EVALUATION OF OST PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH
Interim Report on First-Year Programs and Participants

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Contents

Overview of the Evaluation and This Report

The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) launched services under its Out-of-School Time (OST) Programs for Youth in September 2005 with the award of funds to support more than 500 programs across New York City. Together, DYCD and the city's nonprofit community, working closely with the New York City Department of Education (DOE), extended services to more than 52,000 youth across the city in the initiative's first year, making OST almost certainly the nation's largest after-school initiative. This initial report of the OST evaluation presents early data on the programs themselves and on the youth who participated in them during the 2005-06 program year. It describes a service effort that builds on DYCD's historic commitment to New York City's youth and on the work of nearly 200 community-based and other nonprofit organizations with lead roles in implementing the initiative.

This report draws information from two of the evaluation's primary sources, which are the initiative's program information system, known as OST Online, and the evaluation's annual survey of a sample of OST youth participants. Later reports of the evaluation, including the first-year report scheduled for the fall, will present the results of surveys of program coordinators, executive directors of provider organizations, and others as well as findings from site visits and program observations. The fall report will also present complete data from the participant survey and OST Online, for which only partial data are presented here. Among other analyses that the complete data sources will permit are findings regarding OST program quality and effectiveness in promoting the positive, healthy development of participating youth across different types of programs. The fall report will also include a full technical appendix.

As this report makes clear, the usefulness of the OST evaluation depends on the extent to which it can present complete data from its primary information sources, especially the evaluation's surveys and OST Online. In the coming months, the evaluator and DYCD will continue to work together to increase the completeness and accuracy of data available from these sources.

This early report on OST programs and participants describes an initiative of remarkable breadth that is engaging youth from across the city in activities and learning opportunities that they find engaging and positive. Participants' commitment to these opportunities through regular program attendance suggests that the programs may be promoting the positive developmental outcomes sought by DYCD and its partners. Differential patterns of responses to survey questions by participants in different levels of schooling and by center-based and school-based participants reflect, as described here, differences in actual experiences, developmental differences among youth of different ages, and the varied characteristics of the youth served.

After brief descriptions of the OST initiative and the evaluation, this report presents information on the scope and extent of OST programming in 2005-06, a description of participants' baseline characteristics, a review of their OST attendance patterns, and a summary of their reactions to survey questions about themselves and their program experiences.

Background and Goals of the OST Initiative

This section presents a brief overview of DYCD's work leading up to the launch of the OST initiative and describes DYCD's core goals for the initiative.

Development of the OST Initiative

Although DYCD has supported programs for youth over many years, it began planning for the OST initiative in 2003, when it convened city agencies, youth-serving nonprofit organizations, community leaders, and private funders to develop an OST Program Vision and Goals statement. After reviewing external reactions to an early concept paper on approaches to operationalizing its OST vision and goals, DYCD issued its request for proposals (RFP) for OST services in December 2004. The RFP solicited offers to address five service options, described below. Following competitive review of proposals using selection criteria published in the RFP, DYCD negotiated and awarded contracts under all five options by the end of summer 2005.

Option I was designed to fund OST programs for youth in elementary, middle, and high schools in each of the 10 DOE regions, and also included 15 "priority middle schools" in which OST programs would operate in collaboration with state-approved Supplemental Educational Services providers. As illustrated in Exhibit 1, the program parameters for Option I varied by grade level served, with programs for younger students expected to provide more programming hours (and hence more comprehensive services) than programs serving older students.

Exhibit 1
Option I Program Parameters

| Program Level | Minimum Hours of Operation | | | | | | Maximum Award per Participant |
| | School Year | | Summer | | School Closing Days | | |
	Weeks	Hours/ week	Weeks	Hours/ week	Days	Hours/ day	
Elementary grades							
Year-round programs	36	15	8	50	20	10	$2,800
School year programs	36	15	N/A	N/A	20	10	$2,000
Middle grades							
Year-round programs	36	8	8	50	20	10	$2,100
School year programs	36	8	N/A	N/A	20	10	$1,300
High school							
School year programs	36	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	$540

Option II was designed to support OST programs that would use private match funds to subsidize at least 30 percent of their OST budgets. These programs were intended to serve students of any grade level for a minimum of four weeks and 160 hours per year, with a maximum DYCD award of $600 per participant.

Option III programs were to be operated in collaboration with the Department of Parks and Recreation and would be offered at Parks sites. Each Option III program was expected to address one of three purposes: (1) Reach programs were to offer therapeutic recreation and educational programming for youth with disabilities; (2) Academic Support programs were to offer activities to assist participants to meet or exceed academic standards; and (3) Life Skills programs were to emphasis instruction to youth in how to manage their finances. All of these programs were expected to be in operation for 36 weeks during the school year. The Reach programs were required to offer a minimum of 10 hours of programming per week. The Academic Support and Life Skills programs were required to offer a minimum of six hours of programming per week for participants ages 6-13 and a minimum of four hours per week for participants ages 14-21. DYCD's maximum award was $2,500 per participant for the Reach programs and $540 per participant for the Academic Support and Life Skills programs.

Option IV solicited proposals to provide technical assistance to OST programs. Option V solicited proposals to evaluate the overall initiative.

The RFP stated that DYCD would give greater consideration to proposals for Option I and II programs that planned to serve youth in zip codes with a high need for OST services. DYCD identified these priority zip codes based on the following five criteria: the population of youth ages 6-15 years residing in the zip code, the youth poverty rate in the zip code, the percent of youth ages 16-19 in the zip code who are not in school (and not high school graduates or in the labor force), the number of ELL students in DOE schools in the zip code, and the number of single parent families with children under 18 years of age in the zip code. Using these criteria, 25 high-need zip codes were identified for Option II programs. For purposes of Option I programs, DYCD extended the list to make sure that each of the 10 DOE regions had at least five targeted zip codes.

DYCD's Vision and Goals for the OST Initiative

DYCD described its OST vision as follows in the RFP (page 9): "A quality OST system offers safe and developmentally appropriate environments for children and youth when they are not in school. OST programs support the academic, civic, creative, social, physical, and emotional development of young people and serve the needs of the city's families and their communities. Government, service providers, and funders are partners in supporting an accountable and sustainable OST system."

Accordingly, DYCD's nine program goals reflect this vision (pages 9-10):

1. Provide a healthy, safe environment
2. Foster high expectations for participants
3. Foster consistent and positive relationships with adults and peers and a sense of community
4. Support the needs of working families
5. Support healthy behavior and physical well-being
6. Strengthen young people's academic skills

7. Support the exploration of interests and the development of skills and creativity
8. Support youth leadership development
9. Promote community engagement and respect for diversity

Seen in the context of the national OST movement that has emerged and grown over the last ten years, these program goals cover an especially broad range of developmental objectives for youth participants. In particular, they are less narrowly academic than the goals articulated in many other OST and after-school program authorizations, such as the national 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program. DYCD's goals emphasize positive youth development in multiple domains within a context of safety and also support for the needs of working families.

Evaluation Design and Operations in 2005-06

Since contract award in summer 2005, evaluators have worked closely with DYCD to finalize the evaluation design and to collect baseline data on OST operations and participants. This section describes the evaluation design, evaluation operations in the initiative's first year, and the data sources used in this report.

Overview of Evaluation Design

The core task in designing the OST evaluation was to devise a framework that would capture information at baseline and over time that responded to the OST goals while also accounting for the broad diversity of OST programs and participants. Indeed, the sheer scale of the program posed the largest single challenge in crafting an appropriate evaluation design. The design that resulted from these deliberations employs systematic nesting of samples to permit generalization from the few to the many. Key features of the design are sketched below.

- From all programs in Options I through III, the evaluation is collecting the following types of data annually for three years:

  Data from **OST Online**, DYCD's program information system, which OST programs use to record and maintain information describing the characteristics and OST involvement of all participants, plus other program information

  Survey of program directors, which collects data on program goals and activities, program schedules, staff recruitment and qualifications, participant outreach and recruitment, participant needs and preferences, and linkages with participants' schools, communities, and families

  Survey of executive directors of provider organizations, which collects data on how the OST program influences provider organizations in fulfilling their core missions, how OST programs link to other services delivered by provider

organizations (if at all), and the cost and funding of specified elements of OST programs

- In addition to the data elements listed above, the evaluation is collecting data through annual **participant surveys** in a stratified random sample of 133 Option I programs. In these sites, evaluators are administering surveys to all participants in grades 3-12. This sample is structured to permit findings to be generalized to Option I programs as a whole and also to Option I programs at elementary, middle, and high school levels and to Option I programs that are either school-based or center-based.

  Separate from the stratified random sample of Option I programs, the evaluation is also collecting participant survey data annually in the 15 Priority Middle Schools sites.

- In a random sample of 15 sites selected from the sites in the participant-survey sample, known as the **in-depth sample**, the evaluation is conducting annual site visits. As part of the site visits, evaluators conduct individual and small-group interviews, structured observations of program activities, and surveys of staff and parents. In the second and third years of the evaluation, evaluators will obtain educational and demographic data on students whose names and DOE identification numbers are available in OST Online.

With these data sources, the evaluation is addressing four primary research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the programs supported by the OST initiative?

2. Who participates in these programs, and what are their patterns of attendance?

3. What are participants' patterns of social and emotional growth? Do programs affect participants' educational performance, and, if so, how?

4. Do programs meet the city's needs for assistance to working parents and for improvement in community-level capacities to serve youth during the out-of-school hours, and, if so, how?

Evaluation Operations in Program Year 2005-06

Evaluation start-up occurred at the same time as OST programs began operations. The evaluator developed and finalized the evaluation design, samples, and data-collection instruments in consultation with DYCD on a rolling basis starting at the beginning of the program year, with internal development and review timetables set to correspond to schedules for notifying sites about the evaluation and administering data-collection instruments in the field. In accordance with DOE rules, the evaluator sought and obtained DOE approval of the

participant survey and of the documents and practices to be used to protect the privacy of student data.

Working with the evaluator, DYCD staff contacted OST programs to obtain two types of necessary research consents:

- **Parental research consents**, using a form developed by DYCD and approved by DOE

  DYCD requires programs to enter each participant's parent/guardian research consent status into the appropriate field in OST Online. Of 32,117 Option I participants in grades 3-12 with data in OST Online, as of May 8, 2006, the parents or guardians of 18,514 participants provided research consent, while parents or guardians of 904 participants denied consent. No consent data were recorded for 12,697 Option I participants in grades 3-12.

- **Principal research approvals**, using the form provided by DOE

  DOE rules require that the principal of any host school approve in advance of any research activities to be conducted in that school and involving students or DOE employees. Accordingly, the evaluators, in collaboration with DYCD, sought research approval from principals of schools with OST programs that were either included in the Option I participant survey sample or were part of the Priority Middle Schools Program. Among the 85 school-based programs in the Option I participant survey sample, 78 principals granted research approval. Evaluators and DYCD were unable to secure consent from seven principals. Among the 15 Priority Middle Schools, 12 principals granted research approval, and three did not.

First-year data collection continues has just concluded. Evaluation staff have conducted site visits to the 15 OST programs in the in-depth sample, and have collected a full complement of interview and observational data in those sites. Survey data collection is just now being concluded as well.

Evaluation Data Used in This Report

To provide an early look at baseline data on OST programs and participants during the 2005-06 program year, this report presents analyses of data entered by program staff into OST Online and analyses of surveys completed by OST participants in grades 3-12. Except as otherwise noted, the data drawn from OST Online are current as of April 30, 2006, and represent the 511 OST programs that had participation data entered into OST Online.

With regard to the participant survey, the evaluator contacted each sampled program early in the program year to notify the program that it was in the participant-survey sample and to inform the program about how survey administration would occur. The evaluator

administered the participant survey to OST school- and center-based programs in batches beginning in February 2006, as the necessary consents were received from principals and parents. Surveys were delivered to each program director with instructions for administration and for forwarding completed surveys to the evaluation's survey vendor, who scanned each participant's responses directly into a research database. The 52 programs included in survey analyses in this report therefore include programs that secured research consents early.

Participant survey data presented here are drawn from the 2,333 surveys received by the evaluator as of May 2, 2006, while survey data collection was still underway. These surveys were received from 47 of the 133 OST programs in the stratified random sample of Option I programs selected for participant survey administration (and meeting the evaluation's consent thresholds) and from five of the 15 Priority Middle School Programs. The number of surveys received through May 2, 2006, is approximately 67 percent of the total 3,059 participants with affirmative parental research consent in grades 3-12 who were enrolled in the 47 responding programs in the main Option I sample. (The same surveys represent approximately 58 percent of the total 3,515 participants enrolled in the 47 sampled programs that returned surveys.) The number of surveys received from the five Priority Middle School programs returning surveys constitutes approximately 47 percent of the 621 participants with affirmative parental research consent in those schools. (The same number represents about 40 percent of the 741 participants enrolled in those schools.)

Because survey administration was incomplete at the time that data analyses occurred and only a portion of sampled programs had returned participant surveys, readers should interpret and use these data with caution. The data presented from this partial sample are not representative of all OST programs, although they illustrate the responses of OST participants attending both center- and school-based programs serving a variety of grade levels. As shown in Exhibit 2, no surveys from center-based programs serving middle-grades youth had been received by the cut-off date for this report. It is reasonable to surmise that the 52 programs that returned participants surveys in time for this report are disproportionately high-functioning OST programs that experienced minimal challenges in launching their program or enrolling participants. As a result, the participant experience in these programs may differ from that of participants in programs that were unable to secure sufficient research consents or administer the surveys quickly enough to be included in the data reported here.

The survey response rates included in this report are approximations because of the challenges faced by evaluators in determining the number of participants with affirmative parental consent for evaluation and the total number of enrolled participants at the time of survey administration. One such challenge is that programs did not consistently update OST Online to indicate participants' de-enrollment. Therefore, it is possible that the reported percent of consented students who responded to the survey is somewhat deflated, because some consented students may no longer have been enrolled in the program at the time of survey administration.

Exhibit 2
Number of OST Programs and Participants Represented in
Participant Survey Data, by Grade Level and Program Location

	School-Based	Center-Based	All Programs
Elementary grades			
Programs	20	11	31
Participants	1,058	283	1,341
Middle grades			
Programs	14	0	14
Participants	773	0	773
High school			
Programs	3	4	7
Participants	91	128	219
Total			
Programs	37	15	52
Participants	1,922	411	2,333

In addition, the response levels reported above reflect relatively high rates of parental consent in the 52 OST programs in which it was possible to administer surveys early. The low rate of parental consent for research was a primary reason for delaying survey administration in other programs. Evaluators expect that when data from the complete sample are analyzed, the percent of survey respondents out of the total number of enrolled participants will be considerably lower than in the 52 programs included in this report.

As a result of these conditions, the data presented in this report should be interpreted cautiously. Patterns that emerge may reflect the select group of relatively high-implementing programs, rather than the overall OST initiative. Because of the tentative nature of these early data, this interim report focuses on descriptive analyses of program implementation, rather than on interpreting or drawing conclusions from the results.

Scope and Extent of OST First-Year Programming

In Fall 2005, DYCD issued contracts for 557 OST programs to conduct OST activities in the 2005-06 program year, including 430 Option I programs, 114 Option II programs, and 13 Option III programs. By April 2006, 511 programs were launched and had participation data available, with 412 sites operating Option I programs, 88 operating Option II programs, and 11 operating Option III programs. Among the Option I sites, 270 were based in New York City schools, and 142 were based in other locations (and are known as center-based programs).

Across these 511 programs, as shown in Exhibit 3, DYCD awarded contracts that were intended to serve 15,462 youth in elementary-grades programs, 9,500 youth in middle-grades programs, 11,138 youth in high school programs, and 6,703 youth in programs serving multiple grade levels, for a total of 42,803 youth, according to DYCD's master list of programs. As described in programs' entries in OST Online, these programs actually served a total of 48,923

students from September 2005 through April 2006. Option I programs across all grade levels served more students than were specified in their contracts, with programs funded to serve 31,335 students and actually serving 39,727 students. Indeed, 73 percent of Option I programs met or exceeded their enrollment targets. Many of these programs may have enrolled participants who were not directly funded by OST monies but who benefited from the OST program investment and received the same services and activities as participants who were considered to be OST-funded. Programs supported under Options II and III were awarded funds to support enrollments of 9,993 and 1,475 students, respectively, and served fewer students overall than their award enrollments. Forty-seven percent of Option II programs and 9 percent of Option III programs met or exceeded their enrollment targets. Across all options, 85 percent of elementary-grades programs met or exceeded their enrollment target, compared with 71 percent of middle-grades programs, 50 percent of high school programs, and 38 percent of programs serving multiple grade levels.

Exhibit 3
Targeted Enrollment and Actual Number of Students Served,
by Option and Grade Level

Grade Level	Option I		Option II		Option III		All Programs	
	Targeted Enrollment	Students Served	Targeted Enrollment	Students Served	Targeted Enrollment	Students Served	Targeted Enrollment	Students Served
Elementary	13,707	18,014	1,755	1,583	N/A	N/A	15,462	19,597
Middle	9,181	13,823	319	235	N/A	N/A	9,500	14,058
High	8,447	7,890	2,691	2,282	N/A	N/A	11,138	10,172
Multiple	N/A	N/A	5,228	4,218	1,475	878	6,703	5,096
Total	31,335	39,727	9,993	8,318	1,475	878	42,803	48,923

DYCD awarded over $43 million to the 511 programs, with an average award of $86,000 per program. Award amounts ranged from $3,000 to $340,000. DYCD awarded these contracts to 185 provider organizations. Many provider organizations received more than one award, as shown in Exhibit 4. Eight provider organizations received 10 or more contracts, with total OST funding per organization ranging from $210,000 to $2.3 million.

Exhibit 4
Provider Organizations with 10 or More OST Programs

Provider	Number of Programs	Total Amount of OST Funds
Sports and Arts in Schools Foundation	27	$2,316,000
The Children's Aid Society	25	$2,767,000
Police Athletic League, Inc.	20	$1,145,000
The After-School Corporation	14	$1,133,000
Church Avenue Merchants Block Association, Inc.	11	$1,572,000
Madison Square Boys & Girls Club	10	$419,000
Global Kids, Inc.	10	$280,000
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of NYC	10	$210,000

The RFP specified different numbers of hours that elementary, middle, and high school programs would operate per week, as shown in Exhibit 1. The stated expectations in the RFP for school-year programs were 15 hours, 8 hours, and 3 hours, respectively, with a further expectation that all elementary and middle-grades programs would be open for 10 hours a day on 20 days during the school year when the schools were closed due to holidays and to winter, mid-winter, and spring recess periods. From September 2005 through April 2006, according to OST Online, the 511 OST programs were open for periods that ranged from 8 to 228 days. Delays in program start-up likely account for the reports of low numbers of days of operation, with some programs not beginning operation until April. The average program service period was 130 days, and the median was 150 days. As expected, programs serving younger students were open for more days on average than were programs serving older students. Elementary-grades programs were open for periods that ranged from 28 to 198 days, with an average of 153 days (median of 160 days), middle-grades programs were open between 18 and 198 days, with an average of 137 days (median of 150 days), and high school programs were open for 8 to 207 days, with an average of 103 days (median of 104 days). Programs serving multiple grade levels were open between 13 and 228 days, with an average of 112 days (median of 110 days). OST Online data indicate that: 66 percent of programs across all grade levels were open in every month from September through April; 29 percent were open five to seven months; and 5 percent were open for four months or less during this time period.

OST programs were distributed across each of the five New York City boroughs, as shown in Exhibit 5. Brooklyn hosted the most Option I OST programs (150), while Manhattan had the most Option II programs (39). Each of the five boroughs hosted at least one of the 11 Option III programs. The majority (270) of Option I programs were school-based, whereas the majority of Option II programs were center-based (60). All Option III programs were center-based. Option I programs were fairly evenly distributed across the DOE regions, ranging from 35 programs in Region 10 to 48 programs in Region 6. By far, the largest number of Option II programs was in Region 9 with 32 programs. No Option III programs operated in Regions 5, 6, or 9, while there were three Option III programs each in Regions 8 and 10.

Exhibit 5
Number of OST Programs and Participants, by Option

	Option I		Option II		Option III		All Programs	
	Programs (*n=412*)	Participants (*n=39,727*)	Programs (*n=88*)	Participants (*n=8,768*)	Programs (*n=11*)	Participants (*n=878*)	Programs (*n=511*)	Programs (*n=48,923*)
Borough								
Brooklyn	150	12,847	17	2,105	3	241	170	15,193
Bronx	92	10,628	20	1,578	2	99	114	12,305
Manhattan	66	5,602	39	2,929	3	143	108	8,674
Queens	85	8,561	11	1,649	2	147	97	10,357
Staten Island	19	2,089	2	57	1	248	22	2,394
Program Location								
School	270	30,927	28	2,822	N/A	N/A	298	33,749
Center	142	8,800	60	5,946	11	878	213	15,174
DOE Region								
Region 1	37	4,320	7	633	1	81	45	5,034
Region 2	42	4,904	7	707	1	18	50	5,629
Region 3	43	4,229	5	749	1	140	49	5,118
Region 4	37	3,905	6	426	1	7	44	4,338
Region 5	41	3,638	5	997	0	0	46	4,635
Region 6	48	3,289	2	285	0	0	50	3,574
Region 7	47	4,950	4	452	1	248	52	5,650
Region 8	38	3,486	7	902	3	241	48	4,629
Region 9	44	4,389	32	2,466	0	0	76	6,855
Region 10	35	2,617	13	701	3	143	51	3,461
School Level								
Elementary	170	18,014	13	1,583	N/A	N/A	183	19,597
Middle	122	13,823	8	235	N/A	N/A	130	14,058
High	120	7,890	36	2,282	N/A	N/A	156	10,172
Multiple	N/A	N/A	31	4,218	11	878	42	5,096
Target Zip Codes	264	25,485	25	1,857	N/A	N/A	289	27,342
Priority Middle School	14	2,265	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	14	2,265

As described earlier, DYCD identified a series of target zip codes for Option I and II programs, in order to increase the availability of OST services in high-need areas. Overall, out of the 511 OST programs with data as of April 2006, 289 programs operated in OST target zip codes and served 27,342 students; 264 of these programs were funded under Option I, and 25 were funded under Option II.

Option I programs most frequently served elementary-grades students, with 170 programs serving 18,014 students. Most Option II programs served high school students or students across multiple grade levels, with 36 programs serving 2,282 high school students and 31 programs serving 4,218 students across multiple grade levels. All Option III programs served students across multiple grade levels. The 14 Priority Middle School Programs for which data were available provided OST services to 2,265 students.

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

This section describes the demographic characteristics of participants, as reported in OST Online by 511 programs. Evaluators examined the grade level, gender, race/ethnicity, and public assistance status of participants. The completeness of these demographic data in OST Online varied considerably. For example, 46,909 of 48,923 participants across all options had a grade level entered in OST Online, but only 24,877 had race/ethnicity data. Although OST Online includes a field to indicate whether a student is an English Language Learner (ELL), those data are not reported here due to evidence of widespread inaccuracy in reporting (perhaps attributable to the fact that the default response for this item in OST Online was to categorize the child as ELL).

Grade Level of Participants

The majority of participants enrolled in Option I programs were in the elementary grades (45 percent) or middle grades (36 percent), as shown in Exhibit 6. Nineteen percent of Option I participants were in grades 9-12. In contrast, Option II and III programs were more likely to enroll older participants. In Option II, 41 percent of participating youth were in high school, with another 45 percent in the elementary grades and only 14 percent in the middle grades. In Option III, nearly half of enrolled youth were in high school (47 percent), with about a quarter of participants in the elementary grades and a quarter in the middle grades.

Exhibit 6
Demographic Characteristics of Participants,
by Option (in percents)

	Option I	Option II	Option III	All Programs
Total Number of Enrolled Participants	n=39,727	n=8,318	n=878	n=48,923
Grade Span	n=38,017	n=8,014	n=878	n=46,909
K-5	45	45	27	44
6-8	36	14	26	32
9-12	19	41	47	23
Gender	n=29,214	n=4,937	n=540	n=34,691
Male	50	48	55	50
Female	50	52	45	50
Race/ethnicity	n=21,367	n=3,040	n=470	n=24,877
American Indian	1	0	0	1
Asian	10	11	5	10
African American	36	32	17	35
Hispanic/Latino	39	43	43	39
Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
White (non-Hispanic)	9	10	32	9
Other	5	5	2	5
Has Public Assistance	n=11,302	n=1,015	n=309	n=12,626
Yes	15	17	15	16
No	85	83	85	84

Center-based programs were more likely to enroll older participants than were school-based programs, as shown in Exhibit 7. In center-based programs, almost half of enrolled youth were in high school, with another 18 percent of in the middle grades and 35 percent in the elementary grades. In contrast, school-based programs enrolled half of their enrolled youth in the elementary grades (49 percent), 38 percent in the middle grades, and 13 percent in high school.

Exhibit 7
Demographic Characteristics of Participants,
by Program Location (in percents)

	Center-based	School-based	All Programs
Total Number of Enrolled Participants	*n=15,174*	*n=33,749*	*n=48,923*
Grade Span	*n=14,452*	*n=32,457*	*n=46,909*
K-5	35	49	44
6-8	18	38	32
9-12	47	13	23
Gender	*n=10,529*	*n=24,162*	*n=34,991*
Male	50	50	50
Female	50	50	50
Race/ethnicity	*n=7,644*	*n=17,233*	*n=24,877*
American Indian	0	1	1
Asian	3	13	10
African American	41	33	35
Hispanic/Latino	38	40	39
Pacific Islander	0	0	0
White (non-Hispanic)	13	8	9
Other	4	5	5
Has Public Assistance	*n=3,224*	*n=9,402*	*n=12,626*
Yes	17	15	16
No	83	85	84

Gender of Participants

OST programs in Options I and II served approximately equal numbers of boys and girls, as seen in Exhibit 6. Fifty percent of youth in Option I programs were male, as were 48 percent of youth in Option II. However, Option III programs enrolled substantially more boys than girls (55 percent compared to 45 percent).

Within Option I, programs serving elementary-grades students enrolled more girls than boys (52 percent compared to 48 percent), as shown in Exhibit 8. In contrast, programs serving middle-grades and high school participants enrolled slightly higher proportions of boys (53 percent and 51 percent of participants, respectively).

Center- and school-based OST programs served roughly equal numbers of boys and girls, as seen in Exhibit 7, as did Priority Middle School Programs, as seen in Exhibit 9.

Exhibit 8
Demographic Characteristics of Option I Participants,
by Grade Level (in percents)

	Option 1			
	Elementary	Middle	High	All
Total Number of Enrolled Participants	*n=18,014*	*n=13,823*	*n=7,890*	*n=39,727*
Gender	*n=14,183*	*n=9,795*	*n=5,236*	*n=29,214*
Male	48	53	51	50
Female	52	47	49	50
Race/ethnicity	*n=10,250*	*n=7,495*	*n=3,622*	*n=21,367*
American Indian	1	1	1	1
Asian	12	8	10	10
African American	32	38	43	36
Hispanic/Latino	43	39	26	39
Pacific Islander	0	0	1	0
White (non-Hispanic)	8	9	13	9
Other	4	6	6	5
Has Public Assistance	*n=5,885*	*n=4,239*	*n=1,178*	*n=11,302*
Yes	18	13	13	15
No	83	87	87	85

Exhibit 9
Demographic Characteristics of Priority Middle School Participants
(in percents)

	Priority Middle Schools
Total Number of Enrolled Participants	*n=2,265*
Gender	*n=1,402*
Male	51
Female	49
Race/ethnicity	*n=1,100*
American Indian	2
Asian	6
African American	44
Hispanic/Latino	38
Pacific Islander	1
White (non-Hispanic)	2
Other	8
Has Public Assistance	*n=573*
Yes	16
No	84

Race/ethnicity of Participants

OST programs in Year 1 served large numbers of participants from minority groups. Across all OST options, Hispanic and Latino participants were the largest group served (39 percent of participants in Option I programs and 43 percent in both Options II and III), as seen in Exhibit 6.

In Options I and II, African-American youth were the second largest group served (36 percent and 32 percent, respectively). In Option III, however, only 17 percent of enrolled participants were African-American. Instead, the second largest demographic group served among Option III programs was white, non-Hispanic youth (32 percent of participants). In contrast, white youth made up only 9 and 10 percent of the participant population in Options I and II, respectively.

Among Option I programs, programs targeting high school youth enrolled a higher percent of African-American participants than did elementary- and middle-grades programs (43 percent compared to 32 percent and 38 percent, respectively), as shown in Exhibit 8. High school programs also had a lower proportion of Hispanic/Latino participants than did programs serving younger students (26 percent, compared to 43 percent in elementary programs and 39 percent in middle-grades programs). High school programs served a slightly higher percent of white students (13 percent compared to 8 and 9 percent, respectively).

Center-based programs enrolled a higher percent of African-American participants than did school-based programs (41 percent compared to 33 percent), as shown in Exhibit 7. Center-based programs also enrolled a slightly lower proportion of Hispanic/Latino participants than did school-based programs (38 percent compared to 40 percent). Center-based programs also served a lower percent of Asian students (3 percent compared to 13 percent) and a higher percent of white students (13 percent compared to 8 percent).

Among Priority Middle School Programs, African American youth were the largest group served, followed by Hispanic/Latino youth (44 percent and 38 percent, respectively), as shown in Exhibit 9.

Receipt of Public Assistance among Participants

OST programs across all three options enrolled similar proportions of youth from families receiving public assistance (15 percent in Options I and III, and 17 percent in Option II), as shown in Exhibit 6. Option I programs targeting elementary-grades participants served more families receiving public assistance than did programs targeting middle-grades or high school participants (18 percent compared to 13 percent), as shown in Exhibit 8.

Center- and school based programs served similar proportions of youth from families receiving public assistance (17 percent compared to 15 percent), as shown in Exhibit 7. Sixteen percent of youth attending Priority Middle School programs received public assistance, as shown in Exhibit 9.

Participant Engagement in OST Services

An essential indicator of program outreach and effectiveness is program attendance. Evidence from prior evaluations makes clear that regular program attendance is strongly associated with the development of the types of positive youth outcomes sought through the OST initiative (Huang, Gribbons, Kim, Lee, & Baker, 2000; Reisner, White, Russell, & Birmingham, 2004). DYCD monitors program attendance using OST Online and, in particular, using the system's template for program reporting of individual youth participation in specific activities to which the youth has been assigned. From the record of participants' attendance in their assigned activities, it is possible to determine each participant's number of days of program attendance during the program year. Analyses presented here are based on activity participation data entered by 511 OST programs during the period September 2005 through April 2006.

As expected based on DYCD's instructions to bidders and programs' contract documents, participants in elementary-grades Option I programs attended their OST program for more days, on average, than did participants in that option's middle-grades or high school programs, as shown in Exhibit 10. Prior research suggests that out-of-school time programs have the strongest benefits for participants who participate in programming on a frequent basis. A minimum of 60 program days per school year was found in one relevant study of New York City after-school programs (Reisner et al., 2004) to be a meaningful cut point separating low attenders from moderate attenders in the elementary grades. In that study, a minimum of 60 days of program attendance a year plus attendance on 60 percent of the days that the program was open served as a good predictor of positive student reactions to their after-school experience. Among elementary-grades students in Option I programs, 70 percent of participants attended the OST program 60 or more days during the measurement period.

Exhibit 10
OST Participants' Attendance in Assigned Activities (in percents)

	Option I			Option II	Option III
Grade Level Served	Elem. *n=18,014*	Middle *n=13,823*	High *n=7,890*	All *n=8,318*	*All* *n=878*
Program Days Attended					
1-19 days	10	33	65	38	61
20-39 days	10	19	19	18	32
40-59 days	10	15	7	9	6
60 days or more	70	32	9	35	1

Exhibit reads: Ten percent of youth in elementary-grades Option I programs attended their OST program for 1 to 19 days during the measurement period.

In the middle-grades and high school Option I programs, where activities were offered on fewer days during the program period than was the case in elementary-grades programs, 32 percent of participants in middle-grades programs and 9 percent of high school participants attended their OST program 60 or more days. Thirty-three percent of participants in Option I

middle-grades programs attended their program 1 to 19 days during the period, compared with 65 percent of participants in Option I high school programs.

Attendance patterns in Option II and Option III programs also reflected the lower requirement for number of days of OST programming, compared to Option I elementary-grades programs. In Option II programs, 35 percent of participants attended 60 days or more, and 38 percent attended 1 to 19 days. Among Option III programs, 61 percent of participants attended their program for 1 to 19 days throughout the year, and only 1 percent attended 60 days or more.

Levels of participation can also be expressed as an attendance rate, which reflects mean attendance levels of enrolled youth, as shown in Exhibit 11. Youth attending elementary-grades programs in Option I attended the program on 57 percent of the days they were assigned to an activity. Attendance rates were lower among programs serving older youth. Youth attending middle-grades programs in Option I attended their program on 40 percent of the days they were assigned to an activity, compared with 34 percent for Option I high school participants. Youth enrolled in Option II programs attended their programs on 44 percent of the days they were assigned to an activity. In Option III programs, youth attended 34 percent of their assigned days.

Exhibit 11
Average Attendance Rates in Assigned Activities (in percents)

	Option I			Option II	Option III
	Elem. *n=18,014*	Middle *n=13,823*	High *n=7,890*	All. *n=8,318*	All *n=878*
Percent of Assigned Program Days Actually Attended	57	40	34	44	34

Exhibit reads: Youth enrolled in elementary-grades Option I programs attended 57 percent of the days they were assigned to an activity.

OST Online captures the specific activities and schedule to which an individual participant was assigned and was expected to attend. Each OST participant may therefore have a unique standard of expected program attendance. For example, while most elementary-grades participants may be assigned to one or more daily program activities five days per week, a high school participant might be expected to attend an activity on only one day a week. For each day, program staff record in OST Online whether the youth attends each activity to which he or she is assigned.

Experience in the first year of OST operations indicated that tracking and entering daily attendance by activity for each youth was labor-intensive and hence could have resulted in inaccuracies. For example, after-school programs do not always operate according to schedule, due to unexpected events and opportunities and due also to staff absences. Programs know to expect this and adjust their daily activities accordingly, but OST Online assumes a consistent schedule of activities as planned at the beginning of the program year or semester. Therefore, a code of "not present" does not appropriately distinguish between a participant absence and an

activity cancellation. Because of these possible problems in the recording of activity data, evaluators focused on the numbers and percents of youth present in the program on a given day and not on activity-specific attendance.

As seen in Exhibit 12, youth attending programs in target zip codes attended their program at the same rates or higher as youth attending programs in non-target zip codes, indicating the needs in these neighborhoods for OST services and their receptivity to the programs. Youth at elementary- and middle-grades levels in the two types of communities attended programs at the same rates (57 percent and 40 percent, respectively). In high school programs and programs serving multiple grade levels, youth in programs located in the target zip codes attended their programs at higher rates than their non-target zip code counterparts. In high school programs, youth in target zip codes attended their programs on 36 percent of the days they were assigned to an activity, compared with 33 percent for students in non-target zip codes. In programs serving multiple grade levels, youth in target zip codes attended their programs on 62 percent of the days they were assigned, compared to 40 percent for students in non-target zip codes.
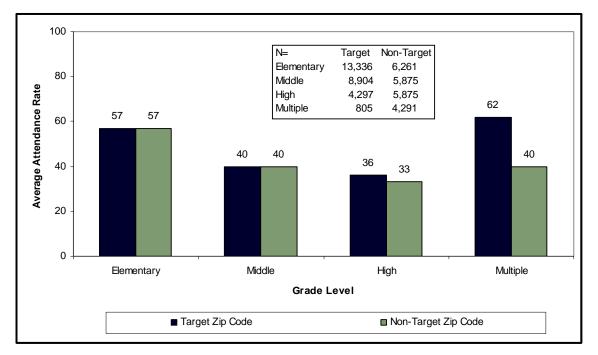
Exhibit 12
Assigned Program Days Attended,
by Grade Level and Target Zip Code (in percents)

N=	Target	Non-Target
Elementary	13,336	6,261
Middle	8,904	5,875
High	4,297	5,875
Multiple	805	4,291

Exhibit reads: Students enrolled in elementary-grades programs in both target zip codes and non-target zip codes attended their program on 57 percent of the days they were assigned to an activity.

In general, youth enrolled in center-based programs attended at slightly higher rates than youth in school-based programs, as shown in Exhibit 13. This was true at elementary-grades,

middle-grades, and high school levels, where attendance rates of 58 percent and 57 percent were computed at the elementary level, 43 percent and 39 percent at the middle-grades level, and 36 percent and 31 percent at the high school level, for center-based and school-based programs respectively. At programs serving multiple grade levels, youth at school-based programs attended their programs at a higher rate than students at center-based programs, at 62 percent and 39 percent, respectively.
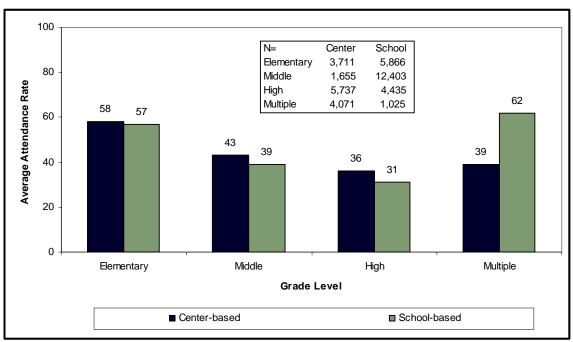
Exhibit 13
Assigned Program Days Attended,
by Grade Level and Program Location (in percents)

N=	Center	School
Elementary	3,711	5,866
Middle	1,655	12,403
High	5,737	4,435
Multiple	4,071	1,025

Exhibit reads: Students enrolled in elementary-grades center-based programs attended their program on 58 percent of the days they were assigned to an activity.

Participants' Descriptions of Their OST Program Experiences and of Themselves

Through the participant survey, evaluators measured youth responses to questions about (1) the extent to which the OST program had provided opportunities for positive youth development, (2) the characteristics of their social interactions in OST programs, and (3) participants' perceptions and behaviors related to learning. A summary of early participant survey findings is presented below. As noted before, these findings are based on the experiences of participants in the select group of sampled OST programs that successfully enrolled participants, received parental and principal consent for research, and administered surveys sooner than other OST programs. Therefore, the findings may not reflect the experiences of participants across all OST programs. Evaluators urge caution in interpreting these early results.

Opportunities for Positive Youth Development in the OST Program

Self-reports of participation in the OST program and in unsupervised settings. As expected in an OST program setting (Reisner et al., 2004), younger participants reported attending the OST program more frequently than did older participants. Eighty percent of youth in elementary-grades OST programs reported that they attended the OST program five times a week. As already discussed, OST middle-grades and high school programs were not designed for daily participation, and youth's attendance reports indicated lower OST attendance among older youth, with 55 percent of middle-grades youth and 14 percent of high school youth reporting five-day a week OST attendance. These self-reported numbers are consistent with attendance patterns in OST Online, with elementary-grades participants on average attending the most program days and high school participants attending the fewest. However, the two figures cannot be directly compared, in part because the survey findings in this interim report are based on a select group of programs that are likely to be high-implementers and to have higher than average attendance.

Similarly, elementary-grades participants were less likely to report being unsupervised during the after-school hours than were middle-grades or high school participants. Eighty-two percent of participants in elementary-grades programs said that they never went to a place after school where adults were not present, compared to 67 percent of middle-grades participants and 41 percent of high school participants responding in the same way. Seven percent of elementary-grades youth, 13 percent of middle-grades youth, and 43 percent of high school youth reported going to a place with no adults present one or two times a week. Eleven percent of elementary youth, 17 percent of middle-grades youth, and 15 percent of high school youth reported being unsupervised after-school at least three times a week. These findings are important in light of research demonstrating the very poor youth outcomes associated with a lack of after-school supervision (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000; Vandell, Pierce, Brown, Lee, Bolt, Dadisman, Pechman, & Reisner, 2006).

Youth also reported attending non-OST programs or after-school activities on occasion, particularly high school students. Seventy-three percent of youth who participated in high school OST programs also reported participating in a different after-school activity at least once a week, compared to 42 percent of elementary-grades youth and 44 percent of middle-grades participants. OST participants also reported spending after-school time in a home, supervised by an adult, at least once a week (62 percent of elementary participants, 74 percent of middle-grades participants, and 78 percent of high school participants). In addition, 57 percent of high school participants and 21 percent of middle-grades participants reported going to an after-school job at least one afternoon a week.
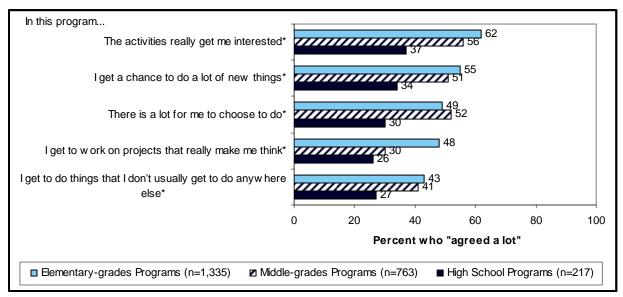
The patterns of self-reported participation in an OST program were similar for center-based and school-based participants. Among elementary-grades participants, 80 percent of youth in school-based programs reported that they attended the OST program five times a week, in comparison with 78 percent of youth in center-based programs. Similarly, 13 percent of high school youth in school-based programs and 14 percent in center-based programs reported attending their OST program five times a week. Elementary-grades participants in center-based programs were less likely to report ever attending a different OST program than were their peers

in school-based programs (67 percent reported never attending another program, compared to 56 percent). This pattern was reversed among high school participants, with only 17 percent of center-based participants reporting that they never attended another after-school program or activity, compared to 58 percent of school-based participants.

Exposure to new experiences. OST participants overwhelmingly agreed that their program had exposed them to new and interesting activities. Across all grade levels, 88 percent of youth said that they "agree a little" or "agree a lot" that the program gave them a chance to do a lot of new things. In addition, three-quarters or more agreed that:

- The activities really got them interested.

- There was a lot to choose to do in the program.

- The program offered opportunities to do things that they don't usually get to do anywhere else.

- In the program they were able to work on projects that really made them think.

Participant reports of engaging in new experiences through the OST program varied significantly by grade level. As seen in Exhibit 14, participants in high school programs were less likely to agree that participation had exposed them to a variety of new and interesting experiences than were participants in programs serving elementary-grades and middle-grades youth. Only 37 percent of participants in programs serving high school youth agreed a lot that the activities really get them interested, compared with 56 percent of participants in middle-grades programs and 62 percent of participants in elementary-grades programs. Similarly, 34 percent of high school participants felt strongly that they had a chance to do a lot of new things in the OST program, significantly fewer than the 51 percent of middle-grades participants and 55 percent of elementary-grades participants responding this way. In addition, less than a third (30 percent) of participants in high school programs reported a lot of choice in activities, compared to about half of participants in middle-grades and elementary-grades programs (52 percent and 49 percent, respectively). Only 27 percent of participants in high school programs agreed a lot that they were able to do things in the OST program that they did not have an opportunity to do elsewhere, compared to 41 percent of participants in middle-grades programs and 43 percent of participants in elementary-grades programs. Finally, participants in high school and middle-grades programs were less likely to report that they worked on projects that really made them think than were elementary-grades participants (26 percent and 30 percent, compared to 48 percent, respectively).

Exhibit 14
Exposure to New Experiences, by Grade Level

In this program...

The activities really get me interested*
Elementary: 62, Middle: 56, High School: 37

I get a chance to do a lot of new things*
Elementary: 55, Middle: 51, High School: 34

There is a lot for me to choose to do*
Elementary: 49, Middle: 52, High School: 30

I get to work on projects that really make me think*
Elementary: 48, Middle: 30, High School: 26

I get to do things that I don't usually get to do anywhere else*
Elementary: 43, Middle: 41, High School: 27

Percent who "agreed a lot"

☐ Elementary-grades Programs (n=1,335) ▨ Middle-grades Programs (n=763) ■ High School Programs (n=217)
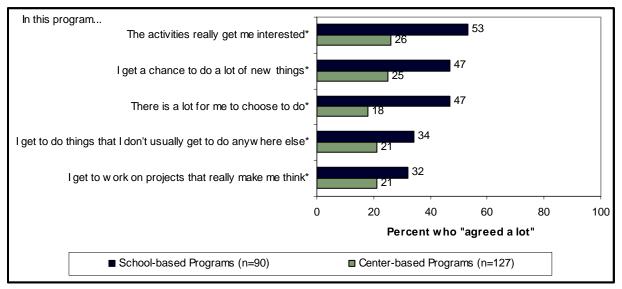
*These differences were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Exhibit reads: Sixty-two percent of participants in elementary-grades programs agreed a lot that their OST program activities really got them interested, compared to 56 percent of participants in middle-grades programs and 37 percent in high school programs.

High school participants in school-based programs were more likely to report high levels of exposure to new and interesting activities than were high school participants in center-based programs, as seen in Exhibit 15. Most notably, more than half (53 percent) of participants in school-based programs said that the activities offered really got them interested, compared to only 26 percent of high school participants in center-based programs. Similarly, 47 percent of participants in school-based programs said that they agreed a lot that there was a lot to choose to do in the OST program, compared to 18 percent of participants in center-based programs. Forty-seven percent of high school participants in school-based programs said that they had a chance to do a lot of new things, compared to 25 percent of participants in center-based programs.

Although elementary-grades youth in center-based and school-based programs responded similarly to most items, significantly more center-based participants agreed a lot that they had a chance to do a lot of new things at the OST program, compared to participants in school-based programs (62 percent compared to 53 percent).

Exhibit 15
Exposure to New Experiences Among High School Participants,
by Program Location
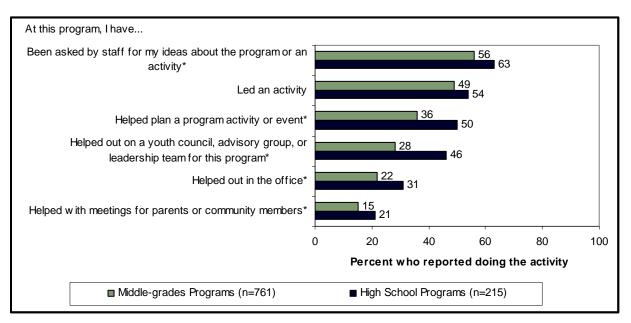
In this program...

The activities really get me interested* — School-based: 53, Center-based: 26

I get a chance to do a lot of new things* — School-based: 47, Center-based: 25

There is a lot for me to choose to do* — School-based: 47, Center-based: 18

I get to do things that I don't usually get to do anywhere else* — School-based: 34, Center-based: 21

I get to work on projects that really make me think* — School-based: 32, Center-based: 21

Percent who "agreed a lot" (0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100)

■ School-based Programs (n=90)   □ Center-based Programs (n=127)

*These differences were statistically significant (p <0.05).

Exhibit reads: Among high school participants, 53 percent of youth in school-based programs agreed a lot that the activities in their OST program really got them interested, compared to 26 percent of youth in center-based programs.

Opportunities for youth leadership. In a set of questions asked of middle-grades and high school youth, participants in high school programs were more likely to report that they played leadership roles in the OST program than were participants in programs serving the middle grades, as seen in Exhibit 16. In particular, 46 percent of participants in high school programs reported that they had helped out on a youth council, advisory group, or leadership team for their OST program, compared with similar responses from 28 percent of participants in middle-grades programs. Fifty percent of high school youth reported helping to plan a program activity or event, compared with 36 percent of middle-grades youth.

Exhibit 16
Opportunities for Youth Leadership, by Grade Level

At this program, I have...

Activity	Middle-grades	High School
Been asked by staff for my ideas about the program or an activity*	56	63
Led an activity	49	54
Helped plan a program activity or event*	36	50
Helped out on a youth council, advisory group, or leadership team for this program*	28	46
Helped out in the office*	22	31
Helped with meetings for parents or community members*	15	21

Percent who reported doing the activity

■ Middle-grades Programs (n=761)   ■ High School Programs (n=215)

*These differences were statistically significant (p <0.05).

Exhibit reads: Sixty-three percent of participants in high school programs reported that they had been asked by staff for their ideas about their OST program or an activity, compared to 56 percent of participants in middle-grades programs.

High school participants in school-based programs were also more likely to report engaging in leadership activities than were high school participants in center-based programs. For example, 59 percent of participants in school-based programs reported having led an OST program activity, compared with 37 percent in center-based programs. Fifty-nine percent of youth in school-based programs also reported having opportunities to help plan an activity or event for their OST program, compared with 44 percent of respondents in center-based programs. School-based high school participants were more likely to report opportunities to provide input into the OST program: 54 percent reported that they had been asked by staff for their ideas about the program or an activity, compared with 25 percent of participants in center-based programs.

Engaging in healthy lifestyles. Overall, about half of all OST participants reported that they engaged in physical activities three hours a week or more. Twenty-nine percent reported that they exercised five hours or more a week, and 22 percent reported that they exercised three to five hours per week. An additional 26 percent of youth reported that they exercised one to three hours a week.

High school participants were somewhat more likely to report exercising on a regular basis, with 59 percent exercising three hours per week or more, compared to 53 percent of middle-grades participants and 48 percent of elementary-grades participants. Elementary-grades youth in center-based programs were more likely to report exercising three hours per week or

more than were elementary participants in school-based programs (53 percent compared to 46 percent). No differences were evident for high school participants in center-based and school-based programs.

Characteristics of Social Interactions in OST Programs

DYCD and evaluators took a serious interest in the social interactions in OST programs because of the large body of research suggesting the importance of positive social relationships in fostering the development of other positive personal traits (e.g., Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Pierce, Hamm, & Vandell, 1999).

Sense of belonging. Overall, participants across all grade levels reported high levels of attachment to their OST program, as seen in Exhibit 17. Seventy-four percent of youth agreed a lot that they felt safe in the OST program, and 60 percent agreed a lot that they felt like they belonged in the program and that the program was a good place to hang out.

Exhibit 17
Sense of Belonging
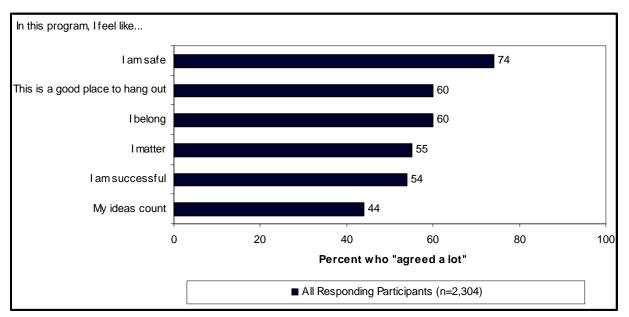
Exhibit reads: Across all grade levels, 74 percent of participants agreed a lot that they were safe in their OST program.

Youth of different ages varied in their responses to this item. Forty-six percent of elementary-grades participants and high school participants agreed a lot when asked whether or not they felt that their ideas counted in the program. In comparison, 40 percent of middle-grades participants agreed a lot. Participants in elementary-grades programs were significantly more

likely than older youth to agree a lot when asked if they felt safe in the program (77 percent, compared to 69 percent of middle-grades youth and 68 percent of high school youth).

Elementary-grades youth in center-based programs were more likely to report that they felt a strong attachment to their OST program. Sixty-six percent of elementary center-based participants agreed a lot that they felt that they belonged in the program, compared to 60 percent of participants in school-based programs. Fifty-one percent of center-based youth and 45 percent of school-based youth agreed a lot that they felt like their ideas counted in the program. Youth in center-based programs were also more likely to report that they felt safe in the program, with 82 percent saying that they agreed a lot, compared to 76 percent of elementary participants in school-based programs. There were no significant differences in the responses of high school participants in school-based and center-based programs.

Interactions with staff. In general, participants reported positive interactions with OST program staff members. Across all grade levels, 68 percent of participants agreed a lot that staff treated them with respect, and 65 percent reported that staff thought that they could learn new things, although only 45 percent of youth agreed a lot that staff always keep their promises.

Participant reactions to questions about OST program staff varied by grade level, as seen in Exhibit 18. Elementary-grades youth were more likely to report positive interactions with staff than were youth in programs serving middle-grades or high school youth. For example, 65 percent of elementary-grades students reported that staff thought that they could do things well, compared to 59 percent of middle-grades students and 51 percent of high school students. Youth in elementary-grades programs were also more likely to report that staff really cared about them, with 62 percent responding that they agreed a lot, compared to 53 percent and 50 percent of middle-grades and high school youth, respectively.

There were only two differences in the responses for center-based and school-based participants. Elementary-grades participants in center-based programs were significantly more likely to report that staff treated them with respect than their peers in school-based programs (75 percent compared to 67 percent). High school participants in center-based programs were more likely to feel that staff cared what they thought than were high school youth in school-based programs (52 percent compared to 40 percent).
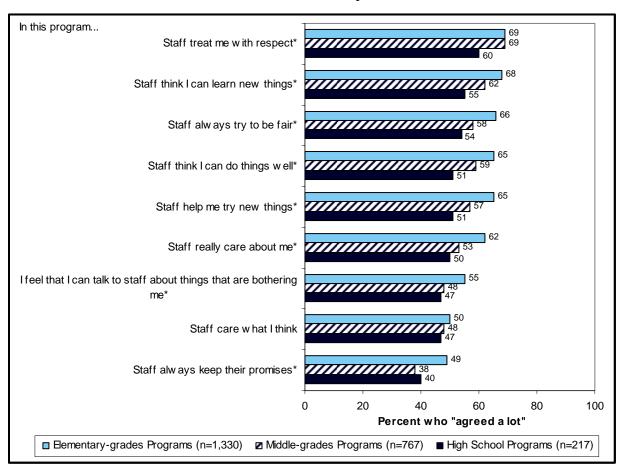
Exhibit 18
Interactions with Staff, by Grade Level

In this program...

Statement	Elementary	Middle	High School
Staff treat me with respect*	69	69	60
Staff think I can learn new things*	68	62	55
Staff always try to be fair*	66	58	54
Staff think I can do things well*	65	59	51
Staff help me try new things*	65	57	51
Staff really care about me*	62	53	50
I feel that I can talk to staff about things that are bothering me*	55	48	47
Staff care what I think	50	48	47
Staff always keep their promises*	49	38	40

Percent who "agreed a lot"

☐ Elementary-grades Programs (n=1,330) ▨ Middle-grades Programs (n=767) ■ High School Programs (n=217)

*These differences were statistically significant (p <0.05).

Exhibit reads: Sixty-nine percent of youth from elementary-grades programs agreed a lot that staff treat them with respect, compared to 69 percent of youth from middle-grades programs, and 60 percent of youth from high school programs.

Interactions with peers. The survey asked participants in elementary-grades programs a series of questions about their interactions with their peers, as shown in Exhibit 19. Youth reported that they had a good time playing with other kids, with 71 percent agreeing a lot. Participants also tended to agree a lot that they had a lot of friends in the program (69 percent) and that they got to know other kids really well in the program (64 percent).

For the most part, elementary-grades youth in center-based programs reported similar levels of positive interactions with peers as did youth in school-based programs, with one exception: youth at center-based programs were more likely to report that they got to know other kids really well. Sixty-eight percent of center-based participants agreed a lot to this statement, compared to 63 percent of school-based youth.

Exhibit 19
Interactions with Peers within Elementary-Grades Programs

In this program, I...

Statement	Percent
Have a good time playing with other kids	71
Have a lot of friends	69
Get to know other kids really well	64
Get along with other kids	51
Like the other kids	41
Can really trust the other kids	27

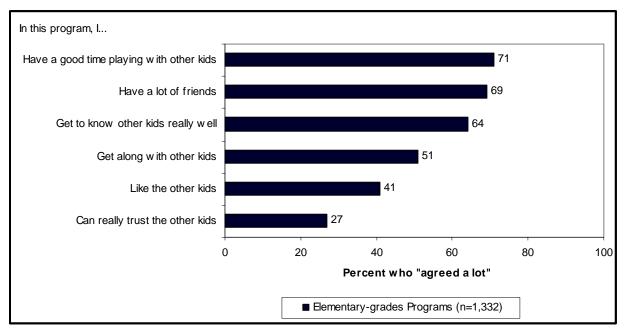Percent who "agreed a lot"

■ Elementary-grades Programs (n=1,332)

Exhibit reads: Seventy-one percent of participants from elementary-grades programs agreed a lot that they had a good time playing with other kids.

Perceptions and Behaviors Related to Learning

Academic self-esteem and aspirations. Participants in OST programs targeting elementary-grades youth reported the highest levels of academic self-esteem, followed by participants in middle-grades programs and then participants in high school programs. Sizable gaps separated the responses of these age groups, as shown in Exhibit 20. For example, 80 percent of elementary-grades youth agreed a lot that they try hard in school, compared to 67 percent of middle-grades youth, and 40 percent of high school youth. In addition, 65 percent of elementary-grades participants felt strongly that they do well in school, compared to 50 percent of middle-grades youth and 27 percent of high school youth. Similar patterns in academic self-esteem were evident on other statements in the participant surveys.
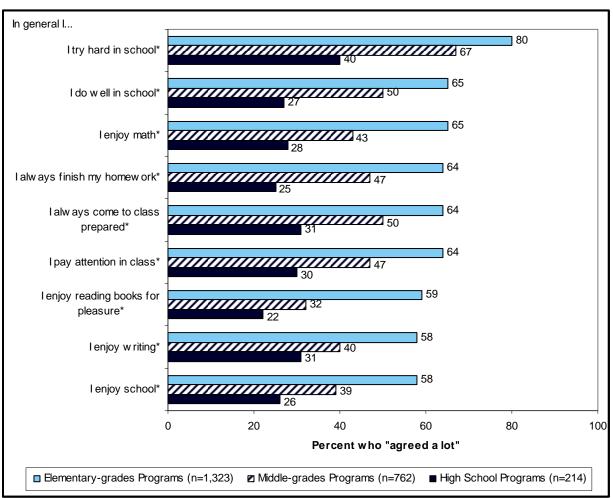
Exhibit 20
Academic Self-Esteem, by Grade Level

In general I...

Statement	Elementary	Middle	High School
I try hard in school*	80	67	40
I do well in school*	65	50	27
I enjoy math*	65	43	28
I always finish my homework*	64	47	25
I always come to class prepared*	64	50	31
I pay attention in class*	64	47	30
I enjoy reading books for pleasure*	59	32	22
I enjoy writing*	58	40	31
I enjoy school*	58	39	26

Percent who "agreed a lot"

☐ Elementary-grades Programs (n=1,323) ▨ Middle-grades Programs (n=762) ■ High School Programs (n=214)

*These differences were statistically significant (p <0.05).

Exhibit reads: Eighty percent of participants in elementary-grades programs agreed a lot that they try hard in school, compared to 67 percent of participants in middle-grades programs and 40 percent in high school programs.

High school participants in school-based programs were more likely to report high levels of academic self-esteem than were their peers in center-based programs, as shown in Exhibit 21. For example, 51 percent of high school youth in school-based programs agreed a lot that they tried hard in school, in comparison with 33 percent of youth in center-based programs. Forty-two percent of high school participants from school-based programs reported that they always come to class prepared, in comparison with 23 percent of center-based participants. Thirty-eight percent of school-based participants report that they generally do well in school, compared to 20 percent of center-based participants.

School-based elementary participants differed from center-based participants on only two items. More school-based elementary youth reported that they enjoy school than did

center-based participants (60 percent compared to 52 percent), and more school-based youth reported that they enjoyed math (67 percent compared to 59 percent).
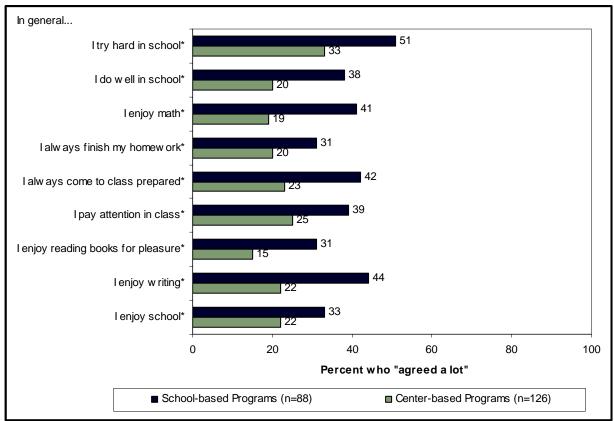
Exhibit 21
Academic Self-Esteem Among High School Participants, by Program Location

In general...

Statement	School-based Programs (n=88)	Center-based Programs (n=126)
I try hard in school*	51	33
I do well in school*	38	20
I enjoy math*	41	19
I always finish my homework*	31	20
I always come to class prepared*	42	23
I pay attention in class*	39	25
I enjoy reading books for pleasure*	31	15
I enjoy writing*	44	22
I enjoy school*	33	22

Percent who "agreed a lot"

■ School-based Programs (n=88)   ☐ Center-based Programs (n=126)

*These differences were statistically significant (p <0.05).

Exhibit reads: Among high school participants, 51 percent of youth in school-based programs agreed a lot that they tried hard in school, compared with 33 percent of youth in center-based programs.

The survey asked middle-grades and high school youth to report on how sure they were that they would finish high school and how much further they would like to go in school. Seventy-two percent of all participants reported that they were very sure that they would finish high school. Forty-six percent of all responding youth reported that they would like to finish college. Surprisingly, given their lower academic self-esteem, high school participants in center-based programs were more likely to report that they were sure that they would finish high school than were participants from school-based programs (89 percent compared to 70 percent). Similarly, 83 percent of high school students from center-based programs reported that they would like to at least finish college, compared to 69 percent of youth from school-based programs.

Development of other competencies. In addition to questions about academic competencies, the survey also asked youth about development of other cognitively related skills. Across all grade levels, 60 percent of participants agreed a lot that they were good at using a computer. Fifty-nine percent agreed a lot that they could play a musical instrument, sing, dance, draw, paint, or could do some other type of art really well. More than half of all respondents (52 percent) agreed a lot that they had the skills to be a leader.

These responses varied by grade level. Elementary-grades participants were more likely to report that they were good at using a computer. Sixty-three percent of elementary-grades participants agreed a lot on this score, followed by 57 percent of middle-grades participants and 49 percent of high school participants. Fifty-five percent of elementary-grades youth agreed a lot that they had the skills to be a leader, followed by 51 percent of middle-grades youth and 37 percent of high school youth. When asked whether or not they could play a musical instrument, sing, dance, draw, paint, or could do some other type of art really well, 66 percent of elementary-grades youth agreed a lot, compared to 54 percent of middle-grades youth and 37 percent of high school youth.

High school participants in school-based programs were significantly more likely to report high levels of competencies in two of these areas than were high school youth in center-based programs. Fifty-eight percent of school-based participants felt that they could play an instrument or engage in another artistic pursuit well, compared with only 23 percent of center-based high school participants. Fifty-one percent of school-based high school youth agreed a lot that they have the skills to be a leader, compared to 28 percent of their center-based peers. There were no significant differences in these competencies among elementary-grades youth.

Among middle-grades and high school participants, 48 percent of respondents agreed a lot that they knew about different careers. Thirty-six percent agreed a lot that they were comfortable speaking in front of a group. Forty-one percent reported that they had a strong attachment to their neighborhood. Thirty-three percent felt that they could make a difference in their neighborhood.

These results differed by grade level. When asked whether they knew about different careers, 42 percent of high school youth agreed a lot, compared to 49 percent of middle-grades youth. Middle-grades participants were also more likely to report that they were comfortable speaking in front of a group (39 percent compared to 24 percent of high school participants). Twenty-five percent of high school participants agreed a lot that they had a strong attachment to their neighborhood, compared to 45 percent of middle-grades participants. Twenty-three percent of high school participants agreed a lot that they felt that they could make a difference in their neighborhood, compared to 36 percent of middle-grades participants.

School-based high school youth were more likely to agree a lot with these items. Fifty-two percent of school-based high school participants agreed a lot that they knew about different careers, compared to 34 percent of youth in center-based programs. Thirty-five percent of school-based participants reported that they were comfortable speaking in front of a group, compared to 16 percent of center-based participants. School-based participants were also more likely to agree a lot with the community well-being items. When asked whether or not they had

a strong attachment to their neighborhood, 34 percent of school-based youth agreed a lot, compared to 19 percent of center-based youth. Thirty-six percent of school-based youth reported that they could make a difference in their neighborhood, compared to 15 percent of youth in center-based programs.

Academic benefits of the OST program. The evaluation asked youth to report on a series of items measuring the academic benefits of participating in an OST project. Participants in elementary-grades programs reported the highest levels of academic benefits, followed by participants in middle-grades programs, as shown in Exhibit 22. Participants in high school programs were least likely to report academic benefits of participation. These differences may reflect the effects of differing levels of OST participation.
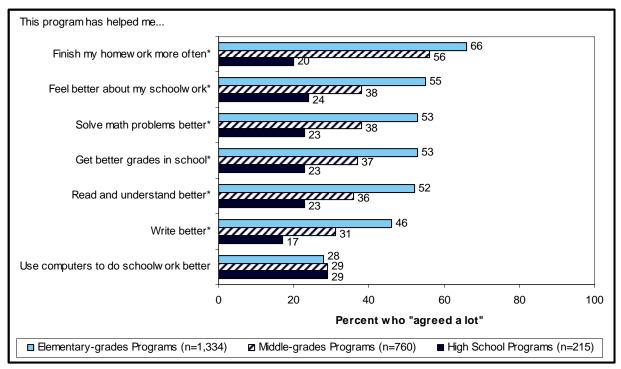
Exhibit 22
Academic Benefits of the Program, by Grade Level

This program has helped me...

	Elementary-grades	Middle-grades	High School
Finish my homework more often*	66	56	20
Feel better about my schoolwork*	55	38	24
Solve math problems better*	53	38	23
Get better grades in school*	53	37	23
Read and understand better*	52	36	23
Write better*	46	31	17
Use computers to do schoolwork better	28	29	29

Percent who "agreed a lot"

□ Elementary-grades Programs (n=1,334) ▨ Middle-grades Programs (n=760) ■ High School Programs (n=215)

*These differences were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Exhibit reads: Sixty-six percent of participants in elementary-grades programs agreed a lot that the OST program had helped them finish their homework more often, compared to 56 percent of participants in middle-grades programs and 20 percent in high school programs.

In general, more than half of elementary-grades participants agreed a lot that the OST program helped them with a variety of academic tasks, compared with a third to a half of middle-grades participants and less than a quarter of high school participants. For example, 66 percent of elementary-grades participants reported that the OST program helped them finish their homework more often, in comparison with 56 percent of middle-grades youth and 20 percent of

high school participants. Youth in elementary-grades programs were also more likely to report that the OST program helped them feel better about their schoolwork. Fifty-five percent of elementary-grades participants agreed a lot with this statement, followed by 38 percent of middle-grades participants and 24 percent of high school participants. Only about a third of participants across all grade levels agreed a lot that the OST program helped them use computers to do their schoolwork better, perhaps reflecting the infrequent use of computers in OST programming.

For elementary-grades participants, there were no differences in reported academic benefits of center- and school-based programs. There were two significant differences among high school participants, however. Thirty-seven percent of center-based participants reported that participation helped them use computers to do schoolwork better, compared to only 19 percent of school-based participants, possibly reflecting a greater availability of computers at the centers. In contrast, 34 percent of high school participants in school-based programs reported that program improved their ability to solve math problems, compared to 14 percent of center-based programs, perhaps the result of a greater academic focus among school-based programs.

Next Steps in Evaluation Reporting

In the fall, evaluators will produce a complete report on the first year of OST operations, using all data available to the evaluation. It will address important elements of each of the evaluation's four main research questions:

1.   **What are the characteristics of the programs supported by the OST initiative?**

     The fall report will describe characteristics such as: the activities in which participants engage and the schedules on which the programs operate; the staff who lead the activities, including their qualifications, supervision, and participation in OST training; methods of outreach and recruitment of participants; participants' needs and preferences; management and supervisory practices used in the programs; and the forms of outreach and collaboration linking OST programs with schools, communities, and families.

2.   **Who participates in these programs, and what are their patterns of attendance?**

     Using final 2005-06 data from OST Online and final data from the first-year participant surveys, the report will present a complete profile of participants and their attendance patterns.

3. **What are participants' patterns of social and emotional growth? Do programs affect participants' educational performance, and, if so, how?**

Although participant-change data won't be available for inclusion in the first-year report, the report will provide comprehensive data from all of the participant surveys, including analyses of survey-response patterns among participants in OST programs with differing program characteristics.

4. **Do programs meet the city's needs for assistance to working parents and for improvement in community-level capacities to serve children and youth during out-of-school hours, and, if so, how?**

The first-year report will report responses from surveys of parents, program directors, and provider organization directors on how the programs meet the needs of working parents. It will also report how OST program participation affects the youth-serving capacity of the city's nonprofit community and of partnering agencies involved in OST, especially DOE and the Parks and Recreation Department.

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