CALIFORNIA

Campaign For Quality!

PROMISING PRACTICES FROM
CALIFORNIA'S HIGH SCHOOL
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

A Publication of the California Afterschool Network

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

CAMPAIGN FOR QUALITY!

PROMISING PRACTICES FROM CALIFORNIA'S HIGH SCHOOL AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

In Fall 2010, the California Afterschool Network released the California High School After School Program Quality Self-Assessment Rubric (QSAR) to establish a framework to measure program outcomes and quality for high school after school programs in California and across the nation.

The Campaign for Quality! Promising Practices from California's High School After School Programs is a companion to the QSAR, created to support program quality by sharing promising practices of high school after school programs statewide.

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T his guide is an installment of the California Afterschool Network Campaign for Quality. The Campaign for Quality seeks to connect after school practitioners to research-supported promising practices grounded in field experience. This Guide seeks to highlight people, programs, and successful practices that are supported by research and achieving successful results in California's high school After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) programs.

The framework for this guide came from the *High School After School Program Quality Self-Assessment Rubric (QSAR).*
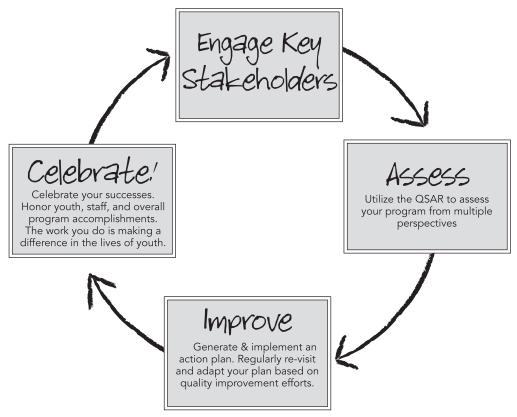
WE INVITE YOU TO USE THIS GUIDE TO:

- **Learn how** a specific practice contributes to after school program quality.
- **Pick up tips** from leading after school practitioners.
- **Position your program with stakeholders** by showcasing ways in which your program aligns with expectations and reflects identified promising practices from the field.
- **Find more information** about the practice through links to web pages, articles and tool kits.

ABOUT THE HIGH SCHOOL INNOVATOR AWARDS

Want even more information from outstanding high school after school programs about promising practices? Learning what the California After School Network's 2010 *High School Innovator Award* winners is a great next step! The Innovator Awards offers the opportunity for statewide individuals to nominate their peers for recognition of their innovative practices and stellar achievements in the areas of Student Achievement, Youth Development and Leadership, Career and Work Skills Development, Collaboration and Partnerships, Engaging Enrichment and Leadership and Vision. The first Innovator Award recipients were honored at a public reception at the *2010 Step Up High School Summit* and information about them are included at the end of the Guide.

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[1] *To ensure you are in grant compliance, reach out to your regional TA team to discuss strategies that are within grant requirements.*

Engage Key Stakeholders

Assess
Utilize the QSAR to assess your program from multiple perspectives

Improve
Generate & implement an action plan. Regularly re-visit and adapt your plan based on quality improvement efforts.

Celebrate!
Celebrate your successes. Honor youth, staff, and overall program accomplishments. The work you do is making a difference in the lives of youth.

The QSAR helps programs analyze their current program quality and serves as a roadmap for program improvement in relation to five main categories and nine elements/disciplines.

MAIN CATEGORIES OF THE QSAR

Schools
Students
Operations
Program Design
Collaboration

ELEMENTS/DISCIPLINES WITHIN THE QSAR

School Partnership: Is the program an integral part of the school as measured by administrative and school staff support, and its alignment with the instructional day?

Student Achievement: Does the program have high expectations to increase student achievement and close the achievement gap by offering academic and personal supports?

Youth Development and Partnering with Youth: Does the program demonstrate a strong youth development component where young people experience supportive peer-to-peer relationships, participate in engaging learning activities that promote 21st Century skills and have a real voice in the operation of the after school program?

Program Operations and Staffing: Are the operational policies and procedures of the program designed to ensure delivery of an effective array of services to the young people it serves as measured by program vision and management, staff recruitment, and training?

Data Collection and Program Evaluation: Does the program have access to data, know how to reflect on the data with the instructional day, and then use that understanding to identify student and school needs as well as to articulate program and student accomplishments to all stakeholders?

Program Administration: Does the program understand the requirements of the ASSETs grant? Do they also have structures in place for community sustainability and program monitoring?

Program Design: Is the program designed to ensure that all of the required components are available and that students participate in experiential learning activities that will equip them to be successful both now and when they pursue future career, educational, or workforce opportunities?

Program Attendance: Is the program attracting not only sufficient numbers of students to remain viable, but also is it attracting the students most in need of program services?

Collaboration and Community Engagement: What kinds of relationships does the program have with local governmental, community based organizations, and small businesses to develop opportunities for high school youth, not only at the school site but especially in the greater community?

PERFORMANCE LEVELS

Each section of the rubric has three categories to measure programs' overall development: Early, Developing, and Mature.

CONTINUUM DEFINITIONS

	EARLY	DEVELOPING	MATURE	EVIDENCE	ACTION
Continuum Definitions	Stage of program development where there is no or very limited development of recognized best practices for working with high school and older youth.	Stage of program development in which some recognized best practices for working with high scholl and older youth are present although there may be elements which could clearly be improved	Stage of development that demonstrates consistent use of recognized best practices working with high school and older youth and can serve as a model fo other programs	Cite examples of: material items, documents, data results, etc., that clearly indicates work accomplished in the respective stage.	Record what actions you took that support your mark, and can also be support to your cited evidence?

Whether a program is at an Early, Developing, or Mature stage will depend upon the Evidence that the program can produce to justify the particular rating. Additionally important will be the aligned Actions taken to support the evidence cited and stage selected.

THE QSAR QUALITY EQUATION

**PL = E + A
(Performance Level = Evidence + Action)**

This is key to success!

ACADEMIC ALIGNMENT WITH THE INSTRUCTIONAL DAY

The after school program is clearly recognized as an integral component of the school program.

At the heart of successful after school learning opportunities are strong, sustainable partnerships between after school staff and instructional day staff.

Research shows that youth, schools, and after school programs each benefit from working together to support learning. For youth, these benefits include improved emotional, social, and academic skills. For school-day teachers, this can mean reinforcement of instructional day learning. For after school providers, this can include access to the expertise and resources offered by the instructional day.

Consistent and frequent communication with school administrators and after school program staff is essential! But how do you bridge the link to the instructional day in order to provide a seamless day for youth?

Kim Boyer of the Central Valley Afterschool Foundation and Christina Hale-Nardi from Creative Before and After School Programs for Success at San Bernardino Unified School District share some promising practices they have seen:

Convene all stakeholders. Bring all stakeholders to the table for intentional conversations about funding sources, instructional day needs, and the after school program's needs. This includes everyone from your athletic director, school counselors, the principal, school department heads, and other after school activity leaders. Discuss how everyone at the table can best benefit from collaboration with the after school program.

Frame your conversations around program expectations and outcomes. Holding conversations with instructional day staff in a way that frames the conversation around program quality is a great way to get school staff familiarized with what your program can do and is striving to achieve. At one high school site in San Bernardino, the QSAR is being used to start conversations about what the after school program is determined to achieve, and allows after school and instructional day staff to get on the same page about what high quality looks like.

Understand the Site Coordinators' role and commitment. Building the bridge between the after school program and instructional day requires a lot of hard work. It is imperative for site coordinators to be onsite during the instructional day, preferably full time. Being visible, present and available to be in on staff meetings is a time-tested way to integrate the instructional day and after school program.

> ## Try this Tip!
>
> *Bring stakeholders to the table to have intentional discussions, facilitate collaboration, and build partnerships! This includes everyone from your athletic director, school counselors, school department heads, and other instructional teachers and after school program staff.*

Look at your students' academic data as a way to track their progress. Looking at the academic progress of after school participants and finding links to your after school program is a great way to start and build on conversations with school day staff. Use participants' GPAs, CAHSEE and CST scores, and instructional day attendance to identify ways in which your program can support the school administration's goals.

Utilizing Instructional Day Teachers. Hiring instructional day teachers that are well known to be "kid magnets," or have demonstrated support for the after school program make them prime candidates to work with, and for, the after school program. Teachers usually fit into one of four different roles:

> **1)** A representative and advocate for the after school program to the instructional day's administration, credentialed and classified staff;

> **2)** An instructional liaison to assure that the after school program is aware of what is being currently taught in the instructional day, so that complimentary instruction can be provided in the after school program;

> **3)** A provider of academic coaching of the Site Coordinator as well as providing information, trainings, and instructional materials for the rest of the after school program staff; and

> **4)** An instructor in the after school program, which provides the most direct alignment with the instructional day, as well as helping create the "seamless school day" feeling that mature programs should demonstrate.

ACADEMICS AND SUPPORTS

The after school program offers a wide variety of academic supports for student progress towards promotion and graduation, including: homework assistance, tutoring, targeted interventions, credit recovery classes, preparation for high school exit, and identifies possible classes students could take at local community colleges, etc.

For high school students, graduating from high school and preparing for life after graduation are top priorities. After school programs can help youth build academic skills in order to graduate and be better prepared for college.

Teens are motivated to join out-of-school time programs that will help them earn academic credits and better prepare them for college. What better way to get students motivated to participate in your after school program and improve their academic success than by providing activities that will do both?

Bill Fennessy and Catherine Estes share a few key tips. Bill Fennessy is the Director of High School Programs at THINK Together, a non-profit after school provider serving youth throughout California that has implemented Credit Recovery, Athletic Tutorials, and programs for underperforming 9th grade students. Catherine Estes, Site Coordinator at McLane High School after school program in Fresno, offers credit recovery, tutoring, and a variety of academic supports for each grade level at their school sites.

Build your relationship with instructional day staff. If one of your goals is to build participants' academic skills, you can't do it without partnering with instructional day staff. They can help to identify your youths' needs and assist with the design and implementation of targeted interventions.

Don't expect this to happen overnight. Dedicate time in designing your academic activities by attending school meetings and building your rapport with the school staff, including the principal, counselors, and teachers. Learn the various acronyms that are used in secondary education and become familiar with the issues at your school site.

Don't limit yourself to meetings you think are only relevant to you or your program. Attend as many instructional day meetings as you as possible to build your knowledge about the students and provide valuable context about the school program. That way, when you approach instructional day staff with ideas of how the after school program can best support the instructional day, you have good knowledge of what that need is and how best the program can fill it.

Data is your biggest tool; don't fear it! Often, when people hear the word 'data', they ask, 'What does that mean? How do I use it?' Data that is useful for after school programs can be packaged in a way that is easily accessible for program staff. Whether looking at GPA matrices, CAHSEE and/or CST result, the percent of students not scoring proficient on benchmark tests, or youth who are chronically absent, this information can help you to craft effective activities for struggling students.

At Blair High School in Pasadena, Bill Fennessy (then Site Coordinator with Pasadena LEARNS) found that students who were not graduating were behind by 15 to 20 units—equaling 4 classes! He started a Credit Recovery course in after school to help students earn the credits they need to graduate. The high school also crafted differentiated targeted 9th grade interventions for students who have a GPA below 2.0 and those with a 1.0 or lower.

Build a stronger tutoring program. At McLane High School, each Monday students do a grade check with tutors to track their progress and document their tutoring next steps. These tutor logs have helped facilitate conversations that counselors have had with instructional school day teachers to intentionally discuss the level of effort and work that students are doing to achieve in their school day classes.

Be willing to try—even if you fail the first few times. Acknowledging that some processes may not work the first time is important. The key is to continually make adjustments to improve your program. If you are providing support around an identified academic need, then it is a matter of finding how best to implement it, not whether the activity should exist.

For example, at Blair High School, the Athletic Tutoring took three years to run smoothly. Tutoring directly after school did not work because of scheduled football practices. In response to student need and availability and conflicting activity offerings, tutoring for athletes was scheduled to meet from 6:30 pm -7:30 pm. All good programming requires continual improvement, so keep making the necessary adjustments and be flexible to meet the academic needs of your youth.

> ## Try this Tip!
>
> *Program improvement means continually assessing and tweaking your program. Be encouraged to try something out and acknowledge that it might not work the first time, so keep trying and revising!*

Partner with local colleges to best address your youths' academic needs. Local colleges in your program's neighborhood can provide great services that best fit the needs of your youth. At Stagg High School in Stockton, the after school program partners with El Concilio to figure out the best ways to meet the academic needs of students. In response to the school's identified needs, El Concilio provides a career readiness class to youth, a social support class for youth who are trying to turn their lives around, and works with San Joaquin Delta College and the University of the Pacific to support students in Math and English Language Arts homework help, a focus of the school in the last few months of the school year.

YOUTH INPUT AND DECISION MAKING

Youth are engaged in the design and implementation of the program; they plan, lead and run many program activities. The after school program and activities have adult-youth shared partnership.

Engaging older youth is particularly challenging, given the competing priorities of work, care-giving duties of younger siblings, and socializing with peers. Given this, how do after school programs recruit and retain youth?

A key feature to retaining youth is to provide multiple leadership opportunities for all young people. When older youth gain leadership experience including planning, decision-making, and executing activities, they are acquiring skills relevant to their future after high school.

Stu Semigran of EduCare Foundation, one of the community partners of Los Angeles Unified School District's Beyond the Bell Take Action Leadership Campaign, describes effective strategies that EduCare has employed with 2,000 youth in 29 Los Angeles high schools:

Listen intentionally to your youth. Youth will tell you what they want and will vote with their feet. Older youth gravitate towards activities that are of most interest to them, and will spend the time to design, plan, and execute those activities. Asking youth what they want and need is a great way to identify the student leaders who are interested and motivated enough to shepherd the activities along.

For instance, at one local high school program with a majority Latino population, Mr. Semigran discovered youth wanted a Korean Club. When he pressed the kids further to assess how committed youth were to starting it, he discovered they wanted to learn the language for gaming purposes, and encouraged them to find a willing teacher and recruit youth for the Club, both of which they did.

Step Up, Step Back. Program activities should be youth-centered, not directed or controlled by program staff. The guideline to "Step Up, Step Back" can be applied to you and your youth in the program. Once you've given youth the tools to lead, have them step up to the challenge of facilitating, while you step back and let them take on leadership responsibilities. As Mr. Semigran stated, "When you continually raise the bar on youth, they not only rise up to meet you; they far surpass anything you thought imaginable."

Continually build youth leadership skills. Don't just give training to youth at the beginning of the year and let them fend for themselves afterward. Providing continual training, feedback, and opportunities to refresh and develop skills are great ways for youth leaders to continually learn and build skills. The Take Action Leadership Campaign provides ongoing trainings throughout the year, including 1:1 coaching, trainings on classroom management, and team management skill building workshops to support youth to be successful leaders in their after school programs.

> ## Try this Tip!
>
> Offer continuous training, coaching, and mentoring to youth to help them develop new skills. Don't stop training your youth after the beginning of the year. Provide youth ongoing training and feedback- these are great opportunities for youth to refresh, build on, and develop skills!

UNDERSTANDING OLDER YOUTH PROGRAMMING

After school program staff have a strong understanding of older youth and their needs and demonstrate how best to engage and support them.

Older youth gravitate towards programs designed to teach content and skills they want to learn, are interested in having responsibility through job-like programs, and thrive on opportunities to explore and prepare for college and life after graduation.

High quality after school programs respond to these unique circumstances by hiring staff that understand older youth, with knowledge of what high school youth find engaging and who can be responsive to their unique interests and needs.

But how do you recruit and retain highly qualified after school staff? What are key strategies that will help you find the best fit for your high school after school program? John Fuentes of Encinal High School in Alameda, California provided a few tips for site coordinators:

Start with what your youth need. When considering staffing needs, start with feedback from the people who matter most: your youth. By finding out from older youth what activities they would like to see in their after school program, you can build a hiring strategy looking for staff strong in those content areas.

After School Program and High School Alumni can be your strongest advocates.
College graduates from your high school have an automatic investment in your school community. Alumni might also have existing relationships with youth and instructional day staff that can help in building rapport between the after school program, the instructional day, and youth. Recruiting internally also increases the chances of finding staff who understand your youths needs, the daily experiences of your school, and how best to support your youth. At Encinal High School, Mr. Fuentes recruits alumni who graduated from college, are passionate about working with young people, and are invested in the community.

Send staff to as many professional development opportunities as possible. Colleagues are the best experts in letting you know if an activity is successful on the ground. Use professional development, trainings, and other networking events to share and hear back from others. These opportunities bring staff into regular contact with like-minded professionals leading to formal and informal sharing of strategies. Have staff attend as many additional professional development opportunities as possible and make the time to share back promising practices and lessons learned with the broader program team.

> # Try this Tip!
>
> *Check out recent alumni who've graduated college—they could be your strongest advocates and new staff! Alumni generally know the school well, have connections with current students, and can relate to youth's daily experience at school.*

Tap into your school community. Your instructional day teachers are invested both in your youth and the school in which they are working. Building relationships with teachers to partner in the after school program will go a long way toward building connections between the instructional day while also providing a seamless day for youth. At Encinal High, Mr. Fuentes asks youth about their favorite teachers, and also builds partnerships with department heads at the school to tap into strong teachers who might work in the after school program, volunteer their rooms to use, or participate in field trips.

DATA TO INFORM PRACTICE

The after school program clearly uses data to determine achievement of program goals and objectives, overall program effectiveness, and improvement in student achievement.

How do you know if your after school program is working? Whether through asking youth at the end of an activity, year-end surveys to parents, or examining participants' grades and test scores, after school programs can use all types of data to inform ongoing improvement.

Effective after school programs use data not only to check in on what's working, but also to find out what can be improved and strengthened in the future. Data can also be useful in fulfilling grant requirements, supporting program-level planning, gauging demand for certain activities, facilitating staff reflection and advocating for more funding. In this way, using program quality assessments in a proactive way can help to assure the best service for youth.

Choua Yang, Afterschool Program Manager at Luther Burbank High School in Sacramento, Heather dos Remedios, Program Specialist at San Gorgonio High School in San Bernardino, Craig Orona of ActivAlliances, Inc., Bill Fennessy at THINK Together and William Baker of Beyond the Bell offer some practical ways to use data to inform program quality- using academic data, an observation tool like the QSAR, and soliciting youth input.

LOOK AT ATTENDANCE, ACADEMIC DATA, AND STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA.

Once program staff know how to access it, there is a wealth of data that a program can use to understand the academic needs of both the school and the students the program serves. For any high school program, there are two main sources of data that any program can access. The first is the California Department of Education Dataquest website: *http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/*

Here you can generate school reports that will provide information about your school's demographics, its performance on the California Standards Test (CST), California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), SAT and ACT exams, and Fitness Gram. Use the various options on the web tool to look at student performance according to ethnicity, gender, English Learner, and Special Needs status. You want to identify "gaps," that is, areas where certain groups are performing at a lower level than others. For example, you might find that males in the 10th grade are performing significantly lower than females in both English Language Arts and mathematics.

Be familiar with the A-G requirements. These are the required classes which students must complete to be eligible for admission to the University of California or California State University systems. They can be found at: *http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/hsgrtable.asp*

Examine student performance on the CST in light of which tests students should be taking if following the A-G requirements. For example, to be eligible for UC/CSU admission, students must complete at least two years of laboratory science. You may find that certain demographic groups are over-represented in non-laboratory science classes like Life Science. If one of the goals of your program is to promote post-secondary college and career readiness, having this data available for students can guide their next steps in the school day, while identifying needs that after school programs can provide for.

The second source of data is the school itself. All high schools participate in the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation process. The self-

study that the school produces analyzes the school's data in depth to identify those areas where the school is succeeding as well as where there is need for improvement. The school's WASC/Single Plan for Student Achievement lays out what the school will do to address those areas where achievement is lagging. The school's WASC report is frequently available on the school's website. If it is not, it can be obtained from the school administration.

Finally, work closely with the teachers and counselors of your program's students to learn their specific needs. Knowing a school's data helps program staff ask the right questions. Closing the Achievement Gap requires that those who work with high school youth in ASSETs programs understand the importance of using educational data to inform their practice.

USE THE QSAR WITH YOUR STAFF TO INFORM PROGRAM QUALITY.

Familiarize your staff with the tool, but don't overwhelm them. Empowering your program staff means familiarizing them with the expectations of your program plan in a way that they can take the process up as their own. It can be intimidating for staff to see quality rubrics, data tools, and outcome data in one sitting. "Chunking" the QSAR for staff – presenting the sections in a series of ongoing professional development sessions - is a more approachable way to engage staff in conversations about evaluation and data.

At Burbank High School, Ms. Yang copied a few pages of the QSAR and highlighted items for staff to focus on in the after school program, and provided five 1-hour long trainings around these topics.

Use the QSAR as a tool to set goals and expectations of what you want to achieve. The QSAR can help in designing your after school program at the start. When you are planning for your program and designing a program plan guide, the QSAR provides pillars of program quality specifically tailored to high school and older youth programming. Staff can also use the QSAR to ensure that they are planning high quality activities.

USE YOUTH VOICE TO INFORM YOUR PRACTICE AS WELL.

Utilize data from youth input. Involve youth in analyzing data of the program to ensure you are meeting student, staff and community needs. This can include youth surveys, focus groups, or soliciting input from your youth leadership councils. The program staff at San Gorgonio High School has developed a team of 12 student leaders, 14 line staff and instructional day teachers that meets a couple times a month to go over designated pages and discuss where they think they are as an after school program. As Ms. Dos Remedios explained, "Each staff member and student leader gets a chance to share where they think we are at (early, developing or mature), then gives evidence and support and their action plan."

Another design of youth surveys that THINK Together successfully uses is provide a blank piece of paper, and a "prompt" that is open ended, such as , "Please list 3 things you would like to do after school if it were up to you". As Mr. Fennessy stated, "We give them a blank piece of paper because we do not want to suggest what they want. We want them to put down what they would really want, and not what they think the adults want to hear. We then tally up the responses and create programs and hire staff based on the results, which truly comes from their voice." THINK Together has found that these surveys are best when given to the entire student body, especially administering it to those students who are not in your program.

PROGRAM MONITORING

The Site Coordinator intentionally observes after school program activities on a regular basis and conducts a formal walk-through.

Site Coordinators have a lot on their plate at any given time: ensuring staff are present, supervising staff, recruiting and retaining youth, leading activities, and assuring that youth are safe and supervised during program hours. Part of the Site Coordinator's job is knowing how the activities of your after school program are being received and how staff are interacting with youth.

Formal walk-throughs are an essential component for managing a quality after school program. Being intentional about how you observe and what you are looking for can guide follow-up conversations for ongoing program improvement. Paola Zuniga, Program Manager at the Bay Area Community Resources, shares some tips on how to effectively conduct walk-throughs of your program:

Set clear expectations in advance. Being clear about your expectations provides a useful road map for the entire program to understand what program quality looks and feels like. A rubric and checklist that incorporate good youth development principles can provide an important framework to guide conversations about quality. Having these conversations during staff meetings will prepare staff so that they are consistently performing at high quality.

Try to observe your after school program from the time youth arrive through the close of program. Being able to see if activities are going well from the very beginning of program until the end is critical to understanding if youth are getting the most out of their time spent in the after school program. Ms. Zuniga suggests visiting different portions of the program. Whether you can observe for a full day of program or take a portion each day over the course of a week, it is important to understand the program's schedule and how engagement is impacted throughout the day.

If possible, have more than one set of eyes. Another great strategy is to conduct a walk-through as a team. Good people to have on the team with you could a certified teacher who is a supporter of the program, a lead teacher in your program activities, youth leaders, or even colleagues from a similar program in the community. The observations can generate rich discussion about program quality.

> **Try this Tip!**
>
> *Be sure to observe activities taking place during different times of the program. Take in experiences from the start of the day through to the close of program. Whether this takes you the full day or over a period of the entire week to fit it in—it is important to understand the program's schedule and how participation is impacted throughout the day.*

Always have follow up conversations and coach those observed. The formal walk-through is not effective unless it's followed up with concrete, real-time feedback for the staff and activities you observe. Making data useful and meaningful is key, especially when you've taken the time (and the staff's time) to observe. As Ms. Zuniga stated, "It's part of quality control to have these conversations with staff and set aside space for that. The staff appreciate being able to deepen their conversations and being able to ground those conversations around concrete feedback." Part of quality control is acknowledging the real positive work that is going on in the classrooms as well as supporting after school program staff to do their best work by identifying areas for improvement.

CHALLENGE AND MASTERY

Many after school program activities challenge participants intellectually, creatively, and/ or physically, and require learning and building a progression of new skills.

High quality after school programs provide engaging activities that help youth explore new opportunities and build new skills. For high school youth, opportunities to feel successful, working toward personally meaningful goals, and building skills useful for college and career are key incentives.

How do you provide new and engaging opportunities for youth to encourage their participation? Ramiro Huerta at the Youth Policy Institute and Bill Fennessy at THINK Together shared some promising practices around designing challenging activities:

Develop programming that matches youth interest and offers opportunities for youth leadership. Provide youth with activities they want to do, especially those they might not otherwise have access to. A survey, focus group, or check in with youth can be a good way to gauge youth interest; consider piloting a new activity to really assess the benefits and challenges in implementing it full-scale. Let the youth express to you whether an activity/program is working or needs to be reworked, changed, or abandoned. If youth feel empowered, they'll feel a sense of ownership to also take the lead in activities, too.

Have credible experts that can provide challenging opportunities. When implementing programming that will retain students, the difference between a good program and great program is the Instructor. Finding a content expert is a requirement of either a good or great program; however, content experts that have an overt passion for what they are instructing is the key to a great program. Older youth are very intuitive to the level of passion instructors bring to them. They will stay and bring other students into the program if the instructor has the same passion they do.

Offer a continuum from beginning to advance in lesson planning. A great instructor will be able to get youth to complete challenging assignments and wanting to attain a higher level of mastery. At THINK Together, they have found the best method for assisting content experts in providing a continuum of challenging activities is to have lesson plans that explicitly "map-out" a progressive building of skills using youth development principles and linking to academic standards, and then culminates into the completion of a long term project or goal. This progressive continuum can then continue into a second group of sessions for those students that have more advanced skills, while another group of "beginning" students can start where the now advanced group of students began.

The key is teaching applied skills. Project-based enrichment classes should intentionally enhance academics by providing relevant, real world applications to academic subjects. One great example of this is a Culinary Arts class. Students must apply a virtual cornucopia of academic standards, such as: having to follow sequential instructions (great at improving test-taking skills), using measurements such as quantities, volumes, and multiplication to increase servings; using social sciences to understand where foods grow to explain why different cultures eat different things; and so forth.

Using the methods described in the previous paragraphs assures you are consistently using the "3 Rs" to attract and retain students; Relationships = Passionate Instructor; Relevance = Real World Applications; and Rigor = Challenging Standards-Based Lesson Plan.

TARGETED STUDENT OUTREACH

The after school program has developed a strong marketing plan to inform youth, school, and parents about the program and its daily scheduled activities and utilizes a variety of media in its promotion.

Particularly in high school, where youth are less likely to participate regularly, recruiting and retaining older youth can be a major challenge.

After school programs that have strong marketing plans and utilize the latest technology and media can be more responsive to young people's social world. Frank Escobar, Program Director of Afterschool Programs at Visalia Unified School District, Candace Meehan, Site Coordinator of the after school program at Long Beach Jordan High School provided concrete advice on how to best build your marketing:

Creating opportunities for youth to participate, lead, and succeed. As with all successful programs, the planning is in the details. The strongest programs are youth-driven and that includes the marketing and outreach strategies. Youth need to know their voice and choice are critical and that they are empowered to shape the services and programs offered to them. Their participation, involvement and engagement are essential and will influence the success of the program.

Peer to peer outreach. Youth in the program are your best ambassadors in generating interest from other youth. Include youth in your marketing strategies and have them talk about the program and their experiences to friends. Word of mouth amongst youth goes a long way!

One strategy does not fit all. There is no one strategy that is the most effective in reaching all youth. Adopting culturally relevant outreach methods is essential, whether providing small club-style flyers, posters similar to Associated Student Body campaigns, updating your program's webpage or website, or intentionally promoting the after school program to students by implementing your recruitment strategy during lunch time. Being visible in different ways is the best way to ensure that people are hearing (and seeing, and feeling!) what your program is about.

Guerilla marketing. Don't stop with posters and flyers. The best way to interest youth is to have after school staff pound the pavement, actively recruiting youth. Face-to-face, personal interaction is one of the most effective strategies of getting youth to attend a program.

At one of the VUSD high school after school programs, Mr. Escobar encouraged program staff to go out during the school's lunch period for two weeks straight to talk about the after school program. Making these personal connections brings in interested youth who might otherwise not respond to formal invitations.

> ## Try this Tip!
>
> *Develop an ongoing commitment to marketing, rather than an event-basis marketing campaign. Consistently and regularly advertising your activities to youth will work better than waiting until your attendance numbers are low.*

PRO-ACTIVE OUTREACH: UTILIZE STUDENT AND SCHOOL DATA TO BOOST RECRUITMENT.

Both Mr. Escobar and Ms. Meehan intentionally brand and market the after school program and clubs to all students. They know it is especially important to know and utilize student and school data to inform their recruitment strategy, program design, and club offerings. Additionally, pro-active outreach is encouraged. Program staff, teachers, and current program participants go out and talk with other students about the program during the lunch hour. This is essential because it gives an opportunity for real dialogue to take place and for questions to be asked and answered by someone who is currently participating in the program. Making these personal connections brings in interested youth who might otherwise not respond to formal invitations.

Develop a marketing commitment, rather than a marketing campaign. Think of marketing as you think of looking at your attendance data or reviewing youth outcomes throughout the year: it's an ongoing process. Rather than wait until numbers are low in activities to launch an all-out marketing campaign, consistently and regularly advertise your activities to youth.

Don't just give, receive in return. If you're actively engaged in great recruitment strategies, or providing a culminating event showcasing the after school program, you are bound to get an increase of youth interested in your program. Instead of just handing them a flyer, make sure to have clipboards readily available to take youths' contact information so that you can also follow up with them directly.

AFTER SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The after school Site Coordinator meets often and regularly with a large network of community stakeholders to develop opportunities for after school participants to engage in mentoring, internship, and career development activities.

Community involvement in after school programs yields a number of benefits, including providing mentoring and staffing, physical and financial resources, and recruitment.

Research shows that community partnerships can lead to opportunities (internships, apprenticeships, enhanced program offerings, expert presenters, special events, etc.) that high school youth find personally interesting, and to service learning projects for youth to engage in and give back to the community.

But how do you establish these relationships with community stakeholders? Leon Mostovoy, Senior Program Consultant at Woodcraft Rangers in Los Angeles, Catherine Estes, Site Coordinator at McLane High School, Janet Yarbrough of Stockton Unified, and Guadalupe Cecena Lopez, Site Coordinator of Calexico High School's after school program provide tips for creating a mutually beneficial relationship with the neighboring community:

Immerse the after school program in a community hot spot. There is no better way to be visible in the community than to have the after school program meet in places where youth normally hang out. Whether it's at a local café, library, or skate park, having some program activities meet out in the community is a great way to meet local businesses and provide them with a steady stream of customers (you and your youth!). At Woodcraft Rangers in Los Angeles, the after school program offers activities and events at a local café popular with youth.

Having difficulties finding willing community partners who could lend resources like a meeting space? Have the youth of your program canvass the surrounding community and see where youth hang out, find potential supporters and talk up the after school program to local businesses. Business leaders and community members will feel more comfortable partnering once they know the after school program staff and youth.

> *Try this Tip!*
>
> There is no better way to be visible in the community than to have the after school program meet in places where youth normally hang out!

Bring the community into your program. Community partners can make your after school programming even stronger by providing opportunities for a variety of your program activities. Whether community partners can offer guest speakers, provide activities, or volunteers, these benefits can connect youth to new experiences and to the community. At Calexico High School, the program boasts a partnership with the San Diego State University-Imperial Campus to hold Mandarin language classes and SAT trainings for youth. The program also partners with the One-Stop Employment program, which hosts a seminar for youth on how to approach job interviews. Finally, the program works with The Neighborhood House, who delivers complete lunches to students participating in strength and conditioning classes during the summer.

Establish a service-learning component in each after school club. Find creative ways to link your activities to the community by incorporating a service component in all relevant activities. Consider providing reading buddies for the library or local elder-care center or providing artwork for your local businesses. At Woodcraft Rangers, the program has partnered with a local art museum to display student art work. The program also hosts activities at the local café to do spoken word, open mic nights, and a talent showcase.

For youth, service learning provides a wealth of benefits. Youth can fulfill community service hours for mandated requirements and build experiences to strengthen college applications and resumes. As important, community service learning develops leadership skills and builds connections in the community and across generations. For your program, service-learning projects can open doors to other opportunities for collaboration and fundraising and can entice young people to join your program in the first place.

Be choosy about free resources. Before even reaching an agreement with community partners, review your program goals to see whether or not the services they are offering fit well into the program and your youth's needs. This will help to be aligned to your vision and to streamline your program and services

Solicit resources for your after school program by knowing how and when to ask. Businesses are willing to give to worthy programs such as yours, but you need to know when best to ask. Ms. Estes mentioned that in general, Tuesday through Thursdays from 10:00 am to 11:30 am and again from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm is the best time to visit businesses. Treat your visit as a business event and dress professionally, have business cards, and letters ready. When you talk with businesses, have information about who you are and what you need. Speak from your heart! More often than not, businesses are willing to offer their support now or in the future, especially those that already know you, your youth or your program.

STEP UP!

INNOVATOR AWARD

Awarded to:

Phyras Men and Leonard Salcido

Digital Media Artists, Change Agent Productions
YMCA of Greater Long Beach

Why do you love doing what you do?

I love working as a Youth Developer and Digital Media Artist here at Change Agent Productions because it gives me a chance to give back to the community and work closely along side the youth on all the projects we have with our clients. I get to inspire and mentor high school aged youth who are constantly going through tough times like I had in the same community and show them the greater possibilities that can arise from one experience.

From their Nominators:

"Phyras is a believer in helping under-served low-income minority youth. he counsels youth and mentors them to follow the right path whether it's about relationships or health, Phyras role models and counsels youth in positive ways. He has a unique human approachable style. "

"Leo is a unique leader who can show genuine concern for youth, speak at national conferences as a professional who knows his skill sets, and still skateboard to and from work listening to alternative music. He is truly the next generation of leaders in the youth development world."

Practices to Meet Community Need

As digital media artists, Phyras and Leonard work alongside youth to carry out professional video productions, graphic design projects and digital media trainings. The under-represented youth in this program learn technology skills applicable to real world careers. The program allows youth to develop marketable skills for the 21 st Century work environment, and build an individual portfolio. The program allows them to apply learning in school as well as through paid internships providing technology services to paying clients. Youth involved in the Change Agent Productions program at the Long Beach YMCA are currently providing the audio-visual services for the Step Up High School Summit.

In their own words:

"Spending time and fostering relationships with our kids is the most important work we do. !f we can build that atmosphere of safety, expression and welcoming then the youth will come and continue to attend and will want to learn and try new things."– *Leonard Salcido*

"I would never force any Dr. Phil moments to get them to release their emotional baggage. I work along side them on a common job interest and build a unique relationship with them to where they can open and honest with me when they feel ready. Not only are they gaining a marketable worliforce skill, they are venting and seeking advice withoutfeeling embarrassed and ashamed . . . I keep myself well rounded in order to connect with them on many levels."–*Phyras Men*

Impact:

Leonard and Phyras have trained over 1,000 young people and professionals in creative class digital media arts, technology, and youth development. Over 250 youth have participated in paid internships working with Change Agents in our production studio.

There is a 98% high school graduate rate and a 78% college attendance rate among participants working with Change Agent Productions.

Quotes from youth:

"Working with Phyras at Change Agents really saved my life. I wouldn Y be the successful and career driven woman that I am today without the guidance and experiences here."–*Romana Vera, 18 CSULB*

"He is the greatest mentor I've ever had. He pushes meforward and helps me rise to the challenge. !fit weren Yfor Leo I probably wouldn Y do the things I love out of fear of failing"–*Kevin Peraza*

INNOVATOR AWARD

Awarded to:

The ECM Partnership

In Partnership with Alvaro Cortes and The Los Angeles Unified School District

Brad Lupien *Co-Founder and Co-President, Champions: Adventure, After School & Sports Programs*
Stu Semigran *President, EduCare Foundation*
Ray Trinidad *President, !MPACT People*

Why do you love doing what you do?

We believe the foundation of a young person's success must be self confidence, their belief that they can and should challenge the status quo and demand more for themselves, their schools, and their communities. We offer students a chance to mentor less experience peers, celebrate their artistic talent, organize service events, and step into the backcountry to learn leadership skills. We have been given the unique opportunity to spotlight life and social skills education, the aspect of "teaching" that we—three former classroom teachers—knew to be critical in a student's success. We love what we do.

From their Nominators:

"The ECM Partnership (was created to) to pool resources together in order to implement the Take Action Leadership Campaign. The vision of the Campaign is that in the spring of their 8th grade year before they graduate, a select group of students at risk of dropping out of high school will engage in a week of activities that will ease their transition. The activities are designed to develop relationships with high school students, familiarize the students with the campus and develop friendships with the peers and teachers."

Innovative Practices to Meet Community Need

Los Angeles Unified School District was struggling to have a solidified, universal vision for what all of its high school after school program should look like. The initial attendance and compliance goals were a first benchmark towards success but the next level was not well defined. Through informal discussion amongst stakeholders we learned that 1) all the high school programs had similar arts, community service and leadership clubs 2) that competition drove ADA and that 3) no one provider had enough volume to effectively leverage the community resources.

LAUSD's Beyond the Bell Branch (BTB) united the providers under one universal vision for High School afterschool. ECM functioned as the program delivery vehicle and the "coaches" that traveled between sites ensuring the unified modeled was understood by all providers. BTB also gave the provider- and through

them the students - creative freedom to develop the model based on student need. Alvaro Cortes, LAUSD Assistant Superintendent, allowed a truly alternative thing to happen; ideas flowed up from the kids vs. down from the adults.

In year #1 five high schools all worked with ECM to deliver the same arts, leadership, bridging transitions, and service learning projects. That initiative expanded to 16 schools in year two and 24 schools in year three. Now in year four we have 29 schools all united in their service efforts, artistically competing at a city-wide level, camping together and benefiting from economies of scale.

We came to the table as individual providers with unique skills and services. We left our ego's at the door, defined a vision, and merged efforts to capitalize on the strength of each agency.

In the spring of each year approximately 100 students from 16 middle schools (1600 students) engage in a week of activities that aid in their matriculation to high school and result in greater academic success and reduce the dropout rate. Each organization provides programming and activities according to their strengths and specialties. Throughout the school year leading up to the campaign the Partnership meets on a regular basis to plan and develop the activities.

Impact of the ECM Partnership's Collaborative Practices

Active participants attend school 3.5 days more each year and score 12.5 points higher on the CA standardized Test (CST). Because of the scale (35,000 plus students involved) of the "campaign" we have been approached by many interested 3rd parties, including but not limited to; the US Airforce, Statefarm, Paramount Studios, and the US Dept of Education.

At the 2010 21 CCLC conference in Washington DC we presented this unified effort model. As an experiment, we suggested an informal "Skype meeting" for teens from various cities starting this fall. Within one week we maxed out the number of cities we could accommodate. The nation's students want and need a venue to unite their voices around the movement!

STEP UP!

High School After School
INNOVATOR AWARD

Awarded to:
Cathye M. Estes M.A.
After School Program Coordinator, McLane High School

Why do you love doing what you do?

I love doing what I do because I have an opportunity to do "EVERYTHING" as well as empower and affect youth to provide a better future. There are no closed doors there are only unexplored passages to create a better future for upcoming generations. My goal daily is to touch a youth's heart either with an action, a smile, or a kind word. I ask and expect nothing in return, just touch somebody else's heart.

From Cathye's Nominators

"She is an incredible women who gives like no other. If all of our schools had at least one Cathye, more of our youth would be successful. She gives the kids tough love. She recognizes their potential and isn't willing to take any less from them. She also recognizes many of her come from broken homes and face every day barriers. She does whatever it takes to help them succeed."

"Cathye goes above and beyond to meet the needs of older youth in an out-of-school time setting. She is the model for what high school afterschool site coordinators should be."

Practices Implemented to Meet Community Need

The After School Program focus is on tutorial and task completion skills five days a week and three hours a day, along with morning tutorial three days a week for one hour. The After School Program also offers a student driven Enrichment Program. The wheel is made up of and not limited to Summits, Conferences, Community Service, College Visits, Girl Scouts, School Newspaper, Clubs, Fresno B.E.S.T., Dance Classes, Showcases, Contests, Job Shadowing, Talent Show and anything we can do to get our youth in the community and the community in our school. At the site level, the program is broken into Small Learning Communities.

Strong partnerships with the core school day facilitate the success of the After School Program. The hope is to slow the Drop-Out rate from 9th grade to 10th grade by offering two tutorials. Tutorials offered include two 9th Grade Tutorials in support of algebra, as well as English and other subjects. The tutor attends the last 30 minutes of instruction daily to follow up with support after school. The program also offers Athletic tutorial. The Park & Rec Fresno "B.E.S.T." Program provides community service opportunities, job readiness skills, and both career and college exploration through college visits.

Utilizing multiple partnerships, Cathye is able to provide a variety of relevant services and opportunities for youth. These opportunities include Female Youth Empowerment Conferences and Male Youth Empowerment Conferences. Each conference is free to one hundred youth. It offers three meals, goodie bags, T-shirts, and six workshops related to specific topics. For example, the Female Conference is now called "Fight Like a Girl" in support of Breast Cancer. This year Maria Kennedy Shriver supported the participants with a letter which can be used with both college and job applications. Presenters included; The National Women's Caucus (My Choice, My Voice, My Vote), Mary Kay (Skin Care), Mia Bella Couture (Dress for Success/Interview Skills), "Know More" & Fresno Barrios Unidos (Healthy Relationships), Girl Scouts (Uniquely Me), What I Want You to Know About Me (This is a book we are going to publish) also Friday's Guest Speaker and activity were focused on cyber issues. Some of the Community partners include and by all means not limited to; Victoria's Secret, Panda Express, The GAP, Chili's, Yosemite Falls Cafe, Kaiser Permanente, Producer's Dairy, Champion Raisins, "BUMP It's", Pampered Chef, Starbucks, colleges, and much more.

The Male Conference is called "Cerca Trova" meaning "Finding my Path", in Italian. The conference and workshops are set up the same manner with different partners. Partners include and again not limited to; the NFL (Ricky Manning-South Carolina Panthers, Clifton Smith-Tampa Bay Buccaneers), Shiekh Shoes, The GAP, Universal Records, Professional Soccer Team- Fuegos, Minor League Baseball Team- Grizzlies, Panda Express, Kaiser Permanente, Sam's Club, Costco, Target, and many more.

Impact:

Students at McLane HS are attending the afterschool program more regularly. Those who are regular attendees of the ASP afterschool program are attending school at a higher percentage than those McLane HS students who are not attending the ASP afterschool program.

Through pre and post assessments, community partners have been able to measure a 96% increase in youth knowledge and awareness about reproductive health.

Quotes from youth:

"I was really inspired by every single presenter. I took away from this a better sense of myself. "

"The Keynote Speaker's story is really touching and made me teary. So was Mrs. Estes' story too. Thanks for sharing those were great stories that were being shared. It makes me think of my own future too. "

STEP UP!

High School After School

INNOVATOR AWARD

Awarded to:

Sam Piha MSW, LCSW

Founder and Principal, Temescal Associates

Why do you love doing what you do?
Afterschool programs have the potential of offering all youth, regardless of learning style or classroom accomplishments, the opportunity to engage in learning that is truly exciting and relevant. All children and youth have something special to offer and can be recognized and celebrated within the afterschool environment.

From Sam's Nominator:
"Years ago, Sam recognized that high school-age youth had been excluded in our thinking about the benefits of afterschool programming. As a result, Sam involved himself in a number of activities to raise awareness about the needs of older youth and the potential for afterschool programs to address these needs. Sam participated on the advisory committee for Fight Crime - Invest in Kids' (FC-IK) publication, California s Next After-School Challenge: Keeping High School Teens Off the Street and On the Right Track. He served as a content expert for Fight Crime - Invest in Kids in their work with State Assemblyperson Daryl Steinberg to draft legislation creating the 21st Century ASSETs initiative - the first mandated set-aside for high school afterschool programs in the country. He was also the first to help practitioners share and explore effective strategies and document promising practices."

Innovative Practices to Meet Community Need
Increased resources through policy change: This was accomplished by serving as a content expert for advocacy organizations in their work with the state legislature, resulting in new resources for high school afterschool. I also assisted staff from the California Department of Education in the drafting of the first ASSETs request for proposal.

Peer communities of practice, grounded in the experience and wisdom of youth leaders. This was accomplished by facilitating the first statewide learning communities for ASSETs cohorts one and two, and subsequent high school afterschool learning communities in Southern, Central, and Northern California.

Efforts to raise visibility and awareness. This was accomplished by authoring articles, giving workshops and presentations across California and the country, and creating Beyond Expectations, a I3-minute video featuring exemplar high school afterschool programs. I also worked early on to promote the potential of afterschool programs to increase graduation through credit recovery and the support of incoming 9th graders who are academically at-risk, and to spotlight programs working in continuation high schools.

Frameworks, tools, and training to improve knowledge of promising practices and program quality. This was accomplished by developing the Bedrock to Rooftop framework for high school afterschool programs, engaging leaders of exemplar programs as presenters and trainers, supporting the capacity building of Regional Leads, and developing early rubrics helping programs self-assess their strengths and weaknesses.

Impact:
Sam has contributed to: The large-scale allocation of state resources for high school afterschool programs; Increased recognition of the potential and importance of afterschool programs to improve the outcomes for older youth; and The development of resources to improve program quality in the field of high school afterschool programming.

STEP UP!
INNOVATOR AWARD

Awarded to:

Normandie Nigh

Executive Director, A World Fit For Kids! (WFIT)

Why do you love doing what you do?

I love to see young people transform into empowered, self confident and happy individuals who believe that they can create what they want in their lives. Students who may have had very little self-esteem and few goals before joining our program become the leaders and role models/mentors to others ... and it really does change both lives in the process. I'm committed to helping young people help themselves and I'm so fortunate to be able to assist them in their journey.

From Normandie's Nominator:

HNormandie has been a visionary and leader in the fight against childhood obesity and empowering young people with leadership and youth development training for more than twenty years. In addition to her implementing her vision of a mentoring model that trains teens in physical activity leadership and personal empowerment in order to become mentors to younger children, Normandie continues to be an advocate at the local, state and national levels for policy that supports after school programming that gets students physically fit while enhancing their emotional and mental well-being . . . Normandie's passion for healthy children (and the adults who live and work with them) is unsurpassed. Her lifelong commitment to these ideals deserves the recognition that this award brings."

Promising Practices that Address Community Need

Normandie designed and implemented the Teen Fit for Success (TFS) of a World Fit For Kids! and brought it to scale in 1997. In this program high school teens are trained to teach physical fitness and self-esteem classes to elementary and middle school students, and assist with the FitnessGram testing of those youth.

After being trained the high school students volunteer for a minimum of 36 hours. Through that experience the teens realize the importance of their position as a role model and how much the younger kids respect them. The high school students gain self-esteem and asense of pride because they are able to apply for ajob and earn an educational stipend for their afterschool internship, after completing their volunteer service. This stipend helped motivate them to stay in school, maintain the required grade point average (2.5 or above) and continue their service work with A World Fit For Kids! or with another youth-serving agency.

Upon beginning participation in TFS, teens are immediately challenged to take ownership of their role in the program and the success they can achieve in their own lives and in the lives of younger students. Initial training is focused on physical activity leadership; personal empowerment; being a role model/mentor; personal fitness and nutrition; effective communication; leadership and advocacy; conflict resolution and group management; work readiness; and first aid/CPR. In advanced TFS training and on-going group meetings, students gain even more in-depth leadership skills and preparation for college and work life. Topics include financial literacy; development of a personal fitness and nutrition assessment/plan; advocacy and policy training; and advanced youth leadership training.

Even in the training, TFS participants have a powerful voice in helping lead and direct the interactive training sessions-each of which is tailored to the teens' needs/interests based on feedback and surveys. As current TFS participants who have passed the training, the teens serving as Assistant Coach-Mentors play an integral role as group leaders in the training of new students. They facilitate discussion, providevaluable insight and direction, and ensure that their new peers have the materials and assistance they need to excel in the training. Meanwhile, the trainees themselves are also empowered to become "leaders"-taking ownership and responsibility for their role in the program, and setting attainable goals for their academic/work careers and personal lives.

Impact:

94% percent ofWFIT students who participated in our TFS training and internship program have graduated from high school since 2003, primarily from a high school with a 49.5% graduation rate. (56% began our TFS program as ninth or tenth graders.) The majority have gone on to higher education.

TFS participants are more likely to pass the math high school exit exam test (CAHSEE) than students who do not attend the program, and they are absent from school less often.

Eight out of ten parents reported children's improved academic skills, increased physical activity levels, and greater personalresponsibility and personal motivation as a result of WFIT participation.

One high school student said, "I don't like it, I love it! It's an inspiration and a very amazing program. People can get to know a lot of people. You can do better in school and have the determination to do something you want."

STEP UP!
INNOVATOR AWARD

Awarded to:

Bill Fennessy

Director of High School Programs, THINK Together

Why do you love doing what you do?

I love contributing and supporting older youth in realizing their dreams and potential, as well as discovering the amazing greatness that lies within them. I like to say that if the After School program were an "airplane", it wouldn't really get off of the ground until our students were able to "fly it."

Innovative Practices Implemented to Meet Community Need

To increase the high school graduation rates; Bill initiated, implemented, and developed Credit Recovery programs, processes, and systems that were part of the After School program, that significantly raised the {Con time" graduation rate. I have continued to expand, develop, and share this knowledge with other After School providers nationwide. The promotion and resulting acceptance of this practice and/or type of programming has benefitted now so many students, which was far beyond my original scope and intent.

To increase student/athletes' academic performance; Bill initiated, implemented, and developed Athletic Tutorial programs which required a persistent effort of well over 4 years of constant trial and error until the required successful and replicable models were identified. I continue to use this valuable model successfully and continue to share this practice with other After School providers, who have also demonstrated significant results.

To engage "disconnected" or "underperforming" 9th grade students; Bill used sources of incoming and current 9th grade student performance data, and then initiated, implemented, and developed several strategies and programs that have included Targeted Tutorial Programs, Leadership Programs, Boot Camps, Second Semester Credit Recovery Programs, Counseling Services, and Homework Help Classes. The need for this type of programming is clearly documented by research data that shows 40% of all high school dropouts, do so in the 9th grade. These programs are designed to keep these identified 9th grade students in school by providing the required sense of belonging combined with a real feeling of both personal and academic success.

To utilize exemplar students in the academic and mentoring support of other students with those identified needs; Bill used sources of school site student performance data to identify the exemplar students that might be able to provide the academic and mentoring support required, as well as use the data to identify the students that would benefit from that support. Bill then initiated, implemented, and developed programs, processes, and systems that allowed for students to be chosen, trained, and compensated for providing the support determined necessary to achieve both academic and

personal growth in the students identified to be served. These programs were used in both a "Cross-Age" and "Peer To Peer" Tutorial Program format. While these programs and services were facilitated by adults, they were structured and delivered by the exemplar students that provided them. This became a great example of Service Based Learning combined with Leadership opportunity. The compensation for these exemplar students is accomplished through the purchase of "incentive items" such as cap & gown, yearbook, prom tickets, grad night tickets, and other related items that these students and their families may not be able to afford, or would require the student to find a job, of which there may be very limited possibilities. The job and leadership skills related to this work will also be of great value to these students in their development and preparation for the worlforce as adults.

Opportunities for Youth Leadership and Service.

The planning, structure, and delivery of these support services is developed by the exemplar students. The result of which is relevant and engaging programming that is youth oriented and driven. While the academic help is better received through the use of these exemplar students, the mentoring side of the process is even more powerful. The real and successful outcomes that these exemplar students own and demonstrate provide a living example for the students in need of the important support services. The job and leadership skills related to this work will also be of great value to these students in their development and preparation for the workforce as adults.

Impact

The first Credit Recovery Programs at Blair High School increased the "on-time" graduation rates 30% over the first 5 years of programming. This highly successful program is featured in the CalifomiaAfter School Network's, *Credit Recovery Solutions Offered in After School Programs.*

The Athletic Tutorial Program for Varsity Football at THINK Together's Valley HS site in Santa Ana, has decreased the number of student/athletes that are academically ineligible during the season from 16 to only 2. The Varsity Football Team's combined Grade Point Average is now 2.65, compared to the school's average of 0.85.

The multiple strategies used to engage different groups of "disconnected" or "underperforming" 9th grade students were cited, by then Principal Rich Boccia, as the key element in keeping 9th grade students feeling that they were a vital part of the school, instead of feeling "lost" or "alone."

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