

**CRESST REPORT 769**

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**EXAMINING PRACTICES OF STAFF  
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN  
FOUR HIGH-FUNCTIONING  
AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS**

**MARCH, 2010**



**National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing**

Graduate School of Education & Information Studies  
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**Examining Practices of Staff Recruitment and Retention  
in Four High-Functioning Afterschool Programs**

**Extended Study from the National Afterschool Partnership Report**

CRESST Report 769

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# **EXAMINING PRACTICES OF STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN FOUR HIGH-FUNCTIONING AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study describes how staff qualifications, decisions on staffing procedures, and professional development opportunities support the recruitment and retention of quality staff members. Four high-functioning programs were identified. Qualitative procedures and instruments were designed to capture staff and parents' emic perspectives about relationships and professional development. Study findings revealed that all staff across the four afterschool programs consistently reported an intrinsic reason for working in their program. Interview data implied that program incentives such as a career ladder and an ascending pay scale were not enticing enough to recruit or retain staff. The decisions to stay with a program tend to be altruistic in nature, such as to provide academic, social, or emotional support for the students. Thus, at these four programs, the motivation for the staff to stay with the programs could be the organized environments, clear program structures, open communication, clear program goals, consistent expectations, positive relationships, and program climates that foster staff efficacy in "making a difference" in their students' lives. Thus, promoting strategies in enhancing staff efficacy, such as empowering staff with decision-making and providing professional development opportunities to enhance their professional skills could help programs to recruit and retain quality staff members.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Research has indicated that students' participation in afterschool programs is beneficial to their academic development and social adjustment (Pierce, Hamm, & Vandell, 1999; Posner & Vandell, 1999 American Youth Policy Forum, 2003), while at the same time protects students from becoming victims of crime, cuts teen pregnancy, smoking, and drug use (Fox, Flynn, Newman, & Christeson, 2003).

These positive outcomes such as higher academic achievement and more socially competent behaviors of students attending afterschool programs can be attributed to a number of factors, including homework help, enrichment activities, and enhanced motivation through engagement with the afterschool staff and programming (U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, 2000). It has also been well documented in literature that positive relationship with just one caring adult can serve as a protective buffer towards the healthy development of at-risk students (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990). As an example, the positive relationships with adult mentors through the Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program resulted in increased academic achievement and school attendance, as well as reduction in risky behaviors for the participating youth (Grossman & Tierney, 1998). Moreover, the findings of a National Study conducted by the National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning (NPQAL)<sup>1</sup> states that one of the most important components of afterschool programs in determining student success is the availability of positive role models and adult figures. This study found that the staff working in the high quality programs were especially qualified (e. g., indicating above national average in their years of experience and education levels), were motivated by intrinsic goals, and developed positive relationships with students and their families. The final report for this study, “The Common Practices in High-Functioning Afterschool Programs” (Huang, Cho, Mostafavi, & Nam, 2008) has identified qualified, motivated staff with low turnover rate as an essential component in high quality afterschool program functioning. Thus, afterschool staff members play an important role in influencing students’ social and academic resiliency.

However, little is known about how effective afterschool programs can work to attract and retain high quality staff members, and the role that staff collaboration and professional development can play in sustaining staff motivation and inspirations. In order to address these questions, this current study serves as an extension and follow-up to the Common Practices in High-Functioning Afterschool Programs Study by closely examining these issues at 4 of the 53 identified high-quality afterschool programs in the National Study that has demonstrated student success over the 5-year study.

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<sup>1</sup> The NPQAL consists of the Southwest Educational Laboratory (SEDL), the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST), the Mid-Continent Resources for Education and Learning (McREL), the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), the WGBH Educational Foundation, SERVE Inc., the Institute for Responsive Education (IRE), and the U.S. Department of Education.

## Purpose of the Study

In an effort to identify and incorporate exemplary practices into existing and future afterschool programs, the U.S. Department of Education commissioned a large-scale evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC, Afterschool Alliance, 2007) program. The purpose of this evaluation project was to develop resources and professional development that addresses issues relating to the establishment and sustainability of afterschool programs. Fifty-three high-functioning programs representative across eight regional divisions of the nation, including rural and urban programs, community-based and school district related programs, were identified using rigorous methods. Exemplary practices in program organization, program structure, and especially in content delivery were studied<sup>2</sup>. The common characteristics that were found across the identified afterschool programs were:

- Strong leadership and clearly established goals
- Program structure and content were aligned to meet the programs' goals
- A set schedule that allowed time for students to learn and practice
- Established relationships with the day school
- The curriculum reflected a linkage to standards
- Most used research-based strategies
- Some form of evaluative structures was maintained
- Low turnover rates of staff members
- Staff members related well to the students
- Staff members had built rapport, maintained high expectations, and kept students motivated and engaged

Although the majority of the programs in this study displayed these attributes, the most dominant characteristic that is consistently revealed in all programs was the high motivational level of the sites and the relationships that the staff established with the students and their families. Because the National Partnership has identified the critical role that quality staff contribute to afterschool programs success, and little is known about how effective programs can work to attract and retain high quality staff members, this study intends to fill in the research gap and examine how staff qualifications, decisions made about

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<sup>2</sup> For details see CRESST Report 768, *What works? Common practices in high functioning afterschool programs across the nation in math, reading, science, arts, technology, and homework—A study by the National Partnership. The afterschool program assessment guide* (Huang, Cho, Mostafavi, Nam, Oh, Harven, & Leon 2009).

staffing, relationships among staff, and staff development opportunities interact to create a program climate that is inductive to student learning. This research study was guided by three sets of research questions:

1. What are the qualifications of the staff at high-quality afterschool programs?
  - a. What characteristics make these staff function efficiently and effectively?
  - b. How do the afterschool programs recruit staff?
  - c. How do afterschool programs retain staff?
2. How are relationships characterized in high-quality afterschool programs?
  - a. What is the nature of relationships among the staff members?
  - b. What characteristics help the building of staff relationships?
  - c. What is the nature of relationships between staff and students?
3. What is the role of professional development in high quality afterschool programs?
  - a. What is the perceived need of professional development opportunities?
  - b. How do programs encourage participation in professional development opportunities?
  - c. How is professional development related to instruction and program activities?

Guided by these research questions, the Study Design and Methodology Section discusses the program selection process and the study design, as well as elaborates on evaluation methodology, procedures, and instruments employed by The National Center for Research on Evaluations, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) in the analyses. The Program Overview Section provides an overview of each of the four afterschool programs in the study sample. The next five Sections describe the findings in the analyses of the internal program structure, staff characteristics, staff recruitment, retention, and review, professional development, and relationships within the programs. Lastly, the Discussion and Conclusions Section highlights overall common staffing characteristics and discusses the findings.



## **STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

This section describes the study design and elaborates on methodology, procedures, and instruments developed by CRESST and Southwest Educational Laboratory (SEDL). Strategies on the recruitment and selection of study participants, data collection procedures, and plans for data analysis are discussed.

### **Study Design**

Because the purpose of this study was to investigate and unfold staffing characteristics and professional development opportunities at high functioning afterschool programs that showed evidences for student successes, qualitative procedures were determined to be best suited to reveal staff and parents' emic perspectives about relationships and professional development. Specifically, this study describes how staff qualifications, decisions on staffing procedures, and professional development opportunities support the recruitment and retention of quality staff members.

### **Study Sample**

The sample for this study was selected from the Common Practices in High-Functioning Afterschool Programs study sample of 53 afterschool programs with promising practices in one or more of the six content areas (reading, math, science, arts, technology, and homework help). The 53 programs were initially chosen between 2004 and 2006 based on the Annual Performance Reports (APRs) or Profile and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS)<sup>3</sup>. Recognizing that all 53 programs showed evidence of promising practices, less rigor was used in the selection of the four programs for this more intensive, qualitative study.

The first step in establishing the purposive sample for this study was to establish the following criteria for program selection:

1. Services elementary and or middle school students
2. 21st CCLC grantee
3. Improvement in student achievement in reading and math for the school years 2005–2006 and 2006–2007 (data derived from PPICS or state achievement test data)

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<sup>3</sup> The APRs provided information including program objectives, grade levels served, number of students served, student demographics, student academic achievement data, hours/days per week the specific content curriculum offered, number of staff in the program, and percentage of credentialed staff. In Year 2, the Department of Education contracted Learning Point to convert the APR into electronic versions called PPICS.

4. Afterschool program goals are met for the 2 years prior (2006 and 2007)
5. Geographically diverse (i.e., north, south, east, and west as well as urban and rural areas)
6. Diversity of grantee type (i.e., school district related and community-based organizations [CBO])

Programs initially qualifying for more than one content area in the larger study sample were considered first. This included three programs; however, two did not meet the criteria for this study and were excluded. The third, a program in Texas, met all the criteria. This program was located in an urban area and in the Southwest. Next, NPQAL staff involved in the data collection process in the Common Practices in High-Functioning Afterschool Programs Study was asked for recommendations for the sample based on their observations during their site visits. Twelve programs of the 50 remaining were recommended for continued study. The 12 programs were divided into geographic regions (i.e., north, south, east, and west) and then further designated as urban or rural. Of these 12, 2 programs, in Florida and Indiana, met all of the sample criteria. Florida's program was in the Southeast and rural, while Indiana's program was in the North and also rural. A fourth program was sought that was urban and in the West. A program in California was selected that met all of the criteria.

The four programs in California, Florida, Indiana, and Texas selected for this study sample had gains in student achievement for the school years 2005–2006 and 2006–2007, as based on PPICS data or state standardized test data. SEDL conducted a further analysis of their student achievement data to determine two sites within each program to be visited. In each program, the two afterschool sites showing the greatest improvement in math and or reading were identified. The type of school site was also considered, with an attempt to select one elementary school and one middle school. For programs without a middle school, two elementary schools were selected.

E-mail and phone contacts were made with the program directors of the four selected programs to discuss participation in the study and the sites identified for the sample. Approval from the school district administration was obtained. Several program directors made suggestions for alternate sites based on the area of study—staffing and staff development. As a result, additional analyses were conducted to determine if the recommended sites met all criteria (i.e., student achievement increases and goal attainment). The final sites selected to visit met all established study criteria for sample selection. At two of the four programs (Indiana and Texas), one middle school and one elementary school were selected. In Florida and California, two elementary sites were selected.

## Measures and Instruments

The data collection instruments were developed collaboratively by CRESST and SEDL. Various interview protocols were developed for project directors, site coordinators, site instructors, and parents to specifically address questions that were most relevant to the interviewee. The purpose of the interview was to gather information on the general nature and structure of the afterschool program to better identify the staff characteristics and professional development offerings of an exemplary afterschool program. Overall, all interview protocols covered a number of areas including staff qualifications, staff hiring and retention, staff relationships, and staff development.

## Qualitative Methodologies

Program administrators,<sup>4</sup> site-level program staff,<sup>5</sup> and parents at the eight afterschool program sites ( $N = 70$ ) were asked to participate in interviews, and interviews were conducted in the spring of 2008. At each site, approximately three instructors, three parents, and one site coordinator were interviewed. Additionally, the project director for each afterschool program was interviewed. When available, principals at the day schools and other program administrators of the afterschool program were also interviewed. Interviews with afterschool staff lasted between 60 and 120 minutes; parent interviews lasted approximately 15 minutes. Interview questions inquired about staff experiences and qualifications, as well as their programs' plans and strategies for staff recruitment and retention. Staff members were also requested to share their experiences in professional development and opportunities available to them. The number of participants at each program is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1  
Number of Participants by Afterschool Program

Programs	Number of participants		
	Program administrators	Site-level staff	Parents
Indiana	1	8	5
Florida	2	12	5
Texas	3	8	4
California	2	10	10

<sup>4</sup> Including project directors, executive directors, vice presidents, grant administrators, etc.

<sup>5</sup> Including site coordinators, instructors, principals, day school liaisons, etc.

Interview data were audio-recorded to ensure data accuracy and transcribed verbatim. Once the taped interviews were transcribed, CRESST researchers employed the Atlas.ti qualitative data analysis software (Muhr, 1997) for coding and qualitative data analysis. The codes were developed based on the central themes extracted from interview protocols and focused on components related to staffing and professional development. To determine reliability of coding, multiple researchers were involved in the training procedure where coding done by the team were compared and discussed until 90% consensus had been reached. In addition, based on the initial coding of a project director, instructor, and parent interviews, codes were revised and definitions of codes were elaborated. Final coding of all the interview data was coded by at least two researchers.

After coding was completed, individual codes were extracted and analyzed for themes and subthemes. At the second level of analysis, cases were compiled to identify emergent themes by group (i.e., project directors, site coordinators, instructors, parents, etc.). This involved the use of constant comparison methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) in an iterative process. Finally, at the third level of analysis, cross-case analyses were conducted by program.

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

This section will provide an overview of each of the four afterschool programs and their program sites. These overviews are intended to offer an understanding of their unique traits in the context of the program, whereas the subsequent sections are a discussion of (a) the synthesis of these characteristics and (b) the findings of the commonalities of these four high-performing afterschool programs.

### **California**

#### **Program Overview**

This program started in 1999 with an already established Community-Based Organization (CBO) as its lead facilitator. It currently services approximately 4,800 students at 46 sites (40 elementary schools and 6 middle schools), which are managed by four project directors. As a CBO-affiliated afterschool program, it has valuable partnerships through the CBO with its city government, State and County Departments of Education, and the five school districts that it services.

The program's goals aim to enhance the lives of students, their families, as well as its own staff. The program strives to provide a safe afterschool environment, enrichment, and community activities for its students. Other goals for its students include achieving state and local standards, developing positive character traits, and attaining understandings of a healthy lifestyle. The program's objectives also include parent and volunteer involvement, as well as goals to provide adequate and effective professional development for its program staff and volunteers.

The Vice President of Operations has been with this afterschool program since its inception, and 15 years prior to that she worked in the CBO as a staff member. Her role is to oversee all the programs that the CBO offers, and is heavily involved in managing the afterschool program acting as the executive director for the afterschool program. Her main responsibilities as the executive director include creating and overseeing the budget, hiring and supervising the managerial staff members—especially the project directors—and collaborating with them in program evaluation and improvement. Although she has the “final say” in the decision-making process, she reports valuing the views and opinions of the project directors. Her educational background consists of a Bachelor's degree in child development, and she has several years of experience in working with children.

There are four project directors, each overseeing 11–12 program sites, mainly the site coordinators. The project director who participated in this study oversees 12 program sites

with 64–70 staff members. This project director started as an instructor of an afterschool program and moved up to the project director position over a course of 6 years. As part of his job responsibilities, he supervises the staff members, oversees the budget allotted for his sites, and assesses professional development needs. He also plans the programming for his sites in collaboration with his site coordinators and researches potential programs to implement into the afterschool program sites. Visits to each site are done on a once-a-month basis, and informal program observation and evaluation consisting of conversations with staff members, students, and day school teachers are reported back to the site coordinator.

The afterschool program sites operate Monday through Friday, from roughly 2:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. The daily activity schedule varies on a daily basis, but the program maintains each student spending 50% of their time in enrichment activities and the other 50% in academic activities, which includes an hour in homework assistance. The staff at the sites includes a site coordinator, a lead instructor, instructors, a day school liaison, and volunteers. A few sites are managed by a *dual-site* site coordinator, where there is one site coordinator who equally divides his or her time between two sites. At those sites, staff includes the dual-site coordinator, an assistant site coordinator (who also is an instructor), instructors, a day school liaison, and volunteers. Of the site staff, only the site coordinators are full-time employees and are provided a salary and benefits; other staff are paid hourly and based on position. On average, staff-to-student ratios are 1:20.

The site coordinators are responsible for their site's daily operations and supervise the staff members on-site. They are hired by the project director and also have interviews with the day school principal of the school sites. The only mandatory requirement from the program is that site coordinators must be 18 years old or older; other expectations are set at the project director's discretion. Site coordinators are considered the "principal" of the afterschool, thus the school principal and day school liaison expect them to hold similar responsibilities. In addition, site coordinators work at the program's administrative offices (where the project directors are housed) starting in the morning for a few hours to fulfill their administrative duties, prepare for the program activities, and or meet with their supervisor. Then they go out to their sites about an hour or two before the program starts mostly to continue daily preparations and or have staff meetings. Most of the instructors are college students; the only mandatory requirement for them is to be at least 18 years of age. Day school liaisons must be a day school staff member and have taught a minimum of 3 years; however, it does not necessarily have to be at the actual school site. Day school liaisons usually provide training and support to the instructors.

Project directors and site coordinators interact with each other on a daily basis, and they report having a friendly and open relationship with each other. The project director participating in this study has also implemented a staff recognition program at his sites, which recognizes staff contributions throughout the year.

### **Site Overview**

Both participating sites in this study are elementary schools, located in urban areas, operate 5 days a week, and start immediately after the end of the school day. The majority of the students are Hispanic and from low-income families. The program schedule starts with a snack and then moves to a program-wide health activity that involves a nutritional and or physical activity. One hour is dedicated to completing homework or assistance, and another hour to an enrichment activity.

Both sites have full-time site coordinators, and because both of these selected sites have dual-site coordinators, assistant site coordinators are also staffed at the sites. Assistant site coordinators are also instructors. The site coordinators are both considering re-attending college at the time of the visit and have been recently changed from managing one program site to two. Most of the instructors are in college, and a few are in the process of attaining their teaching credential. The site coordinators are relatively new to their sites, thus they were not able to report the staff turnover rate. All of the staff reported an enjoyment of working with children and expressed that their job is a positive experience; however, they plan to move on from their current position in the near future (i.e., when it is time to go back to school or when they graduate from school).

## **Florida**

### **Program Overview**

This school district-related program began receiving federal funds in 2003 to initiate its afterschool program. Currently, this program has 12 sites. The main goal for the afterschool program targets student success in passing the Florida standardized achievement test. Other goals include helping students to get better grades, provide safety and security, decreasing student discipline problems and referrals, increasing life skills, and providing quality programming that includes academic assistance.

The 21st CCLC district director was one of the co-developers of the initial grant and continues to be involved in writing and obtaining grants for additional funding. She oversees the administration of the program together with a 21st CCLC project manager, two support staff, and an evaluator. The district director identified numerous responsibilities for

managing the afterschool program, including fiscal and programmatic planning and implementation, ensuring integrity and fidelity of the program, maintaining communication across programs and with the district office, and ensuring compliance in grant administration. The district director is also responsible for overseeing the Title 1 program since 1997. The project manager position is full-time, and he oversees the 12 afterschool site coordinators and daily program implementation. He assists programs in meeting their objectives as well as observes and monitors site activities. His schedule includes frequent contact with the afterschool programs via visits to two to three sites daily, and many e-mails and phone calls. Although not required, the project manager is certified in education and additionally has a master's degree in vocational rehabilitation and counseling. Furthermore, he had experience running afterschool programs prior to becoming the project manager.

Generally, program sites operate Monday through Thursday from approximately 2:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. Activities include time for homework help, academics, and non-academic enrichment activities. Each site is staffed by a coordinator, certified teachers, teacher aides, and activity leaders; it may also be assisted by volunteers from local colleges and AmeriCorps. Afterschool staffs are employees of the school district and are paid at flat school district rates, dependent upon their position. Staffs to student ratios, on average, are 1:12 for academics and 1:15 for non-academic activities.

Site coordinators work full-time and are expected to have at least a bachelor's degree; some are certified teachers. The school district places emphasis on their site coordinators having management experience. The day school principal hires each site coordinator, although district staff members often join in on interviews for this position and pre-interview discussions of potential applicants. Site coordinators manage the day-to-day implementation of the afterschool activities, collaborate with their day school principal to establish the curriculum used, ensure necessary data is collected for performance reporting and program evaluation, and report to both the principal and school district on their progress and issues. The certified teachers are responsible for providing student academic activities in the program and work with their day school principals and site coordinators to determine lesson plans. For non-academic activities, the afterschool sites use a variety of instructional staff. They employ activity leaders and teacher assistants, most often college students with at least 60 college credit hours, recruit volunteers from local colleges and universities to help tutor and mentor afterschool students, and sometimes hire contractors.

District afterschool administrators describe a collegial, yet friendly relationship with site staff, and they use a team approach to decision-making. Monthly site coordinator meetings, cell phone and e-mail contacts, and site visits are the main means of



communication between the district and afterschool site staff. Most of the communication is between the site staff and the afterschool project manager. The district staff members go to afterschool site events, have an open door policy, and feel they support the site staff to “make their job easier.” The project manager has established close ties to each of the principals in the 12 sites, where they are mutually on a “first name basis.” The district director has a minimal relationship with afterschool students and parents, yet mentioned being recognized, at times, in the community by both to say hello or briefly chat. The project manager, however, noted a strong relationship with students as he often helps with activities while at a site, talks with parents to get their feedback and “be friendly,” walks the neighborhood around the school to achieve familiarity with the community, and substitutes for the site coordinator when needed.

### **Site Overview**

Both sites visited are Title I elementary programs. The majority of students are African American and from low-income families. Students are provided snacks in addition to time to unwind from the regular day school and begin on homework. About one and one-half hours are dedicated to reading, math, or science each day, with additional time available as needed by individual students (i.e., tutoring and homework assistance). Academics are embedded in many activities, such as dance and sports. Time for non-academic activities usually ends the afterschool day.

Both sites have a site coordinator and an assistant site coordinator and experience very little staff turnover. Promotions are often from within, creating a career ladder for some. Each site coordinator has been with the program for about 4 years. Both had experience working with children and management experience before taking on their current role. One moved up the career ladder from an activity leader position to the site coordinator position. The assistant site coordinators were also activity leaders before being moved into their current positions. Most of the staff in both afterschool sites are certified teachers, whereas others are activity leaders are college students majoring in education or a closely related field. The teachers and activity leaders in these sites have at least 2 years of experience in the afterschool program, and they express a desire to stay “forever” or at least “for as long as there is funding.” This is a sentiment throughout all of the staff interviewed. Additionally, all of the staff talked about their “love of children” and how working in the afterschool program is “exciting” and “greatly helps students.” They attribute their happiness at the job to being able to help students in a more “fun” setting and to “seeing a difference” for students.

## **Indiana**

### **Program Overview**

This Indiana school district is one of the largest in the state and has an enrollment of over 20,000 students across Grades Kindergarten through 12. Currently the 21st CCLC program is funded in 13 schools within this district; All of these schools except one are Title I schools. The 21st CCLC program is maintained through the Office of Family, School and Community Partnership division of the school district. The program places emphasis on providing a safe environment for the children, as well as increasing academic performance. Afterschool students are provided transportation home from the program, including to and from community programs on the days when afterschool activities are held off-site.

The project director for all 21st CCLC programs provides oversight on program compliance with grant requirements and reporting attendance for the 13 sites. In addition, she supervises site coordinators, provides on-site assistance, leads site coordinator meetings, and works with community partners. She also ensures the afterschool programs are aligned thematically with the district curriculum and state standards when developing activities. An informal career ladder is in place in this district. For example, the project director was previously a site coordinator and instructor in the afterschool program; she moved into the current position approximately a year ago. Her background includes experience in drug prevention, so she also provides some instruction related to this issue for the afterschool sites. The district office leads the grant writing effort and budget monitoring.

The afterschool program operates 4 days a week, Monday through Thursday. Although daily schedules vary across sites, in general, activities include providing snack, homework help or tutoring, and enrichment activities. Generally, site staff includes a site coordinator, afterschool instructors, instructor assistants, and some volunteers. Afterschool staff is district employees and the salary scale is based on position and number of years working in the afterschool program. In addition to staff, sites typically work with community agencies to provide enrichment activities (e.g. Boy Scouts, YMCA, etc.). On average, staff-to-student ratios are 1:15 for enrichment activities and 1:5 for academics. In the fall and spring, the afterschool programs focus on a yearly project that prepares students to take the state assessment.

Site coordinators are full-time employees and are expected to have at least a bachelor's degree. They are hired by the principal in partnership with the 21st CCLC project director. The site coordinators guide the implementation of the afterschool program, collaborate with their principals to establish curriculum, ensure data collection for performance reporting and

program evaluation, supervise afterschool staff, and report to both the principal and 21st CCLC project director on site progress and issues. Site coordinators are also responsible for working with their principals in recruiting and hiring afterschool staff.

Afterschool instructors are responsible for providing academic and enrichment activities in the program and work as a team with their site coordinator, assistant instructors, and principal on lesson plans. The majority of instructors in the afterschool program are certified teachers from the regular school day; however, college students are also hired as instructors. Most of the college students have at least 60 credit hours. Those that do not have enough college credit hours are assigned to non-academic activities only. For enrichment activities, the sites utilize their instructors and instructor assistants, as well as volunteers through community agencies. These volunteers may come on-site to the schools or be at the community program where the afterschool students are taken.

The 21st CCLC project director and site staff described their relationship as friendly with frequent communication. Monthly site coordinator meetings, cell phone and e-mail contacts, and site visits are the main means of communication between the district and site afterschool staff. The afterschool program also has two events each year to celebrate the afterschool staff and program, in addition to an annual event for all of the community. Each program is individualized to meet the needs of the students enrolled. For instance, at the middle school, enrichment activities are offered on-site on 2 days and buses take students to community agencies or organizations (e.g., YMCA) for enrichment programs on the other 2 days.

### **Site Overview**

Both sites in this study are in Title I schools, operate 4 days a week, and begin at the end of the regular school day. One site is located at an elementary school and the other at a middle school. The elementary site ends at approximately 4:30 P.M., whereas the middle school site around 5:00 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. Students, on average, are African American or Caucasian. Daily routine starts with snacks and then moves to homework help and or tutoring for about 1 hour. For the last 45 minutes or so, students spend their time in enrichment activities, some embedded with academics and others strictly non-academic.

Both schools have a full-time site coordinator who is responsible for “building management” related to afterschool activities. The middle school site coordinator has been with the program for 3 years; whereas the elementary school site coordinator, for only 1 year. Both had experience working with children and some management experience before taking on their current role. Most of the staff in both afterschool sites are certified teachers. The

elementary school employs several college students, whereas the middle school only hires college students for their summer program. At both sites, teachers have a range of years of experience in the afterschool program. Several are new, whereas others have had 3 to 5 years of experience working in their afterschool site. Turnover occurs mostly with the college students. All of the staffs express a desire to stay “years and years” or at least “as long as I’m a classroom teacher.” Additionally, all of the staffs talk about their desire to help children and how working in the afterschool program is a wonderful opportunity. They attribute staying in the program to being able to help students, to working with a “good group,” and having a flexible schedule. A number of the certified teachers only work in the afterschool program for 2 of the 4 days.

## **Texas**

### **Program Overview**

In 1999, the Harris County Department of Education formed an afterschool cooperative in its county to ensure that all children living in the county would have access to an afterschool program. Several County School Superintendents and the Joint City/County Commission on Children endorsed the afterschool program. The program utilizes funding from multiple sources and acts as an intermediary between the grant and schools, with the schools being responsible for recruiting and hiring staff members, providing compliance information to the afterschool cooperative, implementing the afterschool program and managing the afterschool funds. The program provides training and technical assistance support to their sites.

Academics are a focus across all sites, in addition to a variety of enrichment activities provided by instructors and at least one external provider. The primary goals of the program focus on meeting the needs of each campus and making the program work for families. To achieve these goals, site coordinators are encouraged to work with their principals to identify campus needs (e.g., using campus improvement plans and reviewing academics) and then target those needs in developing the afterschool activities.

The program director has been there since its inception and was a co-developer of the first 21st CCLC grants. She continues to have a formative role in writing grants and establishing community partnerships for the program. Her primary responsibilities include: acting as a liaison with the County Department of Education, participating in school districts and other government activities; initiating partnerships; and identifying links to other programs (e.g., other afterschool programs and associations, U.S. Tennis Association, etc.). The afterschool program has an organizational structure that separates out special projects

(typically community-based initiatives) and standing projects (e.g., afterschool programs) into separate components. Under each component there are project managers specific to a funding or project area (e.g., 21st CCLC project manager and Child Care/Work Force project manager).

The project manager for 21st CCLC programs oversees over 50 afterschool sites across several school districts and supervises three regional coordinators who work directly with the schools receiving 21st CCLC grants. In addition the project manager provides professional development to afterschool staff, develops and maintains relationships with school districts, and monitors compliance with 21st CCLC requirements. The program director and 21st CCLC project manager have limited interactions with the site coordinators and staff because the regional coordinators act as a direct link between the afterschool program and the day schools.

Regional coordinators are assigned to schools and act as liaisons between the program and the sites. They have relationships with the site coordinator, afterschool staff members, school principals and district superintendents. The responsibilities of regional coordinators include: ensuring sites are providing required data to the afterschool program, providing on-site training to site coordinators on data entry systems and requirements, supporting site coordinators when difficulties arise, and ensuring the afterschool program aligns with the requirements.

All the 21st CCLC sites operate with a full-time site coordinator and provide services for 3 hours a day, 5 days a week. Selection of activities and scheduling are decisions that vary across sites. Although the daily schedules vary across sites, the typical progression is snack first, to allow the students to relax, before moving to academic and enrichment activities (e.g., homework help, tutoring, soccer, step class, cooking, and other activities based on student interests and staff talents). In addition to programming provided by afterschool staff, all sites are required to engage the services of at least one vendor (e.g., community agencies, businesses, and or community members providing specific services). In order to facilitate relationships with vendors and help schools identify the best fit, the program conducts a partnership fair at which vendors have booths and all afterschool programs are participants.

The afterschool site coordinator and instructors are embedded within the school by having the principal responsible for hiring. Often the site coordinators have worked in their schools and the afterschool program prior to being hired as the site coordinator. Site coordinators are full-time, have at least a bachelor's degree and 2 years of teaching experience. They work with the principal to recruit and hire afterschool staff and implement the afterschool program. In addition, site coordinators are required to provide data related to

21st CCLC requirements and the external evaluation. Data is typically entered on a daily basis into an online database that the program has created to track and monitor progress.

Although the majority of instructors are certified teachers, college students and high school graduates are also hired as afterschool staff. Because planning and hiring is done at each site, the afterschool instructors vary from college freshmen to certified regular day school teachers. Instructors are responsible for providing academic support to students, and work with their site coordinator to develop lesson plans for enrichment activities. The program also utilizes AmeriCorps volunteers who are primarily trained and responsible for delivering an enrichment program that is developed by the Cooperative, as well as supporting site coordinators (i.e., data entry and identifying potential vendors).

More specifically, the enrichment program is a project-based learning experience in which students go visit a community business or organization as well as learn in the afterschool class about a particular topic (e.g., aerodynamics is the topic and an airline is the community partner). Typically, the program develops curriculum based upon its corporate sponsorship.

### **Site Overview**

Both sites are located in urban areas, and provide services 5 days a week. One site is located at an elementary school, and the second at a middle school. At both sites, the majority of students are African American with various family backgrounds. The elementary school provides 3 hours of activities each day of the week once the regular school day ends. The schedule includes snack, 2 hours of enrichment activities, and approximately 30 minutes of homework help. The middle school operates 1 hour before school and a little over 2 hours after school. The morning hour offers homework help and breakfast each day before school starts. In the afternoon, students are provided snacks prior to starting an hour of tutoring and or academic enrichment activities and an additional hour of open sports.

Both schools have a site coordinator and experienced staff. At the elementary school, the afterschool staffs primarily consist of certified regular day school teachers, AmeriCorps volunteers, and an outside vendor (community partner). The staff at the middle school are primarily college students, enrolled in at least 12 credits per semester, some certified regular day school teachers and assistants, and at least one outside vendor. Both site coordinators had been in their position for at least 2 years and plan to stay through the end of the grant and longer if funding continues. Staff members at both sites enjoy working with the students and seeing the impact they are making.

## PROGRAM BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

This section presents the program background and structure of the four afterschool programs. Specifically, this section provides a description of the general program characteristics, their operations, populations served, and their program goals.

### Summary of the Program Background and Structures

The programs in Florida, Indiana, and Texas were funded through 21st CCLC and the program in California was funded through the After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program. Most of the programs also received funding from multiple sources and were implemented at Title I schools serving students from low-income families. The programs were in operation between 3 and 5 years, with a mean of 4 years (see Table 2).

Table 2  
Program Background

Afterschool programs	Operation length	Staff-to-student ratio	Urban/rural	Program affiliation
California elementary 1	3 years	1:20	Urban	Community-based organization
California elementary 2	4 years	1:20	Urban	Community-based organization
Florida elementary 1	5 years	1:15	Urban/low density	School district
Florida elementary 2	4 years	1:15	Urban/low density	School district
Indiana elementary	5 years	1:15	Urban/low density	School district
Indiana middle school	3 years	1:10	Urban/low density	School district
Texas elementary	4 years	1:20	Urban	School district
Texas middle school	4 years	1:20	Urban	School district

The schedules of these programs generally accommodated the day school schedules. The daily schedules began at the end of the school day, which was earlier for programs that included kindergarteners, and ended by 6:00 P.M. Most of the programs operated daily, with the exception of the Florida program and one of the Indiana elementary sites, which operated Monday through Thursday. The program sites had varied activity schedules for their students, but all programs offered homework assistance. Other activities included character building programs, boy and girl scouts, nutrition, outdoor sports and play, arts and crafts, board games, and academic enrichment.

These programs frequently had sports as part of their daily schedules. An instructor at one of the California program sites stated, “[Everyday] we’ll do ‘Why Be Healthy’ or a sport activity, an organized sports activity with our own groups.” Table 3 presents information about the program operations.

Table 3  
Information about Program Operations

Program	Program days	Afterschool program hours	Afterschool program activities
California elementary 1	Monday–Friday	2:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.	Homework, sports, academic enrichment.
California elementary 2	Monday–Friday	1:54 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.	Homework, sports, academic enrichment.
Florida elementary 1	Monday–Thursday	2:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.	Homework, computer, academic enrichment, Spanish club.
Florida elementary 2	Monday–Thursday	2:10 P.M. to 5:30 P.M.	Homework, academic enrichment, science, sports.
Indiana elementary	Monday–Thursday	2:15 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.	Homework, nutrition, sports, faith-based club, field trips.
Indiana middle school	Monday–Friday	2:40 P.M. to 5:30 P.M.	Homework, nutrition, sports, art.
Texas elementary	Monday–Friday	2:30 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.	Homework, academic enrichments, arts, computer.
Texas middle school	Monday–Friday	3:45 P.M. to 5:45 P.M.	Tutoring, dance, Spanish, computer, open gym.

The student population range in grade levels from kindergarten through eighth grade. Although the achievement and ability levels of the students varied, most students needed academic assistance. Table 4 shows the demographic information of the student population at the four afterschool programs.



Table 4

Demographics of Student Population Served

Program	Number of students	Grade levels	Ethnicities
California elementary 1	80–85	K–6	Mostly Latino/Hispanic
California elementary 2	78	1–5	Mostly Latino/Hispanic
Florida elementary 1	80–100	3–5	Mostly African American
Florida elementary 2	80–150	2–5	Mostly African American
Indiana elementary	129	1–5	Mostly Caucasian & African American; some Hispanic & Asian American
Indiana middle school	40–50	6–8	Mostly Caucasian, African American
Texas elementary	160–180	K–4	Mostly Latino/Hispanic
Texas middle school	150	6–8	Mostly Latino/Hispanic

The student populations represented across most programs were diverse, reflecting the demographics of their State and neighborhood. Ethnic backgrounds included African American, Latino/Hispanic, Caucasian, and other populations such as Asian American. The site size ranged from 4,050 students to 160,180 students.

### **Common Characteristics of the Four Programs**

#### **Program Goals**

All four afterschool programs described strong commitment to goals that focused on academic achievement and improving grades or test scores. The project director for one afterschool program stated,

Part of our goals is to show an increase in passing rates for those that are taking the Indiana Standardized testing, the state testing. To see an improvement in grades, see an improvement in attendance, to see an improvement in the overall well-being, the health of the students that attend.

Similarly, the site coordinators at two elementary schools discussed improving student standing,

When we started, we had a tremendous amount of level ones. And they moved up to a two. Some of them moved from a one to a four. I mean they really did. And some of them moved from a one to a three or whatever. We are required to serve the lowest 35%. I like to keep those who move up to three anyway so that we can help them maintain it.

Furthermore, an instructor commented on the academic goals for students:

I just think getting them a step further would be a somewhat of a help just for their next grade. I mean some of them just struggle so much with reading, I sit down and read with them a lot. Just to know that they're actually getting that extra help because I don't know if they would get it at home. So I think that's definitely a goal.

The programs defined student academic success by student grades, and that students leave the program with a love of learning and a sense of confidence in their ability to learn. One site coordinator described academic success as "A love of school, a love of learning. Majority of students want to come. I want them to get a sense of 'Yes, I enjoy math and it's not hard. I like to read and I enjoy doing it.'" For some instructors, the definition of success was more individualized. For instance, at the same site, an instructor commented,

It's different for every student. I have one kid in fifth grade that still reads on a pre-primer level and for him to sit there and read three letter words to me and finish, using short vowel sounds or just long vowel sounds, to me that's success.

Besides academic goals, all four programs expressed the goal of providing safe spaces for their students. One site coordinator talked about the difficult circumstances of their students and their need of a safe environment:

I had one little kid that went home and daddy left her. Some of them go home and there's domestic violence, and some of them go home and they have gang-related issues going on. So I think my biggest goal is also to let them feel like we're a safe environment for them to be in. And that we're there when they need us if there's something going on.

This goal for the safety and wellbeing of the students was echoed by an instructor at another program:

I think one of the goals is to have someplace for them to feel safe and welcome and loved, respected. So after school they can come here and participate in an activity that they like and also feel like they're accomplishing something. But most of all, just to keep kids active. Off the streets, somewhere safe, somewhere they can achieve something, accomplish something; make them feel good about themselves.

The afterschool program staff also mentioned social and behavioral goals for their students, as one site coordinator said,

So we do a lot of friendship, a lot of how to be a good friend, a lot of how not to be a victim, and not to be a stand-by person who allows victimization. We also talk about how not to be a bully. And respect is big. You know, we talk about how to respect others, how to respect others' properties, how to respect our parents, how to respect our teachers.

Along the same lines, another site coordinator talked about “instilling life skills” in their students, “We would also like to think that we are instilling life skills in these kids’ lives: social skills, manners, anything we can give them.” Yet another project director expressed a number of goals related to student health and wellbeing:

Goal six is just wellness. That’s kind of the health aspect. When we talk about wellness that’s mental, physical, spiritual side of everything. And so we do activities knowing what the kids, the same with families, connecting to one another—creating events are just fun. And to us that’s spiritual, just being fun and having fun with one another.

Additionally, developing students’ leadership and collaboration skills were also mentioned:

The other one would be their overall interactions with others. So we’re looking for leadership skills. We’re looking for teamwork. We’re looking for students to really help each other get to the next level. So when they work in groups, you know, we really do encourage that here. ‘Hey, let’s work in groups.’ That in itself is success for me because a lot of times they say, ‘I want to do it myself,’ which is okay but we want to see you all achieve the goal. So if you can help somebody else get there with you, that’s success for me right now.

### **Measurement of Program Goals**

At these programs, program goals were measured by tracking student progress on homework assignments, test scores, as well as report cards. A site coordinator discussed their monitoring of student progress:

I check report cards. I talk to their teachers....Once a month we go to a behavior monitoring, where all the group, the teams, get together on a team level, and then they discuss the children, what’s going on. I check their FCAT [Florida’s Comprehensive Assessment Test] scores when they come back and we make charts and I go in with [another instructor] and we decide together, who’s progressing and who’s not and who needs extra [help].

Furthermore, site coordinators described using conferences with day school teachers to measure student success. One site coordinator stated, “I conference with their teachers during the school day. So I may walk into a classroom and say, ‘Okay, how is John doing today? You know, has his behavior changed? Is he acting well?’” An instructor also mentioned

tracking student progress and meeting program goals through specific tests that students complete regularly:

They have a Pearson success maker that gives the kids on their individualized level reading, math and science activities. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, from that program, they also print out school-wide homework for the kids to do from those sheets. And it's tailored towards the state testing so that the kids are seeing the same type of questioning. But we're able to pull the data from that weekly.

Program goals were also measured through formal evaluations conducted by the afterschool programs. A site coordinator described the survey process:

We do a survey at the end of the year. We let the kids actually participate in the survey. What they liked about the program, what they didn't like. What would they change? Who was their favorite teacher? Why that teacher was their favorite? And also if I'm not doing what I said I'm going to do, the kids will also let me know verbally without the survey. So I know that if I'm doing my job, the kids let me know. And my staff will also let me know as well. What areas I need to improve in and vice versa. We kind of keep each other all in line.

### **Parent and Volunteer Involvement**

Another common characteristic is that almost all of these programs had regular community volunteers. The Indiana and Texas project directors mentioned the involvement of community members in their afterschool program. The Indiana project director said, "Our volunteers come in through community agencies, either fulfilling community hours or just through agencies that are working or collaborating with us to provide programs for students. So we have a lot of them coming with volunteers from their agencies to do the programs in the schools." The district director of federal programs in Florida also mentioned using a number of volunteers in their afterschool program:

We have trained volunteers from [a local university]....So they're trained and they're from the center for a civic education. We have trained volunteers from the community. We've gathered up a lot of forces.

Similarly, the California afterschool programs also mentioned regular volunteers, as described by the project director:

At one site I have a teacher who does recorders and she loves recorders, the instrument. She's volunteered to teach to our first and third graders the recorder...then we also have high school students who within the local high schools have to do a certain number of hours for their graduation requirements.

Although parents were also involved in the afterschool programs, their involvement tended to be more focused on their own children and was less regular. One site coordinator commented on parent participation:

Our parent participation isn't that great. We have a few parents that do everything. We have a handful of parents. We probably have five or six parents that we can definitely count on to be here if we need it. Other than that parent participation is very low.

The project director for the California afterschool programs also mentioned parent participation:

We just had our soccer finals but a lot of parents get involved in that they come out and work with the students. Those parents that are sports inclined and want to help out the kids. Aside from that, we have the parents who have special interests or special talents and they come and assist or teach a lesson within our special clubs we have for academics.

Furthermore, parents mentioned being involved in the afterschool programs through events like Family Fun Night or Grandparents Day.



## STAFF BACKGROUND

Hall, Yohalem, Tolman, and Wilson (2003) state, “The staff of effective after school programs intentionally create a culture of high expectations that affirms the potential of each participant and communicates clear expectations and standards concerning participation and behavior...high expectations combined with opportunities to meet those expectations leads to increased motivation and engagement.” Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice (2000) find that caring adults can provide students with guidance and assistance in learning, enrichment, and recreational activities, and can also help students realize their full potential. This section examines the characteristics and responsibilities of the staff at the four afterschool programs. This analysis provides a greater understanding of the qualities necessary for an effective and functioning afterschool program.

### Staff Characteristics

As previously mentioned in the Study Design and Methodology Section, program administrators, site-level staff members, and parents participated in the interviews. The California-based program was operated by a CBO, and therefore, included positions not usually seen in traditional 21st CCLC afterschool programs. For example, the program sites in California included the following positions: Vice President of Operations, Program Director, Program Supervisor, Literacy Coach, and Group Leader. Other than these positions, these programs included staff positions similar to the rest of the afterschool programs in this study such as “instructor.”

The number of staff employed at each site ranged from approximately 6–20 staff members. Project directors reported being in their current positions from 1–15 years at the time interviews were conducted; site coordinators reported being in their positions from 1–6 years. Instructors reported occupying their respective positions anywhere from 1–13 years.

Table 5  
Mean Number of Years in Current Position at the Afterschool Program Site, by State.

Program	Project director	Site coordinator	Instructor
California	2	3.6	4.8
Florida	4	2.75	2.6
Indiana	1	2	2.5
Texas	6 months	1.5	3.4

**Program administrators.** Generally, administrative staff had significant professional experience in afterschool programs. Many of the program administrators had worked up to their current position. For example, a project director of the California-based program began his career in the organization as a teaching assistant. He moved into the project director position after 6 years as a staff member in this program. All project directors interviewed had attained at least a bachelor's degree from a 4-year university, but not necessarily within the field of education. For example, a project director reported having a master's degree in public policy and had previous experience as a grant writer for afterschool program funding. Few program administrators had formal day school teaching experience in the classroom aside from being an afterschool program instructor; however, they reported that their past experiences had prepared them to efficiently manage their respective programs.

Specific characteristics that the program administrators reported as important to their position were: responsibility, being a good listener, and the ability to share decision-making with staff members. They also emphasized that all staff members, including themselves, be dedicated to their work in the program. Additional skills that the program administrators reported as essential were having some management background and or experience, and to be able to effectively communicate with program staff.

**Site coordinators.** The experiences of site coordinators at the programs varied. However, almost all have had previous experience working in afterschool programs. Only one site coordinator did not have experience in afterschool programs but had previously worked as a credentialed teacher at a day school. Two of the site coordinators also had prior experience in their respective programs. For example, one of the California-based program site coordinator had been employed with her program for 5 years and worked her way up the career ladder to become a site coordinator. Another site coordinator of the Florida-based program had been a site coordinator at a different school before arriving to the site where she held her position at the time of the interview. During the time of the interview, the site coordinators had occupied their respective positions between a period of 5 months to 6 years.

Education levels of site coordinators varied across programs. Only two of the eight site coordinators interviewed reported having a postsecondary degree. One California-based program site coordinator had a master's degree in education and another of the Florida-based program had a bachelor's degree in health science. Site coordinators felt similarly to the program administrators in terms of the skills needed. They perceived good communication skills as well as management and organizational skills were important.



**Instructors.** At these afterschool programs, instructors had a wide range of educational experience. Some instructors were recent high school graduates, whereas some had graduate degrees and were certified teachers at the day school. The afterschool programs in Florida and Indiana emphasized recruiting certified teachers to be instructors, thus, the majority of instructors at these sites were full-time teachers at the day school and continued teaching the afterschool academic activities.

Skills that instructors reported to be important in their positions were: managing a group of children, engaging children in the activities and or lessons, and most importantly, providing positive interactions with the students. Instructors were divided in their opinions as to whether instructors should play the role of a “friend” to students. For example, one instructor at the Texas afterschool program site felt it was important for the students to feel she was a friend and that they could approach her with their concerns—academic or otherwise. In contrast, an instructor at a program site in California mentioned that it was important to maintain “boundaries” for students and have a clear understanding that the instructor is there to help them learn and not to befriend them.

### **Summary of Job Responsibilities**

Responsibilities of project directors varied according to locations and organizational structures. For example, the California-based program had a unique organizational structure. This program was managed under a linear, rather than a hierarchical structure, which required four project directors to collaborate in designing program policies, procedures, standards, and goals. One of the project directors at this program described visiting each of the 12 sites he oversaw to ensure program accountability. At these visits, he would observe instructors and talk to student participants about their experiences in the program.

Generally, all project directors reported having the responsibility of overseeing multiple program sites including the site coordinators of those sites. In addition, project directors created program goals and objectives and ensured that those objectives were met. All project directors mentioned that one of their main responsibilities was to ensure that all aspects of the afterschool program functioned in compliance with their funding grant requirements. Oftentimes, this meant that the program directors were also responsible for ensuring all the program data were complied to create accountability reports that were required for their grants. Program budgeting responsibilities also varied. Most program directors managed a program budget, with the exception of the director of the Indiana-based program. In this instance, budgeting was managed by the school district. Project directors of the programs in Texas and Florida also described that their duties included creating and maintaining

collaborations between local, state, and federal entities such as community organizations, district administrators, and their states' Department of Education where further program support could be garnered, including funding opportunities for program sustainability.

Site coordinators had the general responsibility of overseeing program operations at their assigned program site. They were often involved in the hiring and recruiting process of instructors, managed the staff members, and oversaw the program curriculum and activities offered. In addition, it was also their responsibility to maintain their own program databases with the information necessary to stay within grant compliance.

Most coordinators collaborated with their school principals for program support, and one of the site coordinators of the Indiana-based program was also responsible for collaborating with community partners for the same reason. She described her responsibilities as "...like running a school, only smaller." In addition to these general responsibilities, this site coordinator also held parent conferences for each student and ensured that parents were informed about program events, activities, and the progress of their child(ren).

Program instructors were mostly responsible for providing program lessons and activities. They prepared lessons, instructed the students, and made sure that they had all the materials necessary for the students to complete their activities. A majority of instructors also described their responsibilities for supervising students at all times and ensuring their safety.

Many instructors had a role in training newly hired staff. Several program sites used a "shadowing" technique to familiarize new staff with the program instruction. In this way, instructors were a significant resource in new staff training and orientation. Many instructors felt it was important to keep parents informed of program activities, events, and the progress of their children, particularly with behavioral concerns. Several instructors also mentioned that they had the responsibility of communicating with the day school staff. However, beyond the classroom instruction, instructors were not generally involved in program administration.

## STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

A strong program organization maintains and recruits competent, well-qualified staff members who effectively implement the program goals (Beckett, Hawken & Jacknowitz, 2001; Davis & Allensworth, 1994; Zhang & Byrd, 2005). Because staff retention is essential for establishing positive relationships with the students, the following section presents findings regarding staff recruitment and retention at the four programs in this study. Five major topics: (a) program hiring process, (b) staff recruitment strategies, (c) desired staff qualifications by managerial staff and parents, (d) staff retention strategies, and (e) staff review process are examined.

### Staff Recruitment

**Hiring process.** Distinct patterns emerged across interview data. Consistently, interviewees described the hiring process as structured, consisting of an application procedure and interviews with staff members. The application process was managed by the administration of the afterschool program, the school district, or County agency. Application forms were completed online on the afterschool program's website or a hard copy was submitted to the administrative offices of the afterschool program. Most staff members (i.e., program directors, site coordinators, and instructors) reported that the process included a background check and verifications of three to four references.

Three of the four programs (one CBO and two district-related) described a hierarchical review system, where the pool of applicants were first reviewed and narrowed by the Human Resources department of the program, then the project director, site coordinator, and day school principal. These programs also reported that interviews were usually conducted by the direct supervisors and depended on the positions. More typically, only site coordinators interviewed instructors, but site coordinators were interviewed by both the day school principals and afterschool project directors. The principals' involvement in the hiring process for the site coordinators were highly valued and often required by the project directors. The principals either had the decision-making power or heavy input due to the position's proximity and responsibility to the students of the school sites. The CBO program director explained,

When I'm hiring for a [Site Coordinator]...I interview all the candidates that have applied based on the vacancy and then from that I take the top two to three and then with my principals, I schedule an interview time....We're in the principal's office and we do another interview there. I'm not just asking questions, the principal is now asking questions...I like to put them in their hands. This person is going to be here on [the principal's] school grounds as well as operating the program. Yes, granted it's my

program but they're going to be working with [the principal] too...so I really get their feedback. They ultimately have this final say. Even though I may like two candidates so much, that's a perfect time for me to go in and say, look, it's still in your hands, you decide who you want. I'm in there and we do the process together, so they have a definite say in that.

However, for the Texas-based program, the program director did not have a role in hiring staff. At this particular program, the site coordinator was hired by the day school principal and the instructors were hired by the site coordinator and principal.

None of the instructors and parents of the programs reported having a role or being involved in the hiring process. However, most felt that their opinions of other staff members were valued and considered useful by the supervisory staff, as described by the following instructor, "I don't think I'm a part of the hiring process. However, I think they value my opinion...I do feel that...my opinion is valued."

**Recruitment strategies.** In all of the afterschool programs participating in this study, many of the instructors were also day school teachers. Because the afterschool program was viewed by a majority of these programs as an extension of day school instruction, program administrations preferred to recruit from the site's day school teachers. Day school teachers provided an advantage in that they had established connections with the students, as one instructor stated "[the administrative staff] knows that as a member of the [day school] staff that there's a relationship already with the children." Afterschool staff valued the continuity of the teacher-student relationship from day school to after school. A project director echoed a similar sentiment:

As far as staffing, we give the teachers and staff in the buildings first choice to work because they are familiar with those kids more and they know the needs of those kids more. So they are always given first opportunity to apply and work in the afterschool program.

One site coordinator reported,

If I'm going to recruit, if I opened up another second grade class, the first thing I'm going to do is look for second grade teachers. If I can't find one, I'm going to try to go right around that grade level....Our school has all good teachers, so any of them I would be happy to have on board.

With regards to recruiting day school teachers to the afterschool programs, there were variations in the strategies utilized among the management staff. Informal recruiting was done personally, either by another colleague who was also an afterschool instructor or by the

principal of the school site. Many instructors ( $N = 9$ ) reported that they were personally referred to the afterschool program by another staff member. One instructor described her experience in this way, explaining,

A friend of mine used to be an afterschool instructor here and she stopped doing it...she just informed me of [the job opening]. So I contacted the site coordinator....She informed me that nothing could happen because the job openings were not posted on [the afterschool program] website, so I had to look for that and then I had to send in a letter of interest. Then I informed [the site coordinator] that I did all that, then I came in for an interview with [the principal] and [the site coordinator] and got the job.

Formal recruiting strategies consisted of an e-mail to the entire school faculty, notifying the day school administration, or posting the open job at the school site. If not enough day school teachers were recruited for the afterschool program, then afterschool management staff continued to seek applicants with an education background or experience. To recruit potential instructors, program directors and site coordinators reported posting job openings at career placement offices at local universities or reviewing the day school teacher substitute list, as stated by a program director,

If the teachers are going through a big transition, we may not get a lot of teacher to work and we may have to go out and look to the universities for education majors or we utilize our substitute teachers list for afterschool as well.

Although all of the instructors previously reported that they had no role in the hiring process, most stated that they were involved in the recruitment of afterschool staff. Ten instructors across the programs had previously referred or felt that they could refer someone they knew for the open job position. While a majority of the eight site coordinators were open to referrals from the instructors, three site coordinators also sought referrals from principals if there was a need in their program. One site coordinator explained that he or she looked for referrals from colleagues, including the day school principal, because they would come “highly recommended by other people whose opinions I trust.” None of the parents described a role or involvement in the recruitment of afterschool staff.

**Desired staff qualifications.** Desired staff qualifications for the programs are compatible with the necessary skills that the staff mentioned in the Program Background and Structure Section. Some of the minimum qualifications consisted of character or personality traits, work experiences, and education levels. To determine the staff qualifications that quality programs looked for, managerial staff (i.e., program directors and site coordinators) were inquired about the characteristics that were sought in hiring program staff.

In hiring site coordinators, the responses from program directors varied across the programs. The director of the California-based program said that a college degree and professional experience in the education field were “pluses” but not necessary, whereas another director of the Texas-based program stated that a minimum of a bachelor’s degree and 2 years of teaching were required by their 21st CCLC grant. Most of the desired qualifications of a site coordinator were emphasized in the personal characteristics of the applicant, such as a desire to work with children and a strong sense of dedication and commitment. As previously mentioned, principals were often involved in the hiring process of program site staff, thus would seek candidates who would be a “personality fit that’s going to work with them.”

As previously mentioned in the Program Background and Structure Section, the educational background of the instructors varied from recent high school graduates to certified teachers at the day school. This reflects the varying minimum educational requirements that management staff wanted from program staff instructors. In regards to professional experience, management staff responded that they did not look for prior work experience as a qualifier that indicated the fit of a potential instructor. In particular, the CBO program director expressed that he related to the applicant with no work experience:

At least personally, I don’t get turned off by a person who has no work experience because I was once in that boat. I walked in from high school and...I’d never had a job before and here I had someone who took a chance on me and they made that choice. Sometimes we choose to make that choice and sometimes we don’t. It all depends.

More than the educational background and prior professional experience of the instructors, management staff and parents desired a prior relationship of the afterschool instructor to the students. Certified teachers, especially those connected to the day school site, were favored (and required in some cases) for the academic instructor positions and were given first preference to the job opening. One site coordinator of the Florida-based program explained the importance of hiring day school teachers,

[The day school teachers] have been here for a long time. So they know the students. They know the environment. They know the community. And they know the kids.

Some parents shared this same preference of day school staff working as afterschool staff:

[The afterschool instructors] work one-on-one with a lot of the kids. Also they are teachers during the day so they know the kids...that’s a bonus because they know what their weaknesses and what their strengths are anyway. They just continue and work in a smaller group after school.

Similarly to the program directors' perspectives, additional emphasis was placed on the personal characteristics of the applicant, including personality traits and personal interests. Some program directors and site coordinators listed personality traits such as humble, friendly, responsible, energetic, and inquisitive to learning. A personal interest that was commonly voiced among the interviewees was an interest in the educational field or working with children. In addition, many of the supervisors wanted instructors who had classroom management skills.

Instructors also emphasized personal characteristics and interests, such as dedication and a passion for working with children. Interview data suggested that instructors believed that programs looked for classroom management skills and student/children relational skills when hiring for program instructors.

### **Staff Retention**

**Reason.** All staff across the four afterschool programs consistently reported an intrinsic reason for working in their program. The program directors claimed that they were “passionate” about their job and enjoyed working with the students. As described by one director:

I just like being able to be in this position and to help children. You know as a teacher I think when you're really passionate about it; you make a difference in whatever way you can. Sometimes it may not be that I'm providing instruction. It may be that I'm just providing a social need or an emotional need for kids.

The desire to “make a difference” in the lives of the students was a shared sentiment among the directors. They felt that their involvement in the afterschool program offered a solution to various student needs, such as academic help, a safe environment, social needs, emotional needs, and general enhancements to the well-roundedness of a child.

Program directors also had gained several years of experience in the afterschool program setting, with some having started in the afterschool environment as an instructor themselves since high school or college. All of the directors reported that they planned to stay in the afterschool setting indefinitely, or as funding allowed, “[I will stay] as long as funding allows. Forever. In the grant world, I don't know if forever exists.”

Interview data of the site coordinators reflected similar perspectives, in that they also wanted to make a positive impact in the students' lives and provide for the varying needs of the students. To three of the site coordinators, working in the afterschool program was appealing to them because they were already a part of the day school as a teacher or district staff employee. In addition, two of these three site coordinators stated that another motive

was that they wanted to earn extra money. Although most site coordinators wanted to stay in their position indefinitely, two interviewees stated that they would stay until they finished their college degree and use their education and work experience to move on to another job.

The reasons for working in afterschool programs varied among staff instructors. Most instructors' reasons echoed the same intrinsic reasons as the program directors and site coordinators. Every instructor who was also a day school teacher wanted to be involved in the program because they viewed the afterschool program services as a continuity of the day school program and wanted to maintain a connection to their day school students. One of these instructors said,

I saw a program that needed help. They were meeting in my [class]room and I could tell that the leaders were struggling and didn't seem to really know what they were doing...I started seeing things that weren't exactly the way I thought they should be, so then I volunteered to start leading the program after that. And there I've been for several years.

Instructors who were not day school teachers expressed extrinsic reasons in addition to the previously stated intrinsic reasons. Some of these instructors were in the process of earning a teaching degree or had the desire to enter the education field and wanted to earn experience in working with students or in a teaching capacity. However, all instructors strongly maintained that their main reason for working in the afterschool setting was to be a positive influence to the students. One instructor who was not a day school teacher said, "It's rewarding knowing that you're helping children. That's what I like about the job."

**Incentives.** Staff retention is usually tied to some form of incentive that the staff members feel are offered to them through the program. Although various incentives were offered by the afterschool programs in this study, interview data implies that these program incentives were not enticing enough to recruit or retain staff. A majority of the interviewees stated that the pay offered was not an incentive, whether the pay was viewed as good or inadequate, "Salary doesn't play a role....If they came to me and said, 'We're having budget cuts. I'm not going to be able to pay you this year.' I'd still do it."

At the CBO program, pay-raises were merit-based and determined by yearly staff reviews. This same program provided a career ladder, but of the six instructors interviewed from this program, only one utilized it and wanted to continue to move up the ladder. In general, formal staff recognition was not in place for any of the programs; however, one program director took an initiative to start an informal staff recognition program:

I'm just very big on staff recognition. Personally, I like to know when I'm doing a good job. You don't have to put it on a certificate; you don't have to put it on the [afterschool



program's] website. If you come to my door and say, "I really appreciate what you're doing here, thank you very much" so I make sure that at every meeting before I close the meeting, I give some type of recognition, whether that's verbally or individually or as a group, I do some type of recognition....What I've created is what I call the "Staff Applause..." I have two [instructor] awards and one [site coordinator] award....Each of them get a certificate along with a gift certificate of some sort...I feel that it's part of my duties as a supervisor to let them know that they are doing well.

The Indiana-based program had a strong emphasis on hiring within their programs and also had a career ladder for afterschool employees. The coordinator at one of the sites taught in the afterschool program before her promotion to site coordinator, and the project director was both an instructor and site coordinator. The other district-related programs did not report to having a formal career ladder, although many of the interviewees stated that they moved up within their program, which would indicate an informal career ladder in their programs.

Other incentives include the convenience of working at afterschool programs. The flexible schedule was appealing to most instructors:

[The afterschool program keeps their instructors] by being flexible. Understanding that we are here working with our kids, but at the same time we may have a responsibility that we may need to leave one day and be out.

This flexibility in the schedule and the operating hours of the afterschool program was especially attractive to instructors who were college students:

I know for me, I probably could go and find another job with the state and make more money. I'm sure of it, but that doesn't interest me. I love being here, and it's perfect for school. You know, a few hours a day....So then that right there—the time frame....It's a part-time job, but it's in the afternoon when I have classes in the morning. So it fits with my schedule.

Day school teachers reported the convenience of staying at their school site and with their students as an incentive to remain as afterschool instructors:

I think that just not having to leave and go to another part-time job, but being able to be at your school and stay there and participate that way.

At one Florida site, staffs were able to follow their students year after year in the afterschool program, which the instructors felt was an additional incentive. Notably, a couple of staff members implied that the good working relationships with their immediate supervisors and support received from them encourage staff to stay in the programs. As one instructor explains,

[The site coordinator] has such a love for the staff and the children, and she hires people that have those kinds of personality traits....She has a lot of care and concern for the teachers and the students....And she asks us, “What can I do for you today? Do you have unmet needs?” And that interest is enough to make people want to stay.

## **Staff Reviews**

There are typically two types of staff evaluations that apply to afterschool programming: formal and informal. Interview responses indicated that all of the programs had some form of formal staff evaluations undertaken by the administrative organization of the afterschool program, school district, or day school principal. However, only the California-based program had structured review processes for staff members at all levels of their afterschool program. The Texas-based program reported that formal evaluations of the site coordinators were conducted by the afterschool program and a program site in Florida had a review process in place for the site instructors.

**Formal.** For those programs with a formal evaluation process, the nature of the staff reviews varied, but generally involved observations, employing an evaluation tool, and or face-to-face discussions with the staff member’s immediate supervisor. Two of these programs (Indiana and Florida) stated that although their afterschool program did not have a review process in place, the instructors were formally reviewed by the school district or the day school principal. However, the primary focus of these reviews was the performance during the regular school day. The program director from one of these programs explained that certified teachers who were teaching in afterschool would have a formal review by the state because it was required in order to keep their teaching license. Thus, there was no afterschool evaluation process in place for the day school teachers who were also afterschool instructors. In addition, the formal review of instructors conducted by the school site principal kept the principal accountable for the afterschool school staff because he or she was also responsible for hiring afterschool instructors. The director of the Florida-based afterschool program described the principals’ responsibility to the program staff in this way:

[The principals] evaluate the staff. I do not evaluate because I’m not there....If the principals hired [the afterschool program site staff], the principals are in charge. They’re happy. If I hired that person and put them out there, anything that happens would be, “you hired them.”

The other two programs (California and Texas) indicated that their staff reviews were conducted by the afterschool program. Both review processes included classroom observations, an evaluation tool or checklist, and follow-ups to the completed review. Notably, the California-based program had a highly structured review, which utilized an

evaluation tool that was developed by an external program evaluator. This tool was used for all staff members regardless of position or level and for determining the staff member's goals for the following year. The goals were revisited 6 months later during a formal meeting between the staff member and their immediate supervisor, indicating that the staff member was accountable for meeting his or her goals:

Every staff is sat down at one point and we say okay, this is where I feel you're at right now, there are your areas of growth and the next time we review this, this is where I would like to see you. They also have to write out their goals as well and they're held accountable for those goals as well so that the next time we sit down, "what did you accomplish from your goal" type of thing.

The director of this program also made efforts to visit each of the sites he supervised for a "mini-audit," which entailed observations and analysis of site staff, requesting feedback from students and day school teachers, and sharing the information during a one-on-one meeting with the site coordinator. A site coordinator of this program also stated that he conducted and documented observations of his staff members "all the time." Interviewees of this program also stated that their reviews were used to determine professional development needs.

At the Texas-based program, day school principals were responsible for conducting annual reviews for site coordinators and afterschool instructors. In addition, there was a clearly outlined annual review process that took place for their regional coordinators.

Although most of the programs in this study did not have a rigorous staff review process, interviewees most frequently cited the use of informal reviews as a method of evaluating and improving staff.

**Informal.** Interview data consistently indicated that all of the afterschool programs appeared to be conducting frequent informal evaluations, which could be attributed to the nature of the review. Site coordinators provided feedback to the instructors verbally, usually through casual or impromptu conversations such as catching a staff member as he or she was walking by. Most site coordinators and instructors cited that these occurrences of verbal feedback happened on a daily basis. Unplanned classroom observations were also conducted by site coordinators. Principals who were involved in the afterschool program also observed staff members as well.

The high frequency of informal feedback may be an indication of a trusting relationship between the site coordinator and their staff, as one site coordinator stated,

There's no actual sit down, give them a "hey you're doing this, this, and this." I don't micromanage too much. I give them their leeway especially since they're certified teachers. To say, "Hey, this is what's going on, okay? I trust your judgment. I know you're doing the best you can." But if there is a problem I do sit with them one-on-one....So they know that I'll give them my honest feedback...

Another site coordinator responded that he or she preferred not to conduct formal reviews of instructors because they didn't want to "make them nervous" and thought it would "make some people uncomfortable." In contrast, an instructor of a program that held formal reviews considered instructor reviews as "very beneficial" and "very crucial" because it provided feedback to the management staff and the instructor.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

This section will focus on the professional development and training offered by the four afterschool programs. Specifically, this section will discuss orientation and other preparation provided to new employees, how programs determine their professional development needs, the professional development offered to staff through the afterschool programs and other sources, and informal training opportunities.

### Orientation and Job Preparation

All four afterschool programs provided some form of training for new employees. According to the program administrators, this included program-level orientation for site coordinators and instructors. In contrast, site coordinators and instructors mainly reported on site-level orientation, as well as the job specific preparation that each group received.

**Program-level orientation.** The human resources departments for the afterschool programs in Indiana, Florida, and California provided employees with an orientation when they were hired by the district or the organization. This included afterschool staff such as site coordinators, instructors, and activity leaders. Instructors who already worked for the district as credentialed teachers participated in their orientation upon their original hiring. The staff from the Texas-based program indicated that an orientation was included during the beginning of the school year when a training day for all afterschool program employees was conducted. Also, AmeriCorps volunteers and regional coordinators from the same program received a more formalized orientation.

Program-level orientation primarily focused on human resources issues. Program administrators at most of the program sites indicated that new employees were given information about salary and benefits. Furthermore, most mentioned training to comply with federal and or state requirements such as blood-borne pathogens, CPR, and sexual harassment.<sup>6</sup> Other topics mentioned by staff members included child abuse prevention, a preview of training opportunities for the year, and an introduction to the organization (e.g., history, philosophy, and or mission). Staff from most of the afterschool programs also mentioned receiving orientation materials in the form of a packet or manual. For instance, the project director for the California-based program mentioned that new employees receive job specific manuals:

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<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.osha.gov> and <http://www.eeoc.gov> for more information on federal recommendations and requirements concerning training on these issues.

Their staff manual serves as their bible and so it has everything that the program does, everything that they should be doing. It has their standards in it and their job description, so at any time they can go back and remind themselves this is what I should be doing. As far as our supervisors, they have the same thing. Once they're hired, we have a Program Supervisor manual so we go through that....It has eight categories and it talks about financial, staff development, enrollment responsibilities and stuff like that.

**Site-level orientation.** Site coordinators were responsible for providing the site-level orientation for new employees. This primarily took place as a formal orientation at the end of the hiring process, although more than half of the site coordinators also considered their staff meeting held at the beginning of the school year, as an informal type of new employee orientation. Most of the sites targeted orientation for all employees, except the site coordinator at one of the Florida-based programs who expressed the opinion that this form of professional development was not necessary for credentialed teachers who join the afterschool program, "The certified teachers are teachers and so they're very well ready and able to just pick up and do. They don't need anything from me."

Site-level orientation differed in focus from that offered at the program-level. Rather than emphasizing human resource issues, all of the site coordinators placed an emphasis on site information and procedures. For instance, many of the site coordinators were noted to discuss general program information such as program times and schedules, expectations for students, and emergency procedures. Interestingly, staff at only two of the sites—one in California and the other in Texas—reported being introduced to the day school and other afterschool staff during their orientation. Furthermore, staff at only two of the sites noted receiving orientation on programming that extended beyond an introduction to the site schedule. Additional methods employed by many site coordinators for staff preparation included using materials—such as handouts, packets, and booklets—to guide orientation. For instance, a site coordinator from the California-based program mentioned having a checklist of issues to guide orientation:

This is one of my checklists, for example, when somebody starts training. "Do you know where the first aid kit is? Do you know what to do about fire drill, lock down drill, earthquake drill?" You know, important phone numbers, poison control, things like that.

One of the site coordinators at the Indiana-based program also mentioned that the notebook they provided includes materials such as a class list and calendar, "I provide a notebook for each class this year. And in that book there are things that they are going to do with that class. It could be, their calendar, like I said their class list."

**Job specific preparation for site coordinators.** Program administrators for three of the afterschool programs provided additional job-specific preparation for site coordinators. The timing of this training mirrored the timing of the program-level orientation for afterschool staff. More specifically, the Indiana and California programs provided this training upon hiring, whereas the Texas program provided orientation during a meeting for all site coordinators held at the beginning of the school year. Two of the programs also provided site-level training for new site coordinators. At the Indiana program, the project director had site coordinators overlap each other, giving them the opportunity to learn the site-specific policies and procedures. When this was not possible, the project director shadowed the new site coordinator on-site. Similarly, the project director for the California-based program shadowed new site coordinators on-site if needed.

**Job specific preparation for instructors.** Instructors at most of the afterschool sites were reported to receive job specific preparation in addition to their orientation. For example, staff members from three of the sites (in California and Florida) were given opportunities to shadow or be shadowed by their site coordinator. Shadowing seemed to be implemented at the site coordinator's discretion. Unlike the job preparation for site coordinators, the timing of this training did not always mirror the timing of the orientation. More specifically, this process ranged from days to weeks depending upon the site and the employee. One of the site coordinators at the California-based program noted that shadowing will be done until the employee seemed confident:

So for example, I might take the class that they're going to take over, and I have them following me around...if I feel that they're ready, they usually [take over the class] the third or fourth day. If I feel that they're ready and they have the confidence to go out and take the orientation by themselves then I'll let them go, but I'll wait until they're actually ready to go. It might even take up to a week where they're just following me around wherever it is I'm going and taking the children. They're just shadowing me around.

At many of the sites job specific preparation was also provided by the credentialed teachers who worked with the afterschool program. This ranged from mentoring new staff by answering questions and telling them about site rules to providing training for how to work with students. At the Florida-based program, one of the credentialed teachers prepared new staff by teaching them about lesson planning:

One thing that we tried to do is make sure that the teachers have a format for the afterschool lesson plans. We are able to recycle some lesson plans, kind of tweak them, make them a little better. Fit the group that you are teaching that year. But most of the time we want to make sure that they have the lesson plans and they know this is the benchmark we're trying to go over at this point.

## **Identifying Additional Professional Development Needs**

The four afterschool programs made a strong effort to determine the additional professional development needs of their staff. At the program-level, program administrators often made data-based decisions about what professional development and training to offer. Tools used for this process included the results of evaluations, surveys, observations, quality assessments, and needs assessments. The project director for the California-based program talked about using staff reviews as another source for determining needs:

Yes based on our reviews....We throw out professional growth opportunities all the time, consistently, because we have consistent trainings, not only internally but externally, through [the County Office of Education], different things. Some of the school districts that we work with provide trainings.

This project director also mentioned using the services of an outside contractor who uses standardized test results to help determine curriculum needs, topics, and a training schedule.

Furthermore, program administrators for three of the afterschool programs mentioned talking with staff members including district employees, coworkers, and site staff to determine professional development needs. A project director for the Texas-based program stated that she also received feedback from the regional staff, “I got an e-mail the other day that says, ‘We’ve got to get Excel training for some of these site coordinators.’”

In turn, site coordinators focused on determining the professional development needs of individual site staff; they reported using one or more methods for determining development needs. Five site coordinators reported using conversations with staff members to determine needs. In some cases these conversations were initiated by the site coordinator, whereas at other times staff approached their site coordinator with their requests. Five of the site coordinators also reported using data-based methods such as observing their staff, surveying staff, or using the results of staff reviews. In addition, it should be noted that three of the site coordinators made use of both staff conversations and data when determining professional development for individuals.

## **Professional Development Offered to Staff**

Three levels of professional development were offered to staff at the afterschool programs studied. These included trainings offered by the afterschool programs, school districts, and other external sources. Opportunities sometimes differed based on job position or whether staff members were certified.



**Professional development offered through the afterschool programs.** Formal professional development and training was primarily offered at the program-level. At most of the programs, training seemed to focus on the needs of site coordinators and non-certified instructors. This may have resulted from the opinion that certified staff already received the necessary training as part of their certification requirements, “If you have a building that has a lot of teachers then pretty much what’s in place for the school [district] with their standards and through their curriculum facilitator and their assessments is carried over into the afterschool program. If it’s a site where there are a lot of college students that are working, we may need to do professional development in classroom management, you know how to get the classroom under control.”

The timing of professional development sessions and trainings varied among the afterschool programs. The program administrators for two of the programs noted having a training day for staff each year. At one of the programs this took place at the beginning of the school year whereas at the other program, this took place in January. In contrast, the project director for Indiana mentioned having an ongoing list of professional development opportunities that employees can sign up for. Finally, the program administrators from California stated that they have monthly trainings for all afterschool employees.

The four afterschool programs also differed in terms of who provided their in-house professional development and training. At most of the programs, site staff such as credentialed teachers or site coordinators conducted trainings. For instance, the project director from Indiana stated that they have coach teams, made up of certified teachers who were part of the afterschool program, “And then whatever other professional development opportunities working under the [district], we do have teachers that are part of our coach teams, you know, that have done professional development sessions with the site coordinators.” In contrast, the California program also made use of program-level staff such as the teacher liaison, program administrator, program supervisor, and literacy coaches. Furthermore, staff from both the Texas and California programs reported that they sometimes hired outside contractors to provide their trainings.

The afterschool programs all provided a combination of mandatory and voluntary professional development. At the district-based programs this determination appeared to be tied to the position held. For instance, the Texas-based program held an annual 2-day conference for site coordinators to provide information on their program, compliance issues, and best practices. In addition, one of the program administrators from Texas indicated that the training meetings for the site coordinators were mandatory, whereas those offered for the high school workers were not. In contrast, both site coordinators and instructors from the

California program indicated that all of the monthly professional development meetings offered at the program-level were mandatory. Although, as one of the site coordinators in California pointed out, sometimes specific trainings were only mandatory for certain staff members, “They’re also mandatory. It depends because sometimes for example they have trainings for Grades one through third. They just have the group leaders who are involved with those grades that go, but it depends on what the training is about.”

The professional development offered by the afterschool programs focused on four main themes. First, staff from all of the program sites received (a) technology training. In most cases this training was offered to the site coordinators and involved the learning of software for reporting or management purposes. Instructors at a few sites reported also receiving technology training. At one of the Indiana-based sites this involved learning how to create activity worksheets, whereas at one of the Florida-based sites staff learned how to use enrichment software, make digital recordings, and use digital players. Other common themes offered to staff at most of the afterschool sites were (b) training on-site management, (c) classroom management, and (d) academics and enrichment. More specifically, site coordinators were reported to participate in trainings on topics such as data collection, funding, customer service, staff motivation, and community and parent involvement. Instructors were reported to learn about how to teach reading, math skills, games and enrichment. Furthermore, instructors were taught about behavior management, lesson planning, age appropriateness, how to work with special needs children, and how to keep students engaged.

Staff rarely talked about the style of training used for the professional development. When mentioned, instructors and site coordinators indicated that the trainings were normally lectures tied with a discussion or a hands-on component. The site coordinator at one of the California-based sites stated, “It’s lecture, but then it’s also somewhat “hands-on” because they have an activity for you to participate in. They talk to you about it and then they want you to try it out.”

**Professional development offered by the school districts.** Professional development and training offered by the school districts was primarily made available to the certified staff. Based on reports by instructors, these opportunities were made available because of district and or state requirements involving their certification rather than their position with one of the afterschool programs. One of the instructors from Texas explained about the district requirements, “There is a certain number—I think it’s 36—that we have to have....We have to go to the district at the beginning of the year and then a certain number in the middle of the year.” Content areas mentioned by instructors included math, language arts, and behavior

management. For the most part the school districts did not offer afterschool-specific professional development, although one instructor from Indiana did note some applicability, “Well, I guess [the district-based training] might loosely pertain. It might be a school strategy that we’re doing and I know those carry over into afterschool.”

Although less common, site coordinators from the programs in Florida and Texas were noted to have some opportunities to attend district trainings. One of the program administrators for Texas stated, “If a school district has an in-service day we’ll talk to the principal, ‘Can you send your site coordinators to this instead of making them go to how we teach American history or whatever?’”

**Professional development offered by other external sources.** Opportunities to participate in professional development with other external sources were primarily made available to the site coordinators and their supervisors at the program-level. The timing of these opportunities ranged from periodic to monthly or yearly. For instance, site coordinators with the Texas afterschool program were able to attend specific conferences once per year and training meetings with a local science education center once per month. Yet other opportunities from the state of Texas were reported to be available throughout the year.

Site coordinators and program administrators reported participating in professional development opportunities from a variety of sources. Most commonly reported was attendance at trainings and state conferences or national conferences offered by the 21st CCLC. Other sources mentioned by staff were professional development opportunities with SEDL, the Afterschool Alliance, their local County Office of Education, and other local organizations in the fields of education or afterschool programming. Interestingly, staff from the district-based programs made more reports of using outside sources for professional development than did the California-based program. More specifically, the site coordinators and program administrators from California only mentioned receiving outside professional development from their County Office of Education. In most cases all of these opportunities were voluntary. The exceptions mentioned were mandatory spring and fall trainings at the state-level for site coordinators from the Indiana afterschool program, and monthly science education trainings for the site coordinators from Texas.

Few details were provided by the site coordinators and program administrators about the external trainings they attended. Despite this, the themes mentioned most frequently mirrored many of those offered by the afterschool programs: site administration, technology use, and academics and enrichment. For example, staff participated in training on

fundraising, grant writing, staffing, best practices, computer systems, writing, and activities for students.

Instructors from five of the eight afterschool program sites were reported to have attended professional development from external sources. In most cases these opportunities were made available to staff based on need. For instance, one of the site coordinators from Texas sent the photo teacher to Literacy Through Photography<sup>7</sup> training. This site coordinator also sent one of the sports instructors for external training to be certified for soccer, “I talked to [one of the instructors]. She had worked with the soccer team the year before. She and the soccer coach asked me if we could send her to training to become a certified soccer coach over the summer. That’s what we did.” Similarly, one of the instructors from Indiana was sent to a Mental Health America training to enhance her work as a social worker with both the day school and the afterschool.

Only the Florida-based program sites provided opportunities for all of their instructors to participate in external professional development. This included having all activity leaders participate in a county-wide teacher’s work day as well as a conference at a local middle school. Despite this, one of the site coordinators from Florida pointed out that with limited funding it is important to send staff who will share what they learn with other afterschool staff:

Funding is always an issue, but we do make do. One of the things we’ve learned is if we can’t take everybody. We’re going to take the teachers who—or the activity leaders or coordinators who will come back and bring back the information. So we actually have a workshop within a workshop. They’ll get the information, even if they’re presenting, we come back and we share that information with everybody else.

### **Informal Opportunities to Strengthen Staff Knowledge and Experience**

Staff meetings were the primary method used to enhance afterschool staff knowledge and experience. Program administrators for all four afterschool programs reported having site coordinator meetings one or more times per month, with meetings being held most frequently by the California-based program and least frequently by the programs in Texas and Florida. Based on the interviews, these meetings appeared to be mandatory. The project director from Indiana also noted that these meetings helped to fulfill grant requirements:

Principals are aware [the site coordinators]...meetings are required; the meetings are part of our professional development and our strategies as part of the grant. So they pretty

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<sup>7</sup> For more information, see <http://literacythroughphotography.fotofest.org/>

much make sure that they're here, unless it's usually an emergency or—that they're not here.

Site coordinator meetings served multiple purposes concerning professional development. First, they gave the program administrators opportunities to talk with the site coordinators about administrative issues such as, but not limited to, deadlines, paperwork, and memos. Second, program administrators provided training such as how to use the Excel software program or the Internet. Finally, program administrators and site coordinators reported that meetings provided opportunities to share information about what was and was not working at their sites, and events they were planning. One of the site coordinators from Indiana added to this, saying that their program administrator had site coordinators attend conferences and then share what they learned at the meetings:

We usually try to have at least one representative from each level, like a middle school site coordinator goes, elementary. We try to have, I think, two of each. So four of us are there. If one is not able to go [the program administrator] will go in their place. So somebody is always there to represent. During our site coordinator meetings we normally discuss what went on at the professional development. Normally, I think last time we had two representatives that actually led a session. So they redid their sessions. So we were able to see what they did at the presentation and things like that.

Site coordinators for seven of the afterschool sites were reported to hold site-level staff meetings as a form of informal professional development. In contrast to those for the site coordinators, these meetings varied greatly in frequency from monthly to as needed. Furthermore, site staff often gave conflicting reports concerning the frequency of the meetings, with site coordinators reporting greater frequency than their staff. The sites that appeared to have the most consistent meetings, based on the reports of both the site coordinators and instructors, were both located in California.

The focus of the site-level staff meetings mirrored those emphasized during formal professional development. That is, staff tended to report talking about issues of site management, classroom management, and programming. Examples included talking about schedule changes, procedures, activity ideas, and event planning. Other topics mentioned by staff included talking about concerns, what was and was not working at the site, and about the students with whom they worked. An assistant site coordinator from Florida talked about their site-level meetings, “[The site coordinator] likes to have one like at least once a month to see if there's anything that the teachers need, anything that the activity leaders noticed about the kids, something that we might need to change, that sort of thing.”

The afterschool programs visited in this study also reported other, less frequent forms of informal professional development. In general, this took the form of informal communication and collaboration among site staff. Most of the site coordinators were reported to use e-mail to communicate information with staff in lieu of or to keep staff members who missed a meeting up-to-date. Instructors at some of the sites also reported talking with or receiving informal mentoring from more experienced or certified instructors (See the Relationships Within the Afterschool Program Section for more information about staff communication).

## RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

The relationships among the afterschool staff, day school instructors, and parents are mostly characterized by and maintained through informal communication and collaboration. This section describes: (a) the nature of the relationships between afterschool and day school staff, their students and parents; (b) the collaboration amongst the afterschool staff and their coordination with the day school staff in promoting team building strategies; and (c) the promotion of conflict resolution for successful program implementation.

### The Nature of Relationships

#### Staff Relationships

**Managerial and site-level staff relationships.** In general, there was a hierarchal structure in place where the project directors oversaw the afterschool program as a whole, the site coordinators managed the afterschool program at a school site, and the principals were in charge of the day school housing the afterschool program. More importantly, the day and afterschool managerial staff members (i.e., program administrators and site coordinators) expressed that their relationship was positive and “family-like.” The following section discusses the dynamics between: (a) the managerial staff and their staff; and (b) the day and afterschool managerial staff.

*Project directors and afterschool staff.* Although the project directors were not on-site, they often made frequent visits to the programs. Site visits helped the project directors to experience and observe the activities at the school sites, and facilitated frequent communication with the site coordinators. In general, the project directors conducted regular meetings with the managerial staff of the program sites and communicated with them on a daily to weekly basis. A project director described, “Well, actually I go [to the site] daily. Either I or Sam will go there daily. And if something comes up and we need to communicate we do a lot through e-mail...”

E-mail and phone calls were often the main mediums of communication between the program administrative staff and site-level staff, especially in addressing immediate issues and in keeping the channels of communication open. While maintaining their status as the “authority figure,” many of the project directors claimed that their relationships with the staff they oversaw were more like a “friendship.” When talking about his or her relationship with the site-level staff members, a project director elaborated:

I consider it a friendship. And when I started in this position that was one of my fears was that I didn’t want to come in and they see me as a threat, or you know somebody

who is just going to come in and tell you how to do everything. That's not the way I wanted to be and that's not the way it should be...

Most of the project directors felt that they had a professional, yet close-knit relationship with their staff (i.e., site coordinators and instructors), and also felt that they were respected. It was a relationship in which staff members would be able to openly communicate their ideas and concerns to their project director, and work together as a team.

*Project directors, site coordinators and principals.* Project directors and site coordinators also established open communication with the day school principals and or vice principals. These relationships were described as “comfortable” and “friendly.” When student or program issues needed to be addressed, the managerial staff would collaborate with the principals and or vice principals to resolve them. When talking about his relationship with the day school principal, a project director explained:

I could pick up the phone [and talk to] any one of them today. We used to have eighteen, but we have twelve sites. We're on the first name basis, where we're very collegial. It could be just a, “How do you think we could do this better?” Or they'll call and ask, “Can we do this? Do you think I should do this?” So I think it's a two-way street. It's not my way or the highway.

The hierarchical relationships between the program directors, site coordinators, and principals appeared to function efficiently with open communication reinforced by a “family-like” atmosphere. The project directors appeared to have a more informal yet professional relationship with the afterschool staff, whereas the project directors and site coordinators had a slightly more formal relationship with the principals and vice principals. However, although there appeared to be a great deal of communication between the program directors, site coordinators, and principals, there seemed to be less communication between day and afterschool instructors.

**Afterschool staff and day school teacher relationships.** The interactions between afterschool and day school teachers were more informal and with few occurrences. The communication that did occur often focused on student academic progress or behavioral issues. For example, when an instructor was inquired about interacting with day school teachers, the instructor responded, “Yes, I do...informally every once in a while.” However, because many afterschool instructors were also day school teachers and had prior relationships among themselves, they informally talked both during the afterschool hours and during the school day.



*Discussing student progress.* When contact occurred between day and afterschool staff, it was most often to discuss student progress and or issues with specific students. Once an instructor identified an academic or behavioral issue that a student was having, he or she would approach the day school teacher:

As months go by, you do talk to the teacher and say how's so and so doing in math because I helped them with it on Tuesday and he seemed like he got it or it seemed like he didn't get it. And I think the more you work with [the students] after school, the more you can communicate with the teacher. It's almost like going backwards. You start off with the kid, then you talk to the teacher.

In general, afterschool staff seemed hesitant in contacting day school teachers unless necessary. They were more likely to connect with day school teachers when students were having a problem, such as difficulty with homework.

*Mentoring.* Some of the day school teachers also interacted with afterschool instructors by providing them with guidance. For example, one afterschool instructor sought help from a day school teacher:

[For example] math and I was like, I'm not sure about this. And so it's great having [the day school teacher] in there before [the afterschool program begins in order to discuss the curriculum] because I do not want to tell [the students] anything and teach them something that's wrong. So it hasn't happened too often. Couple of times I think this whole year I was like, [to the day school teacher], "can you please explain this to me."

Overall, the contact that afterschool staff had with the day school staff seemed minimal unless a discussion was needed about particular students who were having problems and or if mentorship was given by a day school teacher to an afterschool instructor.

## **Staff–Student Relationships**

**Afterschool managerial staff and student relationships.** Depending upon their roles in the program, the relationships among the afterschool staff and their students varied. The staff–student relationships will be examined in the following categories: (a) among the managerial staff, students and parents, and (b) among the site staff members, students and parents.

*Project director, students, and parents.* Because the project directors were often not on site at the schools, their relationships with the students and parents were different than the on-site staff members' relationships with the students and parents. Their administrative role

usually housed them at an off-site location. One project director expressed his relationship with the students at the afterschool program:

When I go out to evening functions, I do sit with the parents, talk with the children. But as far as knowing the children on a first name basis—I'm thinking, do I actually know these children? I know their scores...data. I know their numbers. I know how each school is doing...I think they still feel my presence [on site], but I'm not [on site] as much as I used to be.

*Site coordinators, students and parents.* Unlike the project directors, the site coordinators had a more intimate relationship with the students and the parents. Site coordinators aimed to create an inviting and welcoming program environment so that the students would feel comfortable at the afterschool program. A site coordinator stated,

I know every single student. I know them by name and I know all about them....We give lots of hugs and lots of praise. And I get little notes from them, little pictures from them. They're what make the difference. They're why we're there.

Site coordinators ensured that students were given positive attention and guidance in the classrooms. As one site coordinator reported, "I know every single child. You can call out a name and I can say, 'That's not one of mine.'" Regardless of their intimacy levels with the students, the main goal of both the project directors and the site coordinators was to run an efficient program where students and their parents would positively benefit from attending the program.

**Afterschool instructor and student relationships.** Consistently, the instructors reported having positive relationships with the students, especially those who were currently day school teachers. Some of the instructors who only worked during the afterschool program reported having an informal and casual relationship, describing it as "having more fun with the students" and "acting more like their friend"; whereas afterschool instructors who were also day school teachers reported having a more formal relationship with their students. All instructors felt that their students were comfortable with them and they had good rapport with them. For instance, one afterschool instructor said, "It's fun...they teach me stuff every day. I've never had a day where if I was sad they didn't pick me up. I laugh everyday with them. It's just really a nice job to have." Furthermore, many of the instructors felt that they had become a friend or caregiver to the students they taught, "I look at myself as a surrogate friend, mother, a parent. That's it." Another afterschool instructor made a distinction between herself and the day school teachers who also taught in the afterschool program:

[Their relationship with the students is] professional. These are teachers and they stay in a teacher/educator's mode. Whereas with me, they are a little bit more relaxed. They know I'm not one of their regular teachers.

One instructor who is also a day school teacher confirmed that she maintains a professional relationship with students, "as a teacher, I perform as a teacher. I'm not a friend, but I'm like a caretaker/instructor..."

Regardless of whether the instructors maintained professional relationships with their students or engaged in more of a friendship with them, all staff felt that the students were comfortable with them and their instructional styles.

### **Staff-parent relationships**

Parents perceived their relationships with various staff members to be positive, informal, and collaborative in their joint efforts to address students' behavioral problems. Parents reported that most of their interactions with the afterschool staff occurred during student pick-up, when parents would inquire about their child(ren)'s behavior and or progress. During this time, staff members informed parents about the behavioral issues that they encountered and planned collaboratively with the parents to resolve the issues. These relationships were fostered by a caring attitude. Caring behaviors were demonstrated by the staff in a number of ways, such as friendly attitudes, responsiveness, and genuine concern. For example, one parent reported the following:

They make you feel like [you've] been knowing each other for a long time...we as parents...we're kind of concerned about our child, our children, and making sure they get the right education, make sure the teacher is treating them right...we've had no problems with the staff period.

Parents also reported that the staff members were concerned about the behaviors of their children, as well as responsive to the parents' concerns:

I was a little concerned about her algebra and I talked to her [afterschool instructor]. I called here, left a message, and he called me back within an hour and then we talked for about 20 minutes, so [the afterschool program staff are] very responsive. [The afterschool program is] like home to me, I have never felt uncomfortable. Every issue I've had has been addressed right then.

Parents also reported feeling comfortable speaking with afterschool staff:

I could very easily talk to [the site coordinator]. I feel very comfortable walking in and asking if she has a moment or two so I can talk to her.

In addition, parents also felt that they were not only consistently informed regarding their child(ren)'s behavior and academic progress, but also on their afterschool program activities and events through flyers which were posted on campus and sent home with students. Multiple parents reported,

There are always notices up in the hallways. They all have signs and notices up for any events. There is always something posted.

The flyers are good for sending out information.

They send home a monthly calendar...I have calendars for the month for what they're going to do, which is great...you can plan doctor [appointments], dentist [appointments], you know, everything [is planned] around this [calendar].

In summary, parents perceived the staff members to be easily accessible, easy to communicate with, and trustworthy when it came to leaving their children in the care of the afterschool program. They felt that the staff kept them informed and up to date on the program activities and events so that parental involvement would be possible. Overall, parents were satisfied with the level of communication and collaboration that they shared with the afterschool staff.

### **Team Building Strategies**

Collaboration amongst the afterschool staff consisted of effective team building and conflict resolution strategies in the four programs of this study. Teamwork was emphasized as staff members worked together on the curriculum they designed for their students and collaborated with the day school. Conflicts amongst the staff rarely occurred and were resolved through effective communication.

**Building teamwork.** Site coordinators were viewed by staff as being helpful, positive, and supportive. One instructor stated, "I know that if any time I need additional support with a child I could send her...to her office." Additionally, afterschool staff members were encouraged to work with one another and collaborate together for the benefits of the students. One instructor explained:

Sometimes we'll get together. Sometimes we won't have enough kids to just go in our classrooms, so we'll get together in our rooms and do it. Like I said, we're all pretty flexible and easy going....Let's say a student is struggling in science, they'll let me know. You know, "can you go ahead and work on them with this?" We'll get together and see what we can do for the child that will benefit them.

**Linkage with day school.** Strategic intent to collaborate with day school was operationalized via e-mail or other communication means. One site coordinator established

coordination with a dry erase board where the day school staff would write down daily events and issues or concerns to inform the afterschool staff. Additionally, the principals of the day schools would often work with the site coordinators to collaborate on extending the day school curriculum into afterschool projects. Efforts were made between the school principals and the site coordinators to consistently enforce the same rules and regulations on the students. A principal stated:

This year, I helped [the site coordinator] set up some expectations for behavior so that what our expectation is with the day school is followed up and is consistent with the afterschool program. There were some issues where...the rules of the day weren't being enforced in the afternoon. So we kind of coordinated that and helped her facilitate a way to communicate that with the parents so that the parents understood what the expectations were and what the consequences were from this....Everyone is on the same page.

**Establishing liaisons.** Typically, at the district programs, the day school principals and the site coordinators developed a rapport and communicated with each other to establish coordination between the day and afterschool programs. Because the California program is CBO-based, a staff member was dedicated to be the liaison between the project director and the school principals as well as between the day and afterschool staff. This liaison person would make sure that things were being clearly communicated and served as the mediator between the day school and the afterschool programs. This position was perceived by both day and afterschool staff as significant in building rapport between day and afterschool staff and with the students. The liaison staff also helped to monitor students' behaviors throughout day and afterschool sessions. This procedure was believed to have strengthened rules and regulations that were enforced by both sessions. A project director stressed:

A big thing also with us is to make sure that we are aligned with our school districts so collaboration is a big thing. It's not this is your Afterschool Program, it's this is our Afterschool Program. We're on the same campus. These aren't different students that come in the Afterschool, it's our students are here. It's the same students that you served during the day right here in Afterschool. So, getting a big collaboration so that everyone knows that they're a part of it, it's not just one thing. It's not us saying that oh, your test scores are better because we're here, it's our test scores are better because we've developed this machine that the students can really be impacted from.

These team-building strategies helped maintain a collaborative atmosphere both within the programs and between day school and afterschool. Students benefited as they filtered from the school to the afterschool programs.

**Conflict resolution.** Although effective communications were established, conflicts still occurred occasionally amongst afterschool staff members. Conflict resolution was a

multi-level process between the project director, the site coordinator, and the staff. As an example, a resolution process at the California-based program entailed disagreeing parties to talk about the problem and how their concerns could be addressed differently in the future. The problem would first be dealt with in-house at the school site by the site coordinators. The project director would rarely step in unless there were conflicts that could not be resolved by the site coordinators. Communication was central in the resolution process:

Okay, we have steps...we have this process....It's basically, "this is how I feel, this is what I feel that you did and this is what you said..." Then the other person responds with "okay, so what you're saying is that you feel that I've been X and Y and Z," whatever it may be and then that's the time for, if the issue was with me, for me then to open up [and say] "okay, my intentions weren't like that but if that's what happened because that's what I'm hearing, I'm apologizing, I'm sorry" and so forth.

Similar procedures took place with conflict issues that would occur with parents. A project director remarked:

Well, I talk with the parent. Find out exactly what the situation was and what happened. Because a lot of times parents may get upset and they don't really realize that, you know, there are procedures and policies that we have to follow, you know, not just in this school building, but we're under corporation. So a lot of times they may not understand that. And talking to them and then talking with the site coordinators and maybe sometimes the student, we find out exactly what happened. A lot of times not being in that building at that particular moment, there're several versions of what happened. So we just try to work with everybody to figure out, okay how can we resolve this problem? Was there a misunderstanding on your part? Was there a misunderstanding on the school's part? And how can we address that issue?

Overall, the managerial staff worked together with the afterschool staff to implement the program successfully. They were able to develop intimate relationships not only with each other, but with students and parents as well. A collaborative environment amongst all participants involved in the program was essential for the success of the program.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

The purposes of this study were to examine how afterschool programs that have demonstrated student success work to engage and retain qualified staff, and the role that professional development play in preparing and sustaining these afterschool staff members. Although the results of this study pointed to some common underlying structures and process in program administration at the four programs, some limitations should be mentioned. First, only four afterschool programs were included in this study, which limits the generalization of results to all afterschool programs. Furthermore, the resources available to these four programs varied. Three of the four programs were district-related, thus relied on grant funding and district resources for staffing, student activities, and professional developments. In addition, the district-affiliated programs also had access to student academic records. The program in California was a community-based organization and had additional resources from the community available to them. For instance, it was able to offer mandatory monthly trainings for the afterschool instructors and was able to draw from a wider pool of community volunteers. Finally, the four programs selected also appeared to have a larger organizational structure that serviced more sites than most afterschool programs.

Despite these limitations, results on staffing and professional development revealed several practical patterns and implications.

### **Strategies in Retaining Qualified Staff**

Raley, Grossman, and Walker (2005) discussed that despite the potential benefits of afterschool programs to students through the development of positive relationships with adult role models, afterschool programs often faced challenges in the hiring and retention of qualified staff members. For example, oftentimes limited funding was available for staff salaries, which left staff with low wages and reliance on part-time or temporary positions. These staff members would eventually leave their part-time afterschool positions in favor for full-time or higher-paying jobs. Fortunately, Raley, Grossman, and Walker (2005) also identified some strategies, besides higher salaries, that could potentially result in the retention of high quality staff: (a) hiring the right staff (e.g., staff who have passion, respect and concrete skills for working with young people), (b) aligning staff skills with tasks, (c) making training substantive and accessible, (d) offer day-to-day staff development, and (e) monitoring program quality. Data revealed that the four afterschool programs in this study appeared to utilize most of these strategies in helping them to attract and retain quality staff members.

## Hiring the Right Staff

Interview data across the programs consistently reported the same desired personality traits for the program staff. Project directors, site coordinators, instructors, and parents wanted staff members to have a strong dedication to the afterschool program and to the population they served. Most of the desired qualifications were emphasized in personal characteristics such as: humble, friendly, responsible, energetic, inquisitive to learning, a desire to work with children, and a strong sense of dedication and commitment.

Organizationally, to make sure that the right staff would be hired, several procedures were in place at the four programs. Three of the four programs (one CBO- and two district-related) described a hierarchical review system,<sup>8</sup> where the pool of applicants were first reviewed and narrowed by the Human Resources department of the program, then by the project director, site coordinator, and day school principal. Specific characteristics that were important in recruitment of management staff such as: dedication and responsibility, good management and organizational skills, and the ability to effectively communicate and share decision-making with staff members were screened. Moreover, because the site coordinators worked closely with the project directors and the school principals, site coordinators were interviewed by both the day school principals and the afterschool project directors. To ensure the smoothness of future collaborations the principals generally had the decision-making power or heavy input in the final decision.

As for program staff and instructors, the program management and the parents expressed that more than the educational background and prior professional experience of the instructors, prior relationships of the afterschool instructors to the students were desired. Skills that were reported as important in their positions were: effectively managing a group of students, ability to engage students in activities and or lessons, and most importantly, ability to provide positive interactions with the students. Consequently, program administrations preferred to recruit from the site's day school teachers. Day school teachers were viewed as having already established connections with the students during the day, and were more able to continue this engagement, both academically and behaviorally, into the afterschool period.

Additionally, to ensure the development of positive relationships and collaboration among staff members, and to ensure that the new staff could demonstrate the desired qualifications, the programs had all staff play a role in the recruitment of the new staff members. For example, although all of the instructors reported that they had no role in the

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<sup>8</sup> For more details on individual sites, see Appendix A–D for site visit reports



hiring process, most stated that they were involved in the recruitment of new afterschool staff. Ten instructors across the programs had previously referred or felt that they could refer someone they knew for the open job position. A majority of the site coordinators were open to referrals from the instructors and the principals if there was a need in their program. One site coordinator explained that he or she looked for referrals from colleagues, including the day school principal, because they would come “highly recommended by other people whose opinions I trust.”

### **Aligning Staff Skills With Tasks**

For afterschool instructors that were certified teachers from the day school, these programs generally took advantage of their credentials and knowledge of the students’ academic progress by aligning their skills and expertise in the day school with the afterschool curriculum. For example, a third-grade teacher would be teaching third graders math lessons in the afterschool. Interview data revealed that these instructors desired to develop a more professional relationship with their students, and used their knowledge and teaching skills to increase their students’ academic efficacy. In contrast, many of the other afterschool staff that were hired from the neighborhood community worked to develop mentoring relationships with their students by “having fun with the students” and “acting more like their friend.” They reported that having positive relationships with their students helped them build rapport with the students, and they served as the students’ mentors and role models.

More importantly, all staff reported being adequately prepared for their job responsibilities through job orientations, specific trainings, and “shadowing.” For specific afterschool curricula such as literacy programs like KidzLit, technology, science, or conflict resolution classes, the instructors of these curricula attended specific trainings for the delivery of these curricula. In turn, both the afterschool staff and instructors were able to utilize their skills and talents to fulfill their objectives in “making a difference” for their students.

**Leveraging human capital.** Another common theme at these four programs was that the project directors and site coordinators worked to maintain a “family-like” atmosphere at the sites, characterized by open communication and collaboration among students, staff, parents, and day school staff.

Sharing the program’s vision, utilizing team-building strategies, and maintaining positive working environments were used as a means to motivate and retain staff members. To maintain low staff-to-student ratios, volunteers were recruited into the programs. This strategy served as a vital function for all four programs in this study. The programs used the

flexibility of the daily schedules, opportunities for practical experiences, and contribution to the society as incentives to recruit volunteers who were college students. Additionally, project directors worked to create and maintain liaisons with local, state, and federal entities such as the local community organizations, district administrators, and their state Department of Education to further program support, including additional resources and funding opportunities for program sustainability. They helped to recruit volunteers with shared missions and visions.

To foster teamwork and collaboration, open communication was stressed and maintained at all four programs, both with the parents and the day school. Parents reported that the afterschool staff showed caring attitudes toward their children and were quick to address their various concerns. They also reported that the staff members were readily available to them, and they felt comfortable speaking with the staff about various issues regarding their child(ren). Communication was also imperative in the collaboration efforts between the day school and afterschool sessions. At the four programs, frequent meetings, e-mail, phone, and other forms of communication were evident in helping to bridge day school and afterschool programs for students. Day school teachers who also worked at the afterschool programs served as liaisons between the two entities. They actively communicated between the day and afterschool staff and monitored students' activities in the day school and afterschool programs. This climate of openness, teamwork, and collaboration helped facilitate the fulfillment of the intrinsic desire of "making a difference" that so many staff members mentioned as a reason for staying with their programs.

These frequent communications not only reaffirmed positive relationships but also helped to prevent conflict and miscommunication. At the afterschool sites, conflicts among staff were rarely reported and when occurred, conflicts were generally resolved by the site coordinators, again, through open communications and discussing the topics of concern candidly with staff members and or parents.

### **Making Training Available**

Continual professional development is important to maintain staff efficacy (Duran & Duran, 2005). Results of the analysis revealed that all four programs claimed they offered professional development to their staff members. These opportunities ranged from orientation and job preparation for new employees, to professional development for existing staff, to meetings and other informal opportunities for communication and collaboration. The frequency of opportunities provided ranged from periodically to monthly and from voluntary

to mandatory. The differences in opportunities were mostly found based on job titles, with site coordinators receiving the majority of the opportunities for professional development.

When offered, professional development and training catered to the needs of the employees. For site coordinators, training and professional development mostly focused on site management and job specific uses of technology for management purposes. Professional development for non-certified instructors generally emphasized on classroom management and programming, that is, opportunities to learn about activities or skills to teach academics and or enrichment. Certified teachers reported participating in professional development concerning classroom management and programming as part of their day school jobs, and rarely participated in trainings that were focused on afterschool. All program directors and site coordinators at the eight afterschool sites reported an emphasis on detecting professional development needs for their staff members.

An interesting observation from this study was that the terminology of professional development seemed to vary by job positions. In general, the management staff would include staff meetings, regular feedbacks on performances, and “shadowing” as part of the professional development and training, whereas afterschool staff generally referred to formal lectures and workshops as professional development opportunities.

**Offer day-to-day professional development.** On site, staff meetings were used to regularly enhance afterschool staff knowledge and experience. Program directors for all four afterschool programs reported having site coordinator meetings one or more times per month. Other than daily operational issues such as deadlines, memos, and trainings such as learning to use particular computer software program or the Internet, these meetings provided opportunities for managerial staff to share information about what was and was not currently working at their sites, and to strategize for future program improvements.

Site coordinators for seven of the eight afterschool sites were also reported to hold site-level staff meetings as a form of informal professional development. In contrast to those for the site coordinators, these meetings varied greatly in frequency from monthly to as-needed. At many of the sites, job specific preparation was also provided by the credentialed teachers who worked with the afterschool program. This ranged from mentoring new staff by answering questions and telling them about site rules to providing training for how to work with students.

**Professional development offered by the school districts.** Professional development and training offered by the school districts were primarily made available to the certified staff. With the district related programs, most of the times, these opportunities could also be

used by the afterschool staff if so desired. However, these trainings generally tailored to day school teaching and academic standards and were not specifically designed for afterschool curriculum or functioning.

### **Monitoring Program Quality**

Almost all site staff interviewed mentioned the intrinsic motivation of “making a difference” in their decision to work with and stay in an afterschool program. To reinforce this motivation, the staff needed to know whether they were doing a good job, and how to improve their skills to continually “make a difference” in their students’ lives. All four programs had some formal or informal evaluation procedures in place for monitoring student academic outcomes, parent satisfaction, and managerial strategies. Although all four programs mentioned strong objectives in developing the well-being of the whole child, it was also evident that strong commitments were also made to goals that focused on academic achievement and improving grades or test scores. These goals were measured by tracking student progress on homework assignments, test scores, as well as report cards. Additionally, formal staff evaluations were undertaken by the administrative organization of the afterschool program, school district, or day school principal at the four programs. However, only one of the programs had structured review processes for staff members at all levels of the afterschool program.

On a daily basis, site coordinators provided feedback to the instructors verbally, usually through casual or impromptu conversations. Unplanned classroom observations were also conducted by site coordinators, and by most principal. The regularity of these informal feedbacks could be an indication of the trusting relationships between the site coordinators and their staff; the site coordinators were thus able to build rapport with their staff and enhance the intrinsic motivation that inspired the staff to stay with the program and to utilize their skills and talents to “make a difference” with their students.

To summarize, all four programs employed the strategies recommended by Raley et al., (2005) such as hiring the right staff, aligning staff skills with tasks, providing staff with adequate preparation, offering day-to-day staff development, and monitoring program quality for continuous improvements. These strategies appeared to have assisted the programs in maintaining a low staff turnover rate.

### **Conclusion**

Components essential for quality afterschool programs can be grouped into five categories: (a) positive human relationships, (b) effective programming, (c) appropriate

environment, (d) strong partnerships, and (e) effective staff and administration (Witt, 2002). However, it is necessary to have effective staff and administration in place before an afterschool program can foster positive human relationships, create an appropriate environment for the students, and build strong partnerships with effective programming. In this study, the four afterschool programs shared a few common characteristics; they were able to: maintain flexibility within their structure, foster the development of human capital to benefit students and their families, and recruit and retain quality staff members.

Study findings revealed that these programs had clear program structures guided by commonly shared goals, explicit understandings of staff roles and responsibilities, and clear communication and expectations through formal and or informal meetings. Program administrators, project directors and site coordinators empowered their staff with decision making, motivated them with the program's mission and team spirit, and enforced positive program environment with open communication. The project directors frequently visited the sites to communicate with the site coordinators and the other staff members. In turn, the site coordinators acted as the bridge between the project directors and the other on-site afterschool staff. All staff had clear expectations for themselves and their students. They could clearly describe their role in the program and how it connected to the roles of those in other positions. Program staff appeared to work well with each other and understood how the organizational structure of their respective afterschool programs operated. Meanwhile, the instructors were empowered with their role in the decision-making process in terms of how to organize their curriculum, and they felt supported by their supervisors. Although site staff and instructors can benefit from more formal professional development, the staff felt they were adequately prepared through orientations, on-site trainings, and staff meetings to conduct their duties effectively. With these relationships and knowledge, the programs were able to operate smoothly and efficiently in a "family-like" atmosphere.

Finally, all staff across the four afterschool programs consistently reported an intrinsic reason for working in their program. Interview data implied that program incentives such as a career ladder and an ascending pay scale were not enticing enough to recruit or retain staff. A majority of the interviewees stated that the pay offered was not an incentive, whether the pay was viewed as good or inadequate, and that the key reasons for the staff in these programs to work and stay in the afterschool program were generally altruistic in nature, such as to provide academic, social, or emotional support for the students. Thus, at these four programs, the motivation for the staff to stay with the programs could be the organized environments, clear program structures, open communication, clear program goals, consistent expectations, positive relationships, and program climates that foster staff efficacy in "making a

difference” in their students’ lives. Future studies could explore these relationships with a larger sample size and more rigorous methodology. Meanwhile, promoting strategies in enhancing staff efficacy, such as empowering staff with decision making and providing professional development opportunities to enhance their professional skills could help programs to recruit and retain quality staff members.

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**APPENDIX A:**  
**California Program**  
**Site Summary**

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**Community-Based Organization Afterschool Program Overview**

This program started in 1999 with an already established community-based organization (CBO) as its lead facilitator. They currently service 4,800 students at 46 sites (40 elementary schools and 6 middle schools). As a CBO-affiliated afterschool program, they have valuable partnerships through the CBO with its city government, State and County Departments of Education, and the five school districts that they service.

The program's goals aimed to enhance the lives of students, their families, and their own staff as well. The program strived to provide a safe afterschool environment and enrichment and community activities for their students. Other goals for their students included achieving state and local standards, developing positive character traits, and attaining an understanding of a healthy lifestyle. The program's objectives also included parent and volunteer involvement, as well as a goal to provide adequate and effective professional development for its program staff and volunteers.

The Vice President of Operations has been with this afterschool program since its inception as an associate director and started in the CBO as a staff member 15 years ago. Her role is to oversee all the programs that the CBO offers, but is heavily involved in managing the afterschool program and acts as the executive director for the afterschool program. She also maintains the partnerships previously mentioned. Her main responsibilities as the executive director include creating and overseeing the budget, hiring and supervising the managerial staff members—mainly the four project directors—and collaborating with the project directors for program evaluation and improvement. Although she has the “final say” in the decision-making process, she reported valuing the views and opinions of the project directors. Her educational background consisted of a Bachelor's degree in child development and had several years of experience in working with children.

The project directors of the program each oversee 11–12 program sites, mainly the site coordinators. The project director who participated in the study oversaw 12 program sites, which includes 64–70 staff members. As part of his job responsibilities, he supervises the staff members, oversees the budget allotted for his sites, and assesses professional development needs. He also plans the programming for his sites in collaboration with his site

coordinators and researches potential programs to implement into the afterschool. Visits to each site are done on a once-a-month basis, and informal program observation and evaluation consisting of conversations with staff members, students, and day school teachers are reported back to the site coordinator. This project director started as an instructor of an afterschool program and moved up to the project director position over a course of 6 years.

The afterschool program sites operate Monday through Friday, from roughly 2:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. The daily activity schedule varies on a daily basis, but the program maintains each student spending 50% of their time in enrichment activities and the other 50% in academic activities, which includes an hour in homework assistance. The staff at the sites includes a site coordinator, a lead instructor, instructors, a day school liaison, and volunteers. Few of the sites were managed by a *dual-site* site coordinator, where there was one site coordinator who equally divided their time between two sites. At those sites, staff included the dual-site coordinator, an assistant site coordinator (who also was an instructor), instructors, a day school liaison, and volunteers. Of the site staff, only the site coordinators were full-time employees and were provided a salary and benefits; other staff were paid hourly and based on position. Staff-to-student ratios, on average, are 1:20 and does not include the site coordinators or the day school liaisons.

The site coordinators are responsible for their site's daily operations and supervise the staff members on-site. They are hired by the project director and also have interviews with the day school principal of the school sites. The only mandatory requirement from the program is that site coordinators must be 18 years old or older, but other expectations are set at the project director's discretion. Site coordinators are considered the "principal" of the afterschool, thus the principal and day school liaison expect them to hold similar responsibilities. In addition, site coordinators worked at the program's administrative offices (where the project directors were housed) starting in the morning for a few hours in order to fulfill their administrative duties, prep for the program activities, and or meet with their supervisor. Then they went out to their sites about an hour or two before the program started mostly to continue daily preparations and or have staff meetings. Most of the instructors are college students and have no other requirements other than the minimum age. Day school liaisons must be a day school staff member and have taught a minimum of 3 years, however not necessarily at the actual school site. Day school liaisons usually provide training and support to the instructors.

Project directors and site coordinators interacted with each other on a daily basis, and they reported having a friendly and open relationship with each other. The participating project director had also implemented his own staff recognition program, which highlighted

staff members several times throughout the year. With other on-site staff members, project directors had a more professional yet friendly relationship. The participating site coordinators had been assigned to their sites recently, thus they described their relationship with the on-site staff members as professional and friendly but “a work in progress.”

### **Afterschool Sites: Two Elementary Schools**

Both of the sites are elementary schools, located in urban areas, operate 5 days a week, and start immediately after the end of the school day. The majority of the students are Hispanic and from low-income families. The program schedule starts with a snack, then moves to a program-wide health activity, which involves a nutritional and or physical activity. One hour is dedicated to completing homework or assistance, and another hour to an enrichment activity.

Both sites have full-time site coordinators, and because both of these selected sites had dual-site coordinators, assistant site coordinators were also staffed at the sites. Assistant site coordinators are also instructors. The site coordinators were both considering re-attending college at the time of the visit and were recently changed from managing one program site to two. Most of the instructors were in college, and a few were in the process of attaining their teaching credential. The site coordinators were relatively new to their sites, thus were not able to report the staff turnover rate. All of the staff reported an enjoyment of working with children and expressed that their job was a positive experience, however planned to move on from their current position in the near future (i.e., when it was time to go back to school or when they graduated from school).

### **Relationships Within and Across the Sites**

Because the two site coordinators interviewed for the study were relatively new at their sites (at the time of the study, they had only been working at their site for a few months), they did not report to have a close relationship with their staff. However, the teaching staff did describe their relationship with their site coordinator as open and professional, and they also described the site coordinators as approachable. Site coordinators also described themselves as available to their staff, which was important because each of the two site coordinators oversaw one additional program site. All site coordinators are given cellular phones by the CBO so that they may be contacted by their staff or supervisors at any time. Site staff described having friendly relationships with one another, although they often did not interact with each other outside of staff meetings because they were busy with their students. Staff meetings usually occurred once a month, however site coordinators often held

informal staff meetings before or after the afterschool program to discuss concerns or programming. The frequency of informal staff meetings depended on the topic of discussion and the urgency of it.

A minority of the teaching staff were also day school staff, thus a day school liaison was hired by the CBO for each program site for the purpose of communication between the day school and the afterschool. Day school liaisons were required to be a part of the day school staff, and therefore already had established relationships with the day school (e.g. principal, teachers, and students). They facilitated the coordination of the curricula and afterschool staff and student relationships. These liaisons were also involved in the afterschool site staff meetings and interacted with the site coordinators frequently to discuss what the day school teachers wanted to communicate to the afterschool staff.

As previously mentioned, the two site coordinators had been working at their respective sites for less than 6 months, and were still getting to know their staff as well as the day school staff. In particular, their relationship with the day school principals was described as mostly professional but productive and open. The principals met with the site coordinators or would communicate through the liaison about feedback and suggestions for the program or to talk about specific students. One of the principals reported communicating with either the day school liaison or site coordinator bi-weekly, whereas the other would communicate everyday with the liaison or site coordinator.

Relationships between the site coordinators and the project director were described as close, where the site coordinators reported that they were comfortable enough to share personal information with the project director. The project director stressed an “open-door policy” and strived to maintain a professional and personal relationship with the staff that he managed. This relationship was facilitated by daily interactions and weekly meetings with the site coordinators.

The site staff described their relationship with the students as friendly and caring. Although they did not say that they were their students’ friend, they described themselves as “caretakers.” For those site staff who were also day school staff, they were known by the students, had established relationships with them, and reported to have already gained respect by them as well. Students were more open with them and would share personal information. Students did not readily approach the site coordinators because the site coordinators were not at their site everyday (due to their management of two sites). Site staff kept students engaged and motivated by being attentive to what the students were interested in and encouraging them in pursuing that interest, as well as stressing the importance of learning and school. The

parents at both sites were pleased with the program, the site staff, and the frequency of communication.

### **Site Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Review**

When hiring new afterschool staff, the program posted the open job on their web site and at various local colleges (such as the career center), as well as notified the program site's day school staff. The program gave priority to hiring the site's day school staff, but also utilized the applicant database from their web site. Referrals by program staff was the most used and successful method of recruitment. The hiring staff looked for people who love children and want to positively impact them.

This program had a clear career ladder for their afterschool employees. One site coordinator reported using the ladder to move from instructor to assistant site coordinator and then to site coordinator. All of the staff loved working for the program and the students; however, those who were students themselves had plans to move on from the program. They viewed the program as a place to build their work experience and would pursue a different job once they graduated from school.

At this program, there was a formal yearly staff review process in place for every afterschool employee. Afterschool employees were reviewed by their direct supervisor, and the project director was also reviewed by the site coordinators he managed. One site coordinator also conducted classroom observations as part of the evaluation process at his site. The principal involvement in the review process varied based on site, but usually involved providing feedback.

### **Professional Development for Site Staff**

Formal orientation at this program involved a presentation of general human resources topics and was a requirement for all new afterschool employees. Informal site orientations varied based on the site, and the site coordinators were autonomous in the implementation of the site orientation. Although most involved various administrative duties and tasks, such as the explanation of site rules and introduction of staff members, the preparation of instruction varied according to the site coordinator. For instance, one site coordinator implemented a 3-month probationary period, which consisted of a shadowing process (i.e., the new employee would follow the site coordinator around for almost a week) and more observations for the new staff member, whereas the other did not have a process in place because she was relatively new at her site.

Formal professional development opportunities were provided by the CBO and occurred once a month. The trainings were held at the CBO offices and provided pay during the time of the training. Training topics were based on the program's monthly themes. Informal trainings occurred during site staff meetings and pay was provided as well as food. The site coordinators could also attend professional development trainings from other organizations (such as the County's Department of Education), but often they would have to find these opportunities themselves and get approval from their supervisor to attend the training.

**APPENDIX B:**  
**Florida Program**  
**Site Summary**

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**District Afterschool Program Overview**

This school district-related program was selected as one of four promising practice programs to participate in a descriptive study of staffing and staff development conducted by the National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning. In the Spring of 2008, interviews were conducted with district staff and staff at two elementary schools in the program. The two elementary schools were selected based on evidence of student achievement gains over time and afterschool goal attainment. Those interviewed included: the district's 21st CCLC director and 21st CCLC project manager; as well as principals, afterschool site coordinators, assistant site coordinators, instructors, and parents at both elementary schools.

The district began receiving federal funds in 2003 to initiate its afterschool program. Currently, the district has 12 sites. District goals for the program target student success in passing the Florida state standardized achievement test and getting better grades, safety and security for students, decreasing student discipline problems and referrals, increasing life skills for students, and providing quality programming that includes academic assistance.

The district's 21st CCLC director was one of the co-developers of the initial grant and continues to be involved in writing and obtaining grants for additional funding. She oversees the administration of the program together with a 21st CCLC project manager, two support staff, and an evaluator. The district director identified numerous responsibilities for managing the program, including fiscal and programmatic planning and implementation, ensuring integrity and fidelity of the program, maintaining communication across programs and with the district office, and ensuring compliance in grant administration. The district director is also responsible for overseeing the Title 1 program in this county (since 1997). The district project manager is full-time and oversees the 12 afterschool site coordinators and daily program implementation. He assists programs in meeting their objectives as well as observes and monitors site activities. His schedule includes frequent contact with the afterschool programs via visits to 2–3 sites daily, and many e-mails and phone calls. Although not required, the project manager is certified in education and additionally has a master's degree in vocational rehabilitation and counseling. Furthermore, he had experience running afterschool programs prior to becoming the project manager.

Generally, the sites operate Monday through Thursday from approximately 2:00 PM to 6:00 P.M. Each site includes time for homework help, academics, and non-academic enrichment activities each day. Each site is staffed by a coordinator, certified teachers, teacher aides, and activity leaders; and may be assisted by volunteers from local colleges and AmeriCorps. Afterschool staff are employees of the district and paid at flat district rates, dependent upon their position. Staff to student ratios, on average, are 1:12 for academics and 1:15 for non-academic activities.

Site coordinators are full-time and expected to have at least a bachelor's degree, some are certified teachers. The district places emphasis on their site coordinators having management experience. Each is hired by his or her school principal, although district staff often join in on interviews for this position and pre-interview discussions of potential applicants. Site coordinators manage the day-to-day implementation of the afterschool activities, collaborate with their school principal to establish the curriculum used, ensure necessary data is collected for performance reporting and program evaluation, and report to both the principal and district on their progress and issues. The certified teachers in the program are responsible for providing student academic activities in the program and work with their school principals and site coordinators to determine lesson plans. For non-academic activities, the afterschool sites use a variety of instructional staff. They employ activity leaders and teacher assistants, most often college students with at least 60 college credit hours, recruit volunteers from local colleges and universities to help tutor and mentor afterschool students, and sometimes hire contractors.

District afterschool administrators describe a collegial, yet friendly relationship with site staff and using a team approach to decision-making. Monthly site coordinator meetings, cell phone and e-mail contacts, and site visits are the main means of communication between the district and site afterschool staff. Most of the communication is between the site staff and the district project manager. The district staff go to afterschool site events, have an open door policy, and feel they support the site staff to "make their job easier." The project manager has established close ties to each of the principals in the 12 sites, where they are mutually on a "first name basis." The district director has a minimal relationship with afterschool students and parents, yet mentioned being recognized, at times, in the community by both to say hello or briefly chat. The district project manager, however, describes a strong relationship with students as he often helps with activities while at a site, talks with parents to get their feedback and "be friendly," walks the neighborhood around the school to achieve familiarity with the community, and substitutes for the site coordinator when needed.



### **Afterschool Sites: Two Elementary Schools**

Both sites are Title I elementary programs, running approximately 3 hours Monday through Thursday, beginning directly after the bell rings at the end of the school day. The majority of students are African American and from low-income families. Students are provided snacks in addition to time to unwind from the regular school day and begin on homework. About one and one-half hours are dedicated to reading, math, or science each day, with additional time available as needed by individual students (i.e., tutoring and homework assistance). Academics are embedded in many activities, such as dance and sports. However, time for non-academic activities usually ends the afterschool day.

Both schools have a site coordinator and an assistant site coordinator. Both sites have experienced staff and very little turnover. They also often promote from within, creating a career ladder for some. Each site coordinator has been with the program for about 4 years. Both had experience working with children and management experience before taking on their current role. One moved up the career ladder from an activity leader position to the site coordinator position. The assistant site coordinators were also activity leaders before being moved into their current positions. Most of the staff in both afterschool sites are certified teachers, whereas others are activity leaders who are college students majoring in education or a closely-related field. The teachers and activity leaders in these sites have at least 2 years experience in the afterschool program and express a desire to stay “forever” or at least “for as long as there is funding.” This is a sentiment throughout all of the staff interviewed. Additionally, all of the staff talk about their “love of children” and how working in the afterschool program is “exciting” and “greatly helps students.” They attribute their happiness at the job to being able to help students in a more “fun” setting and to “seeing a difference” for students.

### **Relationships Within and Across the Sites**

The communication between the site coordinators, assistant site coordinators, and site staff is open and accessible. Instructional staff at both sites have close ties to their site coordinators and rely upon them to resolve issues, move things forward, and provide feedback and scheduling. They also rely on the assistant site coordinators to get rooms ready, ensure materials are available, substitute for them when needed, and be available when needed. Often the assistant site coordinator will be the first on scene when needs arise, whether related to the physical classroom, students, or parents. The relationship between the site coordinator and assistance site coordinator is very close, with much mutual respect shown and constant communication. At both sites, the site coordinator is the hub of

information and decision-making. Although staff have close ties, team decision-making seems limited. Staff at both sites have some formal team meetings, although the schedule varies and may only occur 2–3 times per school year.

Because many of the afterschool staff are certified teachers at their site during the day, most have prior relationships among themselves. They informally talk both during the afterschool hours and during the school day. Generally, there is less communication and relationship between the certified teachers and the college student activity leaders at each site. However, the activity leaders see the teachers as their mentors and describe that they share ideas and information. Afterschool teachers describe the activity leaders as “awesome” and have “great rapport” with them. Staff at both sites are provided computers and use them to e-mail each other. At one of the afterschool sites the staff have cell phones which they use frequently to talk to one another, even when in the next room. Unique to the other afterschool site, each student maintains a daily journal that includes both day school and afterschool activities and behaviors. The staff find this most helpful in learning not only what the student has been doing, but what is being taught in the other activities that day. The journal is collected and checked daily by a school counselor who helps with the afterschool program. This staff person is employed for only a few hours, but volunteers many more hours to spend time with students and to provide guidance to staff. This seems to be time-intensive, but a unique way to both discipline and keep abreast of each student in the program.

The certified teachers at the afterschool sites have built-in relationships with the regular day school staff. These teachers have many informal contacts with other school staff related to the progress (or lack thereof), discipline, goals, and needs of their afterschool students. Both afterschool sites are closely linked to the regular day school staff and curriculum; with academic goals seen as primary, and safety and behavior secondary. Afterschool staff at both sites have strong relationships with the school administration, especially the school principals. The principal can often be found walking around the afterschool program, talking to teachers and students. The principal is also involved in the hiring of the site coordinator and, at times, other afterschool staff.

Afterschool staff describe their relationship with their students as close, where students often will come to them to talk. They keep students interested through hands-on activities and fun in what they teach. Site coordinators and assistant site coordinators know each student by name and will talk with as many as possible during the afterschool and regular day hours. There appears to be mutual respect between staff and students, and between staff and parents. Parents are generally happy with the afterschool staff and feel they can talk to them, but would like even greater communication.

### **Site Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Review**

Both sites recruit staff through the district (i.e., put up postings through the web site and at schools). The sites also send notices to and recruit from local colleges. By far, word-of-mouth is the most productive way the sites say they attain “good staff” which is defined by them as those who love children, love afterschool, and want to see children succeed. Furthermore, they do not believe degrees are as important as having the right attitude and wanting to be there.

Turnover is minimal at the two afterschool sites. The staff stay for a number of reasons, including: love of the program and children, being allowed to use their individual talents, hours (i.e., time of day for college students and extra hours for teachers), and working with others they like. At one site, staff are able to follow their students year after year in the afterschool program which the teachers feel is an additional incentive. Site coordinators are very pleased with their staff and review staff performance very informally and sporadically. Instructional staff get feedback from the site coordinator, both positive and constructive, regularly.

### **Professional Development for Site Staff**

New afterschool staff receive some orientation. All paid staff must attend the district employee orientation. Site coordinators get orientation from the district afterschool staff, whereas site staff meet with their site coordinator. One site staff shadows new instructors for the first several weeks.

For the first time, the district required a 3-hour training for activity leaders across all of its afterschool sites. Certified teachers and volunteers were not included. Otherwise, little formalized professional development is offered specific to the afterschool program. Most certified teachers at each afterschool site receive staff development through their schools and the district, generally to maintain their certification. The district offers some professional development that is open to afterschool employees; however, is it not mandatory and not specific to afterschool needs. Both sites report having once-a-month staff meetings; however, schedules get in the way and the meetings do not always occur that regularly. One site has daily pre-planning discussions amongst the afterschool staff. Site coordinators have once-a-month meetings with district staff and attend conferences and report back information to their site staff. Most of the staff development occurs informally through site coordinator and district project manager feedback and staff sharing.



**APPENDIX C:**  
**Indiana Program**  
**Site Summary**

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**District Afterschool Program Overview**

The Indiana program was selected as one of four promising practice programs to participate in a descriptive study of staffing and staff development conducted by the National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning. In the Spring of 2008, interviews were conducted with and the program's staff at one elementary school and one middle school in the 21st CCLC program. The two schools were selected based on evidence of student achievement gains over time and afterschool goal attainment. Those interviewed included: 21st CCLC director; as well as principals, afterschool site coordinators, instructors, and parents at both schools.

This Indiana school district is the third largest school district in the state and has an enrollment of 22,300 students across Grades K–12. Currently the 21st CCLC program is funded in 13 of the 35 schools within this district, and all of the schools except one are Title I schools. The 21st CCLC program is maintained through the office of Family, School and Community Partnership division of the school district. The programs place emphasis on providing a safe environment for the children, as well as increasing academic performance. Afterschool students are provided transportation home from the program, including to and from community programs on the days when afterschool activities are held off-site.

The project director for all 21st CCLC programs provides over-site on program compliance with grant requirements, reporting and attendance for the 13 sites. In addition, she supervises site coordinators, provides on-site assistance, leads site coordinator meetings, and works with community partners. Also she ensures the afterschool programs are aligned, particularly thematically, with the district and state standards and curriculum when developing activities. The program has an informal career ladder. The project director was previously a site coordinator and instructor in the afterschool program and moved into the new position approximately 1 year ago. Her background includes experience in drug prevention, so she also provides some instruction related to this for the afterschool sites. The district office leads the grant-writing effort and budget monitoring.

The program sites provide afterschool programming 4 days a week, Monday through Thursday. Although daily schedules vary across sites, they offer snack, homework help or

tutoring, and enrichment activities. Generally, site staff include a site coordinator, teachers, teacher assistants, and some volunteers. Afterschool staff are district employees and are paid based on position and number of years teaching in the afterschool program. Some site staff see the pay as an incentive, others see it as an issue (i.e., not adequate). In addition to staff, sites typically work with community agencies to provide enrichment activities (e.g. Boy Scouts, YMCA, etc.). Staff-to-student ratios, on average, are 1:15 for enrichment activities and 1:5 for academics. In the Fall and Spring, the afterschool programs focus on Jumpstart, which prepares students to take the state assessment.

Site coordinators are full-time and expected to have at least a bachelor's degree. They are employed and hired by the principal in partnership with the 21st CCLC project director. The site coordinators guide the implementation of the afterschool program, collaborate with their principals to establish curriculum, ensure data collection for performance reporting and program evaluation, supervise afterschool staff, and report to both the principal and 21st CCLC project director on site progress and issues. Site coordinators are also responsible for working with their principals in recruiting and hiring afterschool staff.

Afterschool teachers are responsible for providing academic and enrichment activities in the program and work as a team with their site coordinator, assistant teacher, and principal to identify lesson plans. The majority of teachers in the afterschool program are certified teachers from the regular day school; however, college students are also hired as teachers. Most of the college students have at least 60 credit hours. Those that do not have enough college credit hours are assigned to non-academic activities only. For enrichment activities, the sites utilize their teachers and teaching assistants, as well as volunteers through community agencies. These volunteers may come on site to the schools or be at the community program where the afterschool students are taken.

The 21st CCLC project director and site staff describe their relationship as friendly with frequent communication. Monthly site coordinator meetings, cell phone and e-mail contacts, and site visits are the main means of communication between the district and site afterschool staff. The afterschool program also has two events each year to celebrate the afterschool staff and program, in addition to an annual Lights on for Afterschool event for all of the community. Each program is individualized to meet the needs of the students enrolled. For instance, at the middle school enrichment activities are offered on site on 2 days and buses take students to community agencies or organizations (e.g., YMCA) for enrichment programs on the other 2 days.

### **Afterschool Sites: One Elementary and One Middle School**

Both sites in this study are in Title I schools, operate 4 days, and begin at the end of the regular school day. The elementary site ends at approximately 4:30 P.M., whereas the middle school site around 5:00–5:30 P.M. Students, on average, are African American or Caucasian. Students are first provided snacks and then move to homework help and or tutoring for about an hour. For the last 45 minutes or so, students spend their time in enrichment activities, some embedded with academics and others strictly non-academic.

Both schools have a full-time site coordinator who is responsible for “building management” related to afterschool activities. The middle school site coordinator has been with the program for 3 years, whereas the elementary school site coordinator for only 1 year. Both had experience working with children and some management experience before taking on their current role. Most of the staff in both afterschool sites are certified teachers. The elementary school employs several college students, whereas the middle school only hires college students for their summer program. At both sites, teachers have a range of years of experience in the afterschool program. Several are new, whereas others had 3–5 years of experience working in their afterschool site. Turnover occurs mostly with the college students. All of the staff express a desire to stay “years and years” or at least “as long as I’m a classroom teacher.” Additionally, all of the staff talk about their desire to help children and how working in the afterschool program is a wonderful opportunity. They attribute staying in the program to being able to help students, to working with a “good group,” and having a flexible schedule. A number of the certified teachers only work in the afterschool program for 2 of the 4 days.

### **Relationships Within and Across the Sites**

The teaching staff at both sites have close ties to their site coordinators and rely upon them to develop activities, intervene with students when needed, find solutions to problems, and provide feedback and scheduling. At both sites, the site coordinator is key to ensuring the staff are informed, the program is organized, and decisions are made promptly. The elementary school site staff meet briefly in the site coordinator’s office before the program begins and before they gather up their students to be taken to snack. At that time, they talk with one another to check-in about students and just “chit chat.” Some teachers and teaching assistants are more involved in these conversations than others. At the middle school site, communication among the afterschool staff is even more informal. Staff may sometimes share classes if attendance is low for the day. Also, staff may rotate classes and when this occurs increased discussion about the activities and students occurs. Few formal team

meetings are scheduled. Staff also use e-mail and cell phones to communicate with one another, and with regular day school staff.

Most of the certified teachers in the afterschool staff have prior relationships among themselves. They informally talk both during the afterschool hours, scheduled planning time in the regular day, and right after the school day ends but before afterschool begins. In afterschool, the certified teachers and the teacher assistants work closely together. There is less of a relationship outside of the activities between the staff in these two positions.

The relationship between the regular day school staff and the afterschool staff, at both sites, is very strong. The site coordinators and afterschool staff are viewed as school staff and included in school activities (e.g., invited to school staff meetings and school events). Both site coordinators are members of regular school team meetings and work closely with the school administration. The principals at both sites are involved with programming decisions and often offer additional support to the site coordinators. Specifically at the elementary school, the principal actively works with the site coordinator on program planning and student disciplinary actions. Regular day school teachers and afterschool staff have many informal contacts. Additionally at the middle school, regular day school teachers leave their homework assignments on white boards in their classrooms so that the afterschool staff can retrieve this information and be updated daily. At the middle school, the site coordinator works closely with the school social worker and views this person as someone to step in if she needs to be off-site.

The relationship between the afterschool staff and their students is friendly and “different” than the regular school day relationship (i.e., students will tell them more personal information and will be less formal). The teachers were also quick to say the students still kept within the schools’ discipline rules and related to them in a more “fun” way. The afterschool staff keep students interested through hands-on activities and giving them choices in what gets taught for enrichment. Some of the teachers also give students incentives, such as parties, outings, and food. Site coordinators know the students and try to talk with them as often as possible. There appears to be mutual respect between staff and students, and between staff and parents. Parents are very happy with the afterschool staff.

### **Site Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Review**

The sites rely on the program’s web site as the initial step in hiring new afterschool staff. Priority is given to the site’s regular day school staff and then, if needed, from a pool of district substitute teachers and or college students majoring in education. Recruitment also occurs through preexisting relationships and referrals. The principal at each site leads the



hiring process with the site coordinator playing an active role (e.g., selecting applications, scheduling interviews, and sitting in on interviews).

The program has a strong emphasis on hiring within their programs and has created a clear career ladder for afterschool employees. The coordinator at one of the sites taught in the afterschool program before her promotion to site coordinator, and the project director was both an instructor and site coordinator. The majority of site staff remain in the afterschool program for several years. Each of the sites have their own activities to recognize the afterschool staff, in addition to the district yearly celebration. Site staff talk about staying in the afterschool program because they “love the children” and really like working with their site coordinator.

Although there is not formal staff review process in place for the afterschool instructors, the site coordinators often provide informal feedback through classroom observations, hallway discussions, and during staff meetings. The principal performs a formal review for the certified teachers in the afterschool program; however, the primary focus of this review is performance during the regular school day.

### **Professional Development for Site Staff**

The project director provides the site coordinators with a toolkit of information, forms, and some activities as a first step to orientation. Additionally, the site coordinators meet with the project director at the beginning of the year. The site coordinator at the middle school was mentored for a few days by other middle school afterschool site coordinators. For the elementary school site coordinator there was no orientation, but that may have been that she had been an afterschool staff member before moving into the position. The site coordinators at the two schools handle orientation for their staff differently. At the elementary school, the site coordinator provides new staff with a folder of information and meets with them individually. She also encourages more senior staff to help new staff. The middle school site coordinator tries to mentor new teachers for a few days in her afterschool program.

Most of the professional development the site staff receives is not through their afterschool program. They generally receive training through the district, often related to being regular day school teachers. Some professional development is offered at each site, provided by the site coordinator and or school principal. The two site coordinators also give staff development during daily meetings, (e.g., just before the program starts) and or in classrooms. The site coordinators are given opportunities to attend conferences at the local, state, and national level; however, neither site coordinator has taken advantage of this opportunity.



**APPENDIX D:**  
**Texas Program**  
**Site Summary**

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**District Afterschool Program Overview**

The Texas program was selected as one of four promising practice programs to participate in a descriptive study of staffing and staff development conducted by the National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning. In the Spring of 2008, interviews were conducted with program staff and staff at two afterschool sites (one elementary school and one middle school). The two sites were selected based on evidence of student achievement gains over time and afterschool goal attainment. Those interviewed included: The program director, 21st CCLC program manager, program regional coordinator, as well as afterschool site coordinators, instructors, college mentors, AmeriCorp volunteers, and parents at both schools.

The Harris County Department of Education in Texas formed an afterschool cooperative in 1999, to ensure that all children living in the county would have access to an afterschool program. Twenty-six County School Superintendents and the Joint City/County Commission on Children endorse the afterschool program. The program utilizes funding from multiple sources and acts as an intermediary between the grant and schools, with the schools being responsible for recruiting and hiring staff members, providing compliance information to afterschool cooperative, implementing the afterschool program and managing the afterschool funds. The program provides training and technical assistance support to their sites.

Academics are a focus across all sites, in addition to a variety of enrichment activities provided by instructors and at least one external provider. Across all sites, the primary goals of the afterschool program focus on meeting the needs of each campus and making the program work for families. To achieve these goals, site coordinators are encouraged to work with their principals to identify campus needs (e.g., using campus improvement plans and reviewing academics) and then target those needs in developing the afterschool activities.

The program director has been there since its inception and was a co-developer of the first 21st CCLC grants. She continues to have a formative role in writing grants and establishing community partnerships for the program. Her primary responsibilities include: acting as a liaison with the County Department of Education, participating school districts

and other government entities; initiating partnerships; and identifying links to other programs (e.g., other Afterschool programs and associations, U.S. Tennis Association, etc.). The program has an organizational structure that separates out special projects (typically community-based initiatives) and standing projects (e.g., afterschool programs) into separate areas. Under each area there are project managers specific to a funding or project area (e.g., 21st CCLC project manager and Child Care/Work Force project manager). The project manager for 21st CCLC programs oversees 60 afterschool sites across 15 school districts and supervises three regional coordinators who work directly with the schools receiving 21st CCLC grants. In addition the project manager provides professional development to afterschool staff, develops and maintains relationships with school districts, and monitors compliance with 21st CCLC requirements. The program administration acts as an intermediary between the funding and service delivery at the schools. The program director and 21st CCLC project manager have limited interactions with the site coordinators and staff because the regional coordinators act as a direct link between the afterschool program and the day schools. For instance, the regional coordinators provide technical assistance to schools and the afterschool program provides staff development opportunities; however, the day schools hire the afterschool site coordinator and instructors and provide the direct services to students.

Regional coordinators are assigned to schools and act as liaisons between the program and the sites. They have relationships with the site coordinator, afterschool staff members, school principals and district superintendents. The responsibilities of regional coordinators include: ensuring sites are providing required data to the afterschool program, providing on-site training to site coordinators on data entry systems and requirements, supporting site coordinators when difficulties arise, and ensuring the afterschool program aligns with 21st CCLC requirements.

All of the 21st CCLC sites operate with a full-time site coordinator and provide services for 3 hours a day, 5 days a week. Selection of activities and scheduling are decisions that vary across sites. Although the daily schedules vary across sites, the typical progression is snack first, to allow the students to relax, before moving to academic and enrichment activities (e.g., homework help, tutoring, soccer, step class, cooking, and other activities based on student interests and staff talents). In addition to programming provided by afterschool staff, all sites are required to engage the services of at least one vendor (e.g., community agencies, businesses, and or community members providing specific services). In order to facilitate relationships with vendors and help schools identify the best fit, the

program conducts a partnership fair at which vendors have booths and all afterschool programs are participants.

The afterschool site coordinator and instructors are embedded within the school by having the principal responsible for hiring. Often the site coordinators have worked in their schools and the afterschool program prior to being hired as the site coordinator. Site coordinators are full-time, have at least a bachelor's degree and 2 years of teaching experience. They work with the principal to recruit and hire afterschool staff and implement the afterschool program. In addition, site coordinators are required to provide data related to 21st CCLC requirements and the external evaluation. Data is typically entered on a daily basis into an online database that the program has created to track and monitor progress. The hiring of afterschool staff is a joint venture between the site coordinator and school principal. Positions are posted through the school district and the site coordinator identifies potential candidates and schedules interviews. Although the majority of instructors are certified teachers, college students and high school graduates are also hired as afterschool staff. Because planning and hiring is done at each site, the afterschool instructors vary from college freshmen to certified regular day school teachers. Instructors within the program are responsible for providing academic support to students, and work with their site coordinator to develop lesson plans for enrichment activities. The program also utilizes AmeriCorp volunteers who are primarily responsible for delivering the Cooperative-developed Kids' Day Program, as well as supporting site coordinators (i.e., data entry and identifying potential vendors).

The Kid's Day program is a project-based learning experience in which students go visit a community business or organization as well as learn in the afterschool class about a particular topic (e.g., aerodynamics is the topic and Continental Airlines is the community partner). This program is in addition to the sites' planned enrichment activities. The program develops curriculum based upon its corporate sponsorship. AmeriCorp volunteers or site staff who have attended curriculum training provide the Kid's Day program.

#### **Afterschool Sites: One Elementary School and One Middle School:**

Both sites are located in urban areas, and provide services 5 days a week. At both sites, the majority of students are African American with various family backgrounds. The elementary school provides 3 hours of activities each day of the week once the regular school day ends. The schedule includes snack, 2 hours of enrichment activities, and approximately 30 minutes of homework help. The middle school operates 1 hour before school and a little over 2 hours afterschool. The morning hour offers homework help and breakfast each day

before school starts. Students are provided snacks prior to starting an hour of tutoring and or academic enrichment activities and an additional hour of open sports in the afternoon.

Both schools have a site coordinator and experienced staff. At the elementary school, the afterschool staff primarily consist of certified regular day school teachers, AmeriCorp volunteers, and an outside vendor (community partner). In addition to instructional staff, the elementary school has one AmeriCorp volunteer, who delivers the Kid's Day Curriculum. The staff at the middle school are primarily college students, enrolled in at least 12 credits per semester, some certified regular day school teachers and assistants, and at least one outside vendor. Both site coordinators had been in their position for at least 2 years and planned to stay through the end of the grant and longer if funding continues. Staff members at both sites enjoy working with the students and enjoy seeing the impact they are making.

### **Relationships Within and Across the Sites**

The site staff describe their relationships with one another as friendly and collegial. Instructional staff at both sites have close ties to their site coordinators and rely upon them to resolve issues and provide feedback on scheduling and lesson plans. Instructors at both sites are comfortable approaching the site coordinator with new programming ideas, as well as concerns about families, students, and other staff members. The site coordinator at the middle school conducts informal staff meetings to bring her staff together. At both sites the site coordinator is the critical link between staff and meeting 21st CCLC requirements in programming, data collection, and communication. One site coordinator indicated she was fairly close to her staff and has an open door policy. The other site coordinator views herself as having a mentoring relationship with her younger staff members.

The communication between site staff and school principals is open and supportive. Site coordinators at both schools have a close relationship with their principals and feel they strongly support the afterschool program. The middle school had designated one of its assistant principals as the main contact or support for the site coordinator. The site coordinator at the elementary school site attends weekly leadership meetings with the school staff. Communication between the afterschool staff and other regular day school staff is informal at both sites. Because several of the afterschool instructors are regular day school staff, they have established relationships with the teachers and feel comfortable approaching them during the school day. In some instances an afterschool instructor will have the same children during the school day as in the afterschool program. At the middle school site there is generally less communication between the afterschool college mentors and the regular day school teachers. Instead, the site coordinator will often approach the regular day school

teachers and then share information with the college mentors. At the elementary school site the AmeriCorp volunteer is familiar with all of the regular day teachers and feels comfortable approaching them informally with questions or concerns about students.

Relationships are also close between the regional coordinators and the afterschool staff, as well as the regular day school staff, at the two sites. The regional coordinators at both sites provide technical assistance to the site coordinators and principals on topics related to the grant. In addition they act as a liaison between the site coordinators and their principals if challenges arise with grant management and compliance. The site coordinators view their regional coordinators as an additional resource to strengthen their afterschool program.

Afterschool staff describe their relationships with students as close. They keep students engaged by providing interesting activities and a variety of choices. The regional coordinators, for both sites, interact with the students as much as possible. At the elementary and middle school sites the parents are very positive about the afterschool program and instructors and feel comfortable approaching their site coordinator and or instructors.

### **Site Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Review**

Both sites recruit staff by posting positions on the program's web site and at schools. The sites also send notices to and recruit from local colleges and universities. Another method used by both sites is personal referrals, either from current or past staff members. Both site coordinators emphasize they look for people who are interested in working with children, as well as being motivated and creative.

Across the programs, the rate of staff turnover is low but varies across sites. The middle school site has a slightly higher rate of turnover of their regular day school teachers in the afterschool program. The site coordinator links this to the changing interests of the students. The majority of the afterschool instructors at the elementary school site have been there for at least 2 years and indicate that they plan to return. The program often promotes from within its afterschool programs, creating a career ladder for some. Principals are responsible for conducting annual reviews for site coordinators and afterschool instructors. The site coordinators will often, informally, provide feedback to instructors. At the program there is a clearly outlined annual review process that takes place for the regional coordinators.

### **Professional Development for Site Staff**

Each afterschool staff member receives the standard orientation from their district employer, mainly touching on administrative topics and not specific to the afterschool. The program provides orientation for its regional coordinators and site coordinators, including

manuals related to the afterschool program. It also holds an annual Fall Afterschool Kickoff (ASK) conference for site coordinators. ASK lasts two days and provides information on the program, compliance issues, and best practices. Both site coordinators have brief informal orientation for their staff at the beginning of the year. Typically, the site coordinator will meet one-on-one with a new staff member for approximately 30 minutes to talk through expectations and goals of the afterschool program. AmeriCorp volunteers and regional coordinators receive a more formalized orientation through the program. For instance, in addition to an orientation meeting, regional coordinators conduct shadow visits with more experienced regional coordinators.

In addition to training on the Kid's Day curriculum, the program provides several opportunities for professional development. During monthly collective meetings, site coordinators receive 2 hours of professional development (topics vary) and an hour of networking and discussion with other 21st CCLC sites and regional coordinators. Other trainings are scheduled throughout the year and it is optional for site coordinators and instructors to attend. Instructors and college mentors at the middle school afterschool site have attended the program- and or other agency-sponsored trainings related to their afterschool activities (e.g., soccer coach certification, digital photography, and robotics). Site coordinators are also encouraged to attend at least one conference a year (local and or national).