

A NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR QUALITY AFTERSCHOOL LEARNING



FEATURED *resources*

MEETING THE HIGH SCHOOL CHALLENGE: MAKING AFTER-SCHOOL WORK FOR OLDER STUDENTS

www.tascorp.org/files/1487_file_hs_report_2007.pdf

AFTERSCHOOL TRAINING TOOLKIT FOR SCIENCE

Creek Restoration Project

www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/science/ex_creek_restoration.html

AFTERSCHOOL TRAINING TOOLKIT FOR TECHNOLOGY

Exploring Technology in Careers

www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/technology/ex_careers.html



AFTERSCHOOL *news*

Afterschool Choices for High School Students

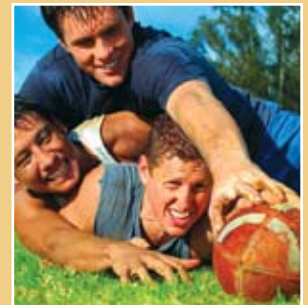
As students get older, their participation in afterschool programs often declines. They have more choices for how to spend free time and the freedom and mobility to pursue other activities. However, research shows that high school students who participate in afterschool programs improve their grades and school attendance, and are more likely to graduate on time.¹ Below are some ideas on what high school students are looking for in an afterschool program.

Community involvement. "What high school afterschool programs need to keep students interested are opportunities to connect to the broader community," says Elizabeth Reisner, a member of the National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning steering committee and co-founder of Policy Studies Associates, Inc., an education research organization. Students can interact with the community through service activities like volunteering at a hospital or through service learning, which incorporates academic curriculum into the community activity.

Career and college preparation. You can help students plan for their futures by arranging for students to spend time "shadowing" someone who works in a field that interests them. They can visit a local community college or university to talk to students and faculty and learn about classes that might interest them. "Job shadowing and college visits are also excellent ways to promote community involvement," says Reisner.

Opportunities to help shape afterschool programs. Students can influence what an afterschool program offers in a variety of ways. Some high school afterschool program directors have collected surveys from students and then used the feedback to decide what activities to offer. Even if your program has clear academic goals, activities can still be created around student interests. For example, if your program's goal is to improve student literacy, you can let students decide whether they want to organize a book group, perform a play, or publish a book of student interviews with community members. You can find these literacy activities for high school students in the online Afterschool Training Toolkit (www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/literacy/).

1 Friedman, L., & Bleiberg, M. (2007). *Meeting the high school challenge: Making after-school work for older students*. New York: The After-School Corporation.



"What high school afterschool programs need are opportunities to connect to the broader community."

ELIZABETH REISNER

National Partnership steering committee member

The National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning helps state education agencies and local practitioners develop high-quality programs for academic enrichment as well as youth development activities.

Newsletter available online at www.sedl.org/afterschool/afterwords/

www.sedl.org/afterschool/



"Our goal is to teach 'real-world' technology skills and connect those skills to academic and workforce success for young people."

BOB CABEZA

executive director

YMCA Youth Institute

LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA

The Downtown Community Development branch of the YMCA of Greater Long Beach operates four sites for high school afterschool programs. Among the activities offered is a program called Youth Institute, which is centered around technology. High school participants learn skills like movie making, graphic design, Web site design, and 3-D animation. "Our goal is to teach 'real-world' technology skills and connect those skills to academic and workforce success for young people," says executive director Bob Cabeza.

Although technology might attract students to the program, Cabeza believes that youth will only stay if the program is structured in a way that constantly engages them. For Cabeza, this means having a safe, youth-centered environment and including students in the planning stages of the program. Teen participants help select a project to work on (such as a film festival or a performing arts day), assume leadership roles, and help plan events.

The program also has a service learning component, where participants teach the technology skills they learned in the Youth Institute to elementary students. "This unique model helps connect our older youth as peer leaders to our younger youth. It also prepares our older youth for jobs in our afterschool programs once they turn 18 and start college," says Cabeza.

IN YOUR *words*

Why do you think high school students participate in afterschool programs?

- Because they are already involved in several extracurricular activities.
- Because other types of extracurricular activities are limited.
- Because they are required to do so to pass a class or graduate.

To participate in this survey and view results, submit your vote at www.sedl.org/afterschool/afterwords/survey200712.html.

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NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR QUALITY AFTERSCHOOL LEARNING

Advancing Research, Improving Education



TRAINING *tip*

A Place of Their Own

High school students will feel a greater sense of ownership in an afterschool program if they can contribute to the program's physical environment. "Have a physical space that youth can call their own, design themselves, and be responsible for," suggests Bob Cabeza of the Long Beach YMCA. Sharing space with a day school might make the task more challenging but not impossible. Consider hanging fabric instead of painting walls, or ask the students in your program for ideas on how to transform their space.

Do you have a training tip you would like to share? E-mail us at afterwords@sedl.org with "training tip" in the subject line.

EVENTS *calendar*

Feb. 28–29 PEAK Afterschool Workshop Series:
Literacy and Arts
KANSAS CITY, MO

April 14–15 "Linkages to Learning"
Southeast Regional Conference
ATLANTA, GA

For more events, visit our calendar at www.sedl.org/afterschool/training/calendar.html.