decisions are reached collaboratively with instructional staff.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- The summer program uses a balance of academic and social learning with a strong emphasis on enhancing what the students learn at their grade level.
- The after-school program mainly focuses on homework and tutoring. Enrichment activities include sciences, physical education, and art.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- Recruitment and retention are not viewed as a challenge. There has been an increase in student enrollment as well as low student turnover with a waiting list.
- Community involvement is observed to be strong.

In Their Own Words

The {Social Service Community Center Providing After-School Programming} is a comprehensive social service community center in Southwest Houston, Texas, that provides support programs to a diverse population. The Center conducts educational and social service programs that help new immigrants settle into their new communities and acculturate, gain personal independence and economic self-sufficiency and quickly become able participants and productive, contributing members of American society. The Center strives to meet the evolving needs of the community through culturally competent and affordable social service programs and administrative support, and providing multi-purpose facilities for local service organizations and community members.

AT A GLANCE - FEE-BASED RECREATION CENTER

The Fee-based Recreation Center (FBRC) Program is located in an urban neighborhood in Houston, Texas. The programs located in the main building have access to facilities that include a cafeteria, several classrooms, a gymnasium, a swimming pool, and the grounds. The summer program opens its doors from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. The after-school program is open from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. On average, the student to tutor ratio is about 20:1 with mixed-grade groupings.

Background and History

- This individual site is part of a larger Greater Houston non-profit organization, which has been in existence for over 125 years.
- The shared mission of all the programs under this umbrella organization is to “put {faith-based} principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.”
- As a fee-based program, it operates primarily to provide adult supervision for students after school, although the programs incorporate homework help, recreational activities, and cultural enhancement activities such as arts and crafts.
- The students served by the summer and after-school programs are primarily a mixture of Hispanic and White ethnicities and from low-income households.

Program Structure and Process

- The site director and the site coordinator oversee the program.
- Certified teachers, instructors and college students provide the academic and physical education instruction.
- Instructors have input on curricular decisions and meet weekly to plan program activities.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- The program is focused on improving academic skills via homework help and tutoring.
- Enrichment activities are focused on social development and include enhancing students' self-esteem, leadership, and teamwork skills.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- Students are referred to the program by school day teachers, and there are waiting lists for students in some age groups.
- The program receives support from community members and businesses in the form of guest speakers, supplies, discounts, and publicity.

In Their Own Words

As part of the larger organization, this program is committed to helping people and the community succeed, our contributions are both far-reaching and intimate—from influencing culture during times of profound social change to the individual support they provide.

By nurturing the potential of every child and teen, improving the city's health and well-being, and supporting and serving our neighbors, the {Fee-Based Recreation Center Program} ensures that everyone has the opportunity to become healthier, more confident, connected and secure.

AT A GLANCE - AFTER-SCHOOL DROP-IN PROGRAM - NON-PROFIT

This program site is part of a larger set of programs that operate in various centers across the Houston area. Summer program activities are offered from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. while all after-school activities take place during 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The center provides students with access to a computer lab, a gymnasium, several classrooms, designated eateries, and a common area (with pool tables, game console systems, and tables with chairs). There is adequate space provided for the summer and after-school program. As a drop-in program, it is intended to provide a safe place that promotes positive development.

College students and other paraprofessionals teach summer and after-school classes, and the student-to-teacher ratio is approximately 20: 1. During the summer, the program curriculum is a compilation of academic, non-academic, enrichment, and physical education activities. Some activities provided in the summer program include training in internet usage, how to build healthy eating habits, and sports. After-school program activities offered are homework/ tutoring sessions, an hour of enrichment, and/or physical activity.

Background and History

- The organization's mission is to inspire and enable all youth, especially those who need it most, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens.
- The students in the afterschool program vary by center site but are generally a mixture of African American, Hispanic, and White ethnicities. The majority of students are from low-income households.
- The individual site has been in existence since 1952.
- This site focuses on academic success, healthy lifestyles, and good character and citizenship development.
- Members receive free meals.

Program Structure and Process

- Paid and volunteer staff includes coordinators, college students, parents, high school students, and other non-teaching or non-school staff.
- The site coordinator and instructors make most decisions regarding the curriculum used in the program.
- During the summer program, the curriculum is focused more on enrichment and less on academic assistance so students do not feel as if they are in school.
- During the after-school program there is a strong emphasis on homework and tutoring.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- The strongest emphasis in the after-school program has been on improving academic skills by focusing on home work help and tutoring.
- The use of specific projects and experiments to illustrate concepts is common.
- The summer program utilizes vendors in specific content areas to conduct academically and non-academically related activities.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- Due to the "drop in" design of this program no formal recruitment strategies exist.
- Enrollment targets have been surpassed every semester.
- Administrators have worked to bring more structure to the summer and after-school programs, and the program receives strong support as it transitions from a recreation center model to a more structured framework.

In Their Own Words

{The After-School Drop in Program} has been the Houston area's leading youth development organization, achieving an enviable record of creatively engaging, educating and empowering a large number of low-income young people in ways that positively impact their lives and improve their chances of achieving and sustaining academic and economic success.

{The After-School Drop in Program} provides these youth a safe haven in the midst of chaotic, dangerous neighborhoods and family contexts and delivers high-quality programming that builds character; enhances academic performance; improves physical health and fitness; expands life skills; develops leadership potential; promotes civic engagement; and equips youth for pursuing rigorous postsecondary educational opportunities and productive careers.

AT A GLANCE - FEE-BASED PROGRAM PROVIDED AT SCHOOL CAMPUS

A second fee-based services program was included in this best practices case study, in this case located at a school campus within the Heights in Houston, Texas. The program is located on an elementary school and has access to facilities that include a cafeteria, a few classrooms, a gymnasium, and the grounds. The after-school program is open from 3:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. On average, the student to tutor ratio is about 15:1 with mixed-grade groupings.

Background and History

- The site, similar to its earlier described counterpart, shares the mission of the parent organization mission to “put {faith-based} principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.”
- The students served by the summer and after-school program are primarily a mixture of Hispanic, White and African American ethnicities and from low-income households.

Program Structure and Process

- The site director and the site coordinator oversee the program.
- Certified teachers, instructors and college students provide the academic and physical education instruction.
- Instructors have input on curricular decisions and meet weekly to plan program activities.

Academic and Enrichment Practices

- The program is focused on improving academic skills via homework help and tutoring.
- Enrichment activities are focused on social development and include enhancing students' self-esteem, leadership, and teamwork skills.

Recruitment, Retention, and Community Involvement

- Students are referred to the program by school day teachers, and there are waiting lists for students in some age groups.
- The program receives support from community members and businesses in the form of guest speakers, supplies, discounts, and publicity.

In Their Own Words

Again similar to its counterpart in this study, this site is

committed to helping people and the community succeed, our contributions are both far-reaching and intimate—from influencing culture during times of profound social change to the individual support they provide.

By nurturing the potential of every child and teen, improving the city's health and well-being, and supporting and serving our neighbors, the {Fee-Based Recreation Center Program} ensures that everyone has the opportunity to become healthier, more confident, connected and secure.

KEY FINDINGS

Presentations of findings are organized by research question. Although there are overlaps in findings across research questions, each is presented separately.

Research Question 1: Currently, what are the best practices being delivered by the primary after-school service models throughout Harris County?

Each case site demonstrated an important set of best practices that organized around three broad thematic areas: program operation, alignment, and delivery; academic and enrichment practices; and recruitment, retention, community involvement, and reflective practice. Key findings for each are presented in turn.

PROGRAM OPERATION, ALIGNMENT AND DELIVERY

Within the theme of program operation, alignment and delivery, the best practices sites implemented a variety of strategies in order to provide strong administrative foundations that lead to safe and organized environments for students.

Management and Leadership. Across participating sites, there has been a strong commitment to site-based decision making as well as to building and sustaining strong relationships with the community and schools their organizations serve. All site coordinators and support staff, such as the curriculum specialist, have maintained substantial control over day-to-day decisions and staffing at their centers. While in many cases (e.g., the For-Profit Childcare Program Serving School Age Youth; the School-Based Program Run by an External Partner; and the Fee-Based Program Provided at School Campus) the teachers did not make most decisions regarding the curriculum used in the summer or after-school program, there have been regular meetings and professional development for all staff twice a year. Incentives have also been provided by some sites for staff interested in continuing their education to receive support in pursuing a postsecondary degree or certificate in a related field.

The site coordinator and, at some sites the curriculum specialist, have made routine observations of the instructional staff. Both have observed instruction and given feedback or assistance on the spot, if needed, at each center site. Routine visits were also conducted by relevant external agencies (i.e. corporate and state) to ensure that programs and facilities have met minimum standards. Staff members appeared to appreciate the leadership and guidance.

Climate. The overall climate of the out-of-school programs was energetic, caring, and supportive. The staff knew the students, and the students felt comfortable talking to staff in a relaxed, nurturing, safe, and trusting atmosphere. The academic and enrichment centers (i.e. library, arts, crafts) were well organized and supplied. Students during both the summer and fall were engaged in their academically-related or enrichment activities. Students also appeared particularly to enjoy the summer curriculum because the content was engaging and allowed for hands-on activities. Students were also observed actively participating in group discussions and went to the instructors with questions or to show them their work. At these sites, staff understood the culture and socioeconomic position of their students as well as some of the specific problems that they experience given their neighborhood contexts. Interactions between staff and students were generally very positive.

Programmatic Goals. Across sites, the summer and afterschool programs worked to provide opportunities for a balance of academic and social learning with a strong emphasis on enhancing what each student is learning at his or her grade level. Often, the program goals included linking afterschool activities to student home life and the outside community. For example, the after-school and summer programs at one site used instructors from community agencies to administer information (i.e. Internet awareness, and building better eating habits). Students were observed enjoying these experiences while gaining pertinent information. Several program administrators also stressed the goal of using research-based practices in the after-school program and aligning its activities with the school day. To that end, instructors sought to assist students in mastering the basics not only in academics but also in an area of enrichment.

ACADEMIC AND ENRICHMENT PRACTICES

Within the theme of academic and enrichment practices, the studied sites provided students a diverse set of learning opportunities to enhance both their academic skills as well as their psychosocial and physical well-being.

Tutoring and Homework Help. Across sites, substantial time (approximately an hour in the case of after-school programs) was dedicated to homework support including homework related to any academic topic but with an emphasis on science, mathematics, and reading. During visits across sites, instructors were observed working individually with each student to monitor and assist with his or her homework. Sites also assigned additional individual time to tutoring depending on each student's need. If students did not have homework, they were given a book or assigned another activity. For most, a priority was placed on integrating school day and after-school learning. Bridging between two programs was more easily achieved when common staff served students in both environments, thus creating clear collaborative relationships. Other sites used state standards to link after-school academic activities directly to the school day curriculum, frequently tailoring those activities to individual student needs.

Use of a Variety of Instructional Strategies. Instructors at all sites employed a combination of instructional strategies to aid in their academic efforts, including whole group, small group, and individual instruction. For summer programs, instruction was often geared toward engaging students with hands on activities and sometimes involved taking students on various field trips; receiving instruction from outside vendors (e.g., the Children's Museum); and engaging with high-school, college-aged, and certified teachers. During the academic year, the most prominent form of homework help (e.g., at the Social Service Community Center Providing After-School Programming and the After-School Drop-in Program – Non-profit) was individual (instructor to student); however, some student pairs worked on homework with occasional tutor assistance or review. In these cases (e.g., the For-Profit Childcare Program Serving School Age Youth; the After-School Drop-in Program – Non-profit), some between-student groups partnered participants in the same grade level and in others across grade levels (i.e., pairings of older students with younger students). The varied instructional approaches appeared to keep the students active in the learning opportunities.

Effort to Provide Balance between Academic and Enrichment Activities. While each placed particular emphasis on aiding students in their academic development, sites also included attention to students' psychosocial and physical development as well. The extent to which enrichment activities had been developed, however, varied as did the opportunities to engage in such activities. In particular, the summer and school-year schedule differed greatly. During the summer, more time was devoted to physical activity and enrichment activities than in the fall when more time was allocated for academic activities.

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Program awareness served as an important and positive recruiting and retention tool for all sites. For most, community and connected schools and their staff were a consistent source of student referrals for both the summer and after-school programs. Recruitment and retention were not viewed as a challenge; most sites experienced little turnover of students and maintained waiting lists. That continuity also allowed instructors and site coordinators to take advantage of opportunities to get to know families, talk with them regularly about their child's progress, and discuss any behavior issues or specific areas where parental support would be beneficial to the student.

Several sites engaged in the best practice process of working with an active advisory board to increase local involvement, which also aided in the formation of strong community ties. For some, corporate partners played a vital role in supporting their organization, programs, and ultimately their students. One important contribution to this strong tie to the community was the use of both external and internal evaluations conducted formally and informally by the site coordinator and by program leaders.

Research Question 2: What strategies are being used to collect data, align service delivery with impact areas, operate cost-effective programs, and effectively measure outcomes based on five program elements?

In answering research question 2, findings from observations and interviews are considered again using the five program elements outlined in Figure 2.

SAFE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

Each site in this study provides a safe and organized environment that is secure, nurturing, and inclusive for all to learn and explore. To create such a setting, sites took intentional steps to hire and train staff who were well-prepared to implement high-quality curriculum, employed procedures (e.g., check in and check out) that ensured child welfare, included ample developmentally appropriate materials for students to use in their learning (e.g., games, toys, learning aids, art materials, etc.), and provided appropriate levels of adult supervision for a given activity and age group. Such steps empowered a majority of staff to feel in control of the classroom space and arrangement, supplied with the needed materials and equipment, and trained with useful strategies for working with students (75, 80, and 83 percent of staff survey respondents, respectively).

Cost-Effective Benefit High quality staff that are properly trained can serve in many functions throughout the program and can optimize the human and material resources provided to the program.

DIVERSE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Sites provided a balanced variety of activities that supported the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth and development of all by utilizing a broad array of strategies and community resources. For example, at the School-Based Program Run by an External Partner, students had the opportunity to take an art class taught by a local artist. At the fee-based daycare program, students had the autonomy to decide in which activity they wanted to participate during certain hours of the program. Students could choose from outside play, dress-up, game consoles, or board games. At the social service community center after-school program, staff were observed encouraging participation of all, regardless of gender, race, language ability, or other evident differences among students. Further, because the diversity of the staff/instructors was reflective of the student demographic (see discussion in subsequent section), students were observed making culturally aligned relationships with site staff/instructors.

Additionally, instructors at the after-school drop-in program (e.g., Fee-Based Program Provided at School Campus; School-Based Program Run by an External Partner; After-School Drop-in Program – Non-profit) actively worked with students to identify and build on their different learning styles by scaffolding instruction, putting students in small groups, and allowing students to assist other students with homework assignments. Other methods used included one-on-one instruction, use of technology, and the use of instructional aids to assist in the management of the learning environment. Students at the Fee-based After-school Program held at a School Campus had the opportunity to choose from various academic and non-academic centers. Each center offered various activities such as reading books, using manipulatives, or engaging in free play.

Cost-Effective Benefit: Technical assistance and training provided by the grantee (HCDE – CASE) provides the administrative and structural support to ensure that goals and objectives are met at minimal cost to each site. For example, accessing materials via the CASE Lending Library provides programs with high quality evidence-based curricula and materials at no cost to the site.

EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICES

A variety of effective administrative strategies were employed across case study sites. In various combinations, programs were managed by a site coordinator who partnered with schools (e.g., the School-Based Program Run by an External Partner), executive leadership (e.g., the Social Service Community the Center Providing After-School Programming; Fee-Based Recreation Center Program; the For-Profit Childcare Program Serving School Age Youth), and site staff (e.g., the After-School Drop-in Program – Non-profit; the Fee-Based Program Provided at School Campus). In all cases, sites were observed to have solid administrative systems that utilized sound fiscal management and business practices. Specifically, observations identified that sufficient staff and materials were readily available to administer curriculum effectively and efficiently.

Further, informal and formal strategies were employed across all sites to collect quantitative and qualitative data. For example, site coordinators might observe instructors while they were in session and provide feedback to the instructors regarding their presentation to ensure that each instructor is meeting program objectives. For formal evaluations, sites had to meet and report on various areas of impact in order to remain compliant as a requirement of their status. For programs associated with another non-profit agency, larger agency, and/or other corporate sponsors, systems were in place to monitor the progress of the center consistently. Meeting various quality indicators was often-times used as a measure to receive local, state, or federal funds. For example, the School-Based Program Run by an External Partner must meet federal reporting and evaluation requirements by establishing a logic model to identify program outputs and outcomes and utilizing a statewide database where attendance, academic progress, and behavior are submitted at routine intervals by each site. This federally funded program requires grantees to employ an independent evaluator to lead the evaluation process by training staff, surveying stakeholders (students, parents, teachers and principals), and providing both quantitative (gains in academic progress, attendance and behavior) and qualitative (school day alignment, intentional planning, and implementation fidelity) analyses upon which to base recommendations for the next program year.

Cost-Effective Benefit A sound fiscal management system ensures that funds are spent in accordance with grant directives. Attention to grant constraints is essential to the continuation and sustainability of the program. Ensuring that programs are properly evaluated is a cost effective measure to identify program components that provide the highest return on investment in the pursuit of academic progress and social/emotional development.

COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The sites created and maintained collaborative efforts with invested stakeholders such as youth, families, staff, community leaders, and business representatives. The School-Based Program Run by an External Partner, for example, had collaborations with the University of Houston and Pearland City officials. The For-Profit Childcare Program Serving School Age Youth is creating a community advisory board as a mechanism for enhancing their already active relationship with the local community. The Social Service Community Center Providing After-School Programming has an active relationship with the United Way and the City of Houston, providing students opportunities to work with social workers and other state agencies to help meet their needs. The Fee-Based Recreation Center Program also has partnerships with the United Way and the University of Houston – Downtown. Connecting actively with corporate partners, the After-School Drop-in Program – Non-profit has relationships with Taco Bell, HEB, and Comcast. The Fee-Based Program Provided at School Campus has active ties to the feeder school, where school day teachers and after-school program staff were observed openly communicating to share student academic progress and identify needs that the programs can collaborate to provide.

Cost-Effective Benefit Creating strong community networks often results in the sharing of resources (space, volunteers, and materials) that enhance program effectiveness. Collaborative relationships can also provide connections to additional sources of funding to support program sustainability and quality.

PROGRAM AWARENESS

No site was observed to have challenges with enrollment and program membership. Because site membership is based on word of mouth and referrals from the school day, it was noted that there was not a great need to allocate resources towards marketing materials. However, several sites (e.g., the For-Profit Childcare Program Serving School Age Youth; the Social Service Community Center Providing After-School Programming; the After-School Drop-in Program – Non-profit) used various marketing tools (e.g., brochures, website, one-page flyers) as a means of raising awareness of the program's contributions to their students and community rather than as a tool to increase enrollment. Additionally, in some cases (e.g., the School-Based Program Run by an External Partner) materials about the programs offered to youth were readily available (i.e. bulletin board and calendar of events); however, in other cases, marketing materials were hard to locate.

Cost-Effective Benefit Marketing materials increase program visibility and highlight accomplishments that can increase community involvement and engage new partners and sponsors.

Research Question 3: What can be learned from these conditions toward the dissemination, replication, and possible scaling of best practices?

In synthesizing findings for research questions 1 and 2 related to each site, several major connecting best practice themes emerge:

- Emphasis on Homework
- Helping students and parents who are English-Language Learners
- Strong ties with school day
- Strong ties with the community
- Diversity of staff
- Engaging curriculum

EMPHASIS ON HOMEWORK

Strong expectations were placed on the completion of homework. Many sites (e.g., the After-School Drop-in Program – Non-profit; the School-Based Program Run by an External Partner; the For-Profit Childcare Program Serving School Age Youth; the Social Service Community Center Providing After-School Programming; and the Fee-Based Program Provided at School Campus) used a system to check whether students’ homework assignments were complete. Students across these sites were often rewarded for completing their homework by 1) being able to move to another activity (i.e. reading a book, going to a center, engaging in physical activity) or 2) winning prizes at the end of a designated period. Students at sites appeared engaged and motivated to complete their assignments. This method of ensuring students complete their assignments appears to help students with task completion.

The after-school staff used a combination of instructional strategies: whole group, small group, and individual instruction (Table 4). In some cases (e.g., the For-Profit Childcare Program Serving School Age Youth; the After-School Drop-in Program – Non-profit), student-to-student pairings occurred, some between students in the same grade level and some between students across grade levels. The varied instructional approaches appear to keep the students active in the learning opportunities. The reading, mathematics, and science instruction focuses on comprehension and mastery while ensuring the students are engaged.

Table 4: Instructional Strategies Employed by Site Staff

How often do you use the following strategies in your work with students? (N=71)

	4 to 5 days a week (%)	1 to 3 times a month (%)	4 to 5 days a week (%)	Less than once a month (%)	Never (%)
Have student work individually to complete worksheets or exercises	33	38	8	3	17
Use cooperative activities or games	63	22	7	–	7
Provide teacher-led instruction	58	30	2	–	10
Offer student-led instruction	15	25	14	8	37
Provide inquiry-based instruction	42	34	8	3	13

HELPING STUDENTS AND PARENTS WHEN ENGLISH IS THEIR SECOND LANGUAGE

Sites with a substantial English language learning student population (i.e., the Social Service Community Center Providing After-School Programming and the After-School Drop-in Program – Non-profit) utilized tutorial time to assist students with homework. This time was observed to be critical for students to gain better understanding about class assignments. Sites also made efforts to assist parents with their ability to understand and comprehend homework assignments, material from the school day and other mediums that were English based. As one site coordinator stated, “We focus on immigrant children because as a culture some are too prideful to ask for help . . . students need the outreach because they don’t have the support at home, they have language barriers, or are not on the same levels as their peers.” This process is aided by the fact that almost half (46%) of the staff speak and understand languages other than English. Among those with second language proficiency, 62% spoke at least Spanish and 38% spoke at least Chinese.

STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SCHOOL

Case study sites with effective programming exhibited close ties with the school with which they were affiliated. The relationship often consisted of regular communication with teachers and administration that addressed the needs of the students. For example, while teachers would drop off students to their after-school program, they would engage in one-on-one conversations with out-of-school site staff/instructors. These conversations would consist of summarizing the students’ school day, explaining any academic or emotional difficulties the student was exhibiting during the school day, or making note of any accomplishments students may have achieved. These conversations prove to be useful when serving the whole child at the center. One site coordinator said, “If one child is struggling in school-- they know about it- we make sure to get the progress reports.” Another site coordinator stated, “The program can act as the bridge from school to parent and from parent to school and making sure they have the parent involvement, makes all the difference.” These observational findings were tempered, however, by the fact that only one staff survey respondent reported sharing curriculum planning with affiliated school day principals. Such disparity may suggest that school day and out-of-school engagement may be happening unevenly among staff and that this could be an area in which improvement is needed.

STRONG TIES WITH THE COMMUNITY

Case study sites demonstrated strong ties with the community. Such partnerships help to expose the site to visitors and community patrons as well as provide an outlet for students and parents to participate in family-oriented events. Examples of strong community relationships include relationships with city officials, universities, and non-profit organizations. One site coordinator notes, “Our community partnerships mean everything to our program; we use local vendors, visit with city officials and oftentimes take field trips to universities such as Rice and the University of Houston. These partnerships give our students a chance to be exposed to things they would otherwise not have access to.” Another site coordinator stated, “It’s great when we have an event and community patrons come and support—not only does it give us a chance to meet new people, but new people have an opportunity to see what our center offers.”

Staff also identify strong ties to the parent and student communities they serve (Table 5). The vast majority of respondents indicated that their programs worked to keep parents informed and involved. They also identified the site as a space where students can begin the process of building community among themselves. Among respondents, for example, 92% identified that their program helps students get along with each other.

Table 5: Staff Ties to the Parent Community

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the summer program staff and program?
(N=58)

	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	It is About the Same (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Our program staff keeps parents informed about the program	53	41	5	0	0
Our program keeps parents informed about their child's participation	41	45	14	0	0
Our program staff welcomes parents to observe	41	43	10	5	0
Our after-school staff welcomes parents' involvement	33	45	16	5	0

DIVERSITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

Quality after-school programs have diverse staff that are responsive to participants, create practices and policies that make services inclusive and available to a variety of populations, and help participants understand and value all people. As one site coordinator described, “the staff is engaged and they are not just interested in doling worksheets, they do their best to pass on the excitement of learning to students.” We found that these programs recruited qualified staff and created collegial environments supporting their programs’ missions. For example, almost 70% of staff survey respondents had at least 1 year of social service experience prior to employment with their site, and 58% had similar levels of prior experience working in a school setting. More than one-third of respondents (25 of 68 who answered the question) had prior experience working with children with disabilities. By highest degree obtained among survey respondents, 41% had a high school diploma, 24% some college, 22% an Associate’s degree, and 13% a Bachelor’s degree or beyond. Of salaried respondents, 70% indicated that they made between \$6 and \$10.99 per hour.

Staff also represented a diverse racial and ethnic composition (Figure 3) as well as an almost even gender distribution with 47% of staff respondents indicating that they were men. This diversity cultivated an environment where staff members were often role models for students, creating a norm of high expectations, appropriate student behavior, good school attendance, effective work habits, and positive attitudes towards learning.

Figure 3: Distribution of Staff by Race/Ethnicity

Note. Values represent percentages. Total N=70.

After-school leaders were able to retain staff and achieve lower turnover rates than other programs (and the associated cost benefits to the organization) because staff felt respected, supported, autonomous, and confident in their ability to reach their students. In turn, staff and students constructed positive relationships with each other, characterized by warmth and mutual respect. Such efforts also produce an overall cost benefit to the broader organization.

Case study sites provided regular opportunities for staff to come together for meetings and planning (Figure 4). Among all survey respondents, 37 percent (N=25) identified that they also participated in training or received technical assistance as a part of the job. For those who participated in professional development, 94 percent described it as completely serving their purposes or at least a good start.

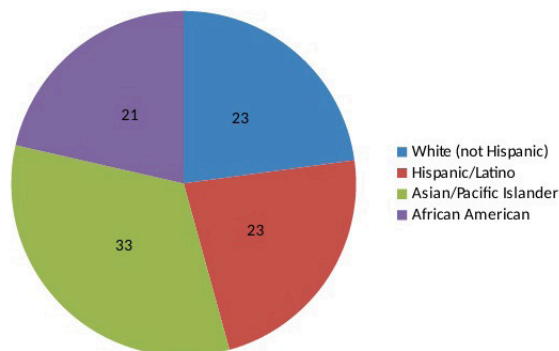
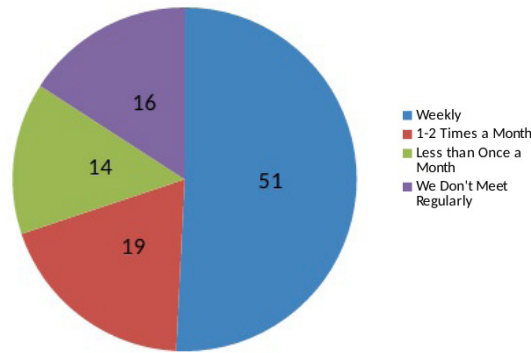


Figure 4: Distribution of the Number Times Staff Meet for Program Planning

Note. Values represent percentages. Total N=70.



ENGAGING CURRICULUM

High quality sites used engaging, age appropriate curricular activities during the summer months and in the fall. As shown in Table 6, the curriculum included both academic and psychosocial aspects and was attentive to the need to provide holistic experiences for participants. Since students generally spend more time in out-of-school programs in the summer, programs often utilized a curriculum to encourage academic development.

Table 6: Activities, Classes, and Services Provided to Students

What activities, classes, or services do you provide as a staff member in the Program? (N=67)

	(%)
Homework help/tutoring	43
Academic enrichment activities/projects (research projects, debate teams, mock trial)	40
Community service projects	12
Career preparation (internships, job searches, etc.)	13
College preparation (PSAT or SAT prep, college exploration, etc.)	3
Cultural clubs, activities, programs (language clubs, cultural celebrations, etc.)	19
Arts and crafts	63
Arts instruction (dance, music, drama, graphic arts, etc.)	18
Health education	24
Sports and fitness activities	58
Referrals for health/social services	6
Social clubs, activities, events	28
Informal recreational activities (e.g., open game rooms)	40
Other	9

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 as respondents could select all choices that applied.

Staff members were provided opportunities to engage with lesson plans in individualized ways. They also had the autonomy to make the lesson “their own.” Site coordinators encouraged staff to practice creativity as they administered the curriculum. One site coordinator described it this way: “Staff has complete creative freedom; they know if the students are going to engage with the programs- it is their job to make it interactive.” As evidenced by their responses (Table 7), staff take stewardship of such creative opportunities seriously, and work to the benefit of students.

Table 7: Program Activities and Participant Experiences

Below are some statements that might describe your summer program’s activities and procedures and participants’ experiences in the program. Please circle whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement. (N=70)

	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Groups are small enough for staff to meet students’ individual needs.	30	53	11	1
The time allowed for activities is generally appropriate.	40	51	7	0
Students have freedom in selecting activities.	17	61	11	3
Students have opportunities to lead group activities.	13	54	24	1
Students have regular opportunities to spend time alone if needed or desired.	17	56	16	6
The program has a process in place for obtaining student input and accommodating their suggestions.	24	53	16	1
Staff are able to provide homework help to bilingual students in their native language.	26	41	9	3
Procedures for dealing with student behavior issues are in place and effective.	31	54	9	4
Children with disabilities are successfully integrated in the program.	31	47	3	0

DISCUSSION

The sites in this study align with the best practice literature (e.g., Huang & Dietel, 2011) in that they developed and nurtured strengths through their active and collaborative connections with the families, communities, and schools they serve. Further, they have carefully attended to maximizing program awareness in ways that have proven advantageous in maintaining a fully subscribed enrollment rate. This study also affirms the importance of designing and implementing a curriculum that provides diverse opportunities (both academic and social) that align with and extend the school day learning that students experience. In sum, while each of the case study sites included in this study has a unique mission and purpose – and opportunities to continue to grow – they share a fundamental commitment to align resources with the programmatic and staffing contributions needed to achieve desired outcomes.

LESSONS FOR ASPIRING CAMPUSES

The findings from this case study also suggest areas that other sites interested in improving practice of this study might concentrate. First, findings from this study suggest that programs interested in high quality programs must set clear goals and empower staff to carry out those goals with independence and authority. Such effective administrative strategies include a plan that seeks out highly qualified staff and provides them regular opportunities to receive relevant professional development. Related, high quality organizations seek to hire staff with a diverse set of experiences and relevant and complimentary sets of expertise. This attention provides the basis for the cultivation of a safe and inclusive environment.

Most of these exemplar after-school programs placed a strong emphasis on the completion of homework and tutoring. Students who are made responsible for writing down assignments, showing tasks to after-school staff, and having after-school staff check off assignments were observed to be task oriented and motivated. By having systems in place, students were aware of high expectations established for the completion of academic work.

During the summer months, the academic curriculum is often designed so students can enjoy a break from regular academic rigor. However, summer program curriculum should align with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS standards for the grade students are entering during the fall. Although the summer curriculum should include the use of enrichment activities and other curriculum that is not used during the regular academic school year, it also needs to both build on students' prior knowledge and introduce them to the new concepts for the upcoming grade. In this way, students can stay in tune with academically-related content as well as enjoy a more relaxed curriculum in the summer months.

Because the summer program extends for the full length of the day, it is important to utilize summer staff and volunteers to help facilitate program goals. Volunteers can serve various purposes in the program. For example, one summer program utilized high school students, who were either 1) past members in the program or 2) needed to meet requirements (i.e. number of volunteer hours) for internship or practicum. By using volunteers, programs can eliminate additional costs associated with staffing and ensure that there are people who can assist instructors and students as needed.

The relationship cultivated with schools is invaluable because of the amount of information that can be relayed between the school day and after-school program. Because school-day teachers are usually the first point of contact for students, they are able to assess and evaluate students' behavior and academic progress. Since teachers have this information, it can be relayed to after-school program staff to help facilitate the bridge from the school-day to the after-school program. After-school program staff that displayed a strong relationship with the school-day staff stated that the open lines of communication were essential in helping meet the on-going needs of students.

Although most programs observed in this study did not provide evidence of having challenges with enrollment or student membership, it is nonetheless important to have adequate marketing materials (e.g., brochures, one-page flyers, bulletin boards) available for potential members or community patrons. By putting a focus on these materials, programs can increase their visibility in the community, thus potentially increasing their enrollment and ability to expand. For example, key information about programs (e.g., student-to-teacher ratio, type of curriculum used, student demographics, etc.) could be provided and consistently updated through a website so people can have immediate access to information. Again, having readily available marketing materials available for potential patrons could lead to the increased overall quality of the out-of-school program. It also has the advantage of making it visible to community members who donate resources and/or time to the programs.

CONCLUSION

There are increased calls at the local, state, and federal levels for out-of-school programs to engage in meaningful implementation and subsequent assessment of program effectiveness (e.g., Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2009). Toward that end, we encourage sites to collaborate with other community and educational partners in the development of measures and study designs. After-school programs are critical for all students' success and are especially crucial for low-income older youth who find themselves in unsafe and unsupervised circumstances (e.g., Harvard Family Research Project, 2008). Ultimately, rigorously ensuring that evaluation processes are infused in the fabric of the programming helps build the culture necessary for organizations and programs to be successful.

As programs consider how they might use these findings to improve in quality and scope across all the recommended areas, it is important to draw on the support structures in place to facilitate that work. Specifically, CASE for Kids serves as a strong example of an important networked resource that can be leveraged for the shared goals of strengthening out-of-school programming toward the ultimate goal of cultivating strong student and community outcomes.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A SCHEDULE OF SITE VISITS

Summer Data Collection Schedule

June 17, 2014: 21st Century Community Learning Center Implemented by an After-School Intermediary
June 24, 2014: 21st Century Community Learning Center Implemented by an After-School Intermediary
June 27, 2014: For-Profit Day Care Program Serving School Age Youth
July 9, 2014: For-Profit Day Care Program Serving School Age Youth
July 9, 2014: Fee-Based Recreation Center Program
6. July 16, 2014: Fee-Based Recreation Center Program
July 28, 2014: Social Service Community Center Providing After-School Programming
July 31, 2014: Social Service Community Center Providing After-School Programming
August 5, 2014: After-School Drop-in Program – Non-profit
August 8, 2014: After-School Drop-in Program – Non-profit

Fall Data Collection Schedule

September 29, 2014: Century Community Learning Center Implemented by an After-School Intermediary
October 7, 2014; Century Community Learning Center Implemented by an After-School Intermediary
October 2, 2014: Social Service Community Center Providing After-School Programming
October 3, 2014: Social Service Community Center Providing After-School Programming
October 6, 2014: Fee-Based Program Provided at School Campus
October 9, 2014: Fee-Based Program Provided at School Campus
October 14, 2014: After-School Drop-in Program – Non-profit
October 16, 2014: After-School Drop-in Program – Non-profit
October 23; 2014: For-Profit Day Care Program Serving School Age Youth
October 24, 2014: For-Profit Day Care Program Serving School Age Youth

Site Coordinator Interview Schedule

November 6, 2014: Social Service Community Center Providing After-School Programming
November 11, 2014: After-School Drop-in Program – Non-profit
November 14, 2014: Fee-Based Program Provided at School Campus

APPENDIX B OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

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OUT OF SCHOOL TIME (OST) OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT COVER SHEET

Co-observed? Yes / No

Co-observer's initials:
1: _____ 2: _____

Program ID/Location:	Observer Initials:	Observation Number:	Room Number:	Date:	Start Time:	End Time:			
ACTIVITY NAME:									
ACTIVITY OVERVIEW (1-2 sentence description):									
ACTIVITY TYPE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ata*	TYPE OF SPACE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS		#			
Homework Help/Test Prep		Classroom		Total number of girls					
Tutoring		Gym		Total number of boys					
Academic activities (not homework)		Computer Lab		GRADE LEVELS (circle all that apply)					
Story reading/listening		Library		K	1	2			
				3	4	5			
Visual arts		Cafeteria		7	8	9			
				10	11	12			
Dance		Auditorium		PARTICIPATION TYPE		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one			
Music		Art Room		By age or grade					
Drama		Music Room		By interest (child's choice)					
Crafts		Hallway		All attendees (in the program)					
Sports—practicing/learning a skill		Outside Playground		*ata = all that apply					
Sports—playing competitive or non-competitive physical games		Other: _____							
Open, unstructured time (e.g., table games, Internet, free play)		TOTAL STAFF	#						
Staff-assigned learning games (dominos, chess, etc.)		High school student							
Community service		College student or young adult							
College/career preparation		Certified teacher							
Cultural awareness clubs/reflective groups		Specialist or other professional							
Other: _____		Other adult							
At the end of the observation, please indicate what type of skill development, if any, took place in this activity.							PRIMARY SKILL TARGETED (check only if skill-building/practice checked)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one
SKILL DEVELOPMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one						Physical/athletic		
				Artistic					
This is a homework activity				Math/numeracy					
				Reading/writing/literacy					
Skill-building or skill practice/ reinforcement (if <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> --> mark primary skill in next column)				Decision making/problem solving					
				Interpersonal communication					
Neither				Other (specify):					

STAFF...	
RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES:
<p>Use positive behavior management techniques that allow youth to accomplish the activity's objectives. Staff set consistent limits and clear behavioral standards, and these are appropriate to the age of the youth and the activity type. If it is necessary to discipline, staff do so in a firm manner, without unnecessary accusations, threats, or anger and there is no evidence of disciplinary problems.</p>	<p>Communicate goals, purpose, expectations. Staff make clear the purpose of what youth are doing <u>and/or</u> what they expect them to accomplish. Activity goals/expectations may also be implicit if youth are clearly on task without staff direction. This item goes beyond how youth are expected to behave (which would be captured under "Use positive behavior management techniques").</p>
<p>Encourage the participation of all. Regardless of gender, race, language ability, or other evident differences among youth, staff try to engage youth who appear isolated; they do not favor (or ignore) a particular youth or small cluster of youth.</p>	<p>Verbally recognize youth's efforts and accomplishments. Staff explicitly acknowledge youth's participation and progress to motivate them using praise, encouragement, and/or constructive guidance/modeling. (Must involve verbal statements not just implied affirmation.)</p>
<p>Show positive affect toward youth. Staff tone is caring and friendly; they use positive language, smile, laugh, or share good-natured jokes. They refrain from threats, cutting sarcasm, or harsh criticism. If no verbal interaction is necessary, staff demonstrate a positive and caring affect toward youth.</p>	<p>Assist youth without taking control. Staff refrain from taking over a task or doing the work for the youth. They coach, demonstrate, or employ scaffolding techniques that help youth to gain a better understanding of a concept or complete an action on their own. This assistance goes beyond checking that work is completed.</p>
<p>Attentively listen to and/or observe youth. Staff look at youth when they speak and acknowledge what they have said by responding and/or reacting verbally or nonverbally. They pay attention to youth as they complete tasks and are interested in what youth are saying/doing.</p>	<p>Ask youth to expand upon their answers and ideas. Staff encourage youth to explain their answers, to give evidence, or suggest conclusions. They ask youth "why," "how," and "if" questions to get youth to expand, explore, better clarify, articulate, or concretize their thoughts/ideas. This item goes beyond basic Q&A.</p>
<p>Encourage youth to share their ideas, opinions, and concerns about the content of the activity. Staff <u>actively elicit</u> youth ideas, opinions, and concerns on the activity content through discussion and/or writing. This item goes beyond basic Q&A to fully engage with youth's ideas and thinking.</p>	<p>Challenge youth to move beyond their current level of competency. Staff give constructive feedback that is designed to motivate youth, to set a higher standard, and meant to help youth gauge their progress. Staff help youth determine ways to push themselves intellectually, creatively, and/or physically.</p>
<p>Engage personally with youth. Staff show a personal interest in youth as individuals, ask about their interests, and engage in discussion about events in their lives. This goes beyond content-based discussions to include personal interest and demonstrate caring by the adults.</p>	<p>Employ varied teaching strategies. To engage youth and/or reach those with different learning styles, staff use diverse instructional strategies, which may include: direct instruction, coaching, modeling, demonstrating, or others. Varied instructional strategies can occur simultaneously <u>and/or</u> sequentially within the observation period.</p>
<p>Guide positive peer interactions. The lesson structure/content explicitly encourages positive relationships/interactions and/or teaches interpersonal skills. May involve staff explaining or through planned activity content why negative behavior (e.g., bullying, teasing, etc.) is unacceptable and offering constructive behavior alternatives. This item does not refer to "Use positive behavior management techniques" above.</p>	<p>Plan for/ask youth to work together. Staff structure activities so that youth work cooperatively to solve problems, and/or accomplish tasks. The focus of the activity is youth-to-youth, rather than youth-to-staff. This item goes beyond staff-assigned teams for competitive games and sports. In the case of staff-assigned teams, staff actively encourage youth to collaborate, plan, devise strategies, etc.</p>
ACTIVITY CONTENT AND STRUCTURE (Note: When homework is the observed activity, do not score these indicators.)	
<p>Is well organized. Activity has clear (implicitly or explicitly stated) goals/objectives; there is evidence of a clear lesson plan and process(es), and tasks can be conducted in the timeframe available. If special materials are needed, they are prepared and available.</p>	<p>Involves the practice/a progression of skills. Activity involves practicing skills needed to complete tasks. If a long-term project, youth's activity on the project provides the opportunity to apply or expand skills or techniques previously learned.</p>
<p>Challenges youth intellectually, creatively, developmentally, and/or physically. Activity's level of challenge is not so difficult that youth have trouble participating successfully and not so easy that youth complete tasks routinely, without thought, and become restless/disengaged.</p>	<p>Requires analytic thinking. Activity calls on youth to think about and solve meaningful problems and/or juggle multiple activities or strategies/dimensions to accomplish a task. For example, the activity requires youth to think about two or more ideas, and/or understand and apply sequencing or patterns. This can apply to complex dance, arts, theater, or sports moves, routines, or strategies.</p>

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT		
1. Is the level of adult supervision appropriate to activity and age group?	Yes	No
If no: →Why not?		
2. Is the work space conducive to the activity?	Yes	No
If no: →Why not?		
3. Are necessary materials available and in sufficient supply?	Yes	No
If no: →Why not?		

OBSERVER'S SYNTHESIS	
Please provide a brief summary of the activity and note how the activity demonstrates core features, where applicable:	
ELEMENT	OBSERVER'S SYNTHESIS
Activity Summary: Please provide a brief description of the activity observed.	
Skill-Building: Activity builds progressively more sequenced and advanced skills and knowledge and challenges youth to achieve clear goals.	
Active Learning: Youth engage actively in learning. They lead/participate in discussions, develop or research a product, contribute original ideas, collaborate, take on leadership roles, and/or are oriented toward completing tasks.	
Relationship-Focused: Actively strengthens relationships among youth and between youth and staff.	
Task-Oriented: The activity engages youth in specific learning and/or developmental goals	

APPENDIX C INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

ENRICH Best Practices Study Site Coordinator Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this focus group. It is intended to gather your important perspective about what you perceive as the strengths of the program and will take one hour. Please answer each question as fully as you can, providing details or specific examples, as appropriate, to clarify your description.

- 1) Describe what best practices your program is undertaking to ensure a safe and inclusive environment.
- 2) What do you identify of evidence that diverse learning opportunities are being provided in your program.
- 3) Describe what you see as the effective administrative or leadership strategies in place within your program.
- 4) What are the collaborative relationships that you identify as meaningfully contributing to your program's best practices?
- 5) How much awareness, from your perspective, does the broader community have of your program?
What are their perceptions?

APPENDIX D STAFF SURVEY

Summer Program Evaluation

Dear Staff Member:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. As part of the evaluation of the Summer Program, Dr. Cathy Horn with The College of Education of University of Houston is surveying all program staff to gather information about: the program's goals, activities, and services; partnership with participating schools; and professional development opportunities. This information will help ENRICH improve the program for students and other stakeholders.

Your responses to this survey are confidential. The evaluation will report combined results only. It will not report individual program staff members' responses. If you are uncomfortable answering a question, you may leave it blank. However, we hope you will answer as many questions as you can.

Thank you for your participation.

Your Job

1. What is your role in the after-school program? Please check one.

- Site Supervisor
- Site Staff
- Partner Organization Staff
- Regular Volunteer
- Other

2. Which of the following best describes your involvement in student activities or instruction?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Teach or lead student activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assist in student activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am not directly involved in student activities

Summer Program Evaluation

Dear Staff Member:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. As part of the evaluation of the Summer Program, Dr. Cathy Horn with The College of Education of University of Houston is surveying all program staff to gather information about: the program's goals, activities, and services; partnership with participating schools; and professional development opportunities. This information will help ENRICH improve the program for students and other stakeholders.

Your responses to this survey are confidential. The evaluation will report combined results only. It will not report individual program staff members' responses. If you are uncomfortable answering a question, you may leave it blank. However, we hope you will answer as many questions as you can.

Thank you for your participation.

Your Job

1. What is your role in the after-school program? Please check one.

- Site Supervisor
- Site Staff
- Partner Organization Staff
- Regular Volunteer
- Other

2. Which of the following best describes your involvement in student activities or instruction?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Teach or lead student activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assist in student activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am not directly involved in student activities

3. In a typical week, how many days per week and hours per day do you work in this summer program?
 Note: Please answer paid days and hours worked for the summer program only. Do not count other jobs you may have or unpaid hours worked in this program.

	Less than one	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	More than Five
Days Per Week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hours Per Day	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. What activities, classes, or services do you provide as a staff member in the Summer Program? (Please check all that apply.)

- Homework help/tutoring
- Academic enrichment activities/projects (research projects, debate teams, mock trial)
- Community service projects
- Career preparation (internships, job searches, etc.)
- College preparation (PSAT or SAT prep, college exploration, etc.)
- Cultural clubs, activities, programs (language clubs, cultural celebrations, etc.)
- Arts and crafts
- Arts instruction (dance, music, drama, graphic arts, etc.)
- Health education
- Sports and fitness activities
- Referrals for health/social services
- Social clubs, activities, events
- Informal recreational activities (e.g., open game rooms)

Other (please specify)

5. Are you an employee of this summer program, a subcontractor, an AmeriCorps Member, or a volunteer?

- Employee
- Subcontractor
- AmeriCorps Member
- Volunteer

6. For what period were you hired to provide services to this summer program?

- Summer only
- School Year (Fall Semester) and Summer
- School Year Summer (Spring Semester) and Summer
- School Year (Fall and Spring Semester) and Summer

Other (please specify)

7. How often do you use the following other strategies in your work with students?

	4 to 5 days a week	1 to 3 days a week	1 to 3 times a month	Less than once a month	Never
Have student work individually to complete worksheets or exercises	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use Cooperative activities or games	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Group within grade or age range	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide teacher-led instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offer student-led instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide inquiry-based instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide hands-on, project based instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Do you use an externally developed curriculum to guide any or all of your activities

- No (skip to Question 11)
- Yes

9. For each curriculum you use, list the name of the curriculum and the subject area(s)/topic(s) addressed by the curriculum (e.g., reading/language arts, math, science, conflict resolution).

10. Do you share written activity or lesson plans with supervisors or colleagues?

- No--I do not prepare written activity or lesson plans (Skip to Question 12)
- No--I prepare written activity or lesson plans but do not share them with anyone (Skip to Question 12)
- Yes--I prepare and share written activity or lesson plans with others

11. With whom do you share your written activity or lesson plans? (Check all that apply.)

- Other teachers in my summer program
- School staff not employed by the summer program
- School principal
- Site coordinator

Other (please specify)

12. To what extent, if at all, do the following conditions act as barriers to the work you are trying to do with students?

	To a great extent	To some extent	A little	Not at all
There are too many students in my group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students are not very motivated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students do not have the skills for the types of activities I would like to do with them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are too many disruptive students in my group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have trouble communicating with students who do not speak English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not control the classroom space/arrangement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not have the materials or equipment I need	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not have the training or experience with some strategies I would like to use in my work with students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

13. Below are some statements that might describe your summer program's activities and procedures and participants' experiences in the program. Please circle whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Groups are small enough for staff to meet students' individual needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The time allowed for activities is generally appropriate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students have freedom in selecting activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students have opportunities to lead group activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students have regular opportunities to spend time alone if needed or desired.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This program has a process in place for obtaining student input and accommodating their suggestions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participants make adequate progress with homework in the time set aside.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Procedures for dealing with student behavior issues are in place and effective.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Children with disabilities are successfully integrated in the program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. While working in the summer program, have you ever taken your students on a field trip?

- No (Skip to Question 21)
- Yes

15. If so, where did you visit?

16. How many students did you take?

- 5 or fewer
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 25
- 26 to 50
- 50 or more

17. In your opinion, what was the purpose of the field trip?

18. If there was a cost associated with the field trip, did the summer program pay for the activity?

- Yes
- No

Other (please specify)

19. What learning experiences were involved in this field trip(s)? (Check all that apply)

- Pre Test
- Scavenger Hunt
- Speaker/Lecturer
- Post Test
- Pre-Visit
- Slide Show
- Handout
- Post-Project
- Post-Discussion
- Post-Visit Slide Show
- Quiz

Other (please specify)

20. In your opinion, does the field trip(s) connect with summer program curriculum?

Yes

No

Job Satisfaction, Supervision, and Support

Below are some questions about your experience working in the summer program.

21. For each statement, please circle the response that best describes your experience.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoy working here	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find the work here challenging and rewarding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have timely access to the materials and equipment I need to do a good job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have sufficient access to technology, such as computers and the Internet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get the support and feedback I need from my supervisor(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have access to the training I need to do a good job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I generally work on my own	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Summer Program staff members are committed to their work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Summer Program staff members support each other and work as a team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The site coordinator involves staff in important decisions about program operations and design	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have enough planning time to develop the types of activities I would like to do with students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have enough opportunities to talk and share ideas with other staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. How often do summer program staff meet as a group (for staff meetings, program planning, etc.)?

- Weekly
- 1-2 times a month
- Less than once a month
- Don't meet regularly

23. Are you compensated for time spent in staff meetings?

- No
- Yes

24. Are you planning to return to this job for the next school year (2014-2015)?

- No
- Yes (Skip to Question 26)
- Not Sure

25. If no or not sure, why not? (Check all that apply.)

- I am graduating from high school/college and have other plans for next year
- The pay is too low
- I need to work more hours or plan to find a full-time job
- I have another job and found the additional work to be too much
- There are no opportunities for advancement
- I plan to enroll in school or training classes/program next year
- The work is too stressful
- I do not enjoy working with the students
- I do not enjoy working with the staff
- The program does not provide me with adequate support (e.g., lack of materials and equipment, lack of adequate space)

Other (please specify)

26. Are you an AmeriCorps Member?

- No (skip to question 28)
- Yes

27. To what extent has your experience working as an AmeriCorps Member in this after-school program:

	To a great extent	To some extent	A little	Not at all
Increased your commitment to community service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased your awareness of the needs and resources of the community served by the school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased your understanding of the strengths and successes of the Houston public schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased your understanding of the challenges facing Houston area public schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved your ability to communicate with others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved your ability to create solutions to problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved your ability to work as a member of a team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved your teaching skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved your organization skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved your ability to lead projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved your ability to take direction from supervisors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Training and Technical Assistance

Below are some questions about the training and technical assistance available in the summer program. For each question, please circle the response or responses which best describe(s) your experience(s) with the training and technical assistance activities.

28. Do you participate in training or technical assistance activities as part of your job in the summer program?

- No (Skip to Question 34)
- Yes

29. Are you paid for time spent in training outside of program hours?

- No
- Yes

30. How fully does the training and technical assistance serve your purposes? (Check one)

- They serve my purposes completely
- They are a good start
- They are a start, but they did not provide sufficient information or guidance to enable me to follow-up or to implement new strategies
- They do not serve my purposes

31. To what extent have you and your colleagues implemented the ideas and strategies presented in the training and technical assistance? (Check one)

- We have implemented the ideas and strategies and they have improved our project (Skip to Question 33)
- We are in the process of implementing the ideas and strategies
- We will try to implement the ideas and strategies later
- We tried to implement the ideas and strategies, but they did not work very well in our project
- We are unlikely to implement any of the ideas/strategies

32. What are the primary obstacles preventing you and your staff from effectively implementing the strategies and techniques learned during training? (Check all that apply)

- We do not have the materials we need
- We do not have adequate space
- We do not have enough staff
- We need further training
- The ideas and strategies did not seem likely to be useful in our site

Other (please specify)

33. What training topics are most useful to you? (Check all that apply)

- Classroom management
- Academic enrichment and literacy development (e.g., project-based learning, thematic curricula, effective homework help)
- Fine and performing arts (e.g., bookmaking)
- Athletic instruction (e.g., cooperative games)
- Health promotion/education and support services (e.g., identifying abuse, working with health/social services agencies)
- Youth development (e.g., conflict resolution, leadership, mentoring, community service)
- Working with a diverse, multicultural student population

Other (please specify)

Your Background and Experience

Below are some questions about your professional background and experience. For each question, please check the response that best describes you.

34. Prior to taking your job with this summer program, how many years of experience did you have working in a social services, youth services, community, or educational organization? (Check one.)

- None (Skip to Question 36)
- 1-2 Years
- 3-5 Years
- 6-10 Years
- More than 10 years

35. If you worked in a social services, youth services, community, or educational program, how many years of experience did you have providing direct services to children or youth?

- None
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

36. Prior to taking your position with this summer program, did you have experience working in a school setting?

- No (Skip to Question 38)
- Yes

37. If you had prior experience working in a school setting, how many years of experience did you have in the following types of positions?

	More than 10 years	6-10 years	3-5 years	1-2 Years	N/A
School administrator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instructional specialist (e.g., music, art, physical education, reading)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom aide/teaching assistant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pupil support staff (e.g., school counselor, social worker, psychologist)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

38. Prior to taking your position with this summer program, did you have experience working directly with children with disabilities?

- No (Skip to Question 40)
- Yes

39. If you had prior experience, did you have any working directly with children with disabilities, what position(s) did you hold? (Check all that apply.)

- Teacher for children with disabilities
- School aide or paraprofessional in a classroom with students with disabilities

Other (please specify)

40. Do you hold any type of teaching certificate or license for Texas, or another state? (Check one.)

- No (Skip to Question 42)
- Yes

41. Name of teaching certificate or license for Texas or another state

42. Has your experience working in this summer program increased your interest in:

	Yes	No	Already Hold this Degree
Pursuing a bachelor's degree with a major in education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pursuing a bachelor's degree in another subject	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pursuing a teaching certificate and/or a master's degree in education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pursuing a master's degree in social work or another field related to child/youth development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Demographic Information

Below are some questions about your personal demographic information. For each question, please check the response that best describes you.

43. Are you currently a student?

- No
- I am a high school student
- I am a college student
- I am a graduate student
- Other type of student

44. What is your highest level of education?

- Less than high school
- High school or GED
- Some college, other classes/training not related to a degree
- Completed two-year college degree
- Completed four-year college degree
- Some graduate work
- Master's degree or higher

45. Do you speak and understand any languages other than English?

- No (Skip to Question 47)
- Yes

46. What languages other than English do you speak and understand? (Note: Only languages you are fluent enough in that you are able to work and communicate effectively with students and parents who speak that language.) (Check all that apply.)

- Spanish
- Chinese
- Russian
- Haitian-Creole
- French

Other (please specify)

47. Which best describes your race or ethnicity? (Check one.)

- Black (Not Hispanic)
- Hispanic/Latino
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Native American or Alaskan Native
- White (Not Hispanic)

Other (please specify)

48. Are you

- Female
- Male

49. What is your age?

- Under 18
- Between 18 and 21
- Between 22 and 25
- Between 26 and 35
- Between 36 and 45
- Over 45

50. Do you live within walking distance of this summer program?

- Yes
- No

51. Do you have a child or children attending this summer program?

- Yes
- No

52. Did you work in this summer program last year (2013)?

- Yes
- No

53. What hourly wage do you earn for your work in this summer program?

- \$0 -- I am a volunteer
- Between \$6 and \$10.99 per hour
- Between \$11 and \$15.99 per hour
- Between \$16 and \$20.99 per hour
- Between \$21 and \$25.99 per hour
- Between \$26 and \$30.99 per hour
- \$31 per hour or higher

Other (please specify)

54. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the summer program staff and program.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	It is about the same	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Our summer program staff keeps parents informed about the program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our summer program keeps parents informed about their child's participation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our summer program staff welcomes parents to observe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our after-school staff welcomes parents involvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a balance between academic and other types of activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our summer program have sufficient resources to conduct activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our summer program staff have adequate support from the site supervisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	It is about the same	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Our summer program have adequate support from the program director	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our program helps students academically	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our program helps students in homework completion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our program helps students get along with others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our program facilitates positive behavior among the participants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

55. What opportunities for staff development have had this summer?

56. Thus far, what are your greatest successes in the summer program this year?

57. What have been your greatest challenges in the after school program this year?

APPENDIX E
HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

June 20, 2014

Dr. Catherine Horn
Educational Psychology

Dear Dr. Catherine Horn,

The University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1) reviewed your research proposal entitled "ENRICH Best Program Practices Study" on June 20, 2014, according to institutional guidelines.

The Committee has given your project unconditional approval; however, reapplication will be required:

1. Annually
2. Prior to any change in the approved protocol
3. Upon development of unexpected problems or unusual complications

Thus, if you will still be collecting data under this project on **April 8, 2015**, you must reapply to this Committee for approval before this date if you wish to prevent an interruption of your data collection procedures.

If you have any questions, please contact Samoya Copeland at [REDACTED]

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Daniel O'Connor, Chair
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1)

PLEASE NOTE: (1) All subjects must receive a copy of the informed consent document. If you are using a consent document that requires subject signatures, remember that signed copies must be retained for a minimum of 3 years, or 5 years for externally supported projects. Signed consents from student projects will be retained by the faculty sponsor. Faculty are responsible for retaining signed consents for their own projects; however, if the faculty leaves the university, access must be possible for UH in the event of an agency audit. (2) Research investigators will promptly report to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects and others.

Protocol Number: 14287-01

Full Review:

Expedited Review:

[REDACTED] Houston, TX [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

COMMITTEES FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS