AN EVALUATION OF A RESOURCE TRAINING GUIDE FOR AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL SETTING

by

Janice Sherri Pritchett
A Project
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of George Mason University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science Sport and Recreation Studies

Committee:

___________________________________________ Chair

___________________________________________

___________________________________________

___________________________________________ Academic Program Coordinator

___________________________________________ Academic Program Coordinator

___________________________________________ Dean, College of Education and Human Development

Date: ____________________________ Fall Semester 2015

George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
An Evaluation of a Resource Training Guide for After-School Programming in the Middle School Setting

A Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science at George Mason University

by

Janice Sherri Pritchett
Bachelor of Science
Old Dominion University, 2010

Director: R. Pierre Rodgers, Ph.D., Associate Professor
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism
College of Education and Human Development

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Fairfax, VA
DEDICATION

"While we try to teach our children all about life, our children teach us what life is all about."

– Angela Schwindt

I would like to dedicate this project to the adolescents who have inspired this research. Every adolescent deserves an opportunity for continued growth and development through after-school programming.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge God for this opportunity to continue my education. I am humbled by your unyielding presence throughout this journey. To my committee chair and members, thank you for your unwavering support and flexibility throughout this process. I am grateful for your guidance and counsel. To my parents, thank you for your unconditional love and support, for without it, I would not strive to achieve my greatest aspirations. To my sisters, thank you for your continued encouragement, as words cannot even begin to describe my gratitude for your confidence in my abilities. To my niece and nephews, thank you for motivating me to strive for excellence. It is my hope that my efforts convince you that anything is attainable through hard work and faithfulness. To my extended family, friends, and colleagues, I would like to thank you for being a constant source of support and understanding. To my students and basketball team, thank you for your patience and willingness to compromise during this enduring process. To the school district that is the subject of this project: I would like to thank you for providing me with the resources necessary to complete this research. I have been blessed to be a part of this community and am forever grateful for the opportunity to grow both personally and professionally. Lastly, it is with utmost appreciation that I acknowledge Habe Coming. Without the continued support and ongoing encouragement of this partnership, this achievement would have only been a figment of my imagination. I am forever indebted to your willingness to sacrifice to help me be the best me.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

21st Century Community Learning Centers ........................................ 21st CCLC
After-School Alliance ................................................................................ AA
Automated External Defibrillator ................................................................. AED
After-School Program .................................................................................. ASP
After-School Program Administration .......................................................... ASP-AM
After-School Program Human Resources .................................................... ASP-HR
After-School Programming and Services ..................................................... ASP-PS
After-School Safety and Enrichment for Teens .......................................... ASSET
American Heritage Dictionary .................................................................... AHD
American Psychological Association .......................................................... APA
American Youth Policy Forum ..................................................................... AYPF
Assessment of Program Practices Tool ....................................................... APT
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation ................................................................. CPR
Child Care and Early Education ................................................................. CCEE
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning .................... CASEL
Center for Disease Control and Prevention ............................................... CDC
Center for Education Reform ..................................................................... CER
Center for Prevention Research and Development .................................... CPRD
Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing .......... CRESST
Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning Initiatives ........... CORAL
Council on Accreditation ......................................................................... COA
Department of Education ........................................................................ DOE
Emergency Medical Services ................................................................. EMS
English for Speakers of Other Languages ............................................... ESOL
Experience Sampling Method ................................................................. ESM
Fairfax County Public Schools ................................................................. FCPS
Federal Bureau of Investigation ............................................................... FBI
Fort Worth Texas After-School Program .................................................... FWTASP
Harvard Family Research Project ............................................................. HFRP
Healthy and Fitness Zones ........................................................................ HFZ
Learning Point Associates, Inc ................................................................. LPA
Maryland After-School Community Grant Programs .................................... MASCACP
Michigan Municipal League ..................................................................... MML
National After-School Association ............................................................ NAA
National Association for the Education of Young Children ....................... NAEYC
National Association of Elementary School Principals .............................. NAESP
ABSTRACT

AN EVALUATION OF A RESOURCE TRAINING GUIDE FOR AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL SETTING

Janice Sherri Pritchett, M.S.
George Mason University, 2015
Project Director: Dr. R. Pierre Rodgers

The intent of this project was to evaluate the quality of a resource training guide for personnel delivering after-school programming in the middle school setting in a public school district located in Northern Virginia. A content analysis of the school district’s resource training guide for after-school programming was conducted to determine the level of quality. The analysis was based on an adapted version of the “Quality Triangle” developed by the Harvard Medical School and McLean Hospital’s Program in Education, After-School, and Resiliency (Noam, 2008). The overall finding of this project suggests that the school district has an opportunity to further advance the quality of its resource training guide in support of providing after-school personnel with a tool to ensure quality in after-school programming in the middle school setting. These findings were evidenced by several emergent themes, including administrative infrastructure, curricular framework, developmental areas, human resources, and program strategies. The results of this project will help to advance knowledge of after-school
programming and enhance training of competent and engaged personnel, as well as ultimately help to further adolescent development in the middle school setting.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Approximately 25 percent of all middle school students within the United States are unsupervised in the hours after school between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. (After-School Alliance [AA], 2014). In recent years, after-school programming has been utilized to address this phenomenon. Approximately 18 percent of adolescents in the United States currently utilize after-school programming compared to 11 percent in 2004 (AA, 2014). After-school programming is important because it provides developmental opportunities for these adolescents, particularly as it relates to academic, behavioral, cognitive, emotional, physical, sexual, and social development. Those who provide after-school programming are responsible for providing adolescents with activities during the hours after school; however, there is a deficiency in uniformity, theoretical frameworks, and desired outcomes, creating a lack of standardization among after-school personnel in the middle school setting (Moore, 2010). This deficiency the ability of after-school personnel to offer effective activities that successfully drive adolescent development, particularly as it relates to leveraging recreational activities to drive health and wellness, social engagement, and academic success (Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2009). Yet, practitioners and scholars continue to grapple with the long-standing challenge of providing a quality environment for adolescents during the hours after school (Hirsch et al., 2010). According to Bouffard and Little (2004), “there is no question that staffing is
a key component of quality in [out-of-school] programs. Many programs attribute their success to skillful [and well-trained] providers, and research demonstrates the importance of positive staff-child relationships for youth outcomes” (p. 1). Research suggests that after-school programming is often at odds with how quality is defined, the relationship between quality and outcomes, how outcomes are identified and measured, and which assessment tools are most effective in measuring quality (LaRue, 2013; Moore, 2010). The infrastructure of most after-school programming incorporates quality indicators, but it is essential to select indicators that relate to the program’s stated outcomes (Kunz et al., 2009). As such, there is a significant need to ensure acceptance and compliance with a set of standards that promote outcome-oriented best practices and are effective in advancing quality in after-school programming (Council on Accreditation [COA], 2015).

There is general consensus on the importance of providing adolescents with opportunities that will productively occupy their time during the hours after school (Fashola, 1998). In support, after-school programming leverages a variety of instructional methods to provide adolescents with opportunities to meet their interests and needs, which may not be fulfilled during traditional school hours (Halpern, 2002). These opportunities include cultural, recreational, relational, and social enrichment experiences, which contribute to academic, behavioral, preventive, and physical developmental outcomes (AA, 2012; Lauer et al., 2004; Shugerman, 2013; Witt & King, 2009). The capacity to offer these opportunities is dependent not only on funding, but also the development of policies and procedures that guide a proper course of action for after-school personnel to ensure optimal performance, as measured by standards of quality in
after-school programming (Kueneman, 2007). These policies and procedures can be used to help increase the overall knowledge of after-school professionals as they endeavor to provide quality services to meet the needs of after-school participants (LaRue, 2013).

It is important to ensure that after-school personnel are properly trained to deliver after-school programming as it provides “allotted time to plan enriching activities, make connections with the community, and communicate with stakeholders. Moreover, [it] greatly impacts the sustainability of the after-school programming profession” (Bouffard & Little, 2004, p. 3). According to Little et al. (2008), “the bottom line of many after-school studies is that one of the most critical features of high-quality programs necessary for achieving positive outcomes is the quality of a program’s staff” (p. 7). It is essential to provide after-school personnel with professional development opportunities that help to enhance their level of knowledge and skills as they serve on the front-line and work directly with after-school participants (Mott, 2009). It is critical to “consider what competencies, skills and knowledge staff need prior to and after they are hired into the program, and provide opportunities to strengthen and build their competencies over time” (Mott, 2009, p. 3). Therefore, the purpose of this project is to evaluate the quality of policies and procedures that are contained within a resource training guide for after-school personnel in the middle school setting.

**Overview of the Project**

**Description of the Project**

Research suggests that after-school environments allow adolescents to interact
with their peers, as well as school personnel, in a more relaxed atmosphere (Fairfax County Public Schools [FCPS], 2015b). The opportunity for adolescents to engage in positive peer relationship building is directly linked to enhanced community connectivity, improved school attendance, decreased at-risk behavior, and increased social competence (FCPS, 2015b). Moreover, after-school programming can help to drive increases in learning outcomes by improving academic achievement (FCPS, 2015b). However, the capacity of after-school programming to positively impact adolescent development is contingent on the quality of programming. This ability is directly aligned to compliance with standards of quality in after-school programming and promote positive outcomes for adolescents (COA, 2015). Research suggests that after-school programming endeavors to provide adolescents with “greater opportunities for success in developing the attitudes, skills, knowledge, and abilities to live healthy lives, become productive adults, and thrive in workplaces and communities in the 21st century” (FCPS, 2015b, n.p.). This project posits that it is worth examining the key determinants of quality in after-school programming and their relationship with driving adolescent development, particularly within the areas of academic, social, and recreational engagement.

The intent of this project is to evaluate the quality of a resource training guide for after-school personnel, designed to guide the delivery of after-school programming in the middle school setting. A public school district located in Northern Virginia has served as the site for this evaluation. This evaluation included, but was not limited to the mission, vision, goals, objectives, strategies, activities, functions, and outcomes as contained within the resource training guide for after-school programming. This evaluation was
guided by the following research question – *Does the school district maintain a high-quality resource training guide for after-school personnel to guide the delivery of after-school programming in the middle school setting?* This project and its findings can be used to further develop strategies to drive improvements in the quality of after-school programming in the middle school setting. In support of this endeavor, this project contributes to the fields of after-school programming and sport and recreational studies by expanding knowledge on the role of standards of quality in driving effectiveness in after-school programming in the middle school setting.

*Description of the School District*

This project focused on materials for after-school programming in a public school district located in Northern Virginia. As of the 2014-2015 school year, this school district spanned approximately 400 square miles and consisted of a population of approximately 1,137,500 residents. The organizational mission of the school district is to inspire and empower students to meet high academic standards, lead ethical lives, and be responsible and innovative global citizens (FCPS, 2015a). The school district looks to the future, commits to opportunity, supports the community, achieves academic success, and holds students and personnel accountable (FCPS, 2015a). This mission and vision are achieved by preparing students for college and careers through rigorous academic studies, providing students with essential life skills to lead responsible, respectful, and fulfilling lives, and teaching students about the important role they play as members of society (FCPS, 2015a).
This school district is the largest in the Commonwealth of Virginia and 10th largest public school district in the country, serving approximately 188,500 students (Emery & McGrath, 2008; FCPS, 2015a). Of these students, approximately 60 percent are minorities, with 25 percent Hispanic or Latino, 19 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, 10 percent Black or African American, and 5 percent of Two or More Races (FCPS, 2015a).1 Approximately 28,800 students study English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and approximately 52,600 students are eligible for free and/or reduced-price meals (FCPS, 2015a).

The school district comprises 196 schools and centers and 48 programs, of which 139 are elementary schools, twenty-three (23) middle schools, three (3) secondary schools, twenty-two (22) high schools, two (2) alternative high schools, and seven (7) special education centers, as well as forty-eight (48) interagency alternative school programs (FCPS, 2015a). The district workforce consists of approximately 24,600 employees, of which 92 percent are school-based positions and 8 percent non-school-based positions (FCPS, 2015a). With an operating budget of approximately $2.6 billion, it receives funding from school district aid (71 percent), state education aid (23 percent), federal aid (2 percent), and other sources (4 percent) (FCPS, 2015a). These funding sources are allocated for instruction (85 percent), transportation (6 percent), facilities management (4 percent), and general support (4 percent).

1 All percentages for American Indian or Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander have been excluded as they account for less than 1 percent of the population.
2 Elementary schools consist of pre-kindergarten through grade 6, middle schools grades 6 through 8, secondary schools grades 7 through 12, and high schools grades 9 through 12.
Of the twenty-three (23) middle schools, three (3) consist of grades 6 through 8 and twenty (20) grades 7 through 8 (FCPS, 2015a). At the middle school level, including secondary schools, it serves approximately 28,000 students. Of these students, approximately 58 percent are minorities, with 23 percent Hispanic or Latino, 20 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, 10 percent Black or African American, and 5 percent Two or More Races\(^3\) [see Appendix A: Demographic Profile of the School District (Middle Schools by Race) and Appendix B: Demographic Profile of the School District (Middle Schools by Gender)]. Female students account for approximately 49 percent of the population, while male students account for 51 percent (FCPS, 2015a). The current demographic profile suggests that the school district addresses the needs of a significant number of students who reside in economically disadvantaged and/or minority households. This is juxtaposed with the high cost of living associated with the geographic area, resulting in necessities, such as after-school assistance, being out of reach for many of its key stakeholders (Emery & McGrath, 2008).

**Description of the School District’s After-School Program**

In 2001, the school district introduced non-fee-based after-school programming as a safe-haven for adolescents across all middle schools. These programs were supported through a local public-private partnership (Emery & McGrath, 2008; FCPS, 2013). The intent of the partnership was to provide evidence-based prevention programming,

\(^3\) All percentages for American Indian or Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander have been excluded as they account for less than 1 percent of the population.
delivered by trained professionals in an after-school environment (Emery & McGrath, 2008; FCPS, 2015c). This partnership served as an intermediary for after-school assistance between the school district and local government agency charged with offering community and recreational services within its jurisdiction (Emery & McGrath, 2008). The partnership was funded through the Virginia State Incentive Grant (VSIG) and operated one (1) to two (2) days per week (Emery & McGrath, 2008).

At the time of inception, a school district-wide survey was conducted to examine after-school programming among local adolescents. The survey found that approximately 57 percent of respondents spent unsupervised time at a peer’s household, 50 percent at a mall or parking lot three (3) or more times per week, and 34 percent at other unsupervised locations at least one (1) time per week (Emery & McGrath, 2008). These findings are consistent with recent trends related to an increase in gang involvement among adolescents in the jurisdiction. More specifically, the jurisdiction is associated with over 100 active gangs in its surrounding geographic area and the primary population for recruitment includes disengaged adolescents that are economically disadvantaged with minority backgrounds (Jackman, 2006). The significant amount of unsupervised out-of-school time (OST) among these adolescents creates a considerable risk for gang involvement. Thus, the availability of after-school programming is an organizational imperative to help ensure the academic, behavioral, and personal success of at-risk adolescents. To address these issues, local law enforcement advanced a holistic approach to combat the prevalence of gang activity, with approximately $2 million through a federal seed grant, of which 51 percent was allocated to policing and 49 percent
to intervention and prevention (Jackman, 2006). More specifically, it established after-school programming in the middle school setting operating five (5) days per week across all twenty-six (26) middle and secondary schools within its jurisdiction as part of its prevention strategy (Jackman, 2006). As a result, gang involvement decreased by approximately 39 percent (Jackman, 2006).

By 2004, the average weekly attendance increased to approximately 3,600 students (Emery & McGrath, 2008). In that same year, the school district’s board established the Office of After-School Programs (OASP), charged with managing approximately $1 million in invested funds for after-school programming (Emery & McGrath, 2008). The following year, the school district’s board of supervisors earmarked approximately $3.4 million in support of expanding the partnership to a bona-fide after-school program (ASP) that operated five (5) days per week across all middle schools (Emery & McGrath, 2008). The mission for after-school programming was stated explicitly “to expand the opportunity throughout [the jurisdiction] for children and youth to participate in high-quality educational, recreational, cultural, and community enrichment programs after the [traditional] school day [and] provide safe, supervised environments for children and youth that increase school and community connectedness, academic achievement, physical activity, and social and life skills while reducing the potential for risk-taking behaviors” (FCPS, 2015b, n.p.).

The school district developed a resource training guide for after-school personnel titled “Middle School After-School Program Resource Guide”, designed to guide the delivery of after-school programming in the middle school setting. The guide is
contained within a standard two (2) inch, three (3) ring binder comprised of approximately 618 pages of text, not including the table of contents, divided across the thirteen (13) chapters [see Appendix C: Resource Training Guide Table of Contents].

The beginning of the guide included an executive summary, which addressed the mission, vision, and goals for after-school programming; however, it did not explicitly state the overarching purpose of the guide as a resource for after-school personnel.

The school district’s ASP strives to accomplish the following four (4) goals: (1) engage every middle school student in a constructive after-school activity; (2) improve academic performance and development among adolescents; (3) increase the number of adolescents participating in school-based or school-linked after-school programming; and (4) reduce the incidence of adolescents involved in substance abuse, gang activity, violence, and other risk-taking behaviors (FCPS, 2015b). A set of seven (7) strategies were outlined to drive after-school engagement (Table 1) (FCPS, 2015b).

Table 1. After-School Program Strategies Used by the School District

<table>
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<th>• Build competency and self-confidence.</th>
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<td>• Provide interesting and engaging activities that will attract students into supportive groups and the broader school community.</td>
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<td>• Provide relationships with committed and caring adults.</td>
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<td>• Provide a safe-haven for students during after-school hours.</td>
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<td>• Support an integrated system in which school and community-based after-school programming is coordinated and linked with traditional school day activities to maximize the benefits to adolescents and families.</td>
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<td>• Support student academic achievement.</td>
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<td>• Teach life lessons, such as anger management, goal setting, hard work, respect for others, responsibility, sportsmanship, and teamwork.</td>
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Note: Adapted from Fairfax County Public Schools. (2015b). Fairfax County Public Schools after-school program resource guide. Fairfax County, VA: Author.
The school district’s ASP leverages several strategies to support a variety of activities across each middle school. However, all of these strategies endeavor to develop social skills, drive academic support and enrichment, engage families and the community, and ensure physical health and wellness (see Table 2) (FCPS, 2015b). These activities were established based on a routine planning process consisting of the following (4) steps: (1) identify needs; (2) determine performance measures for programmatic assessment; (3) select activities to address needs; and (4) align outcomes with programmatic goals (Emery & McGrath, 2008).

In addition to the aforementioned goals and strategies, the school district established the following four (4) outcomes, which are used to measure quality in after-school programming: (1) academic and behavioral data; (2) planned and unplanned site observations; (3) quarterly progress reports; and (4) stakeholder survey results (Emery & McGrath, 2008). By 2007, all of the middle schools were equipped with a comprehensive after-school programmatic infrastructure, including one (1) full-time, onsite program specialist who is responsible for operating its budget and developing and implementing after-school programming. Moreover, the programs consist of two (2) key areas, including academic time and recreational activity time. Academic time is an allotted time for students to receive academic tutoring and/or participate in academic programs (FCPS, 2015c). During academic time, after-school participants with a “C” average or above complete homework assignments in “Homework Hotspot” and/or receive academic assistance from personnel in order to participate in recreational activity time. Recreational activity time is an allotted time for students to participate in physical
health and wellness activities, such as intramural sports, exercise classes, and/or clubs (FCPS, 2015c). However, after-school participants who maintain a “D” average or below are required to receive academic assistance from personnel, which is given the authority to determine if the after-school participant is allowed to participate in recreational activity time. This determination is based on the behavior and/or academic progression of the after-school participant.

Currently, the school district’s ASP is available five (5) days per week during the academic year. It operates in the period from dismissal after traditional school hours until approximately 6:00 p.m. (FCPS, 2015c). All after-school participants are provided transportation to their residences three (3) days per week including Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays (FCPS, 2015c). On the remaining weekdays, after-school participants are required to secure their own transportation from the after-school facility via a parent and/or guardian. All middle school students across the school district are eligible to participate in the program, provided they participate in academic time (FCPS, 2015c). As of 2011, program participation was shown to improve academic performance across the school district, especially among middle school students. For example, the average number of middle school students who received a “D” or “F” in a core subject decreased to approximately 54 percent. Of these middle school students, approximately 84 percent attended less than sixty (60) days of after-school programming (FCPS, 2015b). Moreover, approximately 83 percent of personnel agree that participation in after-school programs contributes to increases in academic performance (FCPS, 2015b).
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<td><strong>Community and Family Involvement</strong></td>
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<td>- Volunteerism</td>
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*Note: Adapted from Fairfax County Public Schools. (2015b). *Fairfax County Public Schools after-school program resource guide.* Fairfax County, VA: Author.*

In 2013, approximately 93 percent of the middle school population attended the school district’s ASP, with notable participation among Black or African American and
Hispanic or Latino students. This level of participation exceeded the demographic profile of middle school students by 100 percent and 14 percent respectively (Emery, personal communication, 2014). As attendance increased, gang involvement among middle school students decreased by approximately 32 percent in its surrounding area (FCPS, 2015b). Also, personnel suggest that classroom behavior improved by approximately 83 percent among middle school students who attended at least sixty (60) days of after-school programming (FCPS, 2015b).

From 2008 through 2012, the school district measured the perceptions of students, parents, and personnel on the impact of after-school programming on the level of community connectivity among after-school participants in the middle school setting (FCPS)4. The survey results suggest that approximately 88 percent of the middle school population were after-school participants, of which, approximately 78 percent of middle school students improved their academic performance, 75 percent improved their relationships with peers and personnel, 73 percent improved their teamwork skills, 73 percent learned how to do new things, 69 percent learned to care more about school, 69 percent advanced their problem-solving skills, 63 percent improved their leadership skills, and 62 percent enhanced their level of connectivity to their community.

Limitations of the Project

The following three (3) key limitations have the potential to influence the

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4 After-School Parent Survey (2011; 2012); After-School Program Staff Survey (2012); After-School Student Survey (2012); After-School Teacher Survey (2010; 2012); Fairfax County Youth Survey (2008; 2011).
evaluative findings: (1) data availability; (2) researcher bias and reliability; and (3) single subject design. First, there was limited access to secondary data. This prevented an in-depth analysis, which may have been obtained through a primary data collection. Secondary data was used due to an extensive application and approval process and lack of reliability in student feedback. Due to the school district’s comprehensive privacy policy, it would have taken a number of months to retrieve primary data in accordance with federal and state confidentiality regulations, as the data set would have contained personally protected information. Additionally, the disclosure of the name of the school district, middle schools offering after-school programming, and after-school participants would have required written approval from the superintendent of the jurisdiction. While this limitation is acknowledged, findings from this project may be generalized to the school district’s ASP across the middle school setting. Second, this project is limited by researcher bias and reliability. This project acknowledges the potential for personal values influencing the evaluation due to the researcher’s connectivity to the subject as a current employee of the school district (Moon, 2013). The researcher will maintain a level of theoretical sensitivity by acknowledging and controlling for researcher bias, which is inherent in the researcher’s connectivity to the subject (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Moreover, this project acknowledges the issues of reliability in conducting a content analysis, which may be further complicated by the errors associated with the human nature of the researcher (Busch et al., 2012). In particular, the researcher was responsible for assisting with the school district’s ASP, including conducting surveys among personnel to measure the level of quality in after-school programming. Lastly, this
project is limited by the use of a single case as it solely evaluated the resource training guide for the school district that served as the subject. Research suggests that a common criticism of the single subject methodology is its dependency on a single case, which makes it difficult to draw a generalizable conclusion (Zainal, 2007).

Definition of Terms

Accreditation – A process through which childcare programs voluntarily meet specific standards to receive endorsement from a professional agency (Child Care and Early Education [CCEE], 2014).

Adolescent – The transitional stage from childhood to adulthood; the childhood development of physical and psychological characteristics (American Heritage Dictionary [AHD], 2015).

Adolescence (or Youth) – The period of physical and psychological development from the onset of puberty to adulthood (AHD, 2015).

After-School Program – A program designed to provide care for educational enhancement to children in the hours immediately following school hours (AHD, 2015).

Evaluation – To determine the importance, effectiveness, or worth of a subject (AHD, 2014).

Middle School – A school at a level between elementary and high school, typically comprising grades 5 through 8 (AHD, 2015).
Out-of-School Time – The non-school time periods for school-age children and adolescents, ‘during which there is often a need for school-age childcare and other types of programming (CCEE, 2014).

Professional Development – A comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving educators’ effectiveness in driving student achievement through a variety of activities that build competencies, skills, knowledge, and abilities (The Professional Learning Association [PLA], 2015).

Quality – A high degree of excellence as determined by attributes that drive effectiveness in after-school programming (AHD, 2015).

Quality Triangle – A triangulated framework used to assess quality in after-school programming based on variables that drive activities, curriculum, and learning, personnel capacity, training, and relational care, and programmatic support, structure, and leadership (Noam, 2008).

Summary

This chapter introduced the overall intent of this project, which was to evaluate the quality of a resource training guide for personnel delivering after-school programming in the middle school setting. Chapter Two reviews past pertinent literature on after-school programming. Chapter Three discusses the methodological design, followed by Chapter Four, which examines the results of the project. Lastly, a summary of the findings, call for future research, and recommendations for practice are found in Chapter Five.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The intent of this project is to evaluate the quality of a resource training guide designed to guide the delivery of after-school programming in the middle school setting. The scope of this literature review includes a history of after-school programming and an overview of the impact of after-school programming on adolescents in the middle school setting, including the role of personnel, policies, and procedures, and standards of quality. The literature review also includes a discussion on adolescent development during middle childhood, including academic, behavioral, physical, and preventive outcomes.

After-School Programs

History of After-School Programs

After-school programming was initiated in local communities in the late nineteenth century (Halpern, 2002). Vandell and Shumow (1999) define ASPs as a supervised environment for adolescents that foster academic success, behavioral intervention, cultural enrichment, flexibility and relaxation, recreational activities, and safety and security (Seppanen et al., 1993). At their inception, ASPs were characterized as “boy’s clubs” that convened in unconventional venues, such as storefronts and other local buildings (Halpern, 2002). As they evolved, ASPs expanded beyond simple childcare capabilities. In the early twentieth century, several academic institutions hosted
recreational and social activities for adolescents during the hours after school (Shugerman, 2013). These early activities were focused on providing adolescents with a safe environment and resources for academic and social support (Shugerman, 2013). For example, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)\(^5\) was established in 1926, and has since become a leading voice on the importance of quality in the delivery of childcare services (National After-School Association [NAA], 2015). Since its inception, the NAEYC has published extensive research on teaching and early childhood development. It also awards accreditation to early childhood degree programs at colleges and universities based on professional preparation standards.

Mahoney and Parente (2009) identified four (4) historic factors that influenced the growth of after-school programming. First, changes in the national labor force, resulting in an increase of female participation in the workforce, precipitated a significant gap in the supervision of adolescents. The phenomenon known as “latchkey children,” described the prevalence of adolescents who were left unsupervised by an adult during the hours after school (Bender et al., 1984; Long & Long, 1983). Secondly, changes in neighborhoods resulted in adolescents spending increased time in unsupervised areas, which contributed to issues related to their health and safety. Thirdly, changes in social and political support due to concerns over the utilization of government resources to provide childcare assistance, led to greater attention to the debate on after-school programming. Fourthly, changes in childcare practices, which were due to an increase in

\(^5\) National Association for the Education of Young Children, which was founded in 1926, is a non-profit organization that promotes high-quality early learning for children by connecting practice, policy, and research.
single-family households and a decrease in the affordability and/or availability of after-school arrangements, influenced an increase in self-care among adolescents.

From the 1950s through 1980s, there was a modest increase in federal funding for early childhood development rather than after-school programming (Shugerman, 2013). Since the 1980s, research regarding after-school programming has substantially increased from a limited amount of studies, including a variety of evaluations and reports (Honig & McDonald, 2005; Shugerman, 2013). As Shugerman (2013) observed, “while funding and public attention for after-school activities in the early 1990s was weak, by the mid-1990s ‘after-school,’ as a distinct social service, grew enormously” (p. 23). In particular, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Initiative (21st CCLC), under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, was established in 1998 and received approximately $40 million in federal funding (NAA, 2015). The intent of the legislation was to promote equal educational opportunities for adolescents, with a particular focus on after-school, before-school, and summer learning programs. In 2011, the After-School for America’s Children Act was introduced to reauthorize and strengthen the 21st CCLC. According to Shugerman (2013), the intent of the reauthorized legislation was to drive improvements in the following eight (8) key areas: (1) align accountability measures to college and career-readiness goals and indicators, such as academic performance, grade-level advancement, and school attendance; (2) encourage innovation through hands-on,

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6 The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Initiative is the only federal funding source dedicated to after-school programming and supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during the hours after school for adolescents (DOE, 2013). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is a policy that sets standards and measurable goals to improve outcomes in education (DOE, 2013).
experiential learning in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; (3) ensure funding to support evidence-based practices; (4) increase quality and accountability through parental engagement, alignment with state-wide learning objectives, and coordination between local, state, and national entities; (5) promote physical activity and nutrition education; (6) promote professional development among after-school personnel; (7) strengthen school-community partnerships; and (8) support individualized learning to ensure mastery of core skills and knowledge. In addition to legislation, formula grants were established for distribution to local school and community-based partnerships through a competitive grant process.

The insurgence of fiscal and legislative support for after-school programming reflects recent shifts in the modern family structure, such as increased hours outside of the home for parents and/or guardians, which has negatively impacted their ability to drive adolescent development (Mahoney & Parente, 2009). Today, after-school programming is offered as a supplemental tool to help with the development of academic and social capabilities among adolescents (Mahoney & Parente, 2009). Since its inception, several components have been introduced to enhance the quality of instruction offered through after-school programming, including pedagogical assessments and leadership development training (Smith et al., 2012). Miller (2001) recently introduced four (4) prototypes of after-school programming (see in Table 3).
Table 3. After-School Program Prototypes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Childcare</th>
<th>Adolescent Development</th>
<th>Extended Learning</th>
<th>Enrichment Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Licensing • Accreditation</td>
<td>• Outcomes-Based Evaluation</td>
<td>• Safety Codes • School Achievement • Standardized Tests</td>
<td>• Activity Frameworks • Voluntary Participation Rates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>• Parent Fees • Development Funds</td>
<td>• Philanthropy • Prevention Funds</td>
<td>• Grants • Local Support • Tuition</td>
<td>• Parent Fees • Scholarships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>• Promote Supervision • Support Development</td>
<td>• Prevent Delinquent Behavior • Promote Development</td>
<td>• Improve Academic Achievement • Decrease Gaps in Academic Achievement</td>
<td>• Create Interests • Improve Skill Sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>• Staffers</td>
<td>• Adolescent Workers</td>
<td>• Para-Professionals • Teachers</td>
<td>• Subject Matter Experts</td>
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</tbody>
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*Note:* Adapted from Miller, B. (2001). The promise of after-school programs. *Beyond Class Times, 58*(7), 6-12.

Yet, while after-school programming experienced a significant growth in recent years, after-school personnel continue to struggle with identifying, understanding, and establishing common theoretical objectives and outcomes for after-school programming, particular within the middle school setting as demonstrated by gaps in the literature (Halpern, 2002). This is a result of the lack of collaboration and communication among practitioners and scholars during the early stages of development in after-school programming (Halpern, 2002). This project will help to fill the gaps in the literature by addressing the definition of quality in after-school programming, as well as advancing best practices for training after-school personnel to ensure the effective implementation and management of after-school programming, particularly within the middle school setting (Moore, 2010).
Impact of After-School Programs on Adolescents

Shugerman (2013) advocates for the importance of providing adolescents with opportunities for engagement during the hours after school. After-school settings also provide adolescents with various instructional methods to meet their interests, needs, and time restraints, which may not be fulfilled during traditional school hours due to the increasing requirements of standardized testing (Halpern, 2002). Scholars posit that after-school programming is important for adolescent development and learning because it provides a rich array of opportunities for cultural, recreational, relational, and social enrichment experiences (Lauer et al., 2004; Shugerman, 2013; Witt & King, 2009). These opportunities also contribute to academic (e.g., school attendance; test scores; grades), behavioral (e.g., improper conduct), preventive (e.g., drug and alcohol use; safe sex; criminal activity), and physical health and wellness outcomes (e.g., physical activity levels; nutrition) (AA, 2012).

Durlak and Weissburg (2007), in partnership with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)\(^7\) at the University of Illinois, conducted a study to examine the benefits of after-school programming. The study analyzed seventy-three (73) past studies on after-school programming. The sample population consisted of approximately thirty-one (31) elementary schools, twenty-four (24) middle schools, and five (5) high schools. The authors concluded that the use of evidence-based approaches in after-school programming was more successful in

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\(^7\) The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, which was founded in 1994 at the University of Illinois, is a non-profit organization at the University of Illinois that advances the development of academic, social, and emotional competence in adolescents.
producing benefits among after-school participants, particularly as it relates to their academic and social development. This included benefits across the following three (3) key developmental areas: (1) feelings and attitudes (e.g., school bonding; self-perception); (2) behavioral adjustment (e.g., drug use; problematic behavior; social behavior) and (3) school performance (e.g., attendance; grades; test scores).

Vandell et al. (2007) studied the Promising After-School Program (PASP)\(^8\) to determine the short and long-term impact of quality in after-school programming, as it relates to the academic, cognitive, and socio-emotional development of adolescents in economically disadvantaged environments. The sample consisted of approximately 2,900 students from elementary and middle schools across fourteen (14) cities in eight (8) states. The authors concluded that students who participated in after-school programming demonstrated higher levels of achievement in mathematics, improved habits, increased compliance in the household, and reduced incidents of misconduct.

Witt and King (2009) conducted a five (5) year evaluation of the Fort Worth Texas After-School Program (FWTASP)\(^9\) to determine if it was successfully implemented and fulfilled its goals to drive educational competence, physical and social development, and crime reduction among adolescents. The study included the collection of data from multiple sources, including document reviews, interviews, focus groups, observations, data reviews, surveys, and questionnaires. The study consisted of approximately 16,000 students across fifty-two (52) schools for the first four (4) years of

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\(^8\) The Promising After-School Program consists of programs that offer a high-quality environment, which endeavor to sustain characteristics that promote positive adolescent outcomes.

\(^9\) The Fort Worth Texas After-School Program provides adolescents with a structured environment to actively engage with their peers through academic, cultural, and recreational activities.
the evaluation and fifty-five (55) schools during the final year of the evaluation. The analysis revealed that approximately 51 percent of after-school participants were aware of the importance of learning, 51 percent of the importance of school attendance, and 43 percent of the importance of academic performance. The authors concluded that after-school programming had a positive impact on adolescent development and engagement.

After-School Program Personnel

The New York State After-School Network ([NYSAN], 2011)\(^\text{10}\) acknowledges the importance of after-school personnel in driving the effective delivery of after-school programming, which can impact developmental outcomes among adolescents. It posits that professional development opportunities should be offered to enhance proficiencies among any key stakeholders that assist in the delivery of after-school programming, including administrators, staff, supervisors, and volunteers. These opportunities included, but are not limited to, coaching, consultations, courses, institutes, mentoring, site visits, technical assistance, webinars, and workshops. These opportunities can be leveraged as mandatory training components that serve as a model to help ensure quality in after-school programming in support of driving quality outcomes. The value of these trainings is that they provide after-school personnel with opportunities to increase knowledge and connections to higher education credentials, improve working conditions, and enhance behaviors related to the field of after-school programming (NYSAN, 2011).

\(^{10}\) The New York State After-School Network, which was founded in 2001, is an advisory group that endeavors to provide adolescents with high-quality expanded learning and developmental opportunities that support their success in school, college, work, and life.
These mandatory training components can be used to effectively address the following eight (8) competency areas through both on-site and distance learning: (1) adolescent development; (2) business and record management; (3) child abuse and maltreatment prevention; (4) child abuse and maltreatment regulations; (5) childcare regulations; (6) healthy and nutrition; (7) program development; and (8) safety and security.

Bouffard and Little (2004) concur on the criticality of professional development and training opportunities for after-school personnel in maintaining quality in after-school programming by stating “for example, well-trained providers use their knowledge of child and adolescent development to interact positively and effectively with youth” (p. 3). Bouffard and Little (2004) advocate for the use of a four-level evaluation model to measure and verify the overall quality and effectiveness of these professional development and training opportunities, including reaction to training, learning outcomes from training, transfer of knowledge to practice through training, and results from training.

The Forum for Youth Investment (The Forum)\(^{11}\) and American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF)\(^{12}\) conducted a study to determine the most common challenges associated with after-school programming in an effort to increase the quality of adolescent engagement (Tolman et al., 2002). The study identified the following ten (10) challenges: (1) alignment across planning and processes; (2) coordination, collaboration,

\(^{11}\) The Forum for Youth Investment, which was founded in 1998, is a non-profit organization that endeavors to assist leaders as they prepare adolescents for college, work, and life.

\(^{12}\) The American Youth Policy Forum, which was founded in 1993, is a non-profit and non-partisan organization that endeavors to organize policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to improve education for adolescents.
and networking among after-school personnel; (3) development of physical infrastructures to support accessibility to OST opportunities; (4) engagement of adolescents in decision-making; (5) engagement of constituents to promote public awareness; (6) engagement of stakeholders across public and private sectors; (7) enhancement of mapping, monitoring, reporting, and research systems; (8) establishment of standards of quality and program quality assessment tools; (9) identification of local, state, and national and public and private funding streams; and (10) stabilization of a high-quality workforce. The authors found that the second most significant challenge was professional development opportunities for after-school personnel. This was demonstrated by a lack of advancement pathways, learning opportunities, and reasonable benefits and wages, which contributed to high turnover rates among after-school personnel across the field of after-school programming. It was concluded that quality in after-school programming is contingent on the capacity to build a stable and high-quality workforce through credentialing, compensation, development, and training. These findings suggest that after-school personnel who participate in professional development opportunities demonstrate improvements related to the overall level of quality in after-school programming.

The After-School Corporation (TASC)\textsuperscript{13} (2009) conducted a study to assess the challenges associated with recruiting and retaining a high-quality workforce to deliver after-school programming. The study analyzed a population of part-time after-school

\textsuperscript{13} The After-School Corporation, which was founded in 1998, is a non-profit organization that helps urban schools to provide effective learning opportunities to adolescents.
personnel, primarily of Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino decent and ranging in age from eighteen (18) to sixty-one (61) years old. It was concluded that after-school personnel should be trained in the following three (3) component areas: (1) adolescent development; (2) community service; and (3) education. The overall finding of the study was that the field of after-school programming should establish general guidelines, position descriptions and titles, and education and training requirements, as well as offer competitive wages and benefits to after-school personnel. These findings suggest that quality in after-school programming is dependent on the recruitment and retention of a well-trained workforce that can advance the curricular framework and forge supportive relationships with adolescents.

LaRue (2013) reviewed literature on the professional development of after-school personnel using a content analytic approach to specifically focus on program quality assessment tools, program evaluations, public entity proposals, publications, and regulations. The author found that the availability of professional development opportunities was influenced by delivery method, operating budget, program infrastructure, and timing. The author concluded that professional development and quality in after-school programming was linked to positive developmental outcomes in adolescents, such as fostering relationship building, improving academic success, and decreasing at-risk behaviors. These findings suggest that it is important to understand the importance of training after-school personnel as a mechanism to provide technical support to meet the needs of after-school participants. More specifically, these findings suggest that professional development opportunities should be designed to identify the
needs of after-school personnel by setting training goals that can help to increase competencies by utilizing effective developmental techniques and strategies.

*After-School Program Policies and Procedures*

The AA\textsuperscript{14} (2012) suggests that participation in after-school programming has the capacity to drive academic, behavioral, physical, and preventive outcomes among adolescents. These outcomes help to strengthen the ability of after-school personnel to develop after-school curriculum that helps to accomplish programmatic objectives (AA, 2012). The key to ensuring quality in after-school programming lies in the development of policies and procedures to guide the accomplishment of these programmatic objectives. Such objectives must directly align to the organizational mission, vision, and goals. The Michigan Municipal League (MML)\textsuperscript{15} (2015) encourages the assessment of after-school programming in an effort to ensure that the formulation, application, and reinforcement of policies and procedures support the organizational mission, vision, and goals and programmatic objectives. Moreover, it is imperative to provide after-school personnel with policies and procedures to help establish a proper course of action to ensure optimal performance in the delivery of after-school programming (Kueneman, 2007).

Kueneman (2007) identified the following eight (8) elements for consideration in the development of policies and procedures to guide the delivery of after-school

\textsuperscript{14}The After-School Alliance, which was founded in 2000, is a non-profit organization that increases public and private investment in after-school programming at the local, state, and national level.
\textsuperscript{15}The Michigan Municipal League, which was founded in 1899, is a non-profit organization that endeavors to improve municipal government through cooperation and advocacy at the state and national level.
programming: (1) disciplinary and behavioral management; (2) financial management; (3) health and safety; (4) operations; (5) parental engagement; (6) personnel; (7) student enrollment; and (8) transportation. The author advanced a set of recommendations were advanced to effectively communicate these policies and procedures and ensure a level of understanding and accountability among key stakeholders, including parents and after-school personnel (Table 4) (Kueneman, 2007).

Table 4. After-School Program Policies and Procedures

- Develop mechanisms to evaluate and revise policies and procedures.
- Ensure policies and procedures are clear, concise, consistent, and impartial.
- Ensure policies and procedures are necessary and efficient.
- Establish statements of acceptance.
- Practice strict adherence to policies and procedures.
- Utilize resource training guides to document policies and procedures.


The development of policies and procedures can also be leveraged to help mitigate discrepancies and complaints, as it relates to compliance with applicable regulatory requirements (MML, 2015). Moreover, policies and procedures can help to drive effective decision-making. As such, it is critical that all stakeholders in the delivery of after-school programming adhere to policies and procedures by ensuring their consistent application. These efforts will help to maintain compliance, safety, and quality in after-school programming.
Bodilly and Beckett (2005) conducted a study, commissioned by the RAND Corporation\textsuperscript{16} at the request of the Wallace Foundation\textsuperscript{17}, to examine key issues that impact the effectiveness of after-school programming. The sample population consisted of a set of group-based programs that deliver after-school programming for adolescents ranging from K through 12. The authors reviewed literature based on demand, impact, practices, participation, and quality, concluding that the following eight (8) factors helped to address these issues: (1) assessments; (2) clear mission; (3) emotional climate; (4) enrollment; (5) expectations and social norms; (6) partnerships; (7) pedagogical philosophy; and (8) trained personnel.

Floyd (2011) examined the role of leadership in driving quality in the delivery of after-school programming. The study utilized eight (8) leadership development models to analyze a set of two (2) low-performing ASPs in the middle school setting in Virginia. The author concluded that the following three (3) characteristics are important to ensuring effective leadership in after-school programming: (1) alignment of policies and procedures to programming outcomes; (2) establishment of an organizational infrastructure; and (3) availability of supportive and developmental opportunities for personnel. Additionally, after-school personnel must utilize policies and procedures, such as the \textit{No Child Left Behind Act}, to ensure accountability and effective leadership in the delivery of after-school programming. These findings suggest that besides instruction, effective leadership is the most significant contributor in driving

\textsuperscript{16} The RAND Corporation, which was founded in 1948, is a research organization that endeavors to improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis.

\textsuperscript{17} The Wallace Foundation, which was founded in 1922, is a philanthropic organization that endeavors to improve learning and enrichment for disadvantaged adolescents by fostering the vitality of the arts.
developmental outcomes among adolescents, which is directly linked to adherence to local, state, and nationally-based policy.

After-School Program Standards of Quality

The National Institute of Out-of-School Time (NIOST, 2009)\textsuperscript{18} suggests that in addition to policies and procedures, the development of standards of quality helps to identify and evaluate the level of effectiveness in after-school programming. Standards of quality consist of, but are not limited to, frameworks, models, practices, and rating systems to design, monitor, and evaluate after-school programming (NIOST, 2009). Most standards of quality have been developed based on a general indicator system, which consists of a set of exemplar policies and procedures that effectively promote quality in after-school programming (Huang et al., 2010). However, the application of standards of quality requires autonomy and flexibility in order to accommodate the organizational infrastructure of each respective program, as well as address the developmental needs of the target student population and key stakeholders.

While the field of after-school programming has yet to adopt a single set of standards of quality, research suggests commonalities between these standards and the level of performance in the delivery of after-school programming (Huang et al., 2010). As such, several local, state, and nationally-based standards of quality have emerged since the inception of after-school programming. For example, the National Association

\textsuperscript{18} The National Institute of Out-of-School Time, which was founded in the 1970s as the School-Age Childcare Project, is an organization at Wellesley College that endeavors to drive the field of after-school programming through consultation, education, research, and training.
of Elementary School Principals (NAESP, 1993)\textsuperscript{19} was one of the first organizations to advance the “Standards for Quality School-Age Child Care.” These standards were designed to promote the role of community-based organizations in realizing the benefits of recreation and socialization among peers (NAA, 2015). Also, the Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time (VPOST)\textsuperscript{20} endeavored to develop a system that will help to sustain quality in after-school programming by driving academic, emotional, physical, and social development among adolescents. According to Huang et al. (2010), standards of quality are generally measured across the following five (5) variables: (1) activities; (2) administration; (3) curriculum, organization, and environment; (4) health and safety; and (5) relationship building. While great strides have been made in the last decade to develop a single set of quality standards for after-school programming, there remains a need for continued empirical research to identify the most critical components of quality in the delivery of after-school programming (NAA, 2015).

According to Noam (2008), quality in after-school programming is most commonly demonstrated through the following five (5) characteristics: (1) authentic learning; (2) leadership; (3) professional development and training; (4) relationship building; and (5) safety. Moreover, the overarching commonality is the capacity to balance academic support with a variety of supplemental activities to drive peer engagement. This suggests that after-school programming provides greater opportunities

\textsuperscript{19} The National Association of Elementary School Principals, which was founded in 1921, is a professional organization that advocates for the support of elementary and middle school principals in driving results for adolescents, families, and communities.

\textsuperscript{20} The Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time, which was founded in 2009, is a non-profit organization that endeavors to drive cross-agency collaboration to promote quality in after-school programming.
for practical learning, which helps to drive academic, behavioral, and social outcomes in adolescents that may not be possible during traditional school hours. Moreover, after-school programming helps to develop competencies within adolescents that are necessary to succeed in the global economy.

The NAA\textsuperscript{21} (2009), in partnership with the Council on Accreditation (COA)\textsuperscript{22}, developed standards of quality, known as the “Code of Ethics for the After-School Professional.” These standards were developed based on criterion commonly accepted as “best practices, outcome-oriented, effective in advancing quality, and responsive to the unique needs and diversity of after-school programs” (COA, 2015, n.p.). Moreover, they are widely accepted across the field of after-school programming, as they are “grounded in a long-standing, widely held belief that children, youth, and families benefit when a program enhances its capacity to achieve its mission and validate its impact” (COA, 2015, n.p.). These standards are organized into the following three (3) categories: (1) after-school program administration (ASP-AM); (2) after-school program human resources (ASP-HR); and (3) after-school program programming and services (ASP-PS).

The AA (2015) designed a programmatic framework to ensure quality in after-school programming. The framework consisted of the following eight (8) programmatic elements: (1) alignment with school activities; (2) community partnerships; (3) continuous assessment and process improvement; (4) intentional programming; (5) peer engagement; (6) safety, health, and wellness; (7) student participation and accessibility;

\textsuperscript{21} The National After-School Association is a non-profit organization that fosters adolescent development, provides educative resources, and encourages advocacy across the field of after-school programming.

\textsuperscript{22} The Council on Accreditation, which was founded in 1977, is a non-profit organization that partners with human service entities to develop, improve, apply, and promote accreditation standards.
and (8) trained personnel. These elements help to drive the following four (4) intermediate and long-term outcomes: (1) improved grades; (2) improved interpersonal behavior and social skills; (3) improved test scores; and (4) reduced delinquent behavior. According to the AA (2015), this programmatic framework helped to increase mathematic test scores by approximately 70 percent and study habits by 60 percent among after-school participants in the middle school setting and to reduce misconduct and drug use by approximately 70 percent (AA, 2015).

McLaughlin (2000) determined commonalities in quality in after-school programming. In a study of approximately 120 ASPs over a ten (10) year period, “quality” was defined based on the ASPs’ ability to effectively drive academic and developmental outcomes in adolescents. The author concluded that while the most effective ASPs varied as the related to geographic location and curriculum, they demonstrated commonalities related to several critical program components, including deliberate learning opportunities to drive developmental growth and community connectedness. Moreover, the most effective ASPs were designed to consider assessment-oriented to solicit feedback, knowledge-oriented to disseminate curriculum, and youth-oriented to capture adolescents’ voices.

Vandell et al. (2006), sponsored by the Charles Steward Mott Foundation, examined the benefits of quality in after-school programming, particularly as it related to driving developmental outcomes in adolescents. The authors conducted a clustered

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23 The Charles Steward Mott Foundation, which was founded in 1926, is a non-profit organization that endeavors to strengthen the well-being of the local and global community and its capacity for accomplishment through grant making.
analysis of identity groups, categorized by demographic characteristics. The authors concluded that students who participated in after-school programming and/or other supervised and/or community-based activities, in nineteen (19) elementary schools and sixteen (16) middle schools across fourteen (14) jurisdictions in eight (8) states, experienced several benefits (e.g., improved school performance; improved feelings and attitudes; behavioral adjustments).

Huang et al. (2010), in partnership with the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST), conducted a national study to evaluate CCLCs. The results were used to guide the development of a resource training guide, intended to establish a universal definition for the term “quality” and set of standards of quality in after-school programming. The study conducted field research to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, including interviews and surveys. This data was triangulated to analyze best practices across a sample population consisting of approximately fifty-three (53) ASPs. The authors concluded that the universal definition for “quality” should be the delivery of basic developmental inputs that translate into best practices and result in positive outcomes for after-school participants. The authors concluded that the following ten (10) characteristics were commonly associated with quality in after-school programming: (1) ability to ensure adolescent-to-adult engagement and relationship building; (2) ability to establish accountability mechanisms to ensure effective performance among after-school personnel; (3) alignment between program

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24 The National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Training, which was founded in the 1970s, is an academic organization that helps to improve quality in education and learning through scientifically-based evaluation and testing techniques.
goals and structures; (4) capacity to ensure low attrition rates; (5) establishment of explicit program goals and strong leadership; (6) linkage between program curriculum and standards of quality; (7) linkage between programming and in-school activities; (8) sustainment of evaluative structures; (9) utilization of research-based instructional strategies; and (10) utilization of schedules.

Huang and Dietel (2011) conducted a literature review to determine and evaluate the best practices that support the delivery of quality in after-school programming across twelve (12) programs. This evaluation was based on the After-School Program Quality Model, developed by the CRESST, comprising the following five (5) components as indicators of best practices: (1) evaluation; (2) goals; (3) leadership; (4) personnel; and (5) program. The authors concluded that, as it relates to evaluation, best practices include internal and external evaluations, as well as mixed methodologies, such as focus groups, interviews, observations, and surveys. As it relates to goals, best practices included the emphasis on academic performance, explicit documentation of program goals that align to competency areas, alignment between program goals and the curricular design, and encouragement of professional certifications among after-school personnel. The best practices associated with leadership included the allocation of instructional materials and resources, articulation of the program mission, vision, and goals, decentralization of decision-making, development of instructional competence among after-school personnel, establishment of a team-oriented organizational culture, and promotion of professional development opportunities. The best practices related to personnel included adolescent-to-adult engagement, community involvement, formal education, minimal
turnover rates, and past professional experience. In regards to the program, best practices included advancement of innovative solutions to drive peer engagement, development of critical thinking skills through science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), dissemination of information through various communication vehicles and modes, promotion of character development, and utilization of research-based strategies.

The United States Department of Education (DOE)\(^{25}\) (2013) studied the 21\(^{st}\) CCLC to identify exemplary practices in the delivery of after-school programming. The study included a large-scale program evaluation to examine whether the current organizational structure and implementation of the 21\(^{st}\) CCLC helps to drive sustainability in after-school programming. The sample consisted of fifty-three (53) ASPs from across eight (8) national divisions, including both rural and urban community and school district-based programs, which were regarded as high-functioning programs. It was concluded that the ASPs that were regarded as high-functioning recognized that “quality matters” in the delivery of after-school programming. These findings were synthesized to develop a tool known as the “After-School Toolkit.” The toolkit was developed, in partnership with the AA, as a resource to help drive proactive business engagement in after-school programming.

**After-School Programs in the Middle School Setting**

Eccles (1999) argues that after-school programming plays an integral role

\(^{25}\) The United States Department of Education, which was founded in 1980, is a government organization that promotes student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access to education.
assisting adolescents as they navigate middle childhood. The National Middle School Association (NMSA)\(^{26}\) (2003) identified the following five (5) characteristics that contribute to creating an effective environment to administer after-school programming in the middle school setting: (1) assessments; (2) collaborative support systems and leadership; (3) diverse teaching methods; (4) safe environments; and (5) shared vision. Unlike the structured environment during traditional school hours, after-school personnel have greater autonomy to drive developmental outcomes without highlighting differentials in capacity, capability, and competency among after-school participants (Eccles, 1999). Considering, it is integral that after-school personnel consider standards of quality to ensure the development of healthy and positive attitudes towards learning and engagement among after-school participants, particularly in the middle school setting (Eccles, 1999). Unfortunately, evidence suggests a lack of available resources for adolescents during this period, which creates a business imperative for after-school programming to fill this void by providing expanded opportunities for learning and engagement. According to Emery (personal communication, 2014), after-school programming provides adolescents with these opportunities in the middle school setting by helping to develop positive and healthy relationships and develop the attitudes, skills, and knowledge necessary to thrive in the workforce and community.

Morehouse (2009) examined quality in after-school programming in a middle school setting in Vermont. The study examined approximately 109 ASPs across the

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\(^{26}\) The National Middle School Association, which was founded in 1973, is a non-profit organization that endeavors to fulfill the educational and developmental needs of adolescents in the middle school setting.
state, concluding that the ASPs demonstrated a developmental gap in the framework that was employed to guide the delivery of after-school programming. This gap resulted in a failure to effectively address the developmental needs of adolescents in the middle school setting. To address this gap, the study developed its own framework, known as “The Five Rs of Program Design.” The framework consists of the following five (5) elements: (1) real-life projects; (2) reinforcements; (3) relationships; (4) relevance; and (5) rigor. This framework provides a tool for after-school personnel to consider the developments needs of adolescents in the middle school setting when developing after-school programming, regardless of scope, geographic location, and community setting.

Westmoreland and Little (2005), in partnership with the Harvard Family Research Project ([HFRP], 2002)\textsuperscript{27} and sponsorship with the Nellie Mae Education Foundation\textsuperscript{28}, evaluated quality in after-school programming in the middle school setting, as it relates to academic, behavioral, and social development. This included an examination of how program quality assessment tools help to support adolescent development in the middle school settings. The sample population consisted of a set of local, state, and national programs and agencies charged with delivering after-school programming and driving adolescent development. The study hosted a one (1) day summit among after-school personnel to discuss quality in delivering after-school programming in the middle school setting.

\textsuperscript{27} The Harvard Family Research Project, which was founded in 1983, is a non-profit organization that endeavors to shape learning opportunities and advance family and community engagement by addressing issues of access and equity in education.

\textsuperscript{28} The Nellie Mae Education Foundation, which was founded in 1990, is a non-profit organization that seeks to reshape education through key investments that will help to build ownership, leadership, and capacity among educators, develop effective system designs, advance quality and rigor in student-centered practices, and promote public awareness.
setting, specifically as it related to activities, opportunities, and programs, adolescent development, family, school, and community-based partnerships, personnel, and relationships. The authors concluded that after-school personnel were challenged with understanding and improving quality in after-school programming, particularly in the middle school setting. More specifically, respondents indicated that program quality assessment tools were too broad and complicated, as they were too heavily focused on childcare capabilities among school-age populations. The study also concluded that after-school programming was unable to drive meaningful engagement among adolescents and after-school personnel. The recommendations included engagement of after-school participants to inform the development of instruments and tools to measure and assess quality in after-school programming, particularly in the middle school setting.

In summary, the literature suggests that the majority of research on after-school programming is descriptive in nature, with only a handful of rigorous empirical studies (Little et al., 2008). However, these studies have helped enhance understanding on key indicators of quality in after-school programming, such as community partnerships, intentional learning opportunities, policies and procedures, professional development and training opportunities, and supervisory structures (Palmer et al., 2009). Additionally, these studies have helped further the discussion on the impact of after-school programming on adolescents in the middle school setting by establishing a safe environment that benefits the interests and needs of adolescents during the hours after school.
Middle Childhood Development and After-School Programs

Adolescent Development

The World Health Organization ([WHO], 2012)\(^{29}\) argues that adolescents experience a significant change between the ages of ten (10) and nineteen (19) years old, as they become more distanced from the familial unit as a critical component of their identity. This age range is associated with a stage known as “adolescence”, particularly during middle childhood between the ages of ten (10) and fourteen (14) years old (Eccles, 1999). This is a critical stage due to the psychological, social, and biological shifts experienced during this period. The psychological shifts include cerebral development, whereas social shifts include neuroanatomical development, such as peer engagement. The biological shifts include pubescent and cognitive maturation, which undergirds biotic transformations.

During puberty, adolescents commonly experience an enhanced sexual libido, growth spurt, and primary and secondary sex development. According to the American Psychological Association ([APA], 2002)\(^{30}\), the pubescent period is associated with the following five (5) developmental stages: (1) behavioral development; (2) cognitive development; (3) emotional development; (4) sexual development; and (5) social development. The behavioral development stage is used to describe the shift in conduct, whereas the cognitive development stage is used to describe enhancements in critical reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. As it relates to emotional

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\(^{29}\) The World Health Organization, which was founded in 1948, is an international health organization that directs and coordinates global health within the United Nations system.

\(^{30}\) The American Psychological Association, which was founded in 1892, is a non-profit organization that endeavors to increase recognition of psychology as a science by expanding its role in advancing health.
development, this stage is used to describe the discovery of a sense of identity, whereas sexual development is used to describe the biological maturation of hormones. The social developmental stage is used to describe the shift from familial to peer relationships.

Research suggests that after-school programming provides a safe environment that helps to equip adolescents with communication vehicles, trusted relationships, positive reinforcements, and moral models as they navigate through these developmental stages (Morehouse, 2009). According to Strauss (2011), “after-school programs have long known that they can embrace the hours between the time school closes and parents return from work to provide children, especially those who don’t have access to other activities, with exciting, engaging experiences that will help them learn academic, social, and professional skills” (para. 2).

Eccles (1999) posits that adolescents commonly demonstrate more developmental necessities during middle childhood compared to younger children, as they are entrusted with a greater level of autonomy as young adults. The middle school setting encourages independence by promoting self-discovery, confidence, and identification (Eccles, 1999). This level of autonomy is demonstrated through a significant reduction in the amount of time spent under the supervision of adults due to increased involvement in extra-curricular activities and engagement with peers. Research suggests that adults play an integral role in fostering resiliency in adolescents as they navigate through the developmental stages of middle childhood (APA, 2002). Unfortunately, instruction during traditional school hours is narrowly focused and does not provide structured
opportunities for adolescents to experiment with their newly established autonomy (Vandell et al., 2006).

There is a shortage in the availability of resources to meet the developmental needs of adolescents during middle childhood, as they seek more autonomy and engage in activities that better align to their personal desires during the hours after school (Eccles, 1999). The tensions associated with middle childhood often manifest through atypical behaviors, including experimentation with drugs and/or alcohol, engagement in juvenile criminal activity and gangs, and the development of mental health disorders, such as eating disorders and depression. These behaviors serve as mechanisms to cope with the interpersonal conflicts and emotional instability associated with middle childhood (APA, 2002; Eccles, 1999). Moreover, research suggests that adolescents become less engaged in academics during middle childhood (APA, 2002; Eccles, 1999).

Gray et al. (1999) advanced a strategy to combat atypical behaviors and drive positive developmental outcomes in adolescents during middle childhood through after-school programming. This strategy included academic expectations and support, adult relationships, emotional intelligence and coping mechanisms, family environment, and religious and spiritual anchors. According to Gray et al. (1999), “young people attending these programs are engaging in activities with positive role models during the very hours when youth are most likely to get into trouble” (p. 42). The field of after-school programming drives these programmatic factors by offering extracurricular programs that are designed to engage adolescents and lessen their engagement in delinquent activities. Strauss (2011) posits that “students in after-school programs are less likely to join gangs,
be victims or perpetrators of violence, become teen parents, or engage in a host of inappropriate behaviors” (para. 6).

The Public Agenda (1999)\textsuperscript{31} conducted a study to examine atypical behavior during middle childhood. The study consisted of a national telephone survey of 1,000 random citizens. This sample included 384 parents whose children were under eighteen (18) years old, as well as 328 teenagers. Approximately 71 percent of respondents described behavior during middle childhood as “rude,” “wild,” and “irresponsible” and respondents acknowledged that few adults demonstrated a concerted action to provide substantive support during this developmental stage. This finding suggests that adults can improve their capacity to drive cognitive, emotional, physical, and social development among adolescents, as they experiment with new behaviors during the transition from childhood to adulthood (APA, 2002).

Erikson (2002) introduced a framework which advanced a psychosocial theory on personality development, consisting of the following five (5) developmental stages: (1) trust versus mistrust; (2) autonomy versus shame; (3) initiative versus guilt; (4) industry versus inferiority; and (5) identity versus role confusion. During these stages, adolescents transition from the home into wider social contexts. According to Erikson (2002), the term “adolescence” is best described by the final stage of “identify versus role confusion” as they “try to figure out ‘who am I? [and] establish sexual, ethnic, and career identities, or are confused about what future roles to play’” (p. 5). In response, after-

\textsuperscript{31} The Public Agenda, which was founded in 1975, is a non-profit organization that endeavors to help diverse populations navigate divisive challenges and identify cooperative solutions.
school programming is often leveraged to address the discomforts associated with these developmental stages during middle childhood.

Miller (2003) examined literature on after-school programming to determine its impact on middle childhood development. The study, commissioned by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, consisted of a literature review based on the following four (4) key cognate areas: (1) child development; (2) education; (3) psychology; and (4) recreation. The author concluded that after-school programming can help to drive learning and academic achievement in after-school participants during middle childhood and provides an alternate environment that better aligns to the interests, motivations, and needs of adolescents. Moreover, the author concluded that after-school programming provides the following eight (8) benefits to adolescents: (1) builds meaningful relationships with adults; (2) drives positive peer engagement; (3) enables development of new skill sets; (4) enhances decision-making and problem-solving capabilities; (5) enhances perceptions as learners; (6) improves familial engagement; (7) provides pathways to self-identification and mainstream society; and (8) transfers positive attitudes regarding in-school experiences. However, after-school programming remains under developed and lacks resources. These findings suggest that when properly supported, after-school programming can provide a safe-haven for adolescents to achieve academic success through improvements in attitude and behavior.

Vandell et al. (2007) conducted a study to examine the experiences of middle school students in after-school programming compared to other after-school activities. The study collected data for a two (2) year period using the Experience Sampling Method
The sample consisted of approximately 1,500 after-school participants from eight (8) programs across three (3) jurisdictions. The authors concluded that after-school participants were more engaged in activities involving both peers and personnel.

_Academic Outcomes_

Shugerman (2013) acknowledges that after-school programming impacts the academic progression of adolescents, particularly as it relates to improved school attendance, enhanced learning engagement, and increased test scores. The remainder of this section will elaborate on the significance of after-school programming as it relates to academic outcomes.

Reisner et al. (2004) conducted a five (5) year evaluation of the TASC to determine its effectiveness in operating school-based after-school programming for public school students in elementary and secondary grades, particularly as it relates to the relationship between academic achievement and school attendance. The authors collected data across four (4) school years from ninety-six (96) ASPs, as well as their host schools. The sample consisted of approximately 52,000 after-school participants and 91,000 students who were enrolled in host schools, but did not participate in after-school programming. Reisner et al. concluded that school attendance increased by approximately 2.7 traditional school days for after-school participants in the seventh and

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32 The Experience Sampling Method is a research methodology, which captures data based on the experiences of the sample population.
eighth grades compared to non-participants. These findings suggest that after-school programming has a positive impact on absenteeism in the middle school setting.

Frankel et al. (2005) studied engagement within state and federally-funded after-school programming in New Hampshire. The study collected data from twenty-nine (29) programs, including sixteen (16) elementary schools and thirteen (13) middle schools serving approximately 3,000 after-school participants. The authors concluded that more than 50 percent of after-school participants demonstrated progress in the timely completion and submission of homework assignments and improvements in classroom behavior. Additionally, students who participated in academic-based activities improved in academic performance by approximately 62 percent, homework completion and classroom participation by 51 percent, and classroom behavior and peer engagement by 35 percent.

Learning Point Associates, Inc. ([LPA], 2011)\(^{33}\) conducted a cross-national study to examine the perception among personnel on the role of the 21\(^{st}\) CCLC in helping to improve academic performance. It was concluded that students who participated in after-school programming through 21\(^{st}\) CCLCs improved in mathematics by approximately 37 percent and english by 38 percent. Further, after-school participants improved in overall learning and engagement, as they enhanced homework completion and classroom participation by approximately 72 percent and overall motivation for learning and classroom behavior by 68 percent.

\(^{33}\) Learning Point Associates, Inc., which was founded in 1984, is non-profit organization that endeavors to transform education systems and student learning through research and consulting.
Naftzger and Vinson (2011), in partnership with the LPA, conducted a study of the 21st CCLC to determine the impact of after-school programming, as it relates to improving academic progress. The study collected data based on the Profile and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS)\(^{34}\) as it relates to academic clubs, homework assistance programs, and tutoring and instruction. The authors concluded that after-school programming provides expanded learning opportunities that help to drive higher scores on standardized tests in key disciplinary areas, such as language arts, mathematics, and science. These expanded learning opportunities help to close achievement gaps, as well as improve grades and study habits. Further, after-school programming helps to improve school attendance among adolescents.

Silver and Albert (2011) conducted a two (2) year evaluation of the academic achievement standards associated with the 21st CCLC in Pinellas County, Florida. The study collected data from approximately 370 after-school participants in the middle school setting, included intake demographics, daily attendance rates, personnel survey results, parental engagement, and student records. The authors concluded that approximately 94 percent of after-school participants maintained or improved their performance in language arts compared to 59 percent among non-participants, 84 percent maintained or improved in mathematics compared to 62 percent among non-participants, and 85 percent maintained or improved in science compared to 40 percent among non-

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\(^{34}\)The Profile and Performance Information Collection System is a web-based data collection system, which is designed to collect data regarding the state-wide administration of the 21st CCLC, as it relates to grants and performance.
participants. These findings suggest that regular participation in after-school programming helps to improve grades and test scores in core subject areas.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction ([WDPI], 2011)\textsuperscript{35} conducted a study on the 21\textsuperscript{st} CCLC during the 2009-2010 school year, focusing on academic performance, particularly as it relates to classroom behavior, school attendance, and overall engagement. The study examined 188 CCLCs, which served approximately 47,217 students. Of these students, approximately 22,657 were regular after-school participants, as determined by thirty (30) or more days of participation. Moreover, approximately 68 percent were minorities and 83 percent were economically disadvantaged. All of the CCLCs offered after-school activities for reading and mathematics, 90 percent for academic enrichment, 88 percent for recreation, 88 percent for science, 85 percent for art and music, 82 percent for cultural enrichment, 82 percent for health, and 63 percent for homework assistance. Further, nearly half of regular after-school participants improved in homework completion by approximately 64 percent, class participation by 62 percent, motivation for learning by 56 percent, attentiveness by 55 percent, peer engagement by 52 percent, classroom behavior by 51 percent, extra-credit opportunities by 46 percent, and school attendance by approximately 43 percent.

\textsuperscript{35} The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, which was founded in 1848, is a government organization that advances state-wide public education and libraries.
Behavioral Outcomes

Hirsch et al. (2010) suggest that adolescents demonstrate a high frequency in delinquent behavior during after-school hours, particularly between the hours of 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. In response, after-school programming provides adolescents with opportunities to help develop positive self-concepts and decision-making skills, as well as improve classroom behavior and reduce truancy.

Russell and Reisner (2005), in partnership with the William T. Grant Foundation, conducted a secondary study based on the evaluation conducted by the TASC in 2004. The intent of the first study was to evaluate the impact of students, parents, and personnel on improving behavioral outcomes among students through after-school programming. The authors concluded that after-school programming helped to improve social skills, including the ability of students to exercise self-control and engage in constructive decision-making as it relates to their behavior. A secondary study was conducted to examine the relationship between the characteristics of after-school programming and behavioral outcomes among adolescents from economically disadvantaged environments. The sample population for the secondary study consisted of approximately 2,319 students from across eight (8) schools, of which 732 were after-school participants. Of these participants, approximately 64 percent were in grade 5, 22 percent in grade 6, and 14 percent in grade 7. These outcomes included attachment to school, attachment to after-school programming, cognitive development, positive

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36 The William T. Grant Foundation, which was founded in 1936, is a grant-funding organization that invests in research in support of advancing adolescent-centered theory, policy, and practice.
relationships with peers, and positive relationships with personnel. The authors concluded that the performance and behaviors of after-school personnel is critical to ensuring the effectiveness of after-school programming in driving outcomes among adolescents.

Russell and Woods (2012), in collaboration with Policy Studies Associates, Inc. (PSA, 2000) and the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) conducted an evaluation of the 21st CCLC in New Hampshire to investigate principals’ perception of the impact of after-school programming on improving negative behavioral outcomes among after-school participants. The principals supervised a target population consisting of approximately 8,445 after-school participants, of which 56 percent were K through 5, 34 percent grades 6 through 8, and 10 percent grades 9 through 12. The authors concluded that principals agreed that after-school programming helped to improve social skills by approximately 97 percent, classroom behavior by 95 percent, school safety by 93 percent, and school attendance by 89 percent. More specifically, approximately 59 percent of after-school participants in grades 6 through 8 demonstrated a lower rate of unexcused absences and 53 percent demonstrated decreases in disciplinary actions.

Vinson et al. (2013) conducted an evaluation to examine the impact of the 21st CCLC in Rhode Island on improving behavioral outcomes among students, consisting of

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37 Policy Studies Associates, Inc., which was founded in 1982, is a private organization that conducts high-quality evaluation, research, and policy analysis to improve decision-making in education and adolescent development.

38 The New Hampshire Department of Education is a government organization that endeavors to provide education leadership and services to promote equal educational opportunities and quality practices and programs in support of helping residents to become fully productive members of society.
population of approximately fifty-six (56) 21st CCLCs serving 221 after-school participants. The site director administered surveys as the data gathering technique throughout the 2011-2012 school year. The authors concluded that after-school programming offered through the 21st CCLC helped to drive improvements in school attendance and reduced incidents of negative behavior. Additionally, students who were engaged in after-school programming for at least thirty (30) days demonstrated a lower rate of unexcused absences and disciplinary actions compared to non-participants.

Physical Outcomes

Ogden et al. (2012) argue that approximately 17 percent of adolescents suffer from childhood obesity, which has reached pandemic proportions within the United States. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)\(^\text{39}\) (2015), the percentage of adolescents who suffer from childhood obesity has tripled in the last three (3) decades. Currently, approximately 21 percent of overweight adolescents range between the ages of twelve (12) and nineteen (19) years old (CDC, 2015). The state of childhood obesity can be attributed to a caloric imbalance among adolescents, which occurs when too many calories are consumed compared to the amount of calories expended on a daily basis. Childhood obesity is a widespread and life-threatening concern among adolescents and is often the result of behavioral, environmental, and genetic factors (CDC, 2015). In addition to food consumption, several other factors...
contribute to childhood obesity, including decreased levels of physical activity. This is commonly associated with continued advancements and increased usage of technology, such as computers, telephones, television, and video games.

Research suggests that childhood obesity is linked to social and psychological challenges, such as discrimination, isolation, and stigmatization (APA, 2002). To mitigate these challenges, the field of after-school programming utilizes sport and recreational activities to engage adolescents in healthy living. Strauss (2011) notes that “after-school programs offer a variety of physical activities and nutritious meals that help stem the tide of obesity facing our children” (para. 9). The promotion of a healthy lifestyle during the hours after school can help to combat obesity during adolescence, as after-school programming offers adolescents with opportunities to engage in physical fitness. These opportunities include exercise, sports, and recreational activities, which can help to drive psychosocial development. Moreover, after-school programming can help to equip adolescents with long-term healthy living habits, such as proper diet and nutrition (Strauss, 2011).

Mahoney et al. (2005) conducted a longitudinal study on the role of participation in after-school programming, as it relates to childhood obesity and peer acceptance. The sample consisted of 439 after-school participants, predominately Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino population residing in an economically disadvantaged area. The authors concluded that peer acceptance was significantly lower among after-school participants suffering from childhood obesity. However, all of the after-school participants demonstrated increases in peer acceptance over time, including those
suffering from childhood obesity. Additionally, when controlling for baseline obesity, socioeconomic status, and race and/or ethnicity, the prevalence of childhood obesity was significantly lower among after-school participants by approximately 21 percent compared to non-participants by 33 percent.

Yin et al. (2005) conducted a study at the Medical College of Georgia\textsuperscript{40}, which included the design of a curricular framework for after-school programming. The intent of the study was to determine the impact of after-school programming on physical outcomes among adolescents. These physical outcomes included improvements in health and fitness, as determined by body fat and composition, blood pressure, cardiovascular fitness, and cholesterol. The study collected pre and post-test data over an eight (8) month period from a sample of approximately 600 after-school participants from across eighteen (18) public schools, with a demographic composition that included 61 percent of Blacks or African Americans, 31 percent Whites, and 8 percent Other. Additionally, adolescents who received at least 40 percent of the after-school curriculum experienced decreased body fat percentages and increased bone mass, mineral density, and cardiovascular fitness.

Huang and Wang (2012), in partnership with the CRESST at the University of California\textsuperscript{41}, evaluated the impact of the After-School Safety and Enrichment for Teens Program (ASSET)\textsuperscript{42} on physical outcomes. This evaluation was based on the following

\textsuperscript{40} The Medical College of Georgia, which was founded in 1828, is an academic and medical organization that endeavors to provide leadership and excellence in teaching, discovery, clinical care, and service through student-centered comprehensive research.

\textsuperscript{41} The University of California, which was founded in 1868, is an academic organization that endeavors to teach, research, and engage in public service.
six (6) health and fitness components: (1) abdominal strength; (2) aerobic capacity; (3) body composition; (4) flexibility; (5) trunk strength; and (6) upper body strength. Using a mixed methodology to conduct the evaluation, including the use of focus groups, interviews, observations, and surveys, as well as longitudinal administrative data from local agencies and school districts. The authors concluded that after-school participants were more likely to exhibit benchmarks associated with the majority of health and fitness zones (HFZ), including cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, muscle strength, and muscular endurance. In particular, after-school participants demonstrated significant positive effects in physical fitness in the elementary and middle school setting.

Michigan State University (2013)\textsuperscript{43} conducted a study to evaluate the impact of the 21\textsuperscript{st} CCLC in Michigan on physical outcomes. The sample consisted of approximately 9,000 after-school participants, which were surveyed to provide responses on their perception on the effectiveness of after-school programming in driving physical outcomes. It was concluded that the majority of after-school participants understood the importance of good nutrition and how to promote wellness and indicated that after-school programming encouraged the development of healthy living habits, especially among participants from economically disadvantaged environments.

\textsuperscript{42}The After-School Safety and Enrichment for Teens Program is a grant and incentive-based program that offers before and after-school programming in partnership with school and community-based entities in support of providing academic support and safe and constructive alternatives for high school students.

\textsuperscript{43}Michigan State University, which was founded in 1855, is an academic organization that endeavors to advance knowledge and transform lives by providing education to students in preparation to contribute to society as globally-engaged leaders, conducting research to create solutions that expand human understanding, and advancing outreach, engagement, and economic development through innovation and research.
Preventive Outcomes

The Young Men’s Christian Association ([YMCA], 2001) posits that adolescents who do not participate in after-school programming are approximately three (3) times as likely to skip school, use drugs and/or alcohol, and engage in sexual activity. According to the AA (2012), approximately 92 percent of employed mothers consider after-school programming to be “very important” as a preventive solution, as after-school participants are less likely to partake in delinquent activities. Goldschmidt et al. (2007) suggest that students who participate in after-school programming are approximately 30 percent less likely to participate in criminal activities. This results in a significant return on investment, as jurisdictions save approximately $2.50 in crime-related costs for every $1.00 invested in after-school programming.

The Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD)44 (2002) conducted an assessment at the University of Illinois to determine the correlation between participation in the Teen Responsibility, Education, Achievement, Caring, and Hope Program (REACH)45 and delinquent behavior. An open-ended survey was employed to collect pre and post-test data from a sample population of after-school personnel and nearly 500 students participating in after-school programming, consisting of approximately 48 percent of after-school participants in grades 4 through 6, 42 percent in

44 The Center for Prevention Research and Development, which was founded in 1989, is a subcomponent of the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois that endeavors to support public policy by improving state-wide capacity for prevention and educational practices through evaluation, decision-making policy-making, and evaluation.

45 The Teen Responsibility, Education, Achievement, Caring, and Hope Program is an outreach program offered through the Illinois Department of Human Services, which provides opportunities to encourage, empower, and enable positive growth and development and capacity building among adolescents.
grades 7 through 9, and 13 percent in grades 10 through 12. Of these after-school participants, approximately 48 percent were Black or African American, 23 percent Caucasian, 20 percent Hispanic or Latino, and 11 percent Other. It was concluded that approximately half of the after-school participants indicated that after-school programming provides developmental opportunities to become more knowledgeable on the dangers of drug use by 53 percent and equipped with tools to avoid drug use by 51 percent. Further, participation in after-school programming helped to decrease the likelihood of engagement in delinquent behavior by approximately 36 percent. These findings suggest that after-school programming helps to provide adolescents with a safe environment during the notably influential hours after school from 3:00 and 6:00 pm.

Gottredson et al. (2004) conducted a study to evaluate the effectiveness of theoretical approaches to after-school programming, as it relates to their ability to mitigate the engagement of adolescents in delinquent behavior in the middle school setting. The study was conducted at the University of Maryland College Park and included the evaluation of approximately 417 after-school participants from across fourteen (14) programs affiliated with the Maryland After-School Community Grant Program (MASCGP). A path model was employed to conduct a content analysis, including a document review of administrative forms based on the Social Skills Rating

46 The University of Maryland College Park, which was founded in 1856, is an academic organization that endeavors to deliver excellence in teaching, research, and service.

47 The Maryland After-School Community Grant Program is a school-based after-school program that offers academic assistance, attendance initiatives, and curricular activities to drive socialization by improving peer engagement.
The Social Skills Rating System (SSRS)\textsuperscript{48}. The authors concluded that participation in after-school programming contributed to reductions in delinquent behavior, in particular as it relates to character development, drug use, and peer engagement.

In summary, the literature suggests that the majority of studies found commonalities among adolescents during the developmental stages associated with middle childhood. These commonalities help to affirm an extricable link between participation and quality in after-school programming and positive developmental outcomes. However, while these studies conclude that after-school programming is often leveraged to address the challenges associated with middle childhood, the field of after-school programming remains ill-equipped with the proper resources to fully address the developmental needs of adolescents during this period, particularly as it relates to academic, behavioral, physical, and preventive outcomes.

Summary

This chapter provided a review of the literature in the areas germane to after-school programming, particularly as it relates to its impact on adolescents within the middle school setting. This included topics on policies, procedures, and standards of quality in after-school programming and the role of after-school personnel. The literature review also included topics on adolescent development, particularly within the context of academic, behavioral, physical, and preventive outcomes. While the field of after-school

\textsuperscript{48} The Social Skills Rating System is a norm-referenced assessment tool that focuses on social behavior in adolescents by measuring academic competence, behaviors, and social skills.
Programming has made great strides to address gaps in the literature on after-school programming, a significant gap remains as it relates to standards of quality and professional development and training for after-school personnel. This project endeavors to fill this gap by affirming the significance of well-trained after-school personnel in sustaining quality in after-school programming.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The intent of this project was to evaluate a school district’s capacity to maintain quality in its resource training guide for after-school personnel in the middle school setting in support of its goal for after-school programming, which is to develop skills among adolescents that are necessary to become productive adults, thrive in the workplace and community, and live healthy lives (FCPS, 2015c). The school district offers after-school programming, designed to provide an environment that helps after-school participants to “feel safe, improve academic development and performance, improve social, emotional, and physical well-being, improve school and community connectedness, reduce the potential for risk-taking behaviors, and reduce interest in gang involvement or delinquent activities” (FCPS, 2015c, n.p.). The results of this project will be used to affirm the significance of standards of quality in after-school programming, particularly as it relates to adolescents who are “too old to be told what to do after school, and too young to be alone” (Westmoreland & Little, 2005, n.p.).

Program Quality Assessment Tools

The field of after-school programming has witnessed an increase in the demand for program quality assessment tools to measure quality in after-school programming.
These tools include, but are not limited to, the Assessment of Program Practices Tool (APT), Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning Initiative (CORAL), Out-of-School Time Observation Instrument (OST), Program Observation Tool (POT), Program Quality Observation Scale (PQO), Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool (QSA), Promising Practices Rating System (PPRS), Quality Assurance System (QA), School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS), and Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) [see Appendix D: Program Quality Assessment Tools]. While several program quality assessment tools have been advanced in recent years, the field of after-school programming has yet to adopt a single tool. This is the result of the wide range of environments in which after-school programming is delivered to adolescents, particularly in the middle school setting (Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2009).

 Nonetheless, commonalities exist among the tools with several “frameworks cit[ing] structural factors – such as staff being well trained, having small staff-to-participant ratios, and having adequate staff compensation – as supporting staff in establishing strong relationships with young people” (Palmer et al., 2009, p. 8).

 **Quality Triangle**

The field of after-school programming has made great strides in establishing standards of quality. However, in recent years, scholars have called for continued empirical research to address questions related to quality in after-school programming (Dynarski et al., 2003). The “Quality Triangle” has been determined to be the most appropriate program quality assessment tool because the other tools lack the following
four (4) features, which ensure an effective evaluation of the resource training guide for after-school personnel, which is designed to guide the delivery of after-school programming in the middle school setting: (1) data collection methodology; (2) primary purpose; (3) target age; and (4) target user. More specifically, three (3) of the program quality assessment tools include a target age that focuses on early childhood. Moreover, five (5) of the program quality assessment tools were eliminated based on their primary purpose, which focuses on accreditation, improvement, and monitoring, which falls outside of the scope of this project. Although the remaining two (2) program quality assessment tools target external users, these tools utilize observations as the data collection methodology. Considering, the “Quality Triangle” is the most suitable program quality assessment tool for the purposes of this project.

The lack of empirical research on standards of quality inhibits the ability to demonstrate “one missing essential ingredient” to transform the training of after-school personnel in the delivery of after-school programming (Noam, 2008, n.p.). To address this concern, the “Quality Triangle” was constructed by the Harvard Medical School’s Program in Education, After-School, and Resiliency’s (PEAR) to identify best practices and standards of quality in after-school programming (Noam, 2008). The “Quality Triangle” is a framework, which identifies key features and

49 The Harvard Medical School, which was founded in 1782, is an academic and medical organization that endeavors to prepare physicians for leadership roles in education, research, and policy.
50 The McLean Hospital, which was founded in 1811, is a medical organization that is dedicated to improving the lives of people and families affected by psychiatric illness.
51 The Program in Education, After-School, and Resiliency, which was founded in 1999, is an organization that fosters evidence-based innovations to help educators understand and respond to the behavioral, emotional, and social needs of adolescents.
reoccurring variables that drive quality in after-school programming (see Figure 1) (Noam, 2008) [see Appendix E: Quality Triangle Framework].

Figure 1. Quality Triangle Framework


The “Quality Triangle” is a forward-thinking methodology that can feasibly transform after-school programming, as it was developed based a set of best practices that were identified through a meta-analysis of past studies. This includes the synthesis of content, personnel, and programming and the following three (3) key features: (1) activities, curriculum, and learning; (2) personnel capacity, training, and relational care; and (3) programmatic support, structure, and leadership (Noam, 2008). The literature review did not uncover any past studies that applied the “Quality Triangle” to measure the quality of after-school programming within the middle school setting based on the evaluation of training materials for after-school personnel.
According to Noam (2008), a three (3) pronged approach that assesses all of the key features is essential for the most effective evaluation of quality in after-school programming. The intent of the “Quality Triangle” is to create a cadre of skilled after-school personnel, provide training and technical assistance to after-school personnel in support of developing strong, caring relationships, and help after-school programming become more intentional in goal setting around learning (Noam, 2008). The “Quality Triangle” appeared to best align to the evaluative goal of this project, which was to equip after-school personnel with the competencies necessary to provide optimal programming in order to drive academic achievement and adolescent engagement (Smith & Hohmann, 2005). Smith and Hohmann (2005) suggest that it empowers “organizations to envision optimal quality, to develop a shared language of practice and decision-making, and to produce reliable and valid ratings for evaluation and comparison over time” (p. 8). The framework further endeavors to provide optimal programming through training and technical support and by providing after-school personnel with the necessary resources to ensure the effective delivery of after-school programming (Noam, 2008). Moreover, it was selected because its applicability is not restrict and can be applied across any after-school environment regardless of the geographic location and target population participating in after-school programming. In addition, it can be leveraged by both internal and/or external personnel to conduct both qualitative and/or quantitative assessments of after-school programming across various target age groups.
Methodology

This project evaluated the quality of a resource training guide for after-school personnel, designed to guide the delivery of after-school programming in the middle school setting. These materials were prepared for use by a public school district located in Northern Virginia. This evaluation included an external assessment, including a content analysis of the resource training guide as secondary data in order to determine the quality of the materials for after-school personnel. This evaluation was guided by the following research question – Does the school district maintain a high-quality resource training guide for after-school personnel to guide the delivery of after-school programming in the middle school setting? The study advances the following hypothesis – The school district maintains a high-quality resource training guide for after-school personnel to ensure the effective delivery of after-school programming in the middle school setting.

In the 1940s, content analyses emerged as a qualitative analytic method (Busch et al., 2012; De Sola Pool, 1959). In the 1950s, researchers utilized this method to determine the affective, cognitive, cultural, historical, linguistic, and social significance of semantic relationships (Busch et al., 2012; De Sola Pool, 1959). Currently, researchers commonly conduct content analyses to reduce data and identify patterns in objective and systematic descriptions of textual material within communications (Berelson, 1952). According to Busch et al. (2012), “to conduct a content analysis on any such text, the text is coded, or broken down, into manageable categories on a variety of levels – word, word sense, phrase, sentence, or theme – then examined” (n.p.). A content analysis commonly
examines text through characters, concepts, items, paragraphs, semantics, themes, and words in order to interpret the connotation of context (Berelson, 1952). The following three (3) approaches are generally considered when conducting content analyses: (1) conventional; (2) directed; and (3) summative (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). A conventional content analysis uses the text data as the basis for code categories, whereas a directed content analysis uses a theoretical framework for coding. A summative content analysis uses content to compare the underlying context with the text data.

This project utilized a content analysis of the text of the resource training guide to respond to a set of diagnostic questions. The researcher developed an analysis worksheet in Microsoft Excel to capture the responses to these diagnostic questions [see Appendix F: Diagnostic Protocol]. These diagnostic questions were used to capture emergent themes across the following three (3) key areas and associated features, as identified within the “Quality Triangle”: (1) content; (2) personnel; and (3) program. The content area captured features of the resource training guide associated with activities, curriculum, and learning, personnel area captured personnel capacity, training, and relational care, and program area captured programmatic support, structure, and leadership. The school district developed a resource training guide for after-school personnel titled “Middle School After-School Program Resource Guide”, designed to guide the delivery of after-school programming in the middle school setting. The guide is contained within a standard two (2) inch, three (3) ring binder comprised of approximately 618 pages of text, not including the table of contents, divided across the thirteen (13) chapters. The beginning of the guide included an executive summary,
which addressed the mission, vision, and goals for after-school programming; however, it
did not explicitly state the overarching purpose of the guide as a resource for after-school
personnel. The researcher conducted memoing, which is the process of recording the
point of view of the researcher as it evolves throughout the course of the content analysis
(Trochim, 2006). These memos were captured through marginal annotations and
comments on the resource training guide.

The researcher served as the sole evaluator and conducted open and selective
coding by manually hand-coding the text to extract data. This helped to illustrate key
concepts and identify emergent themes. Open coding is the iterative process of
segmenting and conceptualizing written messages into preliminary categories of
information through a line-by-line analysis of the content to explain a social phenomenon
of interest (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Selective coding is the iterative process of merging
the preliminary categories to drive the development of a new theoretical position that
links the codes to the social phenomenon of interest (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Trochim,
2006). This coding technique was used to ascertain contextually relevant patterns in the
data, which will help to generate categories that informed the development of a broader
theoretical proposition. The validity of this process was demonstrated through the
correspondence of the categories to the conclusions of the study, as well as the
generalizability of the results to the theoretical proposition (Busch et al., 2012).
Theoretical Framework

By utilizing grounded theory, this project is grounded in the epistemological stance of the researcher, which allowed the separation of extant theoretical frameworks (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory is a qualitative research method that is commonly used across the field of social sciences, which encourages the systematic collection and analysis of data to guide the development of theory to address a social phenomenon of interest (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The purpose of grounded theory is to develop a theoretical concept about a social phenomenon of interest, which is grounded in the researcher’s observation of the qualitative data (Trochim, 2006). Mintzberg (1979) emphasized the importance of grounded research when conducting a qualitative inquiry within an organizational setting. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), this type of research is an inductive and iterative process that includes collecting, coding, and analyzing qualitative data, as well as planning for future research. Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest that grounded theory can be leveraged to drive a continuous theoretical discussion by using conceptual categories and their properties to advance a well-considered explanation of the social phenomenon of interest (Trochim, 2006).

This project selected grounded theory because it helped to advance a theoretical discussion that has practical and general applicability across the field of after-school programming. It analyzed the phenomenon of quality in after-school programming in the middle school setting by collecting and analyzing program materials, in particular the text contained within the resource training guide. As before mentioned, this project utilized open and selective coding and memoing to conduct a line-by-line analysis of the content.
This analysis helped to identify emergent themes based on responses to the diagnostic questions regarding the school district’s capacity to sustain quality in its resource training guide for after-school personnel. The researcher linked these emergent themes to a set of recommendations, which informed the development of a new theoretical perspective on quality in after-school programming in the middle school setting, particularly as it relates to developing training materials for after-school personnel (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). This perspective reflects a more generalizable theoretical concept on quality in after-school programming with pragmatic applicability for after-school personnel within the middle school setting.

Summary

This chapter offered a comprehensive discussion of the methodological design of this project. This included a discussion of program quality assessment tools and the theoretical framework that guided this project.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The intent of this project was to evaluate the quality of a resource training guide for after-school personnel, designed to guide the delivery of after-school programming in the middle school setting. Using the “Quality Triangle” as an evaluative framework, the text within the guide was used to evaluate the level of quality. A set of diagnostic questions was used to capture emergent themes based on the key areas and associated features of the “Quality Triangle.” The study was guided by a single research question –

Does the school district maintain a high-quality resource training guide for after-school personnel to guide the delivery of after-school programming in the middle school setting?

It was specifically hypothesized that the school district maintains a high-quality resource training guide for after-school personnel to ensure the effective delivery of after-school programming in the middle school setting based on the “Quality Triangle.” The researcher developed an analysis worksheet to capture responses to the diagnostic questions, as well as memos [see Appendix G: Diagnostic Responses, Memos, and Emergent Themes]. The memos included marginal annotations and comments to record the point of view of the researcher as it evolved throughout the course of the content analytic review. The researcher served as the sole evaluator and hand-coded the text of the resource training guide to identify emergent themes. The emergent themes were used to ascertain contextually relevant patterns in the qualitative data, which helped to inform the development of a broader theoretical proposition. The remainder of this chapter includes a brief description of the resource training guide, followed by a summary of the
preliminary results of this project. These results are categorized based on the key
features of the “Quality Triangle”, and not by the chapter titles from the resource training
guide. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the emergent themes.

Description of the Middle School After-School Program Resource Guide

The guide was titled “Middle School After-School Program Resource Guide” and
prepared for use by a public school district located in Northern Virginia. The guide is
contained within a standard two (2) inch, three (3) ring binder comprising approximately
618 pages of text, not including the table of contents, divided across the following
thirteen (13) chapters: (1) after-school program; (2) professional development; (3) job
description and expectations; (4) staffing; (5) financial; (6) marketing; (7) partnerships;
(8) parent and community components; (9) professional development and training; (10)
health, safety, and security; (11) transportation; (12) program evaluation; and (13)
resources. The beginning of the guide included an executive summary, which addressed
the mission, vision, and goals for after-school programming; however, it did not
explicitly state the overarching purpose of the guide as a resource for after-school
personnel. Only 369 pages of text were originally prepared by the school district.
Moreover, several documents consisted of print screens from websites, which were
developed for general use across the school district and were not specifically developed
for after-school programming. The remaining documents consisted of materials that were
borrowed from secondary source. While these materials were authored by subject matter
experts in the field of after-school programming, they were not reframed within the
context of the school district’s ASP to ensure the proper application of concepts by after-school personnel. For example, the resource training guide included over 200 pages of text that was developed by secondary sources, which were employed to address the following fifteen (15) mission-critical areas in the delivery of after-school programming: (1) after-school programming typologies; (2) balanced scorecard methodologies; (3) collaboration tips; (4) communication strategies; (5) engagement strategies; (6) evaluation tools; (7) interview protocols; (8) job descriptions; (9) logic models; (10) needs assessment tools; (11) partnership principles; (12) performance evaluation checklists; (13) recruitment and retention strategies; (14) service learning approaches; and (15) professional development toolkits. Although the resource training guide was effective for the 2013-2014 school year, many documents and references dated back to 1990. The introduction, including the mission, vision, goals, background, and statistical overview, has not been revised by the school district since 2004.

Results

The results of this project are based on the evaluation of the resource training guide and categorized by the following three (3) features of the “Quality Triangle”: (1) activities, curriculum, and learning; (2) personnel capacity training, and relational care; and (3) programmatic support, structure, and leadership.

Activities, Curriculum, and Learning

1. Are participants included in the program planning process?
The school district allows each middle school to manage its own planning process for after-school programming; however, it encourages the inclusion of after-school participants throughout the planning process in support of driving authentic decision-making and building ownership, particularly as it relates to a service-learning project. “As youth help plan and execute service projects, they are presented with excellent opportunities to develop leadership [skills], research skills, public speaking abilities, and project management skills” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 43). Each middle school is to identify after-school participants’ needs, which should be used to inform the development of program goals; however, it does not provide a framework to guide the identification of those needs. The school district has conducted focus groups, secondary research, and surveys to determine these needs, as well as identify program activities in support of program goals and performance metrics to measure program success in after-school programming.

2. **Does the program maintain curricular requirements for participants?**

The school district designed a curricular framework that supports enrichment activities that endeavor to link after-school programming to curriculum during traditional school hours. “Linkages to the school day are important because they create cohesion, enhance the school day, provide support to students who are most in need, compound positive results, and contribute to program sustainability” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 54). The curricular framework intends to incorporate academic lesson plans into a less formal after-school environment based on academic guidelines, after-school personnel feedback, and after-school participants’ needs.
It is structured to solicit personnel input as it relates to fulfilling after-school participants’ needs that are not adequately addressed during in-school hours.  

3. **Does the program measure engagement among peers and personnel?**

The school district established a logic model for after-school programming based on the following four (4) program objectives: (1) academic support and enrichment; (2) family and community involvement; (3) physical health, wellness, and recreation; and (4) social skill and adolescent development. A logic model was used to measure the impact of after-school programming on developmental outcomes among adolescents during middle childhood. “The logic model delineates activities that support the strategies. Key objectives are developed, as are outcomes and outcome measures, based on needs” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 14). A set of metrics associated with academic support and enrichment were identified, including the number of adolescents receiving homework assistance, number of adolescents receiving tutoring, number of adult tutors, number of peer tutors, and level of satisfaction with homework and tutoring support among parents and personnel. The metrics associated with family and community involvement included the number of collaborative relationships with community partners, number of collaborative relationships with business partners, number of focus group sessions with community stakeholders, number of funding streams, number of volunteers, and number of literacy sessions with parents. The metrics associated with physical health, wellness, and recreation included the number of participants in intramural sport and fitness activities, number of coaches and
trainers, number of sports and fitness opportunities, amount of time spent in physical activity, and level of satisfaction with physical activity among parents and personnel. Further, the metrics associated with social skill and adolescent development included the number of evidence-based prevention activities, number of participants in prevention activities, number of mentees, number of adult mentors, number of peer mentors, and level of satisfaction with social skill and adolescent development among parents and personnel.

4. **Does the program identify skill-building areas for participants?**

The school district identified skill-building areas based on the aforementioned program objectives that govern the logic model for after-school programming. The program objectives are addressed by offering opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, and abilities among adolescents during middle childhood through activities that drive emotional, physical, and social development, improve academic performance, enhance school and community connectedness, and reduce engagement in at-risk behavior and delinquent activity. “The components and activities that you incorporate into your program should address as many aspects of young people’s development needs as possible (e.g., physical needs; need for creative expression; need to develop competence need for meaningful participation; need to develop positive self-concept)” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 58).

5. **Does the program use learning materials to instruct participants?**

The school district does not provide after-school personnel with designated
learning materials to guide instruction and delivery of curriculum to after-school participants; however, it supports the use of experiential and project-based learning methods. “Community service becomes “service-learning” when those leading the service consciously draw out and build on the learning opportunities inherent in hands-on service activities. Regular service projects are transformed into service-learning when the academic and social skills involved in planning and performance projects are emphasized and youth are engaged in reflection on their actions” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 44). Additionally, training techniques to ensure the effective delivery of homeworking assistance and tutoring are provided.

6. **What program activities are offered to participants?**

The school district allows each middle school to determine the program activities used to deliver after-school programming; however, the activities must address the aforementioned program objectives that govern the logic model for after-school programming. Moreover, the program activities must align to the following three (3) achievement goals that were established across the school district: (1) academics; (2) community responsibilities; and (3) essential life skills. The program activities associated with academic support and enrichment included the following nine (9) elements: (1) board games; (2) clubs; (3) critical thinking sessions; (4) fine and performing arts; (5) homework assignment coordination; (6) subject-specific homework assistance; (7) individual and group tutoring; 8) cross-age peer and adult tutoring; and (9) mathematics, literacy, and technology workshops. “[The] characteristics of high-quality academic enrichment activities
[include] well-integrated academic content, opportunity for students to participate in authentic decision-making, potential for student leadership, and strong student-adult and peer-peer relationships” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 55). As it relates to family and community involvement, the program activities included the following five (5) elements: (1) community outreach; (2) parental education and literacy; (3) partnership building; (4) participant outreach and recruitment; and (5) volunteer recruitment and training. In regards to physical health, wellness, and recreation, the program activities included the following five (5) elements: (1) competitive and non-competitive sports; (2) intramural sports; (3) exercise and physical fitness; (4) strength training; and (5) team building. The program activities associated with social skill and adolescent development included the following eight (8) elements: (1) career preparedness; (2) character education; (3) college readiness; (4) leadership development; (5) mentoring; (6) peer mediation; (7) service learning; and (8) substance abuse and violence prevention and awareness sessions. The school district prohibits the following eight (8) program activities in after-school programming: (1) bike riding; (2) breakdancing; (3) canoeing; (4) dodge ball; (5) fishing; (6) kayaking; (7) rafting; (8) tubing; and (9) trampolines.

Personnel Capacity, Training, and Relational Care

1. Does the program conduct background checks and fingerprints on personnel?

The school district requires all service contracts for after-school programming to comply with background check requirements, as established by local and state
legislation and regulations. These requirements include clearances for any person in contact with after-school participants at the time of recruitment. The school district prohibits employment of any person convicted of a felony and/or an offense involving the physical abuse or sexual molestation of an adolescent or a felony and/or misdemeanor involving child abuse or neglect from serving as a mentor or volunteer. The school district’s human resources department is responsible for conducting background investigations, paying for background checks and fingerprints, and conducting a comprehensive search to locate sex offender and criminal history records using databases and registries that are maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)\textsuperscript{52}, Virginia Department of Social Services\textsuperscript{53}, and Virginia State Police\textsuperscript{54}. “A disqualifying criminal record will be determined by the Department of Human Resources using guidelines applicable to screening new employees. Among the factors taken into consideration is the nature of the offense, the age of the person at the time of the offense, and the amount of time between the date of the offense and the date of application” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 124). All persons to complete the following three (3) release forms: (1) \textit{Sex Offender and Criminal History Record Request Form};

\textsuperscript{52} The Federal Bureau of Investigation, which was founded in 1908, is a law enforcement organization that endeavors to protect and defend the United States against terrorist and foreign intelligence threats, uphold and enforce criminal laws in the United States, and provide leadership and criminal justice services to federal, state, local, and international agencies.

\textsuperscript{53} The Virginia Department of Social Services’ is a public organization that endeavors to help people triumph over poverty, abuse, and neglect, including the identification, assessment, and distribution of service to protect children and services.

\textsuperscript{54} The Virginia State Police, which was founded in 1906, is a law enforcement organization that endeavors to provide high-quality law enforcement services across the Commonwealth of Virginia and plan, train, and promote emergency preparedness to protect the citizenry and its infrastructure.
(2) Request for Search of the Central Registry and Release of Information Form; and (3) Employment Background Information Form. Any person found to intentionally falsify information during the application process is automatically disqualified from consideration for employment.

2. **Does the program identify performance expectations for personnel?**

The school district established performance expectations for after-school personnel to guide the delivery of after-school programming in the middle school setting. The performance expectations are based on job descriptions for after-school personnel, which are captured on the Support Services Performance Expectations Form. Moreover, the Support Employee Mid-Year Performance Assessment Form is used as an evaluation tool to assess the level of performance among after-school personnel on a semi-annual basis. “The performance expectations delineated below serve as a guideline for “meets expectations” [as it relates to] job-specific knowledge and skills, quality and productivity, human relations and communication skills, professionalism, and management and leadership” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 82-86).

3. **Does the program maintain a target adolescent-to-adult ratio?**

The school district does not maintain a target as it relates to the appropriate ratio of adolescents-to-adults to ensure the effective delivery of after-school programming in the middle school setting.

4. **Does the program track retention rates for personnel?**

The school district does not maintain a process to track the retention rates of after-
school personnel.

5. How does the program define the term “engagement”?

The school district does not maintain an explicit definition for the term “engagement.”

Programmatic Support, Structure, and Leadership

1. Does the program maintain a professional development requirement for personnel?

The school district maintains a professional development requirement for after-school personnel. Full-time after-school personnel are required to attend monthly in-service meetings and an annual retreat during the school district-wide in-service meeting. “After-school Program Specialists meet once a month as a group. Meetings are usually the third Friday of every month from 9:30am-12:00pm. Attendance is part of your professional responsibility. All day retreats focus on issues surrounding after-school. Most of the issues to be addressed stem from the After-School Program Specialists. [Retreats] are held on county-wide in-service days in January. All day forums highlight growth and accomplishments over the previous year [and] best practices stemming from individual schools (e.g., programs; activities; strategies)” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 447). Additionally, full-time after-school personnel are required to attend an annual peer exchange forum, which provides personnel with an environment to engage in knowledge sharing by discussing the accomplishments, challenges, and best
practices associated with after-school programming. The school district provides opportunities to enhance the technical expertise and knowledge, skills, and abilities of after-school personnel through books, classes, conferences, programs, reference materials, sessions, speakers, and workshops.

2. **Does the program maintain a recruitment strategy to enroll participants?**

   The school district provides materials to help drive the enrollment of after-school participants, which is captured in its marketing plan. “Recruitment begins before your after-school programs have even been scheduled. Laying the proper groundwork can significantly increase your chances of success when your programs actually begin” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 312). The marketing plan leverages the following eleven (11) communication vehicles to encourage enrollment in after-school programming: (1) emails; (2) flyers; (3) handbooks; (4) meetings; (5) newsletters; (6) letters; (7) postcards; (8) posters; (9) phone calls; (10) public address announcements; and (11) webpages.

3. **Does the program maintain a retention strategy to retain participants?**

   The school district provides supplemental materials to assist in the development of a strategy to drive retention among after-school participants. “Now that you’ve recruited students for your after-school program, how do you keep them coming back? Retention can be just as, if not more, challenging than recruitment” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 326). These materials are provided in an After-School Program Toolkit. The toolkit is intended for use by after-school professionals to drive the recruitment and retention of after-school participants. The toolkit includes sample
flyers, schedule and strategy forms, study activity surveys, bulletin board suggestions, and incentives, materials, room design diagrams, and program activities.

4. **Does the program maintain a training requirement for personnel?**

The school district maintains a training requirement for a select group of positions that are responsible for delivering after-school programming. All full-time after-school personnel are required to complete courses on the school district’s student record and information management system and the procurement process for goods and services through appropriated and non-appropriate funds. Moreover, full-time after-school personnel are required to attend site-based seminars and online webinars on the automated external defibrillator and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (AED/CPR), information technology, financial services, and safety and security. “Regulations require annual training for school staff on student health needs. It requires that a minimum of three (3) school staff members, exclusive of the clinic room aide, be trained each year” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 453). Additionally, supplemental training materials on service learning and partnership building are also provided in the aforementioned toolkit.

5. **Does the program maintain a transportation system for participants?**

The school district funds a transit system, which operates three (3) days per week to their residence at no cost to the after-school participants, to provide limited transportation. “The Office of Transportation Services is responsible for providing the safe and efficient transportation of all eligible students to and from
schools and school activities each day” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 564). School buses and/or full-size commercial buses provide transportation services to accommodate at least forty (40) passengers to comply with federal motor vehicle safety standards. The school district prohibits the use of small-capacity buses to ensure the safe and efficient transport of after-school participants to and from middle school facilities.

6. Does the program maintain an educational requirement for personnel?

The school district maintains a basic educational requirement for after-school personnel having earned a high school diploma at minimum. The school district identifies a “bachelor’s degree in education, recreation, or a related field” as a preferred competence (FCPS, 2015b, p. 109). The school district determines compensation based on an at-will hourly pay band schedule consisting of scales and steps ranging from $9.98 to $30.18, which is determined by the level of education, skill, and supervisory responsibility of each respective employee.

7. Does the program maintain an evaluation process to measure program success?

The school district maintains an evaluation process to measure program success in after-school programming. The evaluation process is conducted by the centralized office that is responsible for providing oversight and coordination in the administration of after-school programming using the following four (4) evaluative tools: 1) observations; 2) outcome reports; 3) progress reports; and 4) surveys. “There are four (4) components to program evaluation including site visits (e.g., planned; unplanned), quarterly progress reports (e.g., process
measures), quarterly outcome reports (e.g., attendance; discipline; grades), and surveys (e.g., parents; staff; students; teachers)” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 583). The observations include planned and unplanned site visits. The progress reports include process metrics related to program activities, which are collected on a quarterly basis, whereas the outcome reports include statistical correlations among after-school programming and academic and behavioral development metrics, which were measured based on the following three (3) areas: (1) attendance; (2) disciplinary actions; and (3) grades. As it relates to grades, the school district measures failing grades in the following four (4) core courses: (1) English; (2) mathematics; (3) science; and (4) social studies. In regard to attendance, the school district measures the number of unexcused absences, which are categorized based on five (5) groupings ranging from no absences to twenty-eight (28) or more absences. The number of offenses related to drug, alcohol, and substance abuse and/or offenses against a person or property is used to measure disciplinary actions. The surveys include the collection of pre and post-test data from after-school participants, personnel, and parents. Moreover, the school district provides supplemental resources to conduct internal evaluations, such as the Quality Self-Assessment for Continuous Improvement Planning Tool. The tool was designed by the RMC Research Corporation, which is a research organization that helps federal, state, local, and non-profit organizations improve constituency outcomes. The tool drives critical thinking among after-school personnel through the measurement of program success based on best practices.
across the field of after-school programming. These best practices are captured through sixty (60) indicators of effectiveness in the delivery of after-school programming, as it relates to academic focus, developmental needs, in-school coordination, management, partnerships, professional development, safety, and structure.

8. Does the program maintain partnerships with internal and external stakeholders?

The school district maintains partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, which are formalized through memoranda of understanding. Internal stakeholders include employees of the school district and local government, whereas external stakeholders include over 140 community-based coalitions, groups, and organizations that offer approximately 760 activities to enhance community engagement, parental education, and service learning. For example, the partnerships are used to appropriate and monitor resources, coordinate program evaluations, provide programmatic support, provide oversight and coordination, and provide technical training and assistance. The school district endeavors to build enduring partnerships through collaborative planning to achieve the following six (6) outcomes: (1) drive sustainability; (2) encourage diversity; (3) establish ownership; (4) establish trust and shared identity; (5) identify funding streams; and (6) increase the capacity of groups to work together. “No single group can build an after-school program alone. Collaborative planning increases capacity of groups to work together, builds trust and shared identity, encourages involvement from diverse organizations, builds school and community ownership,
builds growth and support for funding, and drives sustainability” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 346). The school district also provides the following five (5) supplemental resources within the guide to assist with the collaborative planning process: (1) *Beyond the Head Count: Evaluating Family Involvement in Out-of-School Time* by the Harvard Family Research Project (2002); (2) *Building Relationships with Parents and Families: Resources for Staff Training and Program Planning* by Roberta Newman (1999); (3) *Making an Impact on Out-of-School Time: A Guide for Corporation for National Service Programs in After-School, Summer, and Weekend Activities for Young People* by the National Institute of Out-of-School Time (2000); (4) *Collaborating with Principals in After-School Programs* by Policy Studies Associates, Inc. (2000); and (5) *The Power of Family, School, and Community Partnerships: Principals of Coalition Building* by the National Education Association (2012).

9. **Does the program maintain health and safety regulations?**

The school district maintains policies and procedures to ensure adherence to health and safety regulations during the delivery of after-school programming. The school district equips each middle school facility with a first aid kit, which is stored in the medical clinic. “Each school should develop administrative procedures for handling emergencies. School administrators, in cooperation with the public health nurse, will develop specific procedures for handling healthcare emergencies. School personnel and clinic room aides are responsible for providing healthcare and emergency treatment until Emergency Medical Services
(EMS) or a parent or guardian arrives to assume healthcare responsibility” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 444). In the event of a minor injury, such as scrapes or bruises, the school district requires after-school personnel to escort after-school participants to the medical clinic. In the event of a major injury, such as sprains or cuts, after-school personnel are required to escort after-school participants to the medical clinic and complete an Accident Report Form. In the event of a severe injury, such as broken bones or asthma attacks, the school district requires after-school personnel to contact 911 and the parents of after-school participants. Moreover, the school district maintains security protocols to address emergencies, such as illnesses, medication administration, criminal incidents, and inclement weather. For example, the school district maintains procedures for drills, lockdowns, shelters-in-place, and evacuations in the event of an emergency. The school district also requires after-school personnel to distribute healthy snacks in accordance with diet and nutrition initiatives.

10. **Does the program track attendance for participants?**

The school district maintains a procedure to track the attendance of after-school participants. “We need to be able to understand what high or low average daily attendance means, link attendance to specific outcomes (e.g., academics; discipline), and know which activities are producing the most impact” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 579). After-school personnel are required to immediately record and submit attendance records to the main office at their respective middle school. The attendance record should include the date, full legal name of after-school
participants, full legal name of after-school personnel, and total number of after-school participants. The attendance record can be captured in writing or electronically via Microsoft Access database, which also tracks the student identification number. The school district acknowledged that attendance is a critical component that ensures accountability and determines budgetary allocations, as after-school programming is a public investment. In regards to attendance, the school district is required to collect the number of overall after-school participants, number of after-school participants by program activity, and number of days in attendance by day, week, semester, and year. These metrics are analyzed based on attendance, intensity of attendance, duration of attendance, and breath of attendance. The data is then used to identify linkages between attendance and developmental outcomes related to academic performance, in-school attendance, and behavioral incidents.

11. What are the goals of the program?

The school district established the following three (3) program goals for after-school programming: (1) increase the number of adolescents participating in school-based after-school programming; (2) reduce the incidence of adolescents engaging in gang activity, substance abuse, and other at-risk behaviors; and (3) improve academic performance and development. The school district also established a “stretch goal” to “get every middle school student engaged in a constructive after-school activity” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 1).

12. What are the objectives of the program?
The school district established the following seven (7) program objectives for after-school programming: (1) build competency and self-confidence; (2) provide a safe-haven for adolescents during the hours after school; (3) provide engaging activities that will incorporate adolescents into the broader school community and support groups; (4) provide relationships with committed and caring adults; (5) support academic achievement; (6) support an integrated system in which school and community-based after-school activities are aligned to the traditional school day to maximize the benefits for stakeholders; and (7) teach life lessons, such as anger management, goal setting, hard work responsibility, respect for others, teamwork, and sportsmanship. The school district intends to realize these program objectives by “offer[ing] more program days and types of activities, increase[ing] the number of students served, [recruiting] a full-time After-School Program Specialist at each middle school, increase[ing] capacity for planning, training, and coordination, leverage[ing] school, county, and community resources, expand[ing] the collaborative network, and build[ing] sustainability” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 13).

13. **What facilities are used to host the program?**

The school district does not maintain a requirement as it relates to selecting facilities to host after-school programming as it uses all twenty-six (26) middle and secondary schools across the jurisdiction, which vary in size and structure.

14. **What is the funding source for the program?**
The school district allows each middle school to generate, manage, and disperse its own operating budget and expenditures for after-school programming. “[The school district] is offering grants to middle schools to support after-school program offerings for five (5) days per week. This application is for resources for the five (5) day after-school initiative and supports hourly staff, program provider program activities, snacks, supplies, and equipment, and transportation” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 129). Each middle school receives approximately $40,000 in baseline funding, which is equitably allocated through $4 million dollars in funding for after-school programming. This funding is received from following three (3) sources: (1) seed money and donations from community coalitions; (2) local aid; and (3) state education grants. It also receives $2.00 for each after-school participant, each of which are required to complete an *After-School Program Registration Form* with a parental signature. It must adhere to several requirements to ensure eligibility for grant funding, such as targeting after-school programing to an at-risk adolescent population. It must also offer after-school programming during the hours immediately following traditional school hours, which must operate at least five (5) days per week across a thirty-four (34) week school year.

15. **What is the mission of the program?**

The school district established a mission for all after-school programming, which is “to expand the opportunity throughout the jurisdiction for adolescents to participate in high-quality educational, recreational, and cultural enrichment
programs after the traditional school day by providing a safe and supervised environment to enhance academic achievement, physical activity, social skills, and community connectedness, while reducing the potential for risk-taking behaviors” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 1).

16. **What is the staffing structure of the program?**

The school district delivers after-school programming through a support staff of full-time employees, known as After-School Program Specialists. These specialist positions are twelve (12) month contract employees who serve as administrators during the hours after school. The roles and responsibilities associated with this position include planning, developing, coordinating, scheduling, and implementing after-program activities. Additionally, the school district maintains a centralized office that is responsible for providing oversight and coordination in the administration of after-school programming, to include the development and distribution of materials. More specifically, this office “appropriate[s] and monitor[s] resources, provide[s] training and technical assistance, provide[s] programming support, monitor[s] programming, and coordinate[s] program evaluations” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 13)

17. **What is the vision of the program?**

The school district established a vision for after-school programming, which is to “provide comprehensive and high-quality after-school activities for middle school students to feel safe and improve academic development and performance and improve emotional, physical, and social development while establishing healthy
behaviors” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 15). The school district also endeavors to” improve school and community connectedness and reduce engagement in at-risk behaviors and delinquent activities to ensure adolescents have greater opportunities for success in developing the attitudes, abilities, knowledge, and skills” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 15). The school district envisions that these efforts will help adolescents “live healthy lives, become productive adults, and thrive in the workplaces and communities of the 21st century” (FCPS, 2015b, p. 15).

**Emergent Themes**

The remainder of this section provides the following five (5) emergent themes that were identified during the evaluation of the resource training guide: (1) administrative infrastructure; (2) curricular framework; (3) developmental areas; (4) human resources; and (5) program strategies.

**Administrative Infrastructure**

The school district maintains a stable organizational infrastructure as it relates to the administration of student-centered programs across the jurisdiction. For example, explicit regulatory requirements were established in the following six (6) policy areas: (1) finance management for revenues, tuition, fees, school activity funds, and procurement card expenditures; (2) human resource investigations and background checks for the recruitment, selection, and appointment of employees, volunteers, and mentors; (3)
facilities, transportation, and emergency management services for safety and security during inclement weather; (4) organizational philosophies and goals for local fundraising and charity drives; (5) risk management for planning field trips and reporting student injuries and criminal activity; and (6) special services for health and warfare assistance, first-aid treatment, and medication administration. While the school district prepared regulatory requirements, they were developed for general use across the school district and were not specifically developed for after-school programming. The policies and procedures on administrative support services included attendance, budgets, evaluations, facilities, partnerships, and transportation. After-school personnel are required to report attendance among after-school participants; however, there is not a structured process to track attendance, as after-school personnel are permitted to submit attendance records through manual and/or electronic mechanisms. This can unfortunately result in issues with data integrity. Moreover, each middle school is permitted to generate, manage, and disperse its own respective operating budget and expenditures for after-school programming. Several funding streams are available for after-school programming, such as baseline and supplemental funding through seed money and donations from community coalitions, local aid, and state education grants, however, the explicit roles and responsibilities of after-school personnel in securing these funding sources is not addressed. As it relates to evaluations, the school district identifies specific evaluation tools to measure effectiveness in the delivery of after-school programming, including local assessments, standardized test scores, and surveys. Yet, no explicit methodology guides the use of these tools throughout the evaluation process. Each respective middle
school is responsible for providing facilities to deliver after-school programming; however, the basic requirements to ensure facilities are equipped with the infrastructure to adequately support program activities associated with after-school programming. In regards to partnerships, the school district provides strategies to support its concerted effort to engage in formal and informal partnerships with public, private, and non-profit entities to foster community involvement with internal and external stakeholders. Additionally, a transit system is maintained to provide transportation services for after-school participants; however, it provides limited transportation services and does not support the full operating schedule for after-school programming.

Curricular Framework

The school district established a logic model to serve as the basis for measuring the impact of after-school programming on developmental outcomes among adolescents during middle childhood. The logic model includes descriptions for program strategies and elements, as well as long-term, short-term, and intermediate outcomes, as well as program objectives, as mentioned in the prior section, which are supported by program activities and resources, as well as program, process, and outcome measures. The logic model also identifies external factors that may impede the fulfillment of the overarching goal for after-school programming. After-school personnel are encouraged to offer program activities that will foster skill building across the developmental areas associated with each program objective; however, they are not provided a structured curriculum that identifies program activities. A certain level of flexibility is necessary to ensure after-
school programming can effectively address the needs of after-school participants based on the demographic composition, geographic location, and socioeconomic status of the target population; however, a basic curricular infrastructure is needed to ensure after-school programming drives the same developmental outcomes among after-school participants, which should include effective learning methodologies to guide instruction among after-school personnel.

Developmental Areas

The school district employs a logic model as a basis for fulfillment of the program objectives, which theoretically endeavors to foster adolescent development during middle childhood across the following seven (7) developmental areas: (1) academic development; (2) behavioral development; (3) cognitive development; (4) emotional development; (5) physical development; (6) sexual development; and (7) social development. The materials provided, however, that narrowly focus on academic and behavioral development. While after-school participants demonstrate a need for academic and behavioral interventions, they require significant guidance as they navigate the other developmental areas associated with middle childhood. The most glaring omission in the resource training guide is the absence of materials to address social development through engagement among peers and personnel. Moreover, the school district does not maintain an explicit definition for the term “engagement,” which impacts the capacity of after-school personnel to measure the level of interaction and involvement among peers and personnel. The consideration of social development, particularly within
the context of engagement, is critical to the mission for after-school programming in the middle school setting.

**Human Resources**

The school district delivers after-school programming in the middle school setting through a support staff of After-School Program Specialists who serve as the primary administrators during the hours after school. While specialists are deemed the primary administrator, it is not the sole position responsible for delivering after-school programming. The school district does not explicitly identify additional positions that are responsible for providing support services during the delivery of after-school programming. Also, the school district identifies professional development and training opportunities to ensure incumbents in the specialist position remain current on industry trends across the field of after-school programming and are prepared to comply with requirements for after-school programming. For example, incumbents in the specialist position are required to maintain certifications in AED/CPR to ensure compliance with health and safety regulations. The school district maintains a basic educational requirement for after-school personnel having earned a high school diploma, which can impact the school district’s ability to employ the best-qualified professionals with practical knowledge of after-school programming. The school district does not require professional development and training for additional positions, which can impact the ability of all after-school personnel to comply with the policies and procedures for after-school programming. Additionally, there is no adolescent-to-adult ratio, which is critical
to ensuring it maintains an adequate number of after-school personnel to effectively deliver the curriculum for after-school programming. More specifically, the lack of an adolescent-to-adult ratio impacts individualized program activities for after-school participants, such as homework assistance and tutoring.

Program Strategies

The school district explicitly articulates the mission and vision of after-school programming. It also articulates three (3) program goals, as well as a stretch goal, as mentioned in the prior section; however, there is also an additional set of program goals, which are not consistent across the resource training guide. For example, there is a commitment to increasing course grades, increasing standardized testing passing ratings, improving homework completion and class participation, reducing bullying, and reducing disciplinary actions, which could be more appropriately defined as objectives as they are more indicative of activities that support the overarching program goals. Moreover, the resource training guide demonstrates a lack of consistency in the taxonomies used to describe program objectives, which impacts the ability of the school district to ensure strategic alignment among its program strategies, particularly as it relates to fulfilling its mission and vision through its program goals, objectives, and activities.

Summary

This project revealed that the school district has a stated commitment to sustaining quality in after-school programming as evidenced by the guide’s chapter on
“Creating a Quality Program.” The term “quality” is defined as the level of performance in the delivery of after-school programming, which is determined by the capacity to drive administrative, fiscal, and professional development, develop strong and experienced leadership and trained support staff; foster intentional relationship building, and offer enrichment and skill building opportunities. The school district’s definition for the term “quality” was adapted from the PSA and includes the following nine (9) key elements: (1) family and community involvement; (2) flexible infrastructure; (3) intentional linkages to the traditional school day; (4) outcomes and evaluation; (5) social skill development; (6) safe environment; (7) variety in program activities; (8) well-prepared staff; and (9) youth involvement. This definition is operationalized through the development of a logic model, assessment of the needs of the students, school, and community, selection of program activities, alignment of program activities to program goals to drive student outcomes, and establishment of performance measures and data collection methods and sources to evaluate program success. However, while school district makes a stated commitment to deliver quality in after-school programming, its current programmatic infrastructure moderately supports this commitment, which was evidenced by gaps in its overarching program model.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The intent of this project was to evaluate the quality of a resource training guide for after-school personnel titled “Middle School After-School Program Resource Guide”, designed to guide the delivery of after-school programming in the middle school setting. The beginning of the guide included an executive summary, which addressed the mission, vision, and goals for after-school programming; however, it did not explicitly state the overarching purpose of the guide as a resource for after-school personnel. The results of this project contribute to understanding the importance in developing effective training materials for after-school personnel to ensure the delivery of high-quality after-school programming. The remainder of this section provides a summative overview of the findings. Next, a call for future research is advanced, which is followed by two (2) sets of recommendations that address areas of opportunity to enhance both the school district’s resource training guide and the field of after-school programming.

Summary of Findings

Research suggests that well-trained personnel and quality in after-school programming are interconnected, with scholars calling for additional research on quality in after-school programming (HFRP, 2005; Little et al., 2008). This project responded to this call by conducting a content analysis of a resource training guide for after-school
personnel using the “Quality Triangle” as its program quality assessment tool. The materials were developed by and used within a public school district located in Northern Virginia. As previously mentioned, the school district made a stated commitment to deliver quality after-school programming. However, this project, and the evidence it provides, found that it does not maintain a high level of quality in its resource training guide, which is designed to prepare after-school personnel to deliver after-school programming in support of this commitment. While the resource training guide contained operational guidance for after-school personnel on how to administer after-school programming, it was not reflective of the key features necessary to ensure the highest level of quality in after-school programming as determined by the “Quality Triangle.” The overall finding of this project is that the school district has the opportunity to further enhance the quality of its resource training guide in support of providing after-school personnel with a tool to ensure quality in after-school programming in the middle school setting.

The results of this project were evidenced by several emergent themes, such as administrative infrastructure, curricular framework, developmental areas, human resources, and program strategies. The results of this project disprove the hypothesis, which was evidenced by these emergent themes and helped inform the development of a broader theoretical proposition to explain quality in after-school programming in the middle school setting as a social phenomenon. The TASC (2009) suggests “to be effective, ASPs must be staffed by people who are trained to work with rich curriculum and forge strong and supportive relationships with children. As they gain experience and
undergo required training, after-school educators develop an understanding of youth
development and the skills to engage students in curricula of many kinds, including arts,
fitness, literacy, and science” (p. 2). The findings of this project concur by theorizing
that quality in after-school programming is best determined by the capacity of an after-
school provider to equip after-school personnel with effective training materials;
Moreover, it is imperative to provide after-school personnel with training materials that
reinforce policies and procedures that reflect the attributes of quality in after-school
programming, which is necessary to provide adolescents with an environment during the
hours after school that help to drive developmental outcomes during middle childhood,
including academic, behavioral, cognitive, emotional, physical, sexual, and social
development.

**Future Research**

According to Noam (2008), “although there are a growing number of studies
documenting variables that appear to be associated with positive youth outcomes, there is
still a need not only for more rigorous empirical data, but more specifically, for research
examining the differential importance of [the] variables” that are “associated with high-
quality programs” (p. 6). The HFRP (2005) argues “a national dialogue about the state of
quality standards for programs that serve youth in the middle grades after school has
already begun” (p. 1). White (2003) agrees by stating that “the field is now headed down
a fruitful path of better understanding how to define, support, and sustain high quality”
(n.p.). However, there remains relatively limited research on how to implement standards
of quality for after-school programming (Granger et al., 2007). While this project helps to further understanding on quality in after-school programming in the middle school setting, particularly as it relates to training after-school personnel, it does not entirely satisfy the need to further advance the discussion on after-school programming. This project developed a theoretical proposition based on a single case as the subject. However, a call for continued research is necessary to further establish a more generalizable theoretical concept on quality in after-school programming in the middle school setting with practical applicability among after-school personnel.

It is critical to build on the progress of past studies to advance research and practice that will help to frame efforts that will impact adolescents through high-quality after-school programming (White, 2013). “As the field gathers additional empirical data regarding what program practices define quality, it will also need to scientifically validate the measures it uses to assess quality, a process that has already begun” (Palmer et al., 2009, p. 9). White (2013) recommends partnerships between after-school personnel and scholars by suggesting that “such partnerships allow for the integration of research-based tools and knowledge with local circumstances and expertise…disciplinary research and development processes that advance practice and accrue reliable information about how to improve program quality are needed” (n.p.). The fields of after-school programming and sport and recreational studies can leverage this project as a stepping stone to address the lingering challenges associated with professional development and the importance of well-trained after-school professionals. Furthermore, the literature review did not uncover any past studies that applied the “Quality Triangle” to measure the quality of
after-school programming within the middle school setting based on the evaluation of training materials for after-school personnel. As such, this project serves as the first of its kind by offering an innovative look at the role of evaluation tools in after-school programming. This project agrees with the need for continued research through such partnerships as its findings only represent one (1) out of approximately 13,500 public school districts across the U.S. (Center for Education Reform [CER], 2012). This project should serve as a starting point for future empirical research on quality in after-school programming in the middle school setting.

Scholars have also noted a deficiency in empirical research on the utilization of program quality assessment tools in after-school programming. “By utilizing both outcome and process research in a quality-driven model, the after-school field is poised to undertake important program improvement efforts that result in broad, holistic benefits for the young people we serve” (Palmer et al., 2009, P. 11). However, the HFRP (2005) suggests that “quality assessment must go beyond developing standards and tools that are developmentally appropriate. After-school programs will need more information about how continuous improvement processes can positively impact their outcomes and how to access and choose quality assessment tools” (p. 3). In addition to this disparity, continued research can help to address “common criticisms of quality assessment tools [which are] that they are too broad and complicated, too heavily focused on child care and school-age populations, and unable to engage youth and staff in meaningful reflection about program improvement” (HFRP, 2005, p. 1). LaRue (2013) suggests that program quality assessment tools, such as quality frameworks, should be synthesized and
aligned to quality indicators, which will help to better identify the needs of after-school personnel and drive high-quality developmental outcomes in after-school participants.

Moreover, the HFRP (2005) suggests that “while there is general agreement across tools on key areas of program quality [such as] health and safety, administrative practices, and human relationships, there is wide variation on how national, state, and local organizations have articulated standards within these key areas and in how they have developed indicators to track their progress within the standards. Much of the variation can be attributed to the age of the program participants. This is a central concern in the after-school field right now” (p. 1). The capacity to maintain quality in after-school programming helps to influence developmental outcomes among adolescents, particularly during middle childhood between the ages of ten (10) and fourteen (14) years old (HFRP, 2005). Unfortunately, most standards of quality and program quality assessment tools are not age-specific and are designed for general applicability across elementary, middle, and high schools offering after-school programming. “Indeed, the time is ripe to better understand the challenges of developing and implementing quality after-school programs, especially for middle school-age youth [that are] too ‘old’ to be told what to do after school, and too ‘young’ to be home alone” (HFRP, 2005, p. 1).

Moving forward, scholars should more fully address quality standards that are specific to middle schools as most standards of quality and program quality assessment tools are not age-specific and are designed for general applicability across elementary, middle, and high schools offering after-school programming. Moreover, scholars should
acknowledge the critical role of well-trained after-school personnel in sustaining quality in after-school programming in support of driving developmental outcomes among adolescents during middle childhood. This would further align theory and practice, which is critical within the fields of after-school programming and sport and recreational studies or ASPs will remain ill-equipped to maintain quality in after-school programming in the middle school setting.

**Recommendations**

White (2013) suggests that the field of after-school programming “is ripe for a focused wave on research and development that does not involve dramatic changes but rather capitalizes on the significant progress made over the past fifteen (15) years. After-school and summer programs can have positive effects on a range of important outcomes, and thus they have earned the right to be included in discussions about advancing young people’s learning and development. Future investments in education and youth development should recognize after-school and summer as important opportunities to advance student success, and more fully capitalize on growing capacity at the state and local levels to expand and improve programs” (n.p.). While this project and its findings suggest that the school district in question has made notable progress in after-school programming since its inception in 2001, this chapter concludes by offering two (2) sets of recommendations to further support its stated commitment to sustain quality in after-school programming in the middle school setting. The first set of recommendations includes areas of opportunity to enhance the training materials for after-school personnel,
followed by a second set of broader action items for application across the field of after-school programming (see Appendix H: Set of Recommendations).

The recommendations to enhance the resource training guide were developed specifically for application by the school district that served as the subject of this project; however, they can be adapted by other jurisdictions to further enhance the quality of training materials. These recommendations include the establishment of a schedule to ensure training materials are routinely revised to reflect the most current information on after-school programming, development of primary resources that are specifically prepared for and used by the school district to meet the respective needs of its after-school personnel and participants, and utilization of blended learning methods to satisfy professional development and training requirements, including online learning management platforms and interactive applications, tools, courses, and discussion boards.

The recommendations to enhance the quality of after-school programming were developed for application by the school district based on the key feature areas of the “Quality Triangle”; however, they can also be leveraged for use by any after-school provider. The recommendations related to activities, curriculum, and learning include the development of automated systems to monitor and report attendance among after-school participants, establishment of facility requirements to ensure middle schools are equipped with the proper infrastructure to support a variety of indoor and outdoor program activities, and adoption of an integrated curricular framework to link activities from traditional school hours to those during the hours after school to ensure continuity of
learning. As it relates to personnel capacity, training, and relational care, after-school providers should engage after-school participants as active contributors in the planning process and establish a screening requirement to conduct routine background checks and psychological assessments among after-school personnel. Additionally, the recommendations related to programmatic support, structure, and leadership include the adoption of a common set of quality standards and program quality assessment tools, expansion of transportation services to support the full operating schedule of program activities offered during the hours after school, establishment of an adolescent-to-adult-ratio in accordance with industry standards to ensure the effective delivery of program activities by after-school personnel.

Summary

As previously mentioned by Little et al. (2008), “Time and again, the bottom line of many after-school studies is that one of the most critical features of high-quality programs necessary for achieving positive outcomes is the quality of a program’s staff” (p. 7). In that same spirit, after-school personnel are entrusted to serve on the front-line and work directly with after-school participants (Mott, 2009). It is integral to equip them with training materials that not only help to enhance their level of knowledge, skills, and abilities, but also provide operational guidance to reinforce policies and procedures on how to administer high-quality after-school programming. These efforts will help to further drive developmental outcomes among adolescents, particularly during middle
childhood, through cultural, recreational, relational, and social enrichment experiences during the hours after school.
### APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT
(MIDDLE SCHOOLS BY RACE) 55

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Asian or Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Black or African American</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>566 39.6%</td>
<td>94 6.6%</td>
<td>136 9.5%</td>
<td>73 5.1%</td>
<td>551 38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>125 17.2%</td>
<td>9 1.2%</td>
<td>40 5.5%</td>
<td>38 5.2%</td>
<td>513 70.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C</td>
<td>210 25.2%</td>
<td>57 6.9%</td>
<td>95 11.4%</td>
<td>36 4.3%</td>
<td>432 51.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School D</td>
<td>268 24.4%</td>
<td>44 4.0%</td>
<td>122 11.1%</td>
<td>68 6.2%</td>
<td>594 54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School E</td>
<td>237 14.5%</td>
<td>181 11.1%</td>
<td>778 47.7%</td>
<td>49 3.0%</td>
<td>384 23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School F</td>
<td>125 14.3%</td>
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<td>186 21.3%</td>
<td>48 5.5%</td>
<td>276 31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School G</td>
<td>129 12.2%</td>
<td>130 9.2%</td>
<td>405 38.4%</td>
<td>50 4.7%</td>
<td>373 35.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School H</td>
<td>193 20.0%</td>
<td>202 20.9%</td>
<td>367 38.0%</td>
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<td>179 18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School I</td>
<td>112 11.2%</td>
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<td>272 27.2%</td>
<td>53 5.3%</td>
<td>408 40.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School J</td>
<td>131 14.4%</td>
<td>77 8.5%</td>
<td>141 15.5%</td>
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<td>509 56.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School K</td>
<td>319 24.1%</td>
<td>93 7.0%</td>
<td>448 33.8%</td>
<td>66 5.0%</td>
<td>394 29.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School L</td>
<td>212 23.7%</td>
<td>119 13.3%</td>
<td>365 40.8%</td>
<td>35 3.9%</td>
<td>159 17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School M</td>
<td>344 26.2%</td>
<td>50 3.8%</td>
<td>140 10.7%</td>
<td>86 6.6%</td>
<td>689 52.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School N</td>
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<td>684 49.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School O</td>
<td>218 20.1%</td>
<td>101 9.3%</td>
<td>245 22.6%</td>
<td>57 5.3%</td>
<td>458 42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School P</td>
<td>336 30.9%</td>
<td>115 10.6%</td>
<td>187 17.2%</td>
<td>61 5.6%</td>
<td>386 35.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Q</td>
<td>360 25.8%</td>
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<td>777 55.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School R</td>
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<td>15 1.7%</td>
<td>115 13.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School S</td>
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<td>156 13.4%</td>
<td>69 5.9%</td>
<td>714 61.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School T</td>
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<td>62 5.5%</td>
<td>122 10.7%</td>
<td>59 5.2%</td>
<td>429 37.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School U</td>
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<td>546 39.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School V</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School W</td>
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<td>62 7.4%</td>
<td>197 23.4%</td>
<td>52 6.2%</td>
<td>421 49.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Y</td>
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<td>School Z</td>
<td>58 6.0%</td>
<td>255 26.3%</td>
<td>412 42.5%</td>
<td>34 3.5%</td>
<td>201 20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>5,709 20.3%</td>
<td>2,924 10.4%</td>
<td>6,557 23.3%</td>
<td>1,382 4.9%</td>
<td>11,496 40.8%</td>
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All percentages for American Indian or Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander have been excluded as they account for less than 1 percent of the population.
APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT (MIDDLE SCHOOLS BY GENDER)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Female #</th>
<th>Female %</th>
<th>Male #</th>
<th>Male %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
<td>712</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School D</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School E</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School F</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School G</td>
<td>506</td>
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<td>550</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School H</td>
<td>438</td>
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<td>529</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School I</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School J</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School K</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>52.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School L</td>
<td>418</td>
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<td>476</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School M</td>
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<td>668</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School N</td>
<td>667</td>
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<td>716</td>
<td>51.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School O</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>49.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School P</td>
<td>520</td>
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<td>569</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Q</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School R</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School S</td>
<td>561</td>
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<td>606</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School T</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School U</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School V</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School W</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School X</td>
<td>374</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Y</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Z</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>13,689</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
<td>14,487</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
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</table>


All percentages for American Indian or Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander have been excluded as they account for less than 1 percent of the population.
# APPENDIX C: RESOURCE TRAINING GUIDE TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Sections</th>
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- Why After-School  
- Middle Matters  
- Program Goals  
- Logic Model  
- Scorecard  
- Primer on After-School Terms  
- Program Self-Assessment  
- Procedures  
- Rules of Operation  
- Developing a Communication Plan |
| **Program Development** | - Building Your Program  
- Needs, Goals, Actions, and Results  
- Four Key Strategies  
- Linking to Student Achievement Goals  
- Linking to the School Day  
- Enrichment Activities  
- What Works: Components of Exemplary After-School Programs  
- What Constitutes a Quality Program  
- Creating a Quality Program  
- Exploring Quality in After-School Programs for Middle School-Age Youth  
- Service Learning |
| **Job Description and Expectations** | - After-School Program Specialist Job Specifications  
- After-School Program Specialist Self-Evaluation |
| **Staffing** | - Recruiting Qualified Staff  
- Building the Skills of Staff  
- Pay Scales  
- Overtime  
- Staff Job Duties  
- Staff Hiring Process  
- Interviewing Staff  
- New Staff Information  
- Background Checks |
| **Financial** | - Program Application Directions  
- Program Application  
- Budget Profile |

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<table>
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|                               | ▪ Financial Services Forms  
▪ Program Cards Applications and Updates  
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▪ Budget Manual  
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▪ Contracts and Services Memo  
▪ Memoranda of Understanding  
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▪ Financial Services  
▪ School Finance Guide  
▪ Guidelines for Purchase Orders  
▪ Expenditure Guidelines for Incidental Purchases  
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▪ Procurement Card Management |
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▪ Parents  
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▪ Partners  
▪ Media |
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▪ Principals of Effective Partnerships  
▪ Collaborating with Principals  
▪ Tips for Successful Collaboration  
▪ Community Outreach  
▪ Partnership Guidelines  
▪ Equal Access Memoranda of Understanding |
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▪ Evaluating Family Involvement  
▪ Lights on After-School  
▪ Family Activities |
| Professional Development and Training | ▪ Required Trainings and Technical Assistance Sessions  
▪ Recommended Trainings  
▪ User Guides  
▪ Training Opportunities  
▪ School Health Procedure Training  
▪ AED/CPR Training |
| Health, Safety, and Security  | ▪ Student Responsibilities and Rights  
▪ Safety and Health Office  
▪ Security Office  
▪ Safety and Security Fact Sheets |
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<td>Safety Procedures</td>
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<td>School Health Information</td>
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<td>Reporting Injuries</td>
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<td>Reporting Vandalism and Break-Ins</td>
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<td>Risk Management</td>
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<td>First Aid, Emergency Treatment, and Dispensing Medications</td>
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<td>Sample Emergency Procedures</td>
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<td>Area Office Transportation Specialists</td>
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<td>Requesting Field Trips</td>
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<td>Tracking Attendance and Program Accountability</td>
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<td>Using Access Attendance Database</td>
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<td>Program Evaluation</td>
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<td>Quarterly Reports</td>
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<td>Using Schools Administration Student Information</td>
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<td>Core Courses</td>
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<td>Schools Administration Student Information Discipline Codes</td>
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<td>Surveys: Students, After-School Staff, Classroom Teachers, and Parents</td>
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### APPENDIX D: PROGRAM QUALITY ASSESSMENT TOOLS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Tool</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Target Age</th>
<th>Target User</th>
<th>Target Use</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
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<td>Assessment of Program Practices Tool</td>
<td>National Institute of Out-of-School Time</td>
<td>Measures program practices that relate to adolescent outcomes.</td>
<td>K – 8</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>Observation</td>
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<td>Internal</td>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
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<td>Public and Private Ventures</td>
<td>Measures the impact of after-school programming on academic achievement.</td>
<td>K – 5</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>Observation</td>
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<td>Evaluation, Monitoring, Research</td>
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<td>Program Observation Tool</td>
<td>National After-School Association</td>
<td>Measures program progress against the “Standards for Quality School-Age Care.”</td>
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<td>External</td>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>Document Review, Observation, Questionnaire</td>
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<td>Internal</td>
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<td>Monitoring</td>
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<td>Program Quality Observation Scale</td>
<td>Kim Pierce, Deborah Lower Vandell</td>
<td>Measures quality in after-school environments by documenting adolescents’ experiences.</td>
<td>1 – 5</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Observation</td>
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<th>Assessment Tool</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Target Age</th>
<th>Target User</th>
<th>Target Use</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
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<tr>
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<td>▪ New York State After-School Network</td>
<td>▪ Measures program operations.</td>
<td>▪ K – 12</td>
<td>▪ Internal</td>
<td>▪ Improvement</td>
<td>▪ Document Review</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quality Assurance System</strong></td>
<td>Foundations, Inc.</td>
<td>▪ Measures quality based on a set of building blocks that relate to after-school programming.</td>
<td>▪ K – 12</td>
<td>▪ External</td>
<td>▪ Improvement</td>
<td>▪ Document Review</td>
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<td><strong>School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale</strong></td>
<td>▪ Concordia University ▪ Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute</td>
<td>▪ Measures quality and social interactions within after-school environments.</td>
<td>▪ K – 6</td>
<td>▪ External</td>
<td>▪ Accreditation</td>
<td>▪ Interview</td>
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<td><strong>Youth Program Quality Assessment</strong></td>
<td>▪ High Scope Education Research Foundation</td>
<td>▪ Measures quality in after-school programming.</td>
<td>▪ 4 – 12</td>
<td>▪ External</td>
<td>▪ Accreditation</td>
<td>▪ Observation</td>
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### APPENDIX E: QUALITY TRIANGLE FRAMEWORK

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<th>Features</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities, Curriculum, and Learning</td>
<td>• Activities&lt;br&gt;• Learning Materials&lt;br&gt;• Engagement&lt;br&gt;• Skill Building</td>
<td>• Capture participants’ voices.&lt;br&gt;• Engage through learning materials.&lt;br&gt;• Foster engagement through belonging.&lt;br&gt;• Learn through structured opportunities for skill building.&lt;br&gt;• Provide authentic and relevant activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel Capacity, Training, and Relational Care</td>
<td>• Psychological Well-Being&lt;br&gt;• Ratios&lt;br&gt;• Relationship Building&lt;br&gt;• Retention</td>
<td>• Ensure staff retention.&lt;br&gt;• Establish community partnerships.&lt;br&gt;• Foster relationship building.&lt;br&gt;• Provide effective adolescent-to-adult ratios.&lt;br&gt;• Provide educative and training opportunities.&lt;br&gt;• Reinforce psychological well-being.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programmatic Support, Structure, and Leadership</td>
<td>• Development&lt;br&gt;• Management&lt;br&gt;• Participation&lt;br&gt;• Partnership&lt;br&gt;• Personnel</td>
<td>• Develop recruitment and retention strategies.&lt;br&gt;• Establish an explicit mission, vision, and goals.&lt;br&gt;• Integrate family, school, and community stakeholders.&lt;br&gt;• Manage program operations.&lt;br&gt;• Provide professional development opportunities.</td>
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## APPENDIX F: DIAGNOSTIC PROTOCOL

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<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Questions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Activities, Curriculum, and Learning</td>
<td>1. Are participants included in the program planning process?</td>
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<td>2. Does the program maintain curricular requirements for participants?</td>
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<td>3. Does the program measure engagement among peers and personnel?</td>
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<td>4. Does the program identify skill-building areas for participants?</td>
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<td>5. Does the program use learning materials to instruct participants?</td>
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<td>6. What program activities are offered to participants?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Personnel</strong></td>
<td>Personnel Capacity, Training, and Relational Care</td>
<td>1. Does the program conduct background checks on personnel?</td>
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<td>2. Does the program identify performance expectations for personnel?</td>
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<td>3. Does the program maintain a target adolescent-to-adult ratio?</td>
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<td>4. Does the program track retention rates for personnel?</td>
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<td>5. How does the program define the term “engagement”?</td>
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<td><strong>Program</strong></td>
<td>Programmatic Support, Structure, and Leadership</td>
<td>1. Does the program maintain a professional development requirement for personnel?</td>
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<td>2. Does the program maintain a recruitment strategy to enroll participants?</td>
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<td>3. Does the program maintain a retention strategy to retain participants?</td>
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<td>4. Does the program maintain a training requirement for personnel?</td>
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<td>5. Does the program maintain a transportation system for participants?</td>
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<td>6. Does the program maintain an educational requirement for personnel?</td>
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<td>7. Does the program maintain an evaluation process to measure program success?</td>
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<td>8. Does the program maintain partnerships with internal and external stakeholders?</td>
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<td>9. Does the program maintain health and safety regulations?</td>
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<td>10. Does the program track attendance for participants?</td>
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<td>11. What are the goals of the program?</td>
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<td>12. What are the objectives of the program?</td>
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<td>13. What facilities are used to host the program?</td>
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<td>14. What is the funding source for the program?</td>
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<td>15. What is the mission of the program?</td>
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<td>16. What is the staffing structure of the program?</td>
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<td>17. What is the vision of the program?</td>
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## APPENDIX G: DIAGNOSTIC RESPONSES, MEMOS, AND EMERGENT THEMES

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<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Memos</th>
<th>Emergent Themes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Activities, Curriculum, and Learning</td>
<td>1. Are participants included in the program planning process?</td>
<td>The school district allows each middle school to manage its own planning process for after-school programming. However, it encourages the inclusion of after-school participants to drive authentic decision-making and build ownership throughout the planning process. For example, it encourages each middle school to identify after-school participants’ needs, which should be used to inform the development of program goals. It encourages the use of focus groups, secondary research, and surveys to determine after-school participants’ needs. Moreover, it encourages the identification of program activities in support of program goals and performance metrics to measure program success in after-school programming.</td>
<td>The researcher notes a gap in the planning process for after-school programming, particularly as it relates to giving after-school participants a voice in the planning process. For example, the surveys are designed for respondents to select from a set of predetermined responses, which limits the ability to solicit unique feedback from after-school participants on how best to address their needs through after-school programming.</td>
<td>Curricular Framework</td>
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<td>Areas</td>
<td>Features</td>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>Memos</td>
<td>Emergent Themes</td>
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<td>program maintain curricular requirements for participants?</td>
<td>curricular framework that supports enrichment activities that endeavor to link after-school programming to in-school curriculum. The curricular framework intends to incorporate academic lesson plans into a less formal after-school environment. The curricular framework was developed based on academic guidelines, personnel feedback, and after-school participants’ needs. The curricular framework is structured to solicit personnel input as it relates to fulfilling those after-school participants’ needs that are not adequately addressed during traditional school hours.</td>
<td>curricular framework is too narrowly focused on academic and behavioral development. While after-school participants demonstrate a need for academic and behavioral interventions, adolescents require significant guidance as they navigate through social development.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Are participants included in the program planning process?</td>
<td>The school district allows each middle school to manage its own planning process for after-school programming. However, its encourages the inclusion of after-school participants to drive authentic decision-making and build ownership throughout the planning process. For example, it encourages each middle school to identify after-school participants’ needs, which should be used to inform the development of program goals. It encourages the use of focus groups, secondary research, and surveys to determine after-school participants’ needs.</td>
<td>The researcher notes a gap in the planning process for after-school programming, particularly as it relates to giving after-school participants a voice in the planning process. For example, the surveys are designed for respondents to select from a set of predetermined responses, which limits the ability to solicit unique feedback from after-school participants on how best to address their needs through after-school programming.</td>
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Content Activities, Curriculum, and Learning
 Moreover, it encourages the identification of program activities in support of program goals and performance metrics to measure program success in after-school programming.

3. **Does the program maintain curricular requirements for participants?**

   The school district designed a curricular framework that supports enrichment activities that endeavor to link after-school programming to in-school curriculum. The curricular framework intends to incorporate academic lesson plans into a less formal after-school environment. The curricular framework was developed based on academic guidelines, personnel feedback, and after-school participants’ needs. The curricular framework is structured to solicit personnel input as it relates to fulfilling those after-school participants’ needs that are not adequately addressed during traditional school hours.

   The researcher notes that the curricular framework is too narrowly focused on academic and behavioral development. While after-school participants demonstrate a need for academic and behavioral interventions, adolescents require significant guidance as they navigate through social development.

---

4. **Does the program measure engagement among peers and personnel?**

   The school district established a logic model for after-school programming based on a set of program objectives, including academic support and enrichment, family and community involvement, physical health, wellness, and recreation, and social skill and adolescent development. The logic model is used to measure developmental outcomes among adolescents. However, the logic model does not measure the level of engagement among peers and personnel.
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<td>the impact of after-school programming on developmental outcomes among adolescents. The metrics associated with academic support and enrichment included the number of adolescents receiving homework assistance, number of adolescents receiving tutoring, number of adult tutors, number of peer tutors, and level of satisfaction with homework and tutoring support among parents and personnel. The metrics associated with family and community involvement included the number of collaborative relationships with community partners, number of collaborative relationships with business partners, number of focus group sessions with community stakeholders, number of funding streams, number of volunteers, and number of literacy sessions with parents. The metrics associated with physical health, wellness, and recreation included the number of participants in intramural sports and fitness activities, number of coaches and trainers, number of sport and fitness opportunities, amount of time spent in physical activity, and level of satisfaction with physical activity among parents and personnel. The metrics associated with social skill and</td>
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<td>Areas</td>
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<td>adolescent development included the number of evidence-based prevention activities, number of participants in prevention activities, number of mentees, number of adult mentors, number of peer mentors, and level of satisfaction with social skill and adolescent development among parents and personnel.</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the skill-building areas are comprehensive and strategically aligned to the program objectives that govern the logic model for after-school programming. The researcher also notes the school district’s flexibility in allowing each middle school to select the opportunities that will help to fulfill the program objectives, which can be influenced by the demographic composition, geographic location, and socioeconomic status of the target population for each respective middle school.</td>
<td>Program Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Does the program identify skill-building areas for participants?</td>
<td>The school district identified skill-building areas based on the program objectives that govern the logic model for after-school programming, including academic support and enrichment, family and community involvement, physical health, wellness, and recreation, and social skill and adolescent development. The program objectives are addressed by offering opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, and among adolescents. These opportunities include driving emotional, physical, and social development, enhancing school and community connectedness, improving academic performance, and reducing engagement in at-risk behavior and delinquent activity.</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the lack of designated learning materials for personnel to guide the instruction of after-school</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Does the program use learning materials to</td>
<td>The school district does not provide after-school personnel with designated learning materials to guide instruction and deliver</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the lack of designated learning materials for personnel to guide the instruction of after-school</td>
<td>Secondary Resources</td>
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<td>Areas</td>
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<td>instruct participants?</td>
<td>curriculum to after-school participants. However, it supports the use of experiential and project-based learning methods. It also provides training techniques to ensure the effective delivery of homework assistance and tutoring.</td>
<td>programming can impact program success.</td>
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<td>7. What program activities are offered to participants?</td>
<td>The school district allows each middle school to determine the program activities used to deliver after-school programming. However, the program activities must address the program objectives that govern the logic model for after-school programming, including academic support and enrichment, family and community involvement, physical health, wellness, and recreation, and social skill and adolescent development. Moreover, the program activities must align to the school district-wide achievement goals, including academics, essential life skills, and community responsibilities. As it relates to academic support and enrichment, program activities included board games, clubs, critical thinking sessions, fine and performing arts, homework assignment coordination, subject-specific homework assistance, individual and group tutoring, cross-age peer</td>
<td>The researcher notes that flexibility in selecting program activities for after-school programming is important to program success, as this selection may be influenced by the demographic composition, geographic location, and socioeconomic status of the target population for each respective middle school.</td>
<td>Program Strategies</td>
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<td>Areas</td>
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<td>and adult tutoring, and mathematics, literacy, and technology workshops. As it relates to family and community involvement, program activities included community outreach, parental education and literacy, partnership building, participant outreach and recruitment, and volunteer recruitment and training. As it relates to physical health, wellness, and recreation, program activities included competitive and non-competitive sports, intramural sports, exercise and physical fitness, strength training, and team building. As it relates to social skill and adolescent development, program activities included career preparedness, character education, college readiness, leadership development, mentoring, peer mediation, service learning, and substance abuse and violence prevention and awareness sessions. It prohibits several program activities in after-school programming, including bike riding, breakdancing, canoeing, dodgeball, fishing, kayaking, rafting, tubing, and trampolines.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The researcher notes a gap in the background check process, as it does not conduct psychological assessments to determine the</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>Personnel Capacity, Training, and Relational</td>
<td>1. Does the program conduct background</td>
<td>The school district requires that all service contracts for after-school programming comply with background check requirements, as</td>
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<td>Areas</td>
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<td>Care</td>
<td>checks on personnel?</td>
<td>established by local and state legislation and regulations. These requirements include clearances for all personnel in contact with after-school participants. It prohibits employment of any person convicted of a felony and/or an offense involving the physical abuse or sexual molestation of an adolescent. It also prohibits any person convicted of a felony and/or misdemeanor involving child abuse or neglect from serving as a mentor or volunteer. Its human resources department is responsible for conducting background investigations and paying for background checks and fingerprints. Its human resources department conducts a comprehensive search of several law enforcement databases and registries to locate sex offender and criminal history records, including those maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Virginia Child Protective Services, and Virginia State Police. It requires all persons to complete several release forms, including the Sex Offender and Criminal History Record Request Form, Request for Search of the Central Registry and Release of Information Form, and Employment Background.</td>
<td>mental health and wellness of employees, mentors, and/or volunteers. The researcher also notes that the school district administers background checks during the application process. However, it does not conduct routine background checks throughout the duration of employment as a requirement.</td>
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<td>Areas</td>
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<td><strong>Information Form.</strong> Any person found to intentionally falsify information during the application process is automatically disqualified from consideration.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Does the program identify performance expectations for personnel?</td>
<td>The school district established performance expectations for after-school personnel during the delivery of after-school programming. The performance expectations are based on the job descriptions for after-school personnel, which are captured on the <strong>Support Services Performance Expectations Form</strong>. Moreover, the <strong>Support Employee Mid-Year Performance Assessment Form</strong> is used as an evaluation tool to assess the level of performance among after-school personnel on semi-annual basis.</td>
<td>The researcher notes the omission of performance expectations to capture the capacity of after-school personnel to drive peer engagement, which is a critical component of program success. The researcher also notes that the school district does not maintain a requirement as it relates to the frequency for conducting evaluations.</td>
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<td>Human Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Does the program maintain a target adolescent-to-adult ratio?</td>
<td>The school district does not maintain a target as it relates to the appropriate ratio of adolescents-to-adults to ensure the effective delivery of after-school programming.</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the school district does not consider human resources management during the planning process for after-school programming. However, the adolescent-to-adult ratio is important to ensuring that program activities are adequately supported by a staff of after-school personnel.</td>
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<td>Human Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Does the program track retention rates for personnel?</td>
<td>The school district does not maintain a process to track the retention rates of after-school personnel.</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the school district does not track the retention rates of after-school personnel, which impacts its</td>
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<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Programmatic Support, Structure, and Leadership</td>
<td>1. Does the program maintain a professional development requirement for personnel?</td>
<td>The school district maintains a professional development requirement for after-school personnel. It requires after-school personnel to attend monthly in-service meetings and an annual retreat during the school district-wide in-service day. It also requires after-school personnel to attend an annual peer exchange forum, which provides personnel with an environment to engage in knowledge sharing by discussing the accomplishments, challenges, and opportunities, which helps to ensure that after-school personnel remain current on industry trends across the field of after-school programming.</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the school district provides professional development opportunities, which helps to ensure that after-school personnel remain current on industry trends across the field of after-school programming.</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td>5. How does the program define the term “engagement”?</td>
<td>The school district does not maintain an explicit definition for the term “engagement.”</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the school district does not maintain an explicit definition for the term “engagement”, which impacts its ability to measure the level of interaction and involvement among peers and personnel. Moreover, the researcher notes that it uses after-school programming to enhance the academic and behavioral development of after-school participants. However, after-school participants demonstrate a significant need for program activities that drive social development.</td>
<td>Secondary Resources</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Does the program maintain a professional development requirement for personnel? The school district maintains a professional development requirement for after-school personnel. It requires after-school personnel to attend monthly in-service meetings and an annual retreat during the school district-wide in-service day. It also requires after-school personnel to attend an annual peer exchange forum, which provides personnel with an environment to engage in knowledge sharing by discussing the accomplishments, challenges, and opportunities, which helps to ensure that after-school personnel remain current on industry trends across the field of after-school programming.

5. How does the program define the term “engagement”? The school district does not maintain an explicit definition for the term “engagement.”
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<td>and best practices associated with after-school programming. Moreover, it provides opportunities to enhance the technical expertise and knowledge, skills, and abilities of after-school personnel through books, classes, conferences, programs, reference materials, sessions, speakers, and workshops.</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the school district maintains a recruitment strategy to drive enrollment among after-school participants. However, it does not provide templates for each communication vehicle in support of the marketing plan.</td>
<td>Secondary Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Does the program maintain a recruitment strategy to enroll participants?</td>
<td>The school district maintains a recruitment strategy to help drive the enrollment of after-school participants, which is captured in its marketing plan. The marketing plan leverages several communication vehicles to encourage enrollment in after-school programming, including emails, flyers, handbooks, meetings, newsletters, letters, phone calls, postcards, posters, public address announcements, and webpages.</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the school district maintains a recruitment strategy to drive enrollment among after-school participants. However, it does not provide templates for each communication vehicle in support of the marketing plan.</td>
<td>Secondary Resources</td>
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<td>3. Does the program maintain a retention strategy to retain participants?</td>
<td>The school district does not maintain a recruitment strategy to help retain after-school participants. However, it does provide supplemental materials to assist in the development of a retention strategy to drive retention among after-school participants, which is captured in a resource known as the <em>After-School Program Toolkit</em>.</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the school district does not maintain a recruitment strategy for after-school participants, which impacts its capacity to retain participants, as well as its ability to demonstrate that after-school programming is a business imperative in the middle school setting.</td>
<td>Secondary Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Does the school district maintain a recruitment strategy to help drive the enrollment of after-school participants?</td>
<td>The school district maintains a recruitment strategy to help drive the enrollment of after-school participants, which is captured in its marketing plan. The marketing plan leverages several communication vehicles to encourage enrollment in after-school programming, including emails, flyers, handbooks, meetings, newsletters, letters, phone calls, postcards, posters, public address announcements, and webpages.</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the school district maintains a recruitment strategy to drive enrollment among after-school participants. However, it does not provide templates for each communication vehicle in support of the marketing plan.</td>
<td>Secondary Resources</td>
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<td>Areas</td>
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<td>program maintain a training requirement for personnel?</td>
<td>training requirement for a select group of positions that are responsible for delivering after-school programming. It requires after-school personnel to complete a course on the school district’s student record and information management system. It also requires after-school personnel to complete a course on the procurement process for goods and services through appropriated and non-appropriate funds. Moreover, after-school personnel are required to attend site-based seminars and online webinars on AED/CPR, information technology, financial services, and safety and security. It also provides supplemental training materials on service learning and partnership building, which is captured in a resource known as the <em>After-School Program Toolkit</em>.</td>
<td>school district does not maintain a training requirement for all after-school personnel, which impacts the ability of the school district to ensure that all personnel comply with the policies and procedures for after-school programming.</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
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<td>5. Does the program maintain a transportation system for participants?</td>
<td>The school district maintains a transit system to provide limited transportation for after-school participants. It requires the use of school buses and/or full-size commercial buses to provide transportation services for after-school participants. However, it prohibits the use of small-capacity buses to ensure the safe and efficient transport of after-school participants to and from middle school.</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the school district maintains a transit system to provide transportation services for after-school participants. However, the transit system provides limited transportation services, which does not fully support the operating schedule for after-school programming.</td>
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<td>6. Does the program maintain an educational requirement for personnel?</td>
<td>The school district does not maintain an educational requirement for after-school personnel. However, compensation is determined by the level of education of each respective employee.</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the school district does not maintain an educational requirement for after-school personnel, which impacts its ability to employ the best-qualified professionals with practical knowledge of after-school programming.</td>
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<td>7. Does the program maintain an evaluation process to measure program success?</td>
<td>The school district maintains an evaluation process to measure program success in after-school programming. The evaluation process is conducted using evaluative tools to measure the effectiveness in delivering after-school programming, including observations, progress reports, outcome reports, and surveys. The observations include planned and unplanned site visits. The progress reports include process metrics related to program activities, which are collected on a quarterly basis. The outcome reports include output metrics to determine statistical correlations between after-school programming and academic and behavioral development, which is measured by attendance, disciplinary actions, and grades. As it relates to grades, the school district measures failing grades in several core courses, including English, mathematics, science, and</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the school district uses triangulated methods to evaluate program success in after-school programming, particularly as it relates to its impact on the academic and behavioral development of after-school participants. However, it does not measure the impact of after-school programming on the social development of after-school participants, particularly as it relates to engagement among peers and personnel.</td>
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<td>1. What are the goals of the school district's social studies program?</td>
<td>The school district measures the number of unexcused absences. As it relates to disciplinary actions, measures the number of offenses related to drug, alcohol, and substance abuse and/or offenses against a person or property. The surveys include the collection of pre and post-test data from after-school participants and personnel, as well as parents. Moreover, the school district provides supplemental resources to conduct internal evaluations, such as the Quality Self-Assessment for Continuous Improvement Planning Tool, which is designed to measure program success based on best practices in after-school programming.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Does the program maintain partnerships with internal and external stakeholders?</td>
<td>The school district maintains partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, which are formalized through memoranda of understanding. The internal stakeholders include employees of the school district and local government. The external stakeholders include community-based coalitions, groups, and organizations that help to enhance community engagement, parental education, and service learning. The partnerships are leveraged to</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the school district makes a concerted effort to engage in formal and informal partnerships with public, private, and non-profit entities in support of fostering community involvement with internal and external stakeholders.</td>
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<td>appropriate and monitor resources, coordinate program evaluations, provide programming support, provide oversight and coordination, and provide technical training and assistance. It endeavors to build enduring partnerships through collaborative planning to drive sustainability, encourage diversity, establish ownership, establish trust and shared identity, identify funding streams, and increase the capacity of groups to work together. The collaborative planning process includes strategic decision-making, which helps to clarify roles and responsibilities, develop a communication and outreach strategy, and establish program goals for dissemination to a collective group of stakeholders. It also provides supplemental resources to assist with the collaborative planning process, including <em>Beyond the Head Count: Evaluating Family Involvement in Out-of-School Time</em> by the Harvard Family Research Project, <em>Building Relationships with Parents and Families: Resources for Staff Training and Program Planning</em> by Roberta Newman, <em>Making an Impact on Out-of-School Time: A Guide for Corporation for National Service Programs in After-School</em>,</td>
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<td>9. Does the program maintain health and safety regulations?</td>
<td>The schooldistrict maintains policies and procedures to ensure adherence to healthy and safety regulations during after-school programming. It equips each middle school facility with a first aid kit, which is stored in the medical clinic. In the event of a minor injury, such as scrapes or bruises, it requires after-school personnel to escort after-school participants to the medical clinic. In the event of major injury, such as sprains or cuts, it requires after-school personnel to escort after-school participants to the medical clinic and complete an Accident Report Form. In the event of a severe injury, such as broken bones or asthma attacks, it requires after-school personnel to contact 911 and the parents of after-school participants. Moreover, it maintains security protocols to</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the schooldistrict requires after-school personnel to maintain certifications in AED/CPR as an additional measure to ensure compliance with health and safety regulations.</td>
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<td>address emergencies, such as illnesses, medication administration, criminal incidents, and inclement weather. For example, it maintains procedures for drills, lockdowns, shelters-in-place, and evacuations in the event of an emergency. It also requires after-school personnel to distribute healthy snacks in accordance with diet and nutrition initiatives.</td>
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<td>10. Does the program track attendance for participants?</td>
<td>The school district maintains a procedure to track the attendance of after-school participants. It requires after-school personnel to immediately record and submit attendance records to the main office of each respective middle school. The attendance record should include the date, total number of after-school participants, and full legal name of the after-school participants and personnel. The attendance record can be captured in writing or electronically via Microsoft Access, which also tracks the student identification number. It acknowledges that attendance is a critical component to ensure accountability and determine budgetary allocations, as after-school programming is a public investment. It collects data on attendance, such as the number of overall participants, number of</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the school district acknowledges the importance of attendance in ensuring program success in after-school programming. However, it does not maintain a structured process to track attendance, which results in issues with data integrity.</td>
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<td>participants by program activity, and number of days in attendance by day, week, semester, and year. The data is analyzed based on several indicators, including attendance, intensity of attendance, duration of attendance, and breath of attendance. The data is used to identify linkages between attendance and developmental outcomes related to academic performance, in-school attendance, and behavioral incidents.</td>
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<td>11. What are the goals of the program?</td>
<td>The school district established several program goals for after-school programming. The program goals include increasing the number of adolescents participating in school-based after-school programming, reducing the incidence of adolescents engaging in at-risk behaviors, and improving academic performance and development. It also established a stretch goal to encourage every middle school student to engage in constructive after-school activities.</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the program goals strategically align to the mission and vision of after-school programming.</td>
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<td>12. What are the objectives of the program?</td>
<td>The school district established several program objectives for after-school programming. The program objectives include building competency and self-confidence, providing a safe-haven for adolescents during the hours after school, providing engaging</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the program objectives strategically align to the mission, vision, and goals of after-school programming. However, the school district demonstrates a lack of consistency in the taxonomy used to describe “program objectives.”</td>
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<td>activities that will incorporate adolescents into the broader school community and supportive groups, providing relationships with committed and caring adults, supporting academic achievement, supporting an integrated system in which school and community-based after-school activities are aligned to the traditional school day to maximize the benefits for stakeholders, and teaching life lessons, such as responsibility, respect for others, teamwork, sportsmanship, goal setting, anger management, and hard work.</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the school district does not maintain requirements to ensure that each middle school facility is equipped with the infrastructure to adequately support the program activities associated with after-school programming.</td>
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<td>13. What facilities are used to host the program?</td>
<td>The school district uses all of the middle and secondary schools across the jurisdiction as facilities to host after-school programming.</td>
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<td>14. What is the funding source for the program?</td>
<td>The school district allows each middle school to generate, manage, and disperse its own operating budget and expenditures. It receives baseline and supplemental funding for after-school programming, which is allocated from several sources, including seed money and donations from community coalitions, local aid, and state education grants. It must</td>
<td>The researcher did not capture any annotations as it relates to funding sources for after-school programming.</td>
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<td>adhere to several requirements to ensure eligibility for grant funding, such as targeting after-school programming to an at-risk adolescent population. Also, each after-school participant is required to complete an <em>After-School Program Registration Form</em> with a parental signature. Moreover, it must offer after-school programming during the hours immediately following the traditional school day and should operate across the entire school year.</td>
<td>The researcher notes the school district’s ability to explicitly articulate the mission of after-school programming, which should contribute to program success.</td>
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<td>15. What is the mission of the program?</td>
<td>The school district established a mission for after-school programming, which is to expand the opportunity throughout the jurisdiction for adolescents to participate in high-quality educational, recreational, and cultural enrichment programs after the traditional school day by providing a safe and supervised environment to enhance academic achievement, physical activity, social skills, and community connectedness, while reducing the potential for at-risk behaviors.</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the school district does not effectively display the staffing structure for after-school programming. It explicitly articulates the roles and responsibilities associated with the</td>
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<td>16. What is the staffing structure of the program?</td>
<td>The school district delivers after-school programming through a support staff of full-time employees, known as After-School Program Specialists. The specialist position includes twelve (12)</td>
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<td>contract month employees who serve as administrators during the hours after school. The roles and responsibilities associated with this position include planning, developing, coordinating, scheduling, and implementing program activities.</td>
<td>specialist position. However, it does not address any other support staff positions or adolescent-to-adult ratio requirements.</td>
<td>The researcher notes that the vision strategically aligns to the mission of after-school programming.</td>
<td>Program Strategies</td>
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<td>17. What is the vision of the program?</td>
<td>The school district established a vision for after-school programming, which is to provide comprehensive and high-quality after-school activities for middle school students to feel safe, improve academic development and performance, improve emotional, physical, and social development while establishing healthy behaviors, improve school and community connectedness, and reduce engagement in at-risk behaviors and delinquent activities to ensure adolescents have greater opportunities for success in developing the attitudes, abilities, knowledge, and skills to live healthy lives, become productive adults, and thrive in the workplaces and communities of the 21st century.</td>
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### APPENDIX H: SET OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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<tr>
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<td><strong>Resource Training Guide</strong></td>
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  - Engineer an electronic version of the training materials, including interactive smartphone applications and learning tools.  
  - Establish a schedule to support continuous updates and revisions to training materials.  
  - Establish a more robust professional development and training requirement and opportunities that can sustain continuity of operations during fiscally restricted periods to ensure after-school personnel remain credentialed and current on industry trends and best practices on after-school programming, such as certifications, coaching, conferences, consultations, courses, institutes, mentoring, site visits, workshops, and webinars (NYSAN, 2011).  
  - Expand information on the history and background of after-school programming, particularly as it relates to impacts on developmental outcomes among adolescents during middle childhood.  
  - Reduce content within the training materials by developing frequently asked questions and thumbnails.  
  - Reduce utilization of secondary sources as training materials by authoring program-specific materials.  
  - Upload training materials on the online learning management system, to include interactive courses and discussion boards for after-school personnel. |
| **After-School Programming** |  
  - Define a common set of standards of quality and program quality assessment tools as an accountability mechanism to measure program success in after-school programming.  
  - Develop an organizational chart to capture the full staffing structure that supports after-school programming.  
  - Develop a recruitment and retention management strategy to encourage knowledge sharing through succession planning, as well as the recruitment and retention of highly engaged after-school participants and high-performing after-school personnel, including competitive compensation and benefits.  
  - Develop an automated system to monitor attendance and track data among after-school participants.  
  - Establish a definition for the term “engagement.”  
  - Establish facility requirements to ensure facilities are adequately equipped with the infrastructure to support a variety of indoor and outdoor program activities to enhance learning and health and physical wellness through after-school programming (Chung, 2000).  
  - Establish an integrated curricular framework that enables flexibility in the selection of program activities but limits discretionary authority to mitigate divergence from the overarching mission, vision, goals, and objectives for after-school programming.  
  - Establish a screening requirement to conduct psychological assessments to determine the mental health and wellness of employees, volunteers, and/or mentors.  
  - Establish a screening requirement to conduct routine background checks of current employees, volunteers, and/or mentors. Ensure after-school programming fosters academic, behavioral, cognitive, emotional, physical, sexual, and social development.  
  - Establish a 1:15 adolescent-to-adult ratio in accordance with industry standards for the effective delivery of after-school programming (Chung, 2000).  
  - Establish a more robust educational requirement for after-school personnel to ensure employment of a cadre of the best-qualified after-school personnel with theoretical and practical knowledge on after-school programming. |
- Establish a schedule to support the continuous evaluation of after-school programming and personnel.
- Ensure after-school programming is designed to demonstrate inherent differences from traditional school hours but is inextricably linked to its curriculum and personnel to ensure continuity of learning (HFRP, 2005).
- Ensure adolescents are active co-creators and decision-makers in their after-school experience by including after-school participants in the planning process for after-school programming and soliciting feedback on how to best prioritize and address the needs of adolescents through after-school programming (HFRP, 2005).
- Ensure after-school environments foster engagement among peers, personnel, and community partners through intentional relationship building and mentorships.
- Expand the transit system to offer transportation services five (5) days per week in support of the full operating schedule for after-school programming.
REFERENCES


The Professional Learning Association. (2015). *Definition of professional development*. Retrieved from [http://learningforward.org/who-we-are/professional-learning-definition#.VmXgM78erZI](http://learningforward.org/who-we-are/professional-learning-definition#.VmXgM78erZI)


BIOGRAPHY

Janice Sherri Pritchett graduated from Hylton High School in Woodbridge, Virginia in 2006. She received her Bachelor of Science in Health and Physical Education with a concentration in Teacher Preparation from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia in 2010. She has been employed as a Health and Physical Education Instructor with Fairfax County Public Schools for the past five (5) years and also serves as a Driver Education Instructor. She serves as Head Coach of the Varsity Girls’ Basketball Program at Falls Church High School in Falls Church, Virginia, as well as with the Arlington Pride and Falls Church Monarchs within the Northern Virginia region of the Amateur Athletic Union. In addition, she serves as Director of Sports Programs at the Young Men’s Christian Association in Alexandria, Virginia. She is completing the Master of Science in Sport and Recreation Studies with a concentration in Sport Management from George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. She hails from Heilbronn, Germany by way of Woodbridge, Virginia and resides in Springfield, Virginia.