SCHOOL & COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION PARTNERSHIPS

In Indiana, out-of-school time (OST) programs have been an essential way to support children, youth and families when school is not in session. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many OST programs stepped up to serve essential workers and families when schools were closed. With the historic financial support that districts will receive via relief funding, youth-serving organizations are challenged with a great opportunity to build strong, intentional school and community partnerships that will support recovery efforts and help students accelerate their learning.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Indiana
21st Century Community
Learning Centers

Soaring Beyond Expectations

Indiana
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
Working Together for Student Success

Supporting the Whole Child

After-school programs can help:

- Provide a safe place where professional educators connect with kids, engage them in hands-on learning, help them navigate challenges, and talk about how to make good decisions
- Focus on the whole child and offer enriching activities that encourage young people to try new things, build confidence, and develop social skills
- Partner with school districts by providing virtual programming, distributing learning activities with school lunches, and offering virtual check-ins and support for working families

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Addressing Inequities

After-school programs can help:

- Reach and serve a significant number of young people from low-income families, rural communities, and racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds
- Provide the space for students from all backgrounds to gain confidence through hands-on, real world learning experiences
- Promote opportunities to connect with businesses and employment fields where minorities and women are traditionally under-represented, such women in STEM

Sustaining Connections to Families and Communities

After-school programs can help:

- Establish and strengthen bridges with families and communities
- Represent the demographics of the groups they serve
- Connect students and families to food, health, economic and other types of support

Boosting Academic Performance

After-school programs are proven to help students get excited about learning and improve their work habits and grades. These programs inspire kids of all ages to love learning by engaging them in creative, hands-on projects that teach foundational skills, like communication, teamwork, and problem solving. Students who regularly participate in afterschool:

- Make gains in reading and math
- Improve their test scores
- Have higher graduation rates
- Participate in class more often
- Attend school at higher rates than those who do not attend OST programming

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Creating More Time for Engaged Learning

After-school programs can help:

- Engage students with additional learning time in a way that feels valuable and rewarding, different but complementary to the school day
- Provide new ways to explore material and ideas
- Reduce the 6,000 hour learning gap between high-income and low-income families

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A 2019 evaluation of Indiana's 21st Century Community Learning Center programs by Diehl Consulting Group found that more than 7 in 10 students with high program participation (90+ days) maintained a B or higher or increased their grade from fall to spring in English and in math. Teachers reported that 56% of students in need of improvement came to school more motivated to learn and 53% improved their classroom behavior.

BEST PRACTICES

WHY PARTNERSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT

Strong partnerships between community organizations and schools are at the core of successful out-of-school time programs. As schools begin planning new ways to support students, utilizing relief funding, OST programs are an opportune partner to keep students on track academically while engaging in a safe and supportive learning environment. Partnerships between schools and community-based organizations (CBOs) should be characterized by: alignment of goals and services, effective lines of communication, and data and resource sharing. Meaningful, active collaboration maximizes the use of community resources and fosters creative learning solutions that engage young people and their families. Well-aligned OST programs provide a broad array of enrichment activities that reinforce and complement the regular academic programs of the school, but look and feel different than the regular school day.

"Our tutoring program is one of the strongest elements in the elementary after-school program, all done by teachers. They have a good connection between the school day and afterschool because it's the same teachers that are helping in the afterschool program and they know the kids. The teachers take ownership in it… They love the after-school program, and they encourage it big time with parents and with kids. They believe in it. It's not an extra thing for them. It's an essential part of the school ." - 2018-2019 21st CCLC State Evaluation

Partnership

Create a strong Memorandum of Understanding that includes details about which party is responsible for:

- Providing Space
- Data Sharing
- Transportation
- Meals and Snacks
- Grant Administration

Programming

Utilize a needs assessment, school improvement plan, teacher/parent/student surveys, and academic data to determine how to best serve the students in your community. Prioritize providing programming that is enriching and aligns with the social emotional and academic needs of your students. Remember that for many students, OST is optional, so create programming that will be fun and exciting to encourage regular attendance.

Communication

Meet with the leadership team from both the **local educational agency (LEA)** and **CBO** to determine preferred methods of communication, frequency of meetings, main contacts, and to create shared goals for the students and families you will serve.

Staffing

Determine what qualities, credentials, and qualifications you would like your OST staff to possess. Discuss which parties will be a part of the hiring and staff management. If the program intends to hire school day staff, determine if pay must align with the LEA's pay schedule.

Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation & YMCA of Southwestern Indiana

EVANSVILLE, IN

Grades Served: K-12

Program Focus: STEM

Fiscal Agent: Local Educational Agency (LEA)

PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC) serves as the fiscal agent for eight after-school programs in their district. The LEA also partners with the YMCA of Southwestern Indiana to provide OST programming at two elementary schools and one middle school in their district. The LEA manages and pays for staff and transportation, purchases supplies and equipment, administers the grant, and provides snacks and meals via the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program, For programs that are fiscally managed by the YMCA of Southwestern Indiana, the CBO manages and pays for staff and transportation, purchases supplies and equipment, and administers the grant; the LEA provides snacks and meals via the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program.

STAFFING

At EVSC, building principals help select staff that are passionate about serving kids in a less structured environment. They look for staff who can build community and a positive culture in the OST program. They also market their program as an opportunity for school day staff to be creative and work with students in smaller groups, which interests teachers. Most of the staff in their program is comprised of teachers, instructional assistants and other school personnel. The program also employs community members, but academics are facilitated by certified teachers. Each site employs one Site Coordinator, teachers, and assistants.

The Program Director manages the Site Coordinators and works to ensure they have a finger on the pulse of each school, but tries not to micromanage their staff. The program is intentional about hiring and retaining staff that are able to use the existing assets of their school and community and can become experts at serving students and families.

"WE HAVE FOUND THAT, IF KIDS ARE IN OUR PROGRAMS, THEY ARE IN THE SCHOOLS. THAT'S THE THING THAT KEEPS THEM COMING. KIDS VOTE WITH THEIR FEET AND THEY WANT TO BE IN ENGAGING PROGRAMS. DURING THE SCHOOL DAY, WE HAVE SEEN PARTICIPANTS' BEHAVIOR TAKE AN UPTICK. IF THIS WAS THE ONLY THING OUR PROGRAM PROVIDED, THAT WOULD BE FANTASTIC, BUT WE ARE REALLY LUCKY THAT WE ARE ABLE TO MOVE THE NEEDLE WITH THESE KIDS IN TERMS OF THEIR ACADEMICS AS WELL."
-DEREK MCKILLOP, EVANSVILLE VANDERBURGH SCHOOL CORPORATION

PROGRAMMING

Every individual who serves students in the OST program (community partners, district staff, and community members) is encouraged to participate in district training. Training focuses on de-escalation and GAIN (Growth in Academics through Innovation and Neuroeducation), which is EVSC's Comprehensive Framework for Student Success. Because the OST program is often able to connect with parents more often than school day staff, they engage with the parents and share how behavior management tactics like mindfulness and de-escalation used in school can be used at home.

To support learning and growth, teachers lead the academic portion of the program. Each location has a Site Coordinator who engages with teachers and attends grade level meetings. The Site Coordinators uses information from grade level meetings to ensure the program is incorporating solutions to school day issues into the OST program. For EVSC, afterschool is not a separate program, it's just an extension of school day efforts.

Enrichment programming and family engagement is provided by several community partners (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, YMCA, YWCA, etc.). These partnerships allow the community partners to meet their own organizational goals while also providing services and experiences that can't be provided for by the district. Many of the community partners participate in walk-throughs in each building that are designed to ensure that schools are accessible and family-friendly.

COMMUNICATION

To ensure the after-school and school day staff are in alignment, the LEA has hired a full time Program Director to manage the OST program. The Program Director manages communication and has bi-weekly meetings with every school. During these meetings, the leadership team discusses attendance trends, family engagement efforts, the advisory council, program operations, successes, and concerns. Communication is also conducted informally via text, email, and in-person interactions.

PROMISING PRACTICES

Build authentic relationships with your local after-school Regional Learning Network -The Evansville community has a strong coalition that works to collectively support the young people in their community. Many of the program's community partners and coalition members participate in their school's advisory boards. When the after-school program lost funding, many of the coalition members and community partners stepped in to support students and provide services. Derek McKillop, Program Director, shared, "A lot of times people think funding is contingent. And although money, funding, and contracts make the world go around, I think if you have those relationships, you can find ways to survive, even when things break down."

97%	76%	80%
of regular attendees in grades two through five earned a "C" or better or increased their ELA/reading grade from fall to spring during the 2018-2019 school year.	of students reported that the afterschool program helped improve their relationship skills (e.g., making friends, getting along better with classmates) during the 2018-2019 school year.	of parents reported regular participation ("a few times a week" to "daily") in talking to their child about the school day during the 2018-2019 school year.

Steuben Literacy Coalition & Prairie Heights School Corporation, Fremont Community Schools, MSD Steuben County & Hamilton Community Schools

ANGOLA, IN
Grades Served: K-8
Program Focus: STEM
Fiscal Agent: Community-Based Organization (CBO)

PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

The CBO manages and pays for staff, purchases supplies and equipment, and administers the grant; the LEA provides snacks and meals via the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program, The CBO pays for transportation, and the LEA uses their buses and bus drivers and coordinates the route. This partnership serves kids at seven program sites from four school districts. Additional program partners include: Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), Purdue Extension/4-H, local nursing homes, senior living facilities, and more.

STAFFING

The program is managed by two leaders: one focused on elementary and one focused on middle and high school. The Executive Director of the CBO spends half of their time managing the OST program. The LEA is available for troubleshooting, data collection, and meetings when necessary.

Each location has a Site Coordinator who is responsible for connecting with school day staff, planning, and coordinating family engagement. The organization prefers to hire staff who are licensed or retired teachers. They also hire instructional assistants, paraprofessionals, and anyone with two or more years of college. For applicants with a high school diploma who would like to be part of the organization, Steuben Literacy Coalition pays for the paraprofessional examination for their staff. For many former students, an opportunity to return to their after-school program as staff is also an option. Any applicants that are between 16 and 18 years old can volunteer with a letter of recommendation from a teacher or coach.

"WE DO THE WORK TO ENSURE THESE KIDS ARE GOING TO SUCCEED IN THE CLASSROOM. I THINK THAT THE NUMBER ONE BENEFIT OF OUR PROGRAM IS SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL). SEL IS INVALUABLE! WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO REALLY DIVE INTO THIS IN AN AFTER-SCHOOL SETTING."

-KATHY ARMSTRONG, STEUBEN LITERACY COALITION

COMMUNICATION

Steuben County Literacy Coalition relies on both informal and formal communication methods with the LEA to build a strong relationship. Each program location has a Site Coordinator who actively connects with school day personnel to ensure the OST program is providing lesson plans and accommodations that align with the school day. To ensure students are meeting their academic goals, the Site Coordinators have created a few ways to determine which students have homework and missing assignments. Some sites have a form that they put in teachers' mailboxes for each student, some have a folder where teachers can write notes to after-school staff, and others review student planners when they arrive to the program. Staff at Steuben Literacy Coalition shared, "We're really sensitive not to make more work for the classroom teachers. At the end of the day, we are there to support them and we try not to ask for more than we need."

PROGRAMMING

This organization has created programming that aligns with the priorities of the school day while providing hands-on experiences that are different from the experiences of the school day. The program uses standards-based programs that keeps their kids engaged in daily activities. They also offer incentives like weekend field trips that encourage regular attendance in OST. Steuben County Literacy Coalition partners with JDAI to provide food, supplies, and books for family engagement events.

For students who may not have an interest in or access to sports or the arts, the program has found that their Lego Robotics program has engaged additional students. Students are able to learn more about STEM careers and compete in robotics competitions because the program is able to pay and provide transportation for everyone.

Every student who attends the program is given time to complete homework and has access to tutoring and homework help during OST.

PROMISING PRACTICES

Customize communication efforts- Program staff have made an effort to customize their communication efforts with each of their stakeholders. For their families, they use the Remind App to allow them to select the method of communication that works for them. Since many school leaders have busy schedules, the program actively works with leadership to communicate in a way that is not overwhelming or time consuming. This means that informal communication like texts and quick conversations in the hallways happen more frequently than formal meetings. For some teachers, filling out forms about homework and missing assignments was not feasible. To ensure that OST is still able to support students, the program asked teachers to write their assignments on the chalkboard instead. OST staff arrive to the school a few minutes early for programming and they visit each classroom to see what students should be working on.

91%
of regular participants demonstrated improved classroom grades from fall to spring during the 2018-2019 school year.

87%
of regular participants improved in classroom behavior as documented by their teachers during the 2018-2019 school year.

85%
of regular participants' parents self-reported that they assisted their child with a school project during the 2018-2019 school year.

Communities in Schools of Clark County & Silver Creek School Corporation, Borden/Henryville School Corporation, Clarksville Community School Corporation & Greater Clark County Schools

JEFFERSONVILLE, IN

Grades Served: 1-12
Program Focus: STEM, SEL, & Literacy
Fiscal Agent: Community Based Organization (CBO)

PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

The CBO manages and pays for staff, purchases supplies and equipment, and administers the grant; the LEA provides snacks and meals via the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the CBO manages the partnership with Dare to Care, who serves meals for students in southern Indiana. This program partners with their districts to provide 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) programming to low-income students and fee-for-service extended day learning programming following the 21st CCLC program model.

STAFFING

Communities in Schools of Clark County hires, manages, and pays the staff for their OST programs. Each program location has a Site Coordinator who takes on the majority of the responsibilities for the program.

This organization prefers to hire staff who have experience in education and can relate to school culture. Communities in Schools of Clark County actively recruits staff that have part-time positions at the district to work afterschool. This provides an opportunity for part-time staff to become more financially secure while also helping the OST program retain staff and build relationships with the school.

The elementary school staff who don't work during the school day arrive two hours before the program to stop by classrooms and talk to teachers. At the secondary level, they contract with school day staff as liaisons who have access to the building and are willing to speak for the OST program during the day. Their liaisons serve as counselors, academic coaches, and administrative assistants during the school day.

PROGRAMMING

To ensure that the OST program is aligned with school improvement efforts and the academic need of the students, Communities in Schools of Clark County relies on the relationship with the principal. The Program Director meets with the principal at least twice a year to talk about what's working and what's not working in their school. Principals complete a needs assessment and evaluation for the program twice a year. Often, school principals will refer students to OST programming when they believe they are in need of additional academic and social emotional support. The program uses this feedback in addition to information from teacher, student, and parent surveys to prioritize and plan for the year.

COMMUNICATION

Communities in Schools of Clark County provided school day support before they began serving students in OST. The existing relationship paved the way for the program to work well for their community. LEA and CBO leadership meet via video conference and phone calls at least twice a year. Site Coordinators and program staff are in constant contact with school leadership and teachers. At the secondary level, liaisons keep a pulse on what is going on during the school day via a combination of formal and informal meetings and connections. The program also sends newsletters to the teachers and principals about the program with pictures and stories about what students are doing in afterschool.

For this organization, partnership is all about relationships. Creating strong, authentic relationships has helped the program navigate difficult conversations. Michelle Allen, Director of Programs shared, "When there are issues, the positive relationship can offset the negative. Try to build good, quality interactions to soften the blow when things don't go as planned."

PROMISING PRACTICES

Focus on program quality- Program staff use data, evaluation, and feedback from their students and families to consistently improve their program. They have learned that programs that meet the needs of students while also providing an enjoyable experience will yield high attendance in programs. Site staff work hard to create activities and enrichment opportunities that make students want to attend and bring their friends. Site Coordinators frequently pull attendance reports to review attendance trends and identify students who have missed programming. Staff are encouraged to reach out to kids and families to let them know they are missed and to encourage them to return to OST.

> "AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL, WE CONTRACT WITH SCHOOL DAY STAFF AS LIAISONS. THEY REALLY HELP WITH RECRUITING AND BEING A STRONG VOICE AT THE SCHOOL."
>
> -MICHELLE ALLEN, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF CLARK COUNTY

100%	88%	75%
of regular attendees improved or needed no improvement to their academic performance in the spring as reported by school day teachers during the 2018-2019 school year.	of regular attendees had no suspensions during the 2018-2019 school year.	of high school parents reported reviewing their child's grades on assignments and tests during the 2018-2019 school year.

The Starke County Youth Club & Knox Community School Corporation, North Judson-San Pierre Schools, & Oregon-Davis School Corporation

KNOX, IN

Grades Served: K-12
Program Focus: STEM
Fiscal Agent: Community Based Organization (CBO)

PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

The CBO manages and pays for staff, purchases supplies and equipment, and administers the grant; the LEA provides snacks and meals via the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program, The LEAs are contracted to coordinate transportation, and the CBO pays the LEA. The OST staff share classrooms with school day teachers.

STAFFING

All OST staff are hired, screened, and trained by the Starke County Youth Club. They employ certified Child and Youth Care professionals, education majors, community members, paraprofessionals, teachers, recess workers, and cafeteria workers. The program also employs high school students, many of whom were in the program as kids, to serve as teachers' aides. Some of the after-school staff are also employed by the LEA.

When looking for staff, they hope to find individuals who are patient, caring, and thoughtful. Not all of the staff in the OST program are credentialed or teachers, so the CBO is equipped to provide additional training and support. The program also offers OST-focused training for school day teachers. Each location has one full-time Site Coordinator who is dedicated to the program. They are responsible for managing their own team, program planning, family engagement, and building relationships with school personnel. Every Site Coordinator has their own office in the school building, access to printing, and their own phone line.

PROMISING PRACTICES

Create a strong data sharing agreement with your district - Program staff have found that access to student data is an important aspect of supporting their growth. Having a FERPA release on each student is helpful as well. The staff at the OST program and the school talk about data and gather it often. This helps the two parties find common ground and work together for academic results.

Share student attendance expectations with families - The Starke County Youth Club informs kids and families, during registration, of their expectations in terms of attendance in their Family Handbook. They want parents to know that the OST program is not just a drop-in program and their students will benefit from regular attendance.

COMMUNICATION

The Knox, IN community hosts an annual partnership luncheon. The Starke County Youth Club uses this opportunity to make informal connections with school leaders and potential program partners. The program frequently reaches out to their partners and asks for feedback, to share data, and to invite them to join their self-assessment team. Over the years, they have learned that asking the question "How do we make our programs better for kids?" is a welcome and important conversation for all stakeholders in their community.

At the school level, the Program Director meets with superintendents and the Site Coordinators meet with school principals on a regular basis. The Site Coordinators also meet with administrators or teaching staff to offer help with school day concerns and to disseminate relevant information about programming, student performance, and behavior. Since Site Coordinators have an office in each building, it's not uncommon for teachers to come by with extra homework and ideas to support students who are struggling. Both parties know their kids well and work together help students achieve their goals.

PROGRAMMING

For school leadership in this community, the academic and personal wellness aspect of the OST program is most beneficial for their students. The Starke County Youth Club provides structured and supportive programming that allows students to feel comfortable, safe, and good about themselves. Irene Szakonyi, Executive Director shares, "the more people are contributing to kids, who are building a network of support, and providing protective factors around kids. the better the kid, the family, the community is… once you understand that, you can't deny it's importance… these partnerships are good for kids and families!"

In their OST program, they focus on academic achievement and support, but they also work to ensure their kids become good humans by helping them express themselves, develop to their best potential, and build healthy relationships.

Since the relationship between OST and school day personnel is so strong, students benefit by having programming that is customized to the issues they may be facing during the school day. The school principal might notice that their third graders are struggling with a certain concept and will communicate this with the Site Coordinator. The OST program can easily adjust their lessons for that week, pivot, and help support learning this concept in OST.

> "KIDS WHO ATTEND AFTERSCHOOL HAVE BETTER SCHOOL DAY ATTENDANCE BECAUSE THEY WANT TO STAY AFTER. PARENTS HAVE SAID THEIR KIDS DON'T WANT TO GET UP FOR SCHOOL BUT WILL GET UP IF THEY ARE REMINDED THAT THEY HAVE OST LATER."
>
> -IRENE SZAKONYI, THE STARKE COUNTY YOUTH CLUB

84%
of regularly attending students in kindergarten through grade five earned a B or better or improved fall to spring during the 2018-2019 school year.

89%
of regularly attending students reported that this program helps them make healthy choices during the 2018-2019 school year.

98%
of families engaged with their child's school by participating in at least one school event during the 2018-2019 school year.

RESOURCES

Partnership Resources:

▶ **WEBINAR:**
ESSENTIALS FOR OST AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

YOU FOR YOUTH
- SCHOOL-DAY PARTNERSHIPS: IT'S MORE THAN ALIGNMENT, IT'S CONTINUOUS EDUCATION!
- CONTINUOUS EDUCATION COURSE
- HEALTH AND WELLNESS: PARTNERING WITH THE SCHOOL DAY
- STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

OTHER PARTNERSHIP RESOURCES
- AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE COMMUNITY LEARNING HUBS
- WESTED ADVANCING STUDENT SUCCESS: ALIGNING IN-SCHOOL AND AFTER-SCHOOL LEARNING
- NAESP LEADING AFTERSCHOOL LEARNING COMMUNITIES
- CONNECTING AFTERSCHOOL AND SCHOOL: 15 WAYS TO IMPROVE PARTNERSHIPS

Out-of-School Time Resources
- AFTERSCHOOL AND SUMMER LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE
- 21ST CCLC PROGRAM AND CONFERENCE RESOURCE LIST
- AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE GUIDE
- RESEARCHED BASED CURRICULA
- TITLE FUNDING OPTIONS TO SUPPORT OST PROGRAMS
- CONNECTING AFTERSCHOOL AND SCHOOL: 15 WAYS TO IMPROVE PARTNERSHIP

INDIANA Afterschool NETWORK

Indiana Academy on Out-of-School Learning:
The high-quality online training hub is specifically designed for after-school professionals. Join hundreds of Indiana OST professionals in the Academy. All courses are aligned with the IN Afterschool Standards, CYC credentials, and CCDF requirements. Recommended Indiana Academy trainings:
Building Relationships with School Personnel
Engaging the Community in Quality Summer Programs

www.indianaafterschool.org