



# Funders' Guide to Quality in Out-of-School Time

GRANTMAKERS FOR EDUCATION'S OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME FUNDER NETWORK

# Funders Guide' to Quality in Out-of-School Time

**SUMMARY:** Participating in out-of-school time (OST) programs can be transformational in the lives of young people, but only if the efforts are high-quality. This guide provides recommendations to grantmakers about how they can increase quality in OST through local, regional, statewide and national grantmaking and other strategies. It was commissioned by Grantmakers for Education's OST Funder Network as part of its Quality in Out-of-School Time Deep Dive Series for Grantmakers.

**DEFINITION:** Grantmakers for Education's OST Funder Network and this guide define **"out-of-school time"** to include all kinds of programs that happen outside of the classroom, before and after school, in the evenings, on weekends and during the summer; located in school buildings or community settings; managed or operated by schools, community organizations, parks, camps, faith-based organizations and other entities; and serving children and youth in grades K-12. This guide uses the terms afterschool and out-of-school time interchangeably.

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## Introduction

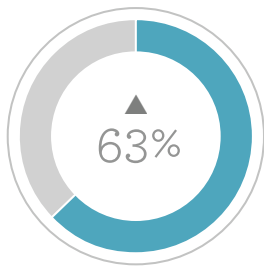
In recent years, OST programs have become the primary places where children can engage in the arts, physical activity, science and technology, leadership development and civic education – subjects and pursuits that have often been reduced during the school day as a result of increased focus on English language arts and mathematics.

Over the past several years, grantmakers focused on positive child and youth development and K-12 education reform have stepped up their investments in out-of-school time (OST) programs. This emphasis has coincided with a growing body of research connecting high-quality learning experiences during childhood and adolescence to the development of healthy and productive adults.

Why are high-quality OST programs important? For starters, they typically engage youth in different ways from schools, homes, independent or peer group experiences. For example, in OST programs, youth often make independent choices about how and with whom to spend their time in a structured, safe and engaging learning context. High-quality OST also offers young people the opportunity to forge positive relationships with adults and peers, and build social, cognitive and other vital skills. Research has shown that healthy relationships form the foundation of social/emotional skills and the ability to function successfully throughout life – at home, in school, with family and friends and as members of civic communities. The best OST programs epitomize the term “child/youth centered” in that the structures and activities are rooted in the interests and experiences, as well as the cultural and community context, of the participants and their families.

In recent years, OST programs have also become the primary places where children can engage in the arts, physical activity, science and technology, leadership development and civic education – subjects and pursuits that have often been reduced during the school day as a result of increased focus on English language arts and mathematics. Furthermore, high-quality OST programs feature pedagogical strategies – such as project-based learning, inquiry-based investigations and student-driven pursuit of interests – that education experts recognize as the best route to fostering the engaged learners who will succeed in mastering not only academic content, but the complex 21st century skills necessary for lifelong success.<sup>1</sup>

As expectations that the OST field can deliver far more than what was expected of “school-age child care” 20 years ago have risen, so has program enrollment. According to the Afterschool Alliance America After 3PM 2014 data, nearly a quarter of all families (23%) currently have a child enrolled in an afterschool program, and participation in OST activities increased 60% from 2004 to 2014.<sup>2</sup> More than 10 million children now attend afterschool programs across the country.



GFE's OST Funder Network members' interest in program quality is growing: in 2013, 63% reported they were funding evaluation and quality assessment at a systems level, up from 47% in 2008.

The stakes for successful OST programming, then, are high. But as OST becomes an increasingly crucial component in education reform and youth development, how will philanthropists, taxpayers and parents ensure that their investments produce desired youth outcomes? How will the field garner enough public and private support to serve the estimated 19.4 million children whose parents could not find an OST program in 2014? The answer is the same as the one recently noted by *New York Times* columnist David Kirp as he compared the results of various early education programs in an op-ed: The difference between poor and positive outcomes is “in a word, quality.”<sup>3</sup>

In fact, the time is right for all OST funders to focus on quality. Research confirming the role that quality plays in driving regular participation and producing positive outcomes is definitive. Grantmakers have provided the support for this research, as well as for national field and system-building efforts at the state and local levels. These investments have resulted in the development of quality standards and quality improvement systems that include the use of assessment tools, access to data that drives changes in practice, professional development and other key resources.

But many challenges remain to achieving equitable access to high-quality OST for all children across the country. While the infrastructure to enable major improvements in quality at scale is developing in many places, in others, such support is undeveloped or just beginning to emerge. All efforts face challenges in sustainably financing access for all children, regardless of age, socio-economic status or zip code. There is also a need for deep examination of the frameworks and tools currently used to define and measure quality to ensure they address the needs of diverse populations of young people, including those with special needs, English language learners, linguistic minorities, children of color and those from non-dominant cultural and ethnic communities.

Since 2009, GFE's Out-of-School Time Funder Network has provided grantmakers with access to professional learning, dialogue, research and communications focused on improving the effectiveness of OST grant making. GFE's OST Funder Network members' interest in program quality is growing: in 2013, 63% reported they were funding evaluation and quality assessment at a systems level, up from 47% in 2008. With that in mind, in 2014 the network initiated a *Deep Dive Series for Grantmakers* focusing on OST quality. The Series has included web seminars, conference sessions, speakers and a podcast to enable funders to learn from each other and share lessons from current literature on OST program quality and grant making initiatives. See the Appendix for details on the Quality Series and the literature reviewed to inform the guide's development.

This guide is intended to help funders of all sizes and locations focus on quality in their current and future OST-grant making. It reviews key pieces of the state-of-the-art knowledge about improving quality and the link between quality and youth outcomes. The guide also discusses efforts to define, measure and create systematic supports for continuous quality improvement in OST and also offers specific strategies for funders to consider – whether they invest locally, regionally or nationally, and in program operations, policy, research, system-building or other areas. Finally, the guide provides a set of recommended priorities for the field to catalyze significant change on the national and local levels, as well as case studies illustrating the different strategies grantmakers are pursuing to support OST quality improvement.

Overall, this guide was produced to catalyze grantmakers to expand their attention to and investment in building quality – actions that will be critical to enabling all children and youth to have access to high-quality OST experiences that will lead to positive growth and development.



## Background on Out-of-School Time Quality

### Defining Quality

A seminal moment in the OST field occurred in 2001 when the National Research Council convened top researchers, practitioners and philanthropic leaders to form the Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth. Supported by public and private funders, including the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the William T. Grant Foundation and the Ford Foundation, the report published by the committee in 2002, *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*, identified the following key features of programs that best support young people in developing positive personal and social assets:

- physical and psychological safety and security;
- structure that is developmentally appropriate, with clear expectations for behavior as well as increasing opportunities to make decisions, participate in governance and rule-making and take on leadership roles as one matures and gains more expertise;
- emotional and moral support;
- opportunities for adolescents to:
  - experience supportive adult relationships;
  - learn how to form close, durable human relationships with peers that support and reinforce healthy behaviors;
  - feel a sense of belonging and being valued;
  - develop positive social values and norms;
  - build and master skills;
  - develop confidence in one's abilities to master one's environment (a sense of personal efficacy);
  - make a contribution to one's community and to develop a sense of mattering
- strong links between families, schools and broader community resources.

The council's report was based on a comprehensive review of the best literature available about youth development programs, research and evaluation.<sup>4</sup> The report was instrumental in bringing attention to out-of-school time programs as an important focus for the health and well-being of children and youth and providing a foundation for research and public policy efforts.<sup>5</sup> The report's definition of the elements of program





quality most likely to lead to positive youth outcomes is still the most relevant and comprehensive definition used today by stakeholders of the OST field.

## The Importance of Quality

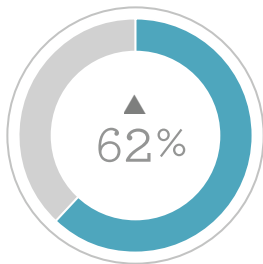
Supported in large part by philanthropic investments, research and evaluation efforts over the past two decades have built a knowledge base about the importance of quality in OST. Multiple studies have provided evidence that improving quality is more likely to get desired outcomes and draw parents and young people to the program. For example, a 2007 report examined the effects of high-quality after-school programs operating in high-poverty communities and found “higher standardized math test scores and better behavioral outcomes for students who regularly participated in high-quality after-school programs than for students who spent substantial after-school time without adult supervision.”<sup>6</sup> A 2011 meta-analysis of program evaluations completed by Joseph Durlak and Roger Weissburg concluded that higher quality programs resulted in successful academic, social, safety and familial impacts. Achieving high quality is important not only to producing positive benefits for participating youth, but also for securing increased and sustained public and private investments in OST programs. See Appendix A for a list of additional studies proving the link between quality afterschool programs and youth outcomes.



## Components of a High Quality OST System

The work conducted over the past two decades has helped the OST field make significant progress toward defining quality and proving its importance. With support from key grantmakers, several cities, regions and states are now building systems aimed at incorporating what is known about quality to improve the everyday OST experiences of young people. Such quality improvement systems include multiple components that are aligned and integrated, so they can address a broad swath of programs and are designed for sustainability over time. These foundational components include: quality standards, assessment tools, core competencies, professional development, workforce supports, data management and a lead intermediary. In addition, there are other key elements essential to building an infrastructure for achieving not only quality, but also sustained, equitable access to OST at scale: attention to providers' organizational capacity, partnerships with schools and other organizations, policy and advocacy, continued research and evaluation focused on effective policy and practices and capital/facilities support.





As of 2015, 33 states had adopted afterschool quality standards. A Wallace Foundation-commissioned report published in 2013 found that 62% of cities coordinating afterschool programs use quality standards or a quality framework.

The following list of components of a high-quality OST system was informed by the work of the Forum for Youth Investment, National Institute on Out-of-School Time, National Afterschool Association, Every Hour Counts, statewide afterschool networks, the Afterschool Alliance, the Harvard Family Research Project and others.

**Quality Standards.** A set of standards that clearly defines what quality looks like in an OST environment forms the foundation of a high-quality OST system. Increasingly, key stakeholders, including providers, public and private funders, technical assistance organizations, intermediaries, parents and others, are adopting and implementing such standards on the state, local and regional level. As of 2015, 33 states had adopted afterschool quality standards. A Wallace Foundation-commissioned report published in 2013 found that 62% of cities coordinating afterschool programs use quality standards or a quality framework.<sup>8</sup> In addition to comprehensive standards, leading stakeholders have developed specific sets of standards focused on healthy eating and physical activity (by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time and National Afterschool Association), summer programs (by the National Summer Learning Association) and college and career readiness and STEM (by the Indiana Afterschool Association).<sup>9</sup>

**Program Assessment Tools and Support for Continuous Quality Improvement.**

Quality standards are useful only if program providers employ them to assess and improve their programming. With that in mind, in recent years, grantmakers have funded the development of multiple evidence-based program assessment tools and training supports.

For example, programs in Palm Beach County, Florida use a version of the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality's tool called the Youth Program Quality Assessment to assess how well their current practices align with regional quality standards. In Wyoming, providers are employing *A Program Assessment System* (APAS), developed by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time. Over the past three years, surveys completed by young people in the programs have shown improvements in attitudes, skills and behavior. (See Appendix B for more about how these evidence-based tools are used to improve quality).<sup>10</sup>

The 2009 Forum for Youth Investment brief, *Measuring Youth Program Quality: A Guide to Assessment Tools, Second Edition*, provides a useful overview of the 10 most commonly used quality assessment tools.<sup>11</sup> The report, published with support from the W. T. Grant Foundation, explains that programs need "tools that help concretize what effective practice looks like and allow practitioners to assess, reflect on and improve their programs." All of the tools included in the review measure six core constructs at varying levels of depth: relationships, environment, engagement, social norms, skill building opportunities and structures/routines.

Since the second edition of the guide to assessment tools was published in 2009, grantmakers have supported the development of other tools in specific areas. For example, the Program in Education, Afterschool & Resiliency (PEAR) has developed tools specific to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs, including Dimensions of Success and the Common Instrument suite. The Weikart Center is working with the National Summer Learning Association to develop an assessment tool geared to summer programs. (See Appendix B for details).<sup>12</sup>

**Core Competencies.** While standards focus on how programs must operate to achieve quality, core competencies define the skills and knowledge required of adult professionals to deliver high-quality programming. Core competencies provide a clear definition of effective youth development practice, serving as the basis for professional



development and training and other workforce supports.<sup>13</sup> Many localities have adopted the National Afterschool Association's core competencies in whole or tailored them to meet local needs.

For example, in 2009, Prime Time Palm Beach County, a regional intermediary in Florida, convened local stakeholders to develop core competencies for practitioners. Prime Time produced a video module that provides an overview of the core competencies and takes practitioners step-by-step through the goal-setting process to plan their own professional development. (See Appendix B for more detail on how the core competencies fit into Palm Beach County's comprehensive quality improvement system).

**Professional Development and Workforce Support.** Because one of the most important drivers of program quality is skilled staff, professional development and workforce support is critical to achieving quality improvement. That includes coaching, supervision and mentoring, in addition to training and formal education. Localities building OST professional development and workforce support use core competencies as the basis for designing both credit and non-credit bearing education pathways that consider the wide range of formal education and life experiences of OST staff. Significant expansion is needed, however, to bring these efforts to scale so more afterschool staff and youth workers have access to high quality pre- and in-service education and training that can lead to certificate and degree completion, career advancement and increased compensation.

In addition to professional education, several communities and states are investing in other workforce supports, including:

- **career registries**, providing OST professionals with the opportunity to collect, organize and showcase their education, training, and experience;
- **career lattices**, assisting OST professionals in planning their career pathways by identifying and connecting to positions within the field and defining training and experience requirements;
- **compensation increases**, targeted to OST professionals who demonstrate completion of various training pathways.

**Intermediary Organizations.** Activities aimed at improving quality should not be the responsibility of each individual OST program or organization. Rather, a lead enterprise at the city, region or state level (referred to as an intermediary organization to differentiate it from a *youth-serving* organization) is often best positioned to take on the work of establishing a quality system in a locality. Its responsibilities may include setting guidelines for programs or organizations to take part in the system, identifying incentives and supports such as training and coaching, managing quality improvement data and coordinating the system components and partners. The Wallace Foundation has provided support to many cities for developing strong intermediaries, while the Every Hour Counts initiative has played a lead role in supporting a community of practice among lead intermediaries and providing technical assistance to cities and regions in developing intermediaries.

**Organizational Capacity.** To ensure that quality improvements are sustained, many grantmakers interviewed for this guide pointed out that resources targeting the program level must be matched by resources bolstering capacity at the organizational level. In 2008, a Wallace Foundation-commissioned study by Fiscal Management Associates found that "many [youth-serving] organizations lack the financial resources to invest significantly in administrative staff, facility needs, IT infrastructure and support and transformational purchases such as improved space." The study found that "the larger impact from working within this under-resourced administrative management

In addition to school partnerships, high-quality OST programs engage in partnerships with arts and cultural organizations, science centers and museums, institutions of higher education, private sector businesses and civic groups.

environment is the limits it places on organizations' leaders' ability to be forward-looking and truly strategic."<sup>14</sup> A follow-up report released in 2015 outlines the design of a successful Wallace-backed initiative to equip organizations with the ability to plan and manage their financial resources.<sup>15</sup> In addition, leadership development is also a significant need facing the field.

**Partnerships with Schools and Other Organizations.** Strong partnerships with schools and school districts enable OST programs to support students' academic success. Building relationships with teachers and administrators, participating in joint professional development, becoming familiar with individual teachers' and schools' curricula and teaching approaches and engaging in joint family outreach are a few strategies that schools and out-of-school programs can undertake to ensure that youth are able to build skills and engage in OST experiences that contribute to their school success.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to school partnerships, high-quality OST programs engage in partnerships with arts and cultural organizations, science centers and museums, institutions of higher education, private sector businesses and civic groups. Cross-sector partnerships provide mentors, tutors, new curricula and activity sequences, staff training opportunities, field trips, in-kind donations of technology and supplies and other resources that improve the quality of programs. Many OST intermediaries broker partnerships across the city, region or state to realize efficiencies of scale and streamline the administrative, outreach, coordination and training required to establish and maintain high-quality partnerships.

**Management Information Systems.** In 2012, the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education and Families produced a detailed guide to building OST-focused management information systems (MIS). Among the reasons cited for investing in an OST MIS were:

- 1) "Providing policymakers and funders with accurate information on the utilization, quality and impact of afterschool programs to make better decisions and targeted investments at the systems level;
- 2) Offering regular feedback to program managers and staff about the effectiveness of their efforts, both in absolute terms and relative to other programs, to promote continuous improvement;
- 3) Reducing the time and money that programs spend completing paperwork to meet reporting requirements, freeing up valuable resources for direct programming with youth; and
- 4) Empowering program sites and instructors with (near) real-time information on student outcomes such as attendance, behavior and academic performance that allows sites to tailor their instruction more closely to the needs of the youth they serve."<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, funders would be wise not to lose sight of the human element. For example, a 2015 Wallace-commissioned report by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago examined the OST data management efforts of nine cities and found "for systems to be effective in their collection and use of data, they need to invest in more than just an MIS and related technology. Equally important are human capital – that is, a well-trained workforce with the skills and expertise to use the technology and interpret the data appropriately – and "social processes" (i.e. norms, routines, procedures and values) that encourage fruitful analysis of data."<sup>18</sup>

**Research and Evaluation.** Research and evaluation completed over the past two decades has created the foundation on which current OST quality improvement efforts



are built. On a national level, continued research is critical to refine current tools and frameworks underlying quality improvement efforts, and to build our understanding of how young people learn. Key items on the national research agenda related to quality include effective and ongoing professional development models, the intersection between OST and social/emotional skill-building and defining effective practices for children's diverse needs, among many others. On the local and regional levels, many organizations are in the early stages of implementing assessment tools, creating data sharing agreements and building MIS solutions – efforts expected to yield useful data that can inform research on, and improvements in, the performance of OST systems.

**Policy, Advocacy and Communications.** Ultimately, evidence of impact must be used to drive the public policy agenda toward providing sustainable financing allowing children to have equitable access to high-quality OST programs. The C.S. Mott Foundation-supported statewide afterschool networks – now in all 50 states – have led efforts to raise public awareness and engage policymakers in discussions and reform aimed at better supporting high-quality OST. They are joined by local and regionally-based intermediaries and national policy and advocacy organizations, including the Afterschool Alliance and others. Increasing the capacity of stakeholders at all levels to engage in policy development, advocacy and public will-building would help secure the substantial and sustainable policy and financing reforms needed to support quality at scale over the long term.<sup>19</sup>

For example, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation prioritized policy reform, advocacy, public awareness and communications in a seven-year effort to bring attention to and improve the quality of summer programs across California. The foundation's support launched the statewide Summer Matters campaign in 2010, aimed at increasing understanding among lawmakers, as well as school leaders, parents and others, about research findings and why investments in summer learning programs were critical for achieving expected student outcomes. See Appendix B for more details.

**Financing for Quality and Sustainability.** Understanding the real costs of quality is key to building and sustaining a system over time, and particularly important to drive improved policy decisions. Consider a 2009 report from The Wallace Foundation on the cost of quality that aimed to equip decision-makers “to better assess different types of programs, their requirements and their associated costs, and weigh them more thoughtfully against the needs of their communities.” The authors wrote, “We also hope the report opens the door to a more fact-based conversation about the costs of quality among policymakers who set reimbursement rates for OST programs, funders who want to ensure that their support more accurately matches their aims and OST providers who set priorities and create the budgets for their programs.” The report found that paying for staff was the primary driver of cost overall, and costs varied significantly by program design, available resources and local conditions. An updated version of the report's cost calculator was released in February 2016.<sup>20</sup>

**Capital and Facilities Improvements.** The physical environment of an OST program is essential to quality, but providers often need capital or facilities improvements. Intermediaries can provide or coordinate assistance to providers in accessing grants or loans for needed improvements. Grantmakers whose strategies encompass capital assistance can also play a key role.





## Grantmaking Strategies to Improve Out-of-School Time Quality

# 2

Getting to quality at scale in a locality will require attention to all of the elements described in the previous section – but, of course, a single grantmaker is unlikely to invest in every single one, nor are these one-time costs. This section includes suggestions for how grantmakers can focus on quality in their investments, whether their approach centers on providing operational or project dollars to youth-serving organizations, support for local or regional quality improvement systems or financing national level work. We differentiate these levels as follows:

- 1. Organizational level.** Funders providing operational and/or project support for youth-serving organizations can ensure that their grants support quality by setting expectations for organizations to meet quality standards, supporting them to use evidence-based program assessment tools and engage in continuous quality improvement and providing adequate resources for staff professional development. It is also important to invest in organizational capacity and leadership development.
- 2. City/regional/state system-building level.** Funders with the flexibility to support the creation and expansion of quality improvement systems can finance local, regional or state-level intermediaries both to facilitate use of a common set of program quality and youth outcome measures, and to help programs use resulting data to drive program quality improvement. With funder support, intermediaries can play a key role in putting all the elements of a quality OST system into operation.
- 3. National level.** Funders with a national reach can support networks of intermediaries and/or quality improvement efforts of national OST organizations. They can also support national intermediaries for research and evaluation into key challenges facing the field, public awareness, policy reform and advocacy on the federal level and dissemination of effective practices, among other strategies.

## Getting to Quality at Scale: How Grantmakers Can Focus on Quality in Their Investments



Funders can support networks of intermediaries, national OST organizations and national intermediaries to engage in:

- Research and evaluation of key challenges facing the field
- Increased public awareness
- Comprehensive policy and financing improvements at all levels of government
- Better dissemination of effective practices



Funders can support local, regional or state-level intermediaries to work with providers in developing and promoting:

- A common set of program quality standards
- A common set of core competencies for staff
- Use of evidence-based program assessment tools to engage in continuous improvement

Funders can support youth-serving organizations to:

- Assess current practice against quality standards
- Use evidence-based program assessment tools
- Engage in continuous quality improvement
- Promote staff access to high quality professional development
- Strengthen organizational capacity
- Prioritize leadership development



## Strategy Recommendations for Funders

The following chart offers a range of strategies for funders to support quality at different levels – organizational, city/regional/ state and national. This chart is meant to demonstrate various possible entry points for those interested in program quality. The ideas here were informed in part by several grantmaker discussions convened by GFE’s OST Funder Network and the National Afterschool Association’s *Funding Quality Initiatives*, published as part of a series of focus briefs on the state of afterschool quality in 2014.<sup>21</sup>

### Funding Strategies Chart

COMPONENT	ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL	CITY/REGIONAL/STATE LEVEL	NATIONAL LEVEL
<b>QUALITY STANDARDS</b>	Require description of how program(s) align with local or statewide standards in proposals and grant reports.	Support broad engagement of stakeholders and review of existing state and/or local standards.  Support communications, engagement and advocacy around standards.	Commission and disseminate current landscape of quality standards.
<b>PROGRAM ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND SUPPORT FOR CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT</b>	Support grantees to use evidence-based assessment tools, ensuring alignment with what is already required by other funders.  Fund coaching for grantees to use data for quality improvement.  Support learning communities of grantees.  Incentivize participation in quality improvement by providing programs with scholarships for staff professional development (PD), subsidies or resources for facility upgrades.	Support intermediaries to offer incentives for participation and training, and ongoing, personalized assistance on using assessment tools.	Support the development and refinement of quality assessment tools and approaches to continuous quality improvement.
<b>CORE COMPETENCIES</b>	Support programs to train staff in using core competencies to assess their own PD needs.  Encourage/equip programs to incorporate core competencies into hiring practices.	Support broad engagement of stakeholders and review of existing core competencies.  Support communications, engagement and advocacy on core competencies.	Support national organizations to disseminate and build awareness about core competencies and how they are used.  Support examination of core competencies, refining as needed.

COMPONENT	ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL	CITY/REGIONAL/STATE LEVEL	NATIONAL LEVEL
<b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE SUPPORTS</b>	<p>Support PD by funding release time, substitutes, tuition/fees and career advising.</p> <p>Require evaluations of PD.</p>	<p>Support intermediaries to partner with practitioners, government, higher education and others to create non-credit and credit-bearing PD and establish other workforce supports including increased compensation programs, career registries and career lattices.</p>	<p>Commission and disseminate reports on current landscape of PD and workforce supports nationally.</p> <p>Support OST leaders to explore national youth development certificate.</p> <p>Support online PD tied to quality standards and core competencies.</p>
<b>INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATIONS</b>		<p>Use multi-year and/or general operating support to boost stability of intermediaries.</p> <p>Support strategic planning, board development, financial acuity, leadership development.</p>	<p>Support national intermediaries with multiyear or general operating support.</p> <p>Support strategic planning, board development, financial acuity, leadership development.</p> <p>Commission and disseminate research into the optimal role for intermediaries and identify effective practices for intermediaries.</p>
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING</b>	<p>Use multi-year and/or general operating support to boost stability of providers.</p> <p>Support strategic planning, board development, financial acuity leadership development.</p>	<p>Create local cohorts of organizational leaders to learn from each other and further develop organizational leadership experience and skills.</p> <p>Support intermediaries to assess organizational capacity needs and develop sharable and scalable resources.</p> <p>Support policy, advocacy and public awareness actions to boost the health of the non-profit sector.</p>	<p>Support policy, advocacy and public awareness actions to boost the health of the non-profit sector.</p>
<b>PARTNERSHIPS</b>	<p>Support program grantees to partner with schools, arts, cultural and civic organizations to enhance program quality.</p>	<p>Support intermediaries to partner with arts, cultural, STEM-focused, civic, sports organizations and postsecondary education to offer new resources to OST programs.</p> <p>Support intermediaries to help providers build effective partnerships with school systems.</p>	<p>Commission and disseminate research into effective partnership strategies; support national organizations to develop partnerships that benefit OST programs.</p>



COMPONENT	ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL	CITY/REGIONAL/STATE LEVEL	NATIONAL LEVEL
<b>MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS (MIS)</b>	Ensure grantees have technology and training required to use an MIS and apply findings to quality improvement.	Support the development of MIS to catalogue youth participation, program quality assessments, youth outcomes, parent/student satisfaction and other data.  Support the development of online searchable databases of OST opportunities.	Support dissemination of effective practices regarding MIS and using data to improve quality.
<b>RESEARCH AND EVALUATION</b>	Support program leaders and staff to learn about new research and apply lessons to practice.  Support programs to evaluate their impact.	Support intermediaries to keep program leaders up to date on new research, and identify and promote opportunities for local leaders to participate in research-practice exchanges.	Commission and support research that expands the knowledge base around OST quality.  Support research-practice exchanges.  Fund research into quality and connections to practice for specific focus areas: social-emotional learning, STEM, literacy, serving English language learners, etc.  Provide co-funding matches to programs and initiatives that are awarded federal grants.
<b>POLICY, ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS</b>	Support practitioners to build skills and participate in advocacy and public awareness for OST.	Support intermediaries to train and assist practitioners and lead advocacy and public awareness for OST.  Support intermediaries to advocate alignment of quality improvement resources from 21st Century Community Learning Centers and child care funding.	Support intermediaries to train and assist practitioners and lead advocacy and public awareness for OST.  Support intermediaries to advocate alignment of quality improvement resources from 21st Century Community Learning Center and child care funding.  Lead conversations on role of high-quality OST in K-12 education.
<b>FINANCING FOR QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY</b>	Understand the cost of quality and support providers with grants adequate to operate quality programs.	Support intermediaries to raise broad awareness about what quality OST costs and to train providers on building sustainable and diversified revenue streams.	Commission and disseminate reports that analyze and document the cost of operating quality OST programs.
<b>CAPITAL AND FACILITIES SUPPORT</b>	Support capital or facilities improvements to offer better-quality program environments.	Support intermediaries to assist providers in accessing resources for capital improvements.	Commission and disseminate publications on how providers can access capital/facility improvement support.



## Principles for Quality-Focused Grantmaking

Through a review of key literature in the field and in-person meetings with grantmakers conducted to develop this guide, several common principles underlying funding OST quality improvement emerged:

**Every funder has a role to play.** Whether a grantmaker has a local, regional or national footprint or a priority to support such areas as program operations, system-building, research, policy change or professional development, every funder should make quality a part of its goal. To that end, a grantmaker providing only program grants for direct services to youth, can (1) require and provide resources for each grantee to use a validated quality assessment tool and (2) ensure that program budgets have sufficient resources for organizational leaders and staff to engage in quality improvement.

Grantmakers can also provide resources for their OST program grantees to engage in the quality improvement process as a learning community, with professional coaching and support. For example, the New York City-based Youth Development Institute facilitates a peer-driven network of 40 career internship program providers focused on quality improvement. Professional development for staff of member organizations includes everything from workshops, structured site visits and on-site technical assistance to a listserv where members notify the group about activities other program's interns can attend, as well as exchange ideas and program advice, and build community. See Appendix B for a more in-depth examination of one funder's investment.

**Achieving quality improvement at scale requires investments at the system level.** While supporting individual or groups of grantees is helpful, such a strategy, of course, is ultimately limited in impact to those organizations. To build quality at scale within their geographic footprint, grantmakers who have the flexibility to support strong intermediaries as anchors of a quality improvement system should consider doing so. For more examples of systemic support, see the case studies focused on Palm Beach County, Florida, and the states of California and Wyoming in Appendix B.

**A focus on equity is crucial and will require differentiation of support.** Pedro Noguera of UCLA recently said, "Access to high-quality afterschool programs could play a decisive role in reducing educational disparities, but this will only occur if we



“Funders should stop investing in each program creating its own evaluation or quality assessment measures. Instead, funders should support the dissemination of tools we have in common so we can grow the evidence base and grow the field.”

*Grantmakers and Thought Leaders  
on Out-of-School Time*

remain vigilant in advocating for equity in the sector.”<sup>22</sup> Increasing equity will require grantmakers to provide organizations working in low-income communities or serving high-needs children a different and more extensive set of supports to achieve quality. Those efforts might include, for example, assistance in building organizational capacity and sustainability over the long term, helping staff and leaders get access to training, providing resources for facilities improvement, transportation subsidies, access to comprehensive services for low-income children and families and other support. In addition, more research is needed to determine how quality frameworks should be differentiated to meet the diverse needs of all youth.

**Quality improvement requires long-term investments.** One common challenge for OST organizations working on quality improvements is that funders do not routinely take into account the timeframe and costs associated with higher quality programming. Improving OST quality is not a discrete project that can be initiated, implemented, evaluated and concluded. Instead, achieving substantial change will require grantmakers to set up a different way of doing business. Funders should consider both multi-year and general operating grants to increase organizational stability and free more management time and attention to focus on program support and staff supervision. Grantees need ongoing assistance to assess quality, implement improvements and incorporate improvement cycles into their routine work. Staff turnover in many OST programs intensifies the need for ongoing training (whether for new staff or veterans to hone their skills) and may undermine the organization’s ability to institutionalize quality practices.

**Don’t reinvent the wheel – or fund a grantee to do so.** As one thought leader noted in the OST Funder Network 2014 report *Grantmakers and Thought Leaders on Out-of-School Time*, “Funders should stop investing in each program creating its own evaluation or quality assessment measures. Instead, funders should support the dissemination of tools we have in common so we can grow the evidence base and grow the field.”<sup>23</sup> Numerous organizations have designed and implemented quality standards, assessment tools, data management systems, career lattices and registries and credentialed training pathways. While it may not be useful to apply each existing tool or system in all places, chances are there is an example up and running that can be adapted to a program’s needs. Successful adaptation by funders and grantees entails taking into account the different programs, assets and challenges in various communities, regions and states.

**Both financial support and provider motivation are needed to have impact at scale.** Funder or policymaker mandates requiring quality improvement will not singularly boost outcomes. Nor will the best intentions of providers to improve quality result in change without sufficient knowledge, resources and support. Rather, the best quality improvement strategies are characterized by partnerships among various stakeholders in a community or at the regional, state or national level.

**Grantmakers should understand the quality landscape.** It is critical that funders understand what efforts are already underway in the targeted geography or focus area to improve quality at the program, organization and/or system level. For example, if providers are already required to use a particular quality assessment tool, insisting on another is counterproductive. Grantmakers should instead identify the gaps in the existing work. In addition, while any one funder does not have to support all parts of quality work, there will likely be limited success or impact if all elements are not addressed. Well-informed funders working together to support high-quality programs should be the rule, not the exception.



## Key Priorities for the Field

Chapter two illustrated ways in which grantmakers can prioritize quality improvement in their out-of-school time investments, regardless of portfolio size, investment strategy or geographic footprint. This chapter recommends priorities for an action agenda for the field. Collaborative leadership by grantmakers on these priorities has the potential to catalyze impact on a national scale, which will, in turn, increase the opportunities for more young people to experience high-quality OST.

### Knowledge Building/Research Priorities

To improve quality at scale, it is critical for funders to take full advantage of the knowledge gained through existing efforts. Below are examples of knowledge building and research priorities that lend themselves well to aligned and/or collaborative grantmaker support:

**Better Understanding the Landscape.** The field lacks a comprehensive landscape of community, regional and state-level quality improvement systems. An all-inclusive “state-of-the-field” report could answer key questions for a range of stakeholders: What states and cities have developed which components? What processes did they use? How are the components similar or different? How well is the component working and what is the evaluation methodology? Which strategies are most effective in scaling quality improvement resources to all programs in a community? Such an analysis could be used to share lessons across organizations and localities and inform local and state policymakers interested in improving OST quality. An online database searchable by geography and quality component would enable stakeholders to gain access to detailed information.

Similar mapping of professional development and skill-building initiatives could provide a detailed digest and analysis of the successes and challenges of various credential programs at postsecondary education institutions and community-based training organizations, as well as the potential for creating a nationally recognized youth development credential. Finally, up-to-date workforce studies detailing demographics, job categories and relevant salaries, career pathways, education requirements and





One common challenge for OST organizations working on quality improvements is that public and private funding falls short of the costs required to achieve high-quality programming.

other factors would provide critical information for the design, piloting and scaling of new approaches to professional development and skill-building that are responsive to workers' needs.

**Clarifying What Quality Costs.** One common challenge for OST organizations working on quality improvements is that public and private funding falls short of the costs required to achieve high-quality programming. Public/Private Ventures and The Finance Project published a Wallace Foundation-supported study in 2009 that analyzed and helped clarify costs for quality out-of-school time programs based on data from 111 programs in six cities.<sup>24</sup> In 2016, The Wallace Foundation released an updated cost calculator that reflects both the change in the general cost of living nationally and changes in the relative cost of living across cities. There are still important questions to be answered, including, as mentioned in the original report, "how cost components vary for different auspices and different populations; opportunities to realize economies of scale in program operations; and effective financing strategies for OST programs." The field could benefit from deep exploration of these questions.

**Building the Evidence Base.** Grantmakers should continue to help the field build the evidence base of what program strategies work successfully and why. Key items on the national research agenda related to quality include effective and ongoing professional development models, refining current tools and frameworks, the intersection between OST and social/emotional skill-building, STEM and other areas and defining effective practices for children's diverse needs, among many others. One strategy is to provide the match for such federally funded awards as Investing in Innovation and other evidence-focused programs.

## Policy and Advocacy Priorities

For long-term sustainability, funders need to engage the public and policymakers in building support for policies and financing that enable providers to deliver high-quality programs. The mapping and research outlined above will help stakeholders advocate in local, state and federal policy arenas. In addition to providing support for policy and advocacy work, grantmakers should pay attention to the potential in aligning multiple public funding sources' quality improvement resources, particularly 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Child Care Development Block Grant programs at the state level. Grantmakers could support the development of a report on this alignment or lack thereof, along with follow-up activities enabling states that have achieved progress in aligning these and other quality improvement efforts to share effective strategies.

## Priorities to Improve Program Practice

**Focusing on Equity.** In the development of this guide, leading stakeholders expressed a desire to work collaboratively with their peers to examine existing quality constructs, tools and professional development to determine the extent that they prepare OST programs and professionals to meet the diverse needs of children – including those with disabilities, children of color, children of varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds, immigrant children and English language learners. There is an increasing sense that "one size does not fit all" when it comes to OST quality and the field could target its approaches to achieve greater impact and effectiveness for youth. Grantmakers could help by sponsoring a series of conversations among lead stakeholders, including the important step of identifying diverse voices to come to the table. An important question for grantmakers is: Are resources going to where they are most needed? Funders committed to equity have an obligation to understand how/if their current investments



promote that goal and look for ways to alter their financing practices in order to assist organizations serving high-need populations trying to provide quality services.

**Extending Quality Improvement Efforts of National Youth Development Organizations.**

National youth development organizations (YDOs) reach millions of young people every year, and in many locations are the key providers of OST programs. There is an opportunity for grantmakers to bolster quality of programming by national YDOs and, at the same time, incentivize them to work in collaboration with other organizations in their local communities on quality initiatives. For example, the Houston YMCA led the development of a Quality Improvement System for YMCA and other local OST programs. The organization is also working with its national office to share lessons learned from this effort throughout the YMCA system across the country. Further exploration could include the possibility of larger, more established organizations assisting smaller OST programs with back office support to help them spend scarce dollars on improving quality, as well as setting up more knowledge exchanges among organizations of different sizes and strengths to share effective practices.

**Developing Adaptable Credentials for Youth Professionals.** Grantmakers could also support a multi-sector group of youth development leaders, trainers and representatives from intermediaries and postsecondary education to develop adaptable models for youth worker and afterschool credentials, such as certificates, associate or bachelor's degree programs.



## Conclusion

In the last 15 years, grantmakers have made significant contributions to improving the quality of OST programs and systems through a range of investments at the national, regional, state and local levels. These contributions have resulted in much better understanding about what quality looks like and what it takes to get there. Now the OST field faces the triple challenge of:

- 1) improving quality at scale as OST enrollment increases;
- 2) building the capacity of many more afterschool staff to implement and manage high-quality youth programs effectively, and
- 3) developing sufficient and sustainable resources to ensure ongoing quality.

There is a need for grantmakers to stay at the table, step up their investments and prioritize quality as a non-negotiable component of their efforts. Philanthropic leadership will be critical to meet the challenge of providing all youth the chance to attend high-quality OST programs throughout their childhood and adolescence. Such actions can ensure that young people not only stay safe and sound, but also are inspired and challenged to broaden their horizons and reach their potential.

## APPENDIX A - Quality Resources

This resource list includes links to key documents related to quality in out-of-school time, however it is not meant to be an exhaustive digest of the topic.

An excellent overview piece is the 2013 compendium produced by the **Expanded Learning and Afterschool Project: Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success**. This document, which provides a comprehensive overview of afterschool and summer programming, with examples of effective practices, programs and partnerships, is edited by Terry Peterson and funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Link: <http://www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds/>

In addition, The Wallace Foundation maintains an extensive digest of publications on its Knowledge Center, including afterschool, summer and expanded learning. Link: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/default.aspx>

### EVALUATION AND OUTCOMES

#### ***Taking a Deeper Dive into Afterschool: Positive Outcomes and Promising Practices (2014)***

Author: Afterschool Alliance  
Funder: Walton Family Foundation  
Link: [http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Deeper\\_Dive\\_into\\_Afterschool.pdf](http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Deeper_Dive_into_Afterschool.pdf)

#### ***A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs that Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents (2010)***

Authors: Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., and Pachan, M.K.  
Funder: William T. Grant Foundation  
Link: Research brief: [http://www.expandinglearning.org/docs/Durlak%26Weissberg\\_Final.pdf](http://www.expandinglearning.org/docs/Durlak%26Weissberg_Final.pdf)  
Full paper published in the American Journal of Community Psychology available for a fee here: <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10464-010-9300-6>

#### ***Outcomes Linked to High-Quality Afterschool Programs: Longitudinal Findings from the Study of Promising Afterschool Programs (2007)***

Authors: Vandell, D. L., Reisner, E. R., and Pierce, K. M.  
Funder: Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
Link: <http://education.uci.edu/childcare/pdf/afterschool/PP%20Longitudinal%20Findings%20Final%20Report.pdf>

#### ***The Impact of After-School Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills (2007)***

Authors: Durlak, J. A. and Weissberg, R. P.  
Funder: William T. Grant Foundation  
Link: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/afterschool/partnerships/documents/ASP-Full.pdf>

#### ***Community Programs to Promote Youth Development (2002)***

Author: Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth, Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Research Council, and Institute of Medicine  
Funders: Ford Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, William T. Grant Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Justice.  
Link: <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/10022/community-programs-to-promote-youth-development>

### OST SYSTEM BUILDING

#### ***Growing Together, Learning Together, What Cities Have Discovered About Building Afterschool Systems (2015)***

Author: Browne, D.  
Funder: The Wallace Foundation  
Link: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/coordinating-after-school-resources/Documents/Growing-Together-Learning-Together.pdf>



### **Funding Quality Initiatives (2014)**

Author: National Afterschool Association  
Link: [http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/mnaeyc-mnsaca.org/resource/resmgr/Docs/NAA\\_4\\_MN\\_A.pdf](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/mnaeyc-mnsaca.org/resource/resmgr/Docs/NAA_4_MN_A.pdf)

### **Is Citywide Afterschool Coordination Going Nationwide? An Exploratory Study in Large Cities (2013)**

Author: Simkin, L. et al., FHI 360  
Funder: The Wallace Foundation  
Link: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/coordinating-after-school-resources/Pages/Citywide-Afterschool-Coordination-Going-Nationwide-An-Exploratory-Study-in-Large-Cities.aspx>

### **Building Citywide Systems for Quality: A Guide and Case Studies for Afterschool Leaders (2012)**

Author: Yohalem, N., Devaney, E., Smith, C. and Wilson-Ahlstrom, A., the Forum for Youth Investment  
Funder: The Wallace Foundation  
Link: [http://forumfyi.org/building\\_system\\_quality](http://forumfyi.org/building_system_quality)  
Seminar: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/view-latest-news/events-and-presentations/Pages/Webinar-Improving-Quality-Systemwide.aspx>

### **Building Management Information Systems to Coordinate Citywide Afterschool Programs: A Toolkit for Cities (2012)**

Author: Kingsley, C., National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families  
Funder: Annie E. Casey Foundation and The Wallace Foundation  
Link: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/collecting-and-using-data/Pages/Building-Management-Information-Systems-to-Coordinate-Citywide-Afterschool-Programs.aspx>

## **PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TOOLS AND GUIDES**

### **Quality Improvement Tools**

- David P. Weikart Center on Youth Program Quality, see: <http://www.cypq.org>
- Program in Education, Afterschool and Resiliency (PEAR), see <http://www.pearweb.org/>
- National Institute on Out-of-School Time, see <http://www.niost.org>

### **Measuring Youth Program Quality: A Guide to Assessment Tools, Second Edition (2009)**

Author: Yohalem, N., Devaney, E., Smith, C. and Wilson-Ahlstrom, A. with Fischer, S. and Shinn, M., the Forum for Youth Investment  
Funder: William T. Grant Foundation  
Link: <http://forumfyi.org/content/measuring-youth-program-quality-guide-assessment-tools-2nd-edition>

### **Structuring Out-Of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement: A Practice Guide (2009)**

Authors: Beckett, M., Borman, G., Capizzano, J., Parsley, D., Ross, S., Schirm, A., and Taylor, J. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education  
Funder: U.S. Department of Education  
Link: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide.aspx?sid=10>

### **A Practitioner's Guide: Building and Managing Quality Afterschool Programs (2009)**

Editors: Jordan, C., Parker, J., Donnelly, D. and Rudo, Z., SEDL  
Funder: Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
Link: [http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/practitioners\\_guide\\_to\\_afterschool\\_programs.pdf](http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/practitioners_guide_to_afterschool_programs.pdf)

### **After-School Toolkit: Tips, Techniques and Templates for Improving Program Quality (2008)**

Authors: Bradshaw, M., Furano, K. and Gutierrez, N., Public/Private Ventures  
Funder: James Irvine Foundation  
Link: [http://ppv.issuelab.org/resource/after\\_school\\_toolkit\\_tips\\_techniques\\_and\\_templates\\_for\\_improving\\_program\\_quality](http://ppv.issuelab.org/resource/after_school_toolkit_tips_techniques_and_templates_for_improving_program_quality)

***Putting It All Together: Guiding Principles for Quality Afterschool Programs Serving Preteens (2008)***

Author: Public/Private Ventures

Funder: Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health

Link: <http://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net/putting-it-all-together-guiding-principles-afterschool-programs-serving-preteens>

**CORE COMPETENCIES FOR OST PROFESSIONALS**

***Youth Work Core Competencies: A Review of Existing Frameworks and Purposes (2009)***

Authors: Starr, B., Yohalem, N. and Gannett, E.

Funder: School's Out Washington

Link: [http://www.niost.org/pdf/Core\\_Competencies\\_Review\\_October\\_2009.pdf](http://www.niost.org/pdf/Core_Competencies_Review_October_2009.pdf)

**ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING**

***The Skills to Pay the Bills: An Evaluation of an Effort to Help Nonprofits Manage Their Finances (2015)***

Authors: MDRC and Child Trends

Funder: The Wallace Foundation

Link: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/financial-management-for-nonprofits/Pages/The-Skills-to-Pay-the-Bills.aspx>

***Administrative Management Capacity in Out-of-School Time Organizations: An Exploratory Study (2008)***

Authors: Summers, J. and Price, L., Fiscal Management Associates

Funder: The Wallace Foundation

Link: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/financial-management-for-nonprofits/Pages/Administrative-Management-Capacity-in-Out-of-School-Time-Organizations.aspx>

**FINANCING OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS**

***Tough Times, Tough Choices in After-School Funding: Pathways to Protecting Quality (2012)***

Author: McCombs, J., Nataraj Kirby, S. and Joseph Cordes, RAND Corporation

Funder: The Wallace Foundation

Link: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/quality-and-cost/Pages/Tough-Times-Tough-Choices-in-After-school-Funding.aspx>

***The Cost of Quality Out-of-School-Time Programs (2009)***

Authors: Baldwin Grossman, J. and Lind, C. et al., Public/Private Ventures, the Finance Project

Funder: The Wallace Foundation

Link: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/key-research/Pages/The-Cost-of-Quality-of-Out-of-School-Time-Programs.aspx>

For the updated cost calculator, see: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/cost-of-quality/Pages/default.aspx>

**POLICY, ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS**

***Strengthening Partnerships and Building Public Will for Out-of-School Time Programs (2010)***

Authors: Clapp Padgett, H., Deich, S. and Russell, L., National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families.

Funder: The Wallace Foundation

Link: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/coordinating-after-school-resources/Pages/Strengthening-Partnerships-Building-Public-Will-Out-of-School-Time.aspx>

**Out-of-School-Time Policy Commentary #13: Speaking in One Voice: Toward Common Measures for OST Programs & Services (2008)**

Authors: Wilson-Ahlstrom, A., Yohalem, N. and Donner, J., the Forum for Youth Investment, the Collaborative for Building After-School Systems  
Funder: William T. Grant Foundation  
Link: <http://forumfyi.org/files/OSTPC13.pdf>

**QUALITY IN CONTENT FOCUS AREAS**

**Literacy**

**Building Literacy in After School (2015)**

Author: Afterschool Alliance  
Funder: Dollar General Literacy Foundation  
Link: [http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue\\_briefs/issue\\_building\\_literacy\\_67.pdf](http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue_briefs/issue_building_literacy_67.pdf)

**Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)**

**Click2sciencepd.org: an interactive, professional development site for trainers, coaches, site directors and frontline staff/volunteers working in out-of-school time STEM programs, serving children and youth.**

Funder: The Noyce Foundation  
Link: <http://www.click2sciencepd.org>

**STEM in Afterschool System Building Toolkit**

Author: Mainspring Consulting and Project LIFTOFF, informed by strategies and tools of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation-funded Statewide Afterschool Networks  
Funder: The Noyce Foundation  
Link: <http://www.expandingstemlearning.org>

**Examining the Impact of Afterschool STEM Programs (2014)**

Authors: Krishnamurthi, A., Ballard, M., and Noam, G.  
Funder: The Noyce Foundation  
Link: <http://afterschoolalliance.org/ExaminingtheImpactofAfterschoolSTEMPrograms.pdf>

**Social and Emotional Learning**

**Preparing Youth to Thrive: Promising Practices in Social Emotional Learning (2016)**

Authors: Smith, C., McGovern, G., Larson, R., Hillaker, B. and Peck., S.C.  
Funder: Susan Crown Exchange  
Link: <https://www.selpractices.org>

**Supporting Social and Emotional Development through Quality Afterschool Programs (2015)**

Authors: Devaney, E. and Moroney D.  
Funder: American Institute for Research  
Link: <http://www.air.org/resource/supporting-social-and-emotional-development-through-quality-afterschool-programs>

## Appendix B: Case Studies

### Creating OST Quality Improvement and Professional Development at Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County

The story of Prime Time Palm Beach County's quality improvement efforts is one of methodical, long-term commitment.

Created in 2000, Prime Time Palm Beach County is an independent nonprofit intermediary organization focused on building the capacity of the county's afterschool programs to offer high-quality learning that keeps youth engaged and on track for academic success and healthy social development. Its service area, Palm Beach County, Florida, is home to more than a quarter million children under age 18, with an estimated 19.4% living below poverty level. The organization works with 250+ afterschool sites and 1,700 practitioners, ultimately impacting 20,000 local youth each year.

Prime Time's largest single funder, the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, was created in 1986 as a result of a voter-approved property tax levy directed to support programs that improve the lives of children and their families. The levy was reapproved by 85% of voters in 2014.

The organization's approach to improving program quality began in 2002 with a convening of representatives from the school district, the county parks and recreation department, afterschool providers, the local state college and funders to define quality standards for Palm Beach County afterschool programs. The resulting standards, along with the Palm Beach County Afterschool Core Competencies for staff developed by Prime Time and other stakeholders in 2009, form the foundation of Prime Time's current Quality Improvement System (QIS).

As of fall 2015, 136 programs have voluntarily adopted the quality standards and are actively participating in QIS (there may be multiple programs per organization). Entry is by application, and minimum requirements include dedicated program space, 20 or more youth attending daily, and up-to-date compliance with state licensure status. Once an afterschool program is accepted into QIS, a full range of targeted professional development supports are available to its staff. These include scholarships to attend college courses, career advising to navigate educational pathways and the college system, access to a registry system to store

educational and professional accomplishments and financial incentives to reward practitioners as they progress and complete specific milestones. Afterschool staff also receive individual coaching on youth development strategies that support program improvements.

A detailed description of the components of Prime Time's QIS follows:

- **Measurement tools.** Programs use the Palm Beach County Program Quality Assessment (PBC-PQA) measurement tool to understand their level of adherence to the standards. The PBC-PQA is a customized quality assessment tool based on the Youth Program Quality Assessment.
- **Quality advisor.** Programs work with a quality advisor, employed by Prime Time, who offers consultation, coaching and technical assistance for continuous quality improvement based on PBC-PQA results. In 2015, Prime Time launched a new QIS Incentives Program, which will provide financial awards to programs based on performance, to re-invest back into the program.
- **Career advisor.** All OST practitioners in the county – not just those in programs participating in Prime Time's QIS system – have access to a career advisor. These advisors help staff to participate in professional development according to individual strengths and areas of growth mapped to core competencies. Career advisors help practitioners decide which educational pathway – credit or non-credit – is best for them, assist with planning and scheduling classes or trainings and connect them to financial resources, such as scholarships and salary supplements.
- **Scholarship support.** Prime Time provides scholarship support to practitioners. Operated in partnership with Palm Beach State College, the credit-bearing pathway leads to a Youth Development College Credit Certificate, an Associate in Science Degree in Human Services (Youth Development Concentration), and a Bachelor of Applied Science Degree in Supervision and Management. The non-credit bearing pathway awards practitioners earn Continuing Education Units leading to the 40-Hour School Age Certification, with options to earn Director Credentials at initial and advanced levels. Since 2007,



Prime Time has awarded more than 1,500 scholarships to afterschool professional staff for college course work, professional credentialing and to attend conferences.

- **Salary supplements.** Through the ACHIEVE OST program and the Children’s Services Council, Prime Time offers salary supplements to QIS practitioners earning less than \$17.50/hour who successfully complete milestones along their professional development path. The program is designed to increase afterschool program stability and improve program quality by reducing staff turnover and encouraging afterschool practitioners to continue their education.
- **Out-of-school time registry.** In the fall of 2015, Prime Time launched its out-of-school time registry for practitioners, built using Salesforce. QIS program staff will be required to use the registry to catalogue their employment history, as well as participation in professional development courses, training and conferences.
- **Open access training.** Prime Time also offers a series of open access training for all OST practitioners. Prime Time’s training focuses on areas of need that come to light across multiple programs. Training that supports the needs of both QIS and non-QIS programs is offered at various times at multiple locations throughout the year. In the first three quarters of 2015, 771 OST practitioners attended Prime Time training, at no cost to OST practitioners working in Palm Beach County. In addition, Prime Time is considering the development of online training in response to practitioner demand.

### Outcomes

Prime Time is using the Every Hour Counts measurement framework to guide its outcome measurement design. Once the OST registry is fully operational, Prime Time and the Children’s Services Council plan to link PBC-PQA program data to individual professional development registries, to understand better how professional development affects the quality ratings of the programs in which staff work. Several years of QIS data show that the programs with the most dramatic improvement in PBC-PQA scores have two key components: 1) directors who encourage their staff to participate in professional development offerings specific to areas of focus on the PBC- PQA; and 2) staff who engage in the improvement planning process by setting program goals and putting training skills into practice.

Prime Time is also using the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment to measure development of social/emotional skills for youth in out-of-school time. “Eventually we will be able to see the continuum of PQA data informing professional development that then improves program quality and youth outcomes,” said Andy McAusland, Children’s Services Council.

To get access to youth data reliably and on a continual basis, the Children’s Services Council funds a staff person within the Palm Beach County School District’s research and development office. The Children’s Services Council receives school achievement information for the children receiving subsidies to attend out-of-school time programs, and they plan eventually to match the school data set with the Devereux results to more comprehensively understand youth outcomes.

### Key Success Factors

According to Suzette Harvey, executive director of Prime Time Palm Beach County, and Andy McAusland of Children’s Services Council, the spirit of collaboration, transparent communication and a deep level of trust that characterizes the relationship between Prime Time and the Children Services Council have been key to the success of their efforts thus far. In addition, they pointed to the following factors:

**Keeping the QIS voluntary, but offering significant incentives for participation.** Participation in Prime Time’s QIS is entirely voluntary, so does not carry the burden of a forced mandate for programs. As the QIS has evolved, access to important incentives like scholarships and salary supplements for staff and to quality advisors for programs are restricted to QIS participants, increasing the attraction for programs to participate.

**The clear delineation of roles between Prime Time and the Children’s Services Council.** The Children’s Services Council provides funding to afterschool and summer programs to support access for low-income children and to Prime Time as the intermediary organization. This frees Prime Time’s quality advisors to focus solely on quality improvement for programs. “Programs can be transparent with us about their weaknesses, and we can help them improve. Programs know that the quality advisors are not evaluative, but focused on connecting them to the resources they need,” said Harvey.

**Taking the time to create broad stakeholder buy-in for each new step.** “Prime Time has been strategic in its approach to building a professional development system, especially given the number, diversity and geographic

spread of the practitioners in Palm Beach County,” said McAusland. “It has methodically implemented each piece, making sure there is involvement and support from after-school staff and a broad range of others, as well. Prime Time moved slowly, crafting each new component as the natural next step from the component that preceded it.”

**Long-term commitment of the lead funder.** Said McAusland, “Patience is not always the strongest characteristic of funders. But in our relationship with Prime Time, we have supported the intentionally slow development of the system. We can see where it is going – better data will inform us in our efforts to continually improve how we develop great staff and improve the quality of the programs across the entire system.” Prime Time also recently received support from Palm Beach County’s Youth Services Department to support further expansion to programs serving middle school-age youth.

**Investment in communications.** Prime Time has developed a set of communication materials that are designed with OST practitioners in mind, to introduce them to professional development resources. Trailblazing the Pathways for Afterschool: The Route to Afterschool Professional Development is a guide to help afterschool practitioners navigate the professional development opportunities available to them. It provides an overview of the educational pathways, scholarship program, and financial incentives available. In addition, the guide provides step-by-step instructions on how to navigate the Florida Department of Children and Families and Palm Beach State College websites.

### **The Pinkerton Foundation Spearheads Peer-Led Quality Improvement in New York City**

Out-of-school time programs serving teenagers face unique challenges in improving quality. That’s because they often are not part of quality improvement systems built around child-care licensing requirements or organized with resources connected to school-aged child care or 21st Century Community Learning Centers. To build capacity and improve the quality of these programs, new strategies are needed.

To that end, over the past 13 years, the Pinkerton Foundation, a local New York City grantmaker, has catalyzed and supported a peer network of high school career internship programs, evolving into the go-to resource for practitioners and program directors seeking effective strategies to improve the quality and impact of their work.

**Career Internships – a definition:** Career internship programs are designed to expose youth to the world of work. These programs aim to help young people understand career options, the nature of the workplace and how their in- and out-of-school experiences will contribute to their work options and choice and further education. In his 2013 book: “Youth Education and the Role of Society: Rethinking Learning in the High School Years,” Robert Halpern of the Erikson Institute argues that the nation should transform its approach to educating adolescents by, among other reforms, vastly increasing and improving work-based learning.

Established in 1966, The Pinkerton Foundation provides grants to New York City organizations, with a focus on direct service programs that help young people develop the skills, self-reliance and strong values necessary to live up to their full potential. In the late 1990s, Pinkerton began supporting career internship programs as part of its expansion of funding for older youth. By the year 2000, Pinkerton was supporting 24 internship programs housed in a variety of places, such as museums, libraries, hospitals, business improvement districts and cultural and social service organizations.

After completing a full round of site visits in 2002, Pinkerton Foundation Program Officer Laurie Dien noticed how much the group of grantees could learn from one other to strengthen each of the programs. She then administered a survey to the group to gauge interest in forming a network. All 24 programs responded with interest. Prior to convening the first meeting, Dien asked each internship program to complete a three-page program profile that was disseminated to the group beforehand, so that everyone would know who else was attending and the basics of their program approach. Many had never met the other providers. Representatives from all 24 organizations attended the first meeting and the Career Internship Network (CIN) was on its way.

Dien found what she hoped for: The diversity of participating member organizations fostered an interesting cross-pollination of information and resources. Said Dien, “Despite the range and unique facets of each internship program, members had much to share, becoming important resources for one another.”

The next step was to make a modest investment of \$15,000 in the Youth Development Institute (YDI) to coordinate the burgeoning network, which included hiring a coordinator knowledgeable and passionate about internship programs. Established in 1991, it supports the integration of positive

youth development principles in programs and systems that serve youth, and promotes practices and policies that enable young people to thrive. YDI's capacity building efforts include staff development, program assessment, organizational support, program design, facilitated learning communities, tools and information development and advancing public policy to provide better support positive youth outcomes.

YDI grounded its work in five research-based principles that have been found to be present when youth, especially those with significant obstacles in their lives, achieve successful adulthood: 1) close relationships with adults; 2) high expectations; 3) engaging activities; 4) opportunities for contribution; and 5) continuity for adult supports over time. Because YDI's approach is distinguished by an understanding of and a respect for the complexities of youths' lives and the critical role of youth-serving organizations in supporting young people, the organization was well-positioned to make use of its knowledge, expertise and capacity to facilitate the new network.

Regular meetings first focused on sharing written information, including intern orientation and training materials, mentor training materials, program evaluation and intern assessment forms, and program schedules. Continued workshops covered evaluation and assessment, youth development principles, intern retention, alumni involvement, preventing sexual harassment in the workplace and engaging young people in reflective activities. Strategies to stay connected with youth alumni were shared along with developing a template for an alumni-tracking database. Technical assistance is provided by CIN's coordinator to individual sites as needed. Lessons learned are then shared with the whole network. Site visits and training continue to facilitate ongoing learning across organizations and build individual skills.

Dien was successful in bringing the Clark Foundation, and later the Altman Foundation, to the table. In addition to helping to support the network, Clark provided operational funding for internship programs that had reached their time limit with Pinkerton through 2010.

Fast forward 12 years, and the Career Internship Network is alive and well. Now supported by the Altman and Pinkerton Foundations, CIN has grown to more than 40 member programs. CIN's professional development for staff of member organizations includes workshops, structured site visits, materials, on-site technical assistance and an email list where members notify the group about activities other program's interns can attend, exchange ideas and program advice and build community. From the beginning CIN

members began offering collaborative programs where interns visit each other's programs. The goal is to expand interns' knowledge, experiences and career-knowledge options.

### **Outcomes**

A peer-driven network of programs is a different approach from the more-structured development and implementation of a QIS. The Pinkerton Foundation evaluates CIN by metrics, such as attendance at its workshops and meetings, its members' assessments of the benefits of CIN, the quality of its workshops and tools and the ongoing sustainability and outcomes of its member programs. One of the key benefits for member programs is that CIN offers a dynamic community and a set of peer-developed tools that help mitigate the challenges of staff turnover. It also allows for an informal career ladder for staff where they move into senior positions at other institutions.

Annual site visits and written reports spotlight the increase in quality of the internship programs that have been affected by this shared professional development. YDI recently launched a documentation project to create a guide to career internships based on the collective learning and best practices of the CIN network and to highlight the role of learning communities in strengthening program quality and impact.

### **Key Success Factors**

#### ***Providing long-term grantmaker support and advocacy.***

The original idea, early organizing work and seed funding for CIN came from the Pinkerton Foundation more than a dozen years ago. The foundation has continued to support the CIN member programs and the network, and convinced other funders to join in supporting both.

#### ***Choosing an intermediary that brings expertise and infrastructure to the network.***

As coordinator of the network, YDI leverages not only its infrastructure and relationships, but also its deep expertise in youth development, high-quality program practice and culture that prioritizes the experience of practitioners.

***Hiring a dedicated coordinator with extensive knowledge and passion about internship programs.*** Highlighting best practices and helping the group solve challenges were of crucial importance.

#### ***Ensuring there are peer-driven priorities and activities.***

From the outset, the network's agenda and activities have been driven by the programs to meet their own needs.

Grantmakers have maintained flexibility, not requiring that the network be required to adopt specific priorities and strategies. An advisory committee of YDI representatives from member programs and funders helped with the network's direction.

**Having a targeted focus.** The network's specific focus on career internship programs provides strong common ground, helps to focus the agenda, and assists the network in meeting the needs of member programs.

### Wyoming Afterschool Alliance's Statewide Focus on Quality

In the fall of 2010, the Wyoming Afterschool Alliance (WYAA) decided to step up its focus on quality. To that end, it enlisted the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) at the Wellesley Centers for Women to design and implement a statewide OST quality improvement system in Wyoming. Central to the effort was the introduction of tools allowing programs to analyze data, form plans to address problems and measure results.

As Wyoming's statewide afterschool network, WYAA receives core funding from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. To support the \$100,000 cost of the initial pilot, WYAA also accessed funding from the state Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, the Wyoming Community Foundation, the Ellbogen Foundation and local private funds.

Certainly, quality was not a new focus at WYAA. Director Linda Barton said, "When I directed an afterschool program, I realized how important it is for staff to understand the program's mission and goals and what high-quality youth work looks like. Clear criteria for hiring staff and high expectations had a significant impact on how children experienced our program."

But, Barton continued, "Lots of people think youth work is not a real job and many people who work in school districts also think this. In order for the OST sector to achieve progress toward equity with the school day, we have to create organizational structures in our programs. We need intentions, plans and implementation built around an understanding of what quality is."

As part of the stepped-up quality effort, in 2011, NIOST brought APAS (A Program Assessment System) to Wyoming. Director Ellen Gannett explained that NIOST developed APAS – which is used by 600+ afterschool programs in 34

states and Canada – to help build a common approach to quality improvement among many different types of programs. APAS tools enable programs to analyze program-level data, plan interventions and measure the impact. "APAS is designed not only to help improve quality across a system, but also build the OST field," Gannett said.

Originally piloted in Massachusetts, APAS includes the Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes (SAYO) and the Assessment of Program Practices Tool (APT). The SAYO-Staff & Teacher survey, completed by staff and teachers, measures changes in youth skills and outcomes linked to long-term healthy development and educational success. The SAYO-Youth survey is for youth and includes questions about program experiences, sense of competence and views of the future. The APT-Observation & Questionnaire is used by program staff to examine various aspects of program quality.

For the APAS pilot, 17 sites began to use the SAYO and APT, with a focus on measuring student engagement in learning. NIOST provided both in-person and virtual training to program directors in how to use the new tools, and dispatched a cohort of quality advisors – external consultants – to coach programs in their ongoing use of the tools. Although the external quality advisors model worked for NIOST in other places, however, geography proved to be a formidable obstacle in Wyoming. Its vast prairies, mountains and canyons separate its dozens of small towns, making travel a considerably more difficult challenge than it is in more populated places. After the first season, NIOST and WYAA adjusted the model by training onsite staff to be quality advisors. The internal quality advisors took on the tasks of observing their own programs and guiding their staff teams to develop strategies and activities designed to improve quality and student outcomes.

With NIOST training, program leaders and staff used the APT program observation tool to assess their program against the tool's quality framework. Then with the assistance of quality advisors, the staff reviewed the data and created action plans to target those areas that needed to be strengthened and reassessed. The action plans were a key link to help staff understand the progression from gathering and analyzing the data to changing practice based on what they learned. The initial action plans revealed to NIOST and WYAA the extent of the work before them.

For example, in one action plan, program staff described how they planned to manage disruptive behavior in young people through "behavior contracts." WYAA and NIOST helped the programs' staff take a different approach, instead identifying what it was about their own actions that



were potentially creating challenges for young people and the changes they needed to make— for example, adding prolonged transition times and preventing disruptive behavior by adjusting the program and staff practices to meet young people’s needs more effectively. “We suggested replacing behavior contracts with an increase in highly engaging, hands-on activities.” said Barton. “We don’t underestimate the difficulty of doing this. In fact, we are trying to provide consistent, long term support and build internal capacity for programs.”

### **Outcomes**

Over the past three years, SAYO surveys completed by young people participating in APAS programs have shown an upward trend in attitudes, skills and behaviors of the youth. Quality advisors and site staff report seeing value in the quality improvement process and wish to continue their APAS work.

Steve Hamaker, CEO of Greater Wyoming Big Brothers Big Sisters, noted, “The APAS system helped our team move from being overwhelmed by complex challenges toward implementing systematic, data-informed strategies. We successfully prioritized and focused improvement efforts on manageable, concrete tasks while identifying and sustaining program strengths. The support and coaching our leadership team receives from NIOST and WYAA are invaluable in helping us achieve and celebrate measurable gains in quality while creating a culture of continuous improvement.”

Programs that participated in all three years of the pilot showed increases in engagement in learning from year to year and made the largest improvement from fall to spring in the third year. NIOST and WYAA found that programs involved in the pilot increased their shared vision of quality, built a greater understanding of the context of quality improvement, teamwork and relationship building, and an acceptance of the need to invest time in order to realize quality gains.

### **Scaling Up**

The initial pilot with NIOST, which involved 17 sites, has scaled to include all 35 organizations (74 program sites) that receive support from the 21st Century Community Learning Center program in Wyoming. The state Department of Education budgets \$45,000 per year to support WYAA to facilitate the process and partner with NIOST. Programs are also required to include a line item in their 21st Century grant budgets to finance their data reports.

In addition, programs attend two days of APAS training per year, building a professional network of OST colleagues across the state. NIOST and WYAA also host monthly conference calls with the program staff. The calls provide opportunities to ask questions, share successes and ideas and, said Barton, “bolster spirits and build community. It’s important to create a network so people don’t feel like they are the only ones struggling.” WYAA and NIOST are developing a peer network to help programs share successful ideas and help with challenges.

### **Next Step: The Career Development System Framework**

WYAA and NIOST have created the Career Development System Framework to establish an over-arching OST quality improvement system for the state. Professional development is a key component. According to results from a 2011 needs assessment survey administered by WYAA to inform the APAS pilot, Wyoming’s direct service OST staff and leaders want training in multiple areas. Informed by the survey, WYAA has sponsored training and conferences focused on leadership, project-based learning, youth development and STEM. WYAA also recently led the development of the state’s first afterschool/youth work credential program. Launched in May 2015 in partnership with a local community college, the online three-semester program includes a capstone practicum. WYAA is now focused on identifying incentives for staff who enroll in the program, raising support for scholarships and developing a partnership with the University of Wyoming to offer the credential.

WYAA is also working with the Early Childhood Statewide Advisory Council to develop program quality practices for programs serving children ages 0-12.

### **Key Success Factors**

The initiative’s leaders stress the need for personnel, time and financial support over time to achieve measurable gains in quality. According to a summary report of the project written by NIOST, “adopting a data-driven approach to quality improvement is a long-term commitment that takes at least three years to establish and an ongoing commitment (both financial and personnel) to ensure continued success.” For Wyoming, this commitment included the creation of a pilot cohort, successive training sessions, repeated data collections at the site level, turning data to action at sites, ongoing coaching from NIOST and “cheerleading” and financial support from WYAA.

## Building a Statewide Commitment to High Quality Summer Learning in California

When California's voter-approved Proposition 49 increased the state's investment in OST programming by \$450 million in 2006, the state's 1,000 programs increased by fourfold nearly overnight. At the same time, a clear need to focus on quality emerged. In response, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation joined with other grantmakers to help the state's Department of Education create a statewide system focused on afterschool quality.

Not long after, the organization added another component: an emphasis on summer learning. When Proposition 49 was approved, the subject was "not on the radar screen," according to Justina Acevedo-Cross, program officer in the foundation's Children, Families and Communities program. But by 2008, media attention spotlighted new research showing the devastating impact of summer learning loss on economically disadvantaged children. As a result, the foundation expanded its after-school strategy to include high-quality opportunities offered over the summer, as well. "The foundation's goal is to increase access to year-round learning opportunities that support development and wellbeing for every child. Our focus was not solely on academic programming, or solely on recreation-only programs – we wanted to see a blend of the two, with a focus on quality," said Acevedo-Cross.

The Packard Foundation's seven-year initiative (2009-2016) has three major components:

**1. Cultivation and Demonstration of High-Quality Practice.** "When we started, stakeholders did not have a common definition or vision of what high-quality summer programming looked like," said Acevedo-Cross. The foundation selected 10 communities from across the state to form a community of practice; each area included the school district and district-connected programs run by multiple community-based organizations. The communities were selected for geographic diversity, existing public resources available for summer learning programming (including Prop 49 supplemental funds, referred to as ASES, or After-School Education and Safety funds), a readiness to examine and build their summer learning program using quality improvement methods and proximity to a strong technical assistance provider. The foundation matched each community with coaching and technical assistance resources from National Summer Learning Association and a local technical assistance provider often connected to the state-supported regional hubs for after-school technical support. Grants from the foundation supported professional development for site leaders and program

educators to understand the elements they had to build into their programs, and how to embed continuous learning processes so they could improve quality over time. These 10 communities developed into what Packard Foundation staff refer to as the "showroom communities" for summer learning.

### **2. Policy Development and Stakeholder Engagement.**

In 2008, summer programming was still not a priority of school districts, the state Department of Education or state-level policymakers. The Packard Foundation worked with advocates to create the statewide Summer Matters campaign in 2010, headquartered at the intermediary organization Partnership for Children and Youth (PCY) and co-chaired by PCY's executive director and the state superintendent of public instruction. Summer Matters launched a public engagement effort to increase understanding among lawmakers, school leaders, teachers, parents, youth providers and others about what the research showed and why investments in summer learning programs were critical for achieving expected student outcomes.

Said Acevedo-Cross: "The 'showroom communities' demonstrated high-quality summer learning in action for school board members, lawmakers and other decision makers – particularly in Sacramento. On site visits, they could see the tangible difference between a high-quality, engaging summer learning experience and remedial summer school. These visits helped build the case for investment in summer learning across the state."

The Summer Matters campaign also explicitly helped build expertise among providers, parents and others in the showroom communities to speak to the media and at meetings and events. They wrote stories about summer learning loss in publications read by principals, superintendents and school board members.

Said Acevedo-Cross, "Lots of things happened this year as a result of the work that Summer Matters has done. One of the major victories was passage of SB 1221 – a state regulation giving preference for funding year-round programs with the Prop 49 dollars. SB 1221 signals to school leaders, school board members, teachers, parents and others that it is important to have kids engaged during the summertime." SB 1221 also requires programs to demonstrate that they are using a quality improvement process to be eligible for Prop 49 and 21st Century Community Learning Center funding, a requirement that aligns with Packard Foundation-supported efforts over the past few years to help create a quality-support system for year-round expanded learning programming.

### **3. Technical Assistance and System Building to Support Quality:**

In 2006, the California Department of Education started building regional hubs for after-school technical assistance throughout the state, in an effort to support the thousands of new and expanded programs created with Prop 49 resources. When Packard's summer strategy was introduced in 2009, the approach was to equip the existing after-school technical assistance system with expertise in supporting high-quality summer programming. "Our dollars leveraged the larger state investment and helped make the results more robust and accessible to providers," said Acevedo-Cross. "Our goal, and we are still trying to get there, is that all programs have access to a technical assistance provider with expertise in summer learning within a two-hour drive."

In 2012, the Packard Foundation's attention to policymaking and ability to find and take advantage of opportunities to catalyze large-scale change led the organization to invest in the strategic planning process launched by the new Afterschool Division of the California Department of Education. The Afterschool Division invited a wide range of stakeholders to partner with the department in creating its strategic plan, aiming to change the focus of the state bureaucracy from compliance to quality assurance. With support from the Packard Foundation, the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation and other grantmakers, the department joined with the California Afterschool Network to create multiple working groups that attracted deep and sustained participation from diverse stakeholders. Many practitioners and advocates on the Summer Matters campaign joined the Workgroup on Quality Standards, creating the state's first set of quality standards, which were adopted by the Department in 2015.

The strategic planning process is having an impact beyond the expanded learning field. "The Afterschool Division began breaking new ground for the entire agency with a planning process that relied on authentic stakeholder engagement – listening to what people and leaders in the field had to say. Now this approach has become an exemplar for other divisions," said Acevedo-Cross.

The Packard Foundation will conclude its investment in summer learning at the end of 2016. "We didn't go into this thinking that by year seven we would be done. But summer learning is on the radar of K12 leaders in California in a very big way. Investing in summer learning is no longer about remedial summer school. School leaders now have choice and autonomy about how to spend their funds, and districts are seeing the wisdom in investing in quality summer learning opportunities for all kids because they are seeing it helps them meet their goals," said Acevedo-Cross.

### **Outcomes**

The Packard Foundation is measuring the outcomes of its initiative in the following ways:

- Whether districts invest new resources or reallocate existing resources to support summer programs. And whether K12 leaders better understand and more frequently talk about OST and summer learning as critical components of children's academic and social and emotional learning. A survey conducted by an independent evaluator found that two-thirds of surveyed California school board members and superintendents believe that summer learning loss is somewhat of a concern for their district, and 28% believe it is a large concern.
- The extent to which school day and expanded learning/summer programs are aligned. Surveys by the independent evaluator have found that district leaders who express overall support for summer learning programs also describe ways that the programming is integrated with the goals and objectives of their school-day curricula. In addition, providers report strong alignment among afterschool and summer learning programs – they often use the same staff, are led by the same leaders and develop a shared understanding of best practices.
- The quality of the technical assistance provided to programs and the extent to which technical assistance meets programs' needs. Provider surveys from 2011 and 2013 show marked improvement, including an increase in the percentage of providers rating the technical assistance as "excellent" from 44% to 58%. In 2013, 80% of afterschool and summer providers surveyed reported that the technical assistance they tapped met or exceeded their needs.

In 2017, the Packard Foundation will publish a summary of its investment strategy and evaluation, and program staff will share their experiences with colleagues and stakeholders in a series of meetings planned for 2016-2017.

### **Key Success Factors**

**Finding strategic investment opportunities within the ever-shifting policy environment.** Support for the Afterschool Division's strategic planning process is one example where the Packard Foundation made a relatively modest investment that contributed to catalytic results: the state's first set of quality standards for after-school and summer programs. A second example is the Summer

Matters Campaign's focus on ensuring that local school leaders understand the importance of summer learning, particularly because the state's local control funding formula shifts increased budgetary authority to these local decision makers.

**Providing sustained support for programs to change practice.** The Packard Foundation invested in a set of communities that represented the diversity of the state, and provided ongoing support so they could evolve into a strong learning collaborative that would help to define what a great summer program looked like. It also sponsored technical assistance and two in-person meetings per year. Practitioners and technical assistance providers became experts at understanding what quality practice entailed and how to achieve it. As momentum behind statewide quality standards gained steam, this group of practitioners became strong champions for the standards.

**Making use of public and private investments.** The Packard Foundation tapped the regional technical assistance leads already in place as part of the California Afterschool Division's quality improvement system to be the technical assistance providers for its showroom communities as well. In addition, multiple local, regional and statewide grantmakers made aligned investments in summer learning, including Kaiser, the S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation, the Noyce Foundation, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, Fort Fund, Give Something Back, the Leshner Foundation and the Cowell Foundation, among others.

**Investing in building the communication and advocacy skills of emerging leaders and spokespeople for the field.** Through the Summer Matters campaign, many practitioners found that they were powerful speakers about the importance of access to high-quality summer learning experiences. Support from the Packard Foundation helped build their skills and expertise as communicators and contribute their practical expertise to policymaking discussions. Said Acevedo-Cross, "It is important for us to build emerging leadership in the field of expanded learning. People benefit from communications training and learning how to develop and disseminate messages. They need skills for development, grant writing, organizational capacity, sustainability. Investments in this kind of capacity building create the potential for long-term impact on youth."

## Increasing Access to High-Quality Summer Learning Programs

Summer camps have long been a focus area for philanthropists, especially on the local level. But when Karl Alexander and colleagues at Johns Hopkins University released research in 2007 showing that over half of the academic achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth could be explained by what happens over the summer, several leading grantmakers deepened their involvement in understanding and supporting increased access to high-quality summer learning programs.

To that end, in 2009, Atlantic Philanthropies seeded the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) as a policy and practice organization for the field. NSLA evolved from the Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University, which itself had been supported for years by the Open Society Foundations (then Institute). NSLA engages in policy development and national advocacy (for example, National Summer Learning Day) to support summer learning. NSLA also sponsors communities of practice and develops resources for practitioners, including the Comprehensive Assessment of Summer Programs, an assessment tool considered appropriate for selecting exemplar programs, but too lengthy to be used extensively in the field.

In 2011, the New York-based Wallace Foundation began to invest in research and exemplary programs to understand effective summer learning approaches. This initiative built on Wallace's multiyear investments in city-based afterschool systems to expand and improve afterschool programs. One practice almost all of the Wallace-supported cities have in common is using the Weikart Center's Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) tool as an observational instrument to assess program quality. The development of the YPQA was supported over multiple years by the William T. Grant Foundation. In 2012, the Weikart Center and the National Summer Learning Association began a joint project to create a support system for summer program quality improvement that connects directly to afterschool quality improvement tools.

To date, five foundations – William T. Grant Foundation, The Wallace Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, DeVos Foundation and Raikes Foundation – have contributed about \$560,000 in total to various phases and aspects of the work. The results over the past three years have represented not only a valuable collaboration between two leading national quality improvement-focused organizations, but also a unique partnership among both national and regional foundations. The Summer Learning

Program Quality Assessment Project has taken shape over three major phases of work:

### ***Phase I – Proof of Concept: Develop and Pilot Summer Learning Program Quality Assessment Tool***

In 2013, with the support of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the William T. Grant Foundation, NSLA and the Weikart Center ran a proof-of-concept pilot of a quality improvement observational tool specifically geared to summer programs and aligned with the PQA. The pilot ran in Grand Rapids, MI, Oakland, CA and Baltimore, MD. The purpose of the pilot was to (1) integrate elements of existing Weikart Center and NSLA tools as a scalable quality improvement intervention for use in summer learning programs, and (2) to implement this process in a small number of programs in order to gain a better understanding of how it worked. Findings from the pilot revealed key areas for improvement, including streamlining the tool, revising the data collection protocol and developing better supports to enable sites to use the data for program improvement.

### ***Phase II – Feasibility: Develop and Pilot Summer Learning Program Quality Intervention Process***

In summer 2014, Weikart and NSLA began testing whether it was feasible for communities to launch the assessment and accompanying training at a larger scale than the previous year. The Wallace Foundation worked with a set of regional funders – Raikes Foundation (Seattle, WA), the David and Lucile Packard Foundation (Oakland CA and Stockton, CA) and the DeVos Foundation (Grand Rapids, MI) – to support the feasibility study. The Wallace Foundation funded the Weikart Center and NSLA to refine the Summer Learning PQA and provide training and technical assistance to sites, while each of the other foundations supported the pilot sites in their regions. The feasibility study found that programs had a high satisfaction rate with the Summer Learning PQA, but were more successful using it if a quality improvement infrastructure was already in place. Cities that had some familiarity with the YPQA process and a pool of trained assessors successfully integrated the Summer Learning PQA into their activities. The pilot also found great variety in the quality of the summer programs within and across cities.

### ***Phase III— Scaling up: Refine and Expand Summer Learning PQA Process***

In the next phase, The Wallace Foundation, Weikart Center and NSLA selected Denver and St. Paul, two places with city-wide afterschool systems and mature quality improvement processes, to implement the Summer PQA; that meant reaching 30 program sites in summer 2015 and 60 sites in 2016. In addition, the Packard Foundation is providing support to the Weikart Center and NLSA to refine their observation, interview and data management tools, and the Raikes Foundation is funding the Weikart Center's work with the statewide intermediary, School's Out Washington and the Seattle Public Schools. "The strong partnership between the school district and our statewide intermediary gave us the opportunity to look at the relationship between highquality summer programs as measured by the SLPQA and youth outcomes. While we are still learning what works in which settings, preliminary results demonstrate the promise of highquality programs," said Juliet Taylor, program officer at the Raikes Foundation.

### ***Key Success Factors***

***Leverage prior investments.*** The stakeholders in this project intentionally used their own and other philanthropies' prior investments to create and test a validated tool that could be used at scale throughout the country to build quality in summer programs.

***Respect grantmakers priorities and constraints.*** The project was designed so each grantmaker could invest in alignment with its own strategies. All the investments built upon one another.

***Set clear expectations for all partners.*** The project partners committed to spending the time to communicate with each other consistently, hold quarterly calls among the national and regional funding partners and maintain close contact with the grantees. The project was designed with clear roles, goals and expectations for all stakeholders, funders included. The sites participating in the pilot phase were assured that the quality data emerging from their pilot of the Summer PQA would not be used for evaluation, but to inform quality improvement.

***Support intermediaries as key drivers of quality.*** The project was most successful in the places that had an experienced and trusted local intermediary with the ability to carry forward the day-to-day work with providers.



# Principles for Effective Education Grantmaking

- principle  
no. **1** **Discipline and Focus**  
In education, where public dollars dwarf private investments, a funder has greater impact when grantmaking is carefully planned and targeted.
- principle  
no. **2** **Knowledge**  
Information, ideas and advice from diverse sources, as well as openness to criticism and feedback, can help a funder make wise choices.
- principle  
no. **3** **Resources Linked to Results**  
A logic-driven “theory of change” helps a grantmaker think clearly about how specific actions will lead to desired outcomes, thus linking resources with results.
- principle  
no. **4** **Effective Grantees**  
A grantmaker is effective only when its grantees are effective. Especially in education, schools and systems lack capacity and grantees (both inside and outside the system) may require deeper support.
- principle  
no. **5** **Engaged Partners**  
A funder succeeds by actively engaging its partners – the individuals, institutions and communities connected with an issue – to ensure “ownership” of education problems and their solutions.
- principle  
no. **6** **Leverage, Influence and Collaboration**  
The depth and range of problems in education make it difficult to achieve meaningful change in isolation or by funding programs without changing public policies or opinions. A grantmaker is more effective when working with others to mobilize and deploy as many resources as possible in order to advance solutions.
- principle  
no. **7** **Persistence**  
The most important problems in education are often the most complex and intractable, and will take time to solve.
- principle  
no. **8** **Innovation and Constant Learning**  
Even while acting on the best available information – as in Principle #2 – a grantmaker can create new knowledge about ways to promote educational success. Tracking outcomes, understanding costs and identifying what works—and what doesn’t—are essential to helping grantmakers and their partners achieve results.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer 1 Learning for Student Success*, edited by Terry K. Peterson, Ph.D., and released in 2013, provides a comprehensive overview of afterschool and summer programming, with examples of effective practices, programs and partnerships. Funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> For comprehensive information on results of the 2014 Afterschool Alliance's America After 3 survey see: <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/>. The 2014 survey was funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Wallace Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the Noyce Foundation, with additional support from the Heinz Endowments, The Robert Bowne Foundation and the Samueli Foundation.

<sup>3</sup> Kirp, David. "Does Pre-K Make Any Difference?" The New York Times, October 2, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002). Community Programs to Promote Youth Development. Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth. Washington, DC: National Academy Press. <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/10022/community-programs-to-promote-youth-development>

<sup>5</sup> For example, in 2014 the Afterschool Alliance's research review identified key factors for 5 promising program quality 1) Intentional programming/strong program design 2) Staff quality 3) Effective partnerships 4) Program evaluation and improvement. See Taking a Deeper Dive into Afterschool: Positive Outcomes and Promising Practice, published by the Afterschool Alliance in 2014. Supported by the Walton Family Foundation. [http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Deeper\\_Dive\\_into\\_Afterschool.pdf](http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Deeper_Dive_into_Afterschool.pdf)

Examples of research that followed the 2002 NRC report include:

Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2007). The impact of after-school programs that promote personal and social skills. Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.

Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R.P., & Pachan, M.K. (2010) A meta-analysis of afterschool programs that seek to promote personal and social skills in children and adolescents. American Journal of Community Psychology, 16, 294-309.

<sup>6</sup> Vandell, D. L., Reisner, E. R., & Pierce, K. M. (2007). *Outcomes linked to high-quality afterschool programs: Longitudinal findings from the study of promising afterschool programs*. University of California, Irvine and Policy Studies Associates, Inc.

<sup>7</sup> The brief cited examples of studies that showed such results as improved test scores and grades. For example: The Promising Afterschool Programs Study, a study of about 3,000 low-income, ethnically-diverse elementary and middle school students, found that those who regularly attended high-quality programs over two years demonstrated gains of up to 20 percentiles and 12 percentiles in standardized math test scores respectively, compared to their peers who were routinely unsupervised during the afterschool hours. Another example of improved school attendance and engagement in learning came from a five-site evaluation of the Boys & Girls Clubs' national Project Learn program that found a reduction in absences among participants, from 6.4 days per school year at baseline to 2.19 days per school year at follow-up. This was especially notable when compared to non-participants whose absences increased over that same 30-month period. Chapin Hall's study of Chicago's After School Matters program found that, over their high school careers, students enrolled in the program for three or more semesters and those who participated at the highest levels had higher graduation rates and lower dropout rates than similar students not in the program.

There were also studies that showed impacts on promotion of self-concept and healthy choices. The Promising Programs evaluation found that regular participation in quality afterschool programs is linked to "reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students," including "significant reductions in aggressive behaviors with peers," "reductions in misconduct," and "reduced use of drugs and alcohol." And a 2007 evaluation of the LA's BEST program found that children attending LA's BEST are 30 percent less likely to participate in criminal activities than their peers who do not attend the program. Researchers estimate that for every dollar invested, the program saves the city \$2.50 in crime-related costs.

<sup>8</sup> Simkin, L. et al. (2013). Is Citywide Afterschool Coordination Going Nationwide? An Exploratory Study in Large Cities. Published by FHI 360 for the Wallace Foundation. See: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/coordinating-after-school-resources/Pages/Citywide-Afterschool-Coordination-Going-Nationwide-An-Exploratory-Study-in-Large-Cities.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> For Indiana's quality standards, see: <http://www.indianaafterschool.org/quality/standards/>. For the healthy eating and physical activity standards, see: <http://www.niost.org/About/hepa-standards>.

<sup>10</sup> For NIOST's tools, see <http://www.niost.org>. For the David P. Weikart Center on Youth Program Quality Tools, see <http://www.cypq.org>

<sup>11</sup> Yohalem, N. et al. (2009). Measuring Youth Program Quality: A Guide to Assessment Tools, Second Edition. Washington, D.C. The Forum For Youth Investment. <http://forumfyi.org/content/measuring-youth-program-qualityguide-assessment-tools-2nd-edition>

<sup>12</sup> The Program in Education, Afterschool, and Resiliency, (PEAR), a joint initiative of Harvard 12 University and McLean Hospital, worked with partners Educational Testing Services (ETS) and Project Liftoff to develop the Dimensions of Success observation tool (DoS). DoS defines 12 indicators of STEM program quality in out-of-school time. It was developed and studied with funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF). Supported by the Noyce Foundation, PEAR also developed the Common Instrument, a survey for youth 10 years or older that includes 10 self-report items to assess child and adolescent interest and engagement in science. More

## Endnotes

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information about these tools is available at <http://www.pearweb.org/tools/>. The David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality has developed the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Program Quality Assessment (STEM PQA), an observation-based measure of instructional practices to support continuous improvement during STEM programming. More on the STEM PQA is available here: <http://www.cypq.org/downloadpqa>.

<sup>13</sup> Starr, B., Yohalem, N. and Gannett, E. (2009). Youth Work Core Competencies: A Review of Existing Frameworks and Purposes. Developed for School's Out Washington. [http://www.niost.org/pdf/Core\\_Competerencies\\_Review\\_October\\_2009.pdf](http://www.niost.org/pdf/Core_Competerencies_Review_October_2009.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Summers, J. and Price, L. (2008). Administrative Management Capacity in Out-of-School Time Organizations: An Exploratory Study. Published by Fiscal Management Associates for The Wallace Foundation. <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/financial-management-for-nonprofits/Pages/Administrative-Management-Capacity-in-Out-of-School-Time-Organizations.aspx>

<sup>15</sup> Walker, K et al. (2015). The Skills to Pay the Bills: An Evaluation of an Effort to Help Nonprofits Manage Their Finances. Published by MDRC and Child Trends for The Wallace Foundation. <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/financial-management-for-nonprofits/Pages/The-Skills-to-Pay-the-Bills.aspx>

<sup>16</sup> Examples cited include: The Arnold Community Learning Center in Lincoln, Nebraska, which uses a 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) grant for an afterschool program as it works to align its curriculum with regular school day instruction. The site supervisor works with school staff to extend the school day plans for students into the afterschool hours. The homework club teachers are school para-educators who work closely with teachers and students during the school day and then carry that expertise into the afterschool homework club. The Lincoln 21st CCLC initiative also has a curriculum coach as a school district employee who works with district curriculum specialists to train afterschool staff in aligning afterschool curriculum with district standards. In Cincinnati, CincyAfterSchool operates more than two dozen 21st CCLC sites, providing instruction and activities tailored to support each school's curriculum. Programs embed a full-time coordinator in the school building specifically to build relationships that support the recruitment and retention of students who most need the program. CincyAfterSchool leaders and school district personnel collaborate on common quality standards and data-sharing tools, while personnel ensure alignment and integration by creating communication packets that connect the student's core day work to their afterschool instruction. The packets also help parents stay informed about how their children are doing. A recent evaluation found that 51.6 percent of CincyAfterSchool students had increased their reading scores from 2007 to 2008, while 50.8 percent had increased their math scores during that same period.

<sup>17</sup> Kingsley, C. (2012). Building Management Information Systems to Coordinate Citywide Afterschool Programs: A Toolkit for Cities, National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education & Families. <http://www.nlc.org/find-citysolutions/institute-for-youth-education-and-families/afterschool-and-summer-learning/afterschool-archives/buildingmanagement-information-systems-to-coordinate-citywide-afterschool-programs-a-toolkit-for-cities>

<sup>18</sup> Browne, D. (2015). Growing Together, Learning Together, What Cities Have Discovered About Building Afterschool Systems. <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/coordinating-afterschool-resources/Documents/Growing-Together-Learning-Together.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> For more information about advocacy-focused grantmaking, see the Alliance for Justice [website](#) and [Philanthropy Advocacy Playbook](#).

<sup>20</sup> Baldwin Grossman, J., Lind, C. et al. (2009). The Cost of Quality Out-of-School-Time Programs. Published by Public/Private Ventures and The Finance Project for the Wallace Foundation. <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/key-research/Pages/The-Cost-of-Quality-of-Out-of-School-Time-Programs.aspx>

<sup>21</sup> National Afterschool Association (2014). Funding Quality Initiatives. [http://21c.ymcdn.com/sites/mnaeyc-mnsaca.org/resource/resmgr/Docs/NAA\\_4\\_MN\\_A.pdf](http://21c.ymcdn.com/sites/mnaeyc-mnsaca.org/resource/resmgr/Docs/NAA_4_MN_A.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Piha, S. Looking into the Future: The Words of Important Afterschool and Education Leaders, Learning in Afterschool & Summer Blog, Monday, February 23, 2015. <http://blog.learninginafterschool.org/2015/02/looking-into-future-words-of-leading.html>

<sup>23</sup> Grantmakers for Education's Out-of-School Time Funder Network (2014). Grantmakers and Thought Leaders on Out of School Time. [http://edfunders.org/sites/default/files/GfE\\_report\\_140729.pdf](http://edfunders.org/sites/default/files/GfE_report_140729.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Baldwin Grossman, J., Lind, C. et al. (2009). The Cost of Quality Out-of-School-Time Programs. Published by Public/Private Ventures and The Finance Project for The Wallace Foundation. <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/key-research/Pages/The-Cost-of-Quality-of-Out-of-School-Time-Programs.aspx>. For the updated cost calculator, see: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/cost-of-quality/Pages/default.aspx>.