

The Role of the School in Children's Out-of-School Time

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Source: *The Future of Children*, Vol. 9, No. 2, When School Is out (Autumn, 1999), pp. 117-134

Published by: Princeton University

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1602710>

Accessed: 02-07-2018 19:59 UTC

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The Role of the School in Children's Out-of-School Time

Joy G. Dryfoos

Abstract

As the primary community institution in the lives of children, schools have much to contribute to plans for addressing the needs of today's youngsters during the time when classes are not being held. In recent years, demands have escalated for after-school child care, educational enrichment, and safe havens that also foster positive youth development. Many programs that respond to these needs are housed in school buildings. Some are operated by the schools, some by community-based organizations, and others by partnerships between schools and outside groups. New public funding for after-school programs often flows through the school system. This article reports the prevalence of school-based programs and discusses extracurricular activities, child care and extended-day programs, enrichment programs, and ambitious efforts to transform the schools into full-time community hubs offering something for residents of all ages. Implementation challenges accompany program expansion, and this article also examines major issues that arise in school-based programs: governance, space, program quality, funding, and accountability. If these programs fulfill their promise, the school of the future may, indeed, be open extended hours for the enrichment of the children and the sustenance of the family.

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Schools have traditionally been perceived as places that children leave when the official school day is over. At 2:30 P.M. or 3:00 P.M., the school system has finished its work for the day, and the doors close. But across the country, recognition is growing that children need attention not only during school but after school hours. Too often, no one is home to receive children or to protect them, increasing their vulnerability to the consequences of high-risk behaviors related to sex, drugs, and violence. The school day is not long enough to teach the students all they need to learn. With supportive efforts mounted at the federal, state, and local levels, schools today are beginning to respond to this need by partnering with community agencies to open their doors earlier in the morning as well as after school and on evenings, weekends, and even summers.¹

This article explores recent changes in perceptions about the use of schools and the social forces driving them. Examples of pioneering school-based after-school programs and new uses of schools are presented along with evaluation findings. The potential for using school sites to meet the comprehensive needs of children and families is strong, but obstacles must be overcome along the way. Therefore, the article also discusses barriers to program implementation, with a focus on issues of governance, staffing, funding, and accountability that will be increasingly significant as school-based after-school programs proliferate.

Evolving Roles for Schools

The increasing demand for new uses of school facilities has its roots in the changing demography and social context for child rearing. (See the article by Cappella and Lerner in this journal issue.) Working parents seek child care; educators concerned about student achievement call for an extended school day; and the need for safe havens and positive extracurricular activities is increasing both for young children and teenagers. More and more schools are responding to these needs by housing after-school child care, tutoring, and recreation efforts in school buildings.

Forces for Change

After-school programs that focused on child care were introduced during the Second World War to give working mothers, new to the labor force, a place to leave their children. Nearly 3,000 extended-day programs located in school buildings served 100,000 school-age children during the war.² In most states, these centers closed after the war ended, but over the past 20 years, the availability of extended-day programs in schools has increased again. (See the commentary by Seligson in this journal issue.) The 1991 National Study of Before- and After-School Programs yielded estimates that approximately 1.7 million of the nation's children in grades K-8 were enrolled in some 49,500 before- and after-school programs. About 13,500 of these programs (close to 28%) were located in school buildings.³

Indeed, few parents are available to monitor children after school hours, and many worry about leaving their children home alone. In 1996, some 77% of mothers of children ages 6 to 17 were in the labor force, up from 55% in 1975.⁴ Although reli-

able data on children left unsupervised are hard to come by, it is estimated that 12% of elementary schoolchildren fend for themselves regularly after school, and that as many as 70% of those over age 10 may be on their own.⁵ (See also the Child Indicators article in this journal issue.) In a recent poll, some 74% of elementary and middle school parents said they would be willing to pay for after-school programs, although only about one-third of these parents reported that their children actually attended an after-school program.⁶

What goes on after school cannot be separated from what happens in school. Educators, increasingly concerned about student performance and facing pressure to improve lagging academic achievement, are beginning to focus on the learning potential inherent in out-of-school time. (See also the commentary by Brown in this journal issue.) In 1994, only 30% of the nation's fourth and eighth graders scored at proficient or advanced levels in reading in the National Assessment of Educational Progress.⁷ Youngsters who are left on their own after school lack support at home for their learning.⁸ Some education experts focus on the loss of learning that students may suffer during the summer vacation, and others point to the fact that students in Japan, France, and Germany spend twice the time American students spend in core academic instruction.⁹ An expanded school day could allow more daily time for learning, as could a year-round school schedule.

Finally, neighborhood violence frightens many young children, even as it attracts older children to its risks. Both young children and teens need safe places where they can be protected and supervised. The after-school hours are a time when vulnerable

middle school and high school youths become involved with sex, drugs, and violence.^{10,11} However, studies indicate that being engaged in extracurricular activities is associated with lower rates of involvement with such risky behaviors. A national survey of 10th graders compared students who spent one to four hours weekly in school-sponsored activities with those who spent no time in such activities. The nonparticipants were 57% more likely to drop out, 49% more likely to use drugs, 37% more likely to become teen parents, 35% more likely to smoke, and 27% more likely to be arrested.¹²

Using school buildings as safe havens and places to promote youth development is not a new idea. As early as 1935, the Mott Foundation pioneered a model of community education called the "lighted school-house." As many as 10,000 schools in the country have at one time or another adopted some aspect of this community education approach, which brings extended-hour learning, recreation, and social activities into schools under the auspices of local education systems.^{13,14} Today, practitioners from many disciplines who are concerned about the challenging conditions that confront young people are coming together to create new school-based arrangements for promoting healthy youth development.

A Growing Number of School-Based Programs

Information about school-based after-school programs has been limited, but a number of recent studies cast new light on the prevalence and character of after-school activities. These include studies by the National Center for Education Statistics, which asked schools about the availability of extended-day programs and eighth graders about their participation in school-based activities.¹⁵ Detailed information about after-school programs comes from the 1991 National Study mentioned earlier² and from a summary of exemplary program models assembled in 1998 by the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice.¹⁶

Data gathered by the U.S. Department of Education from school districts throughout the country reveals that the percentage of both public and private schools with

extended-day programs increased markedly between 1988 and 1994 (see Figure 1).¹⁷ School officials reported on extended-day programs offered at the school, including any programs offering services outside regular school hours, regardless of funding source or sponsorship. The proportion of public schools reporting extended-day programs increased from 16% in 1988 to nearly 30% in 1994; the proportion of private schools with programs increased from 33% to 48%. Programs were most likely to be located in central city schools and in those with high minority enrollments.

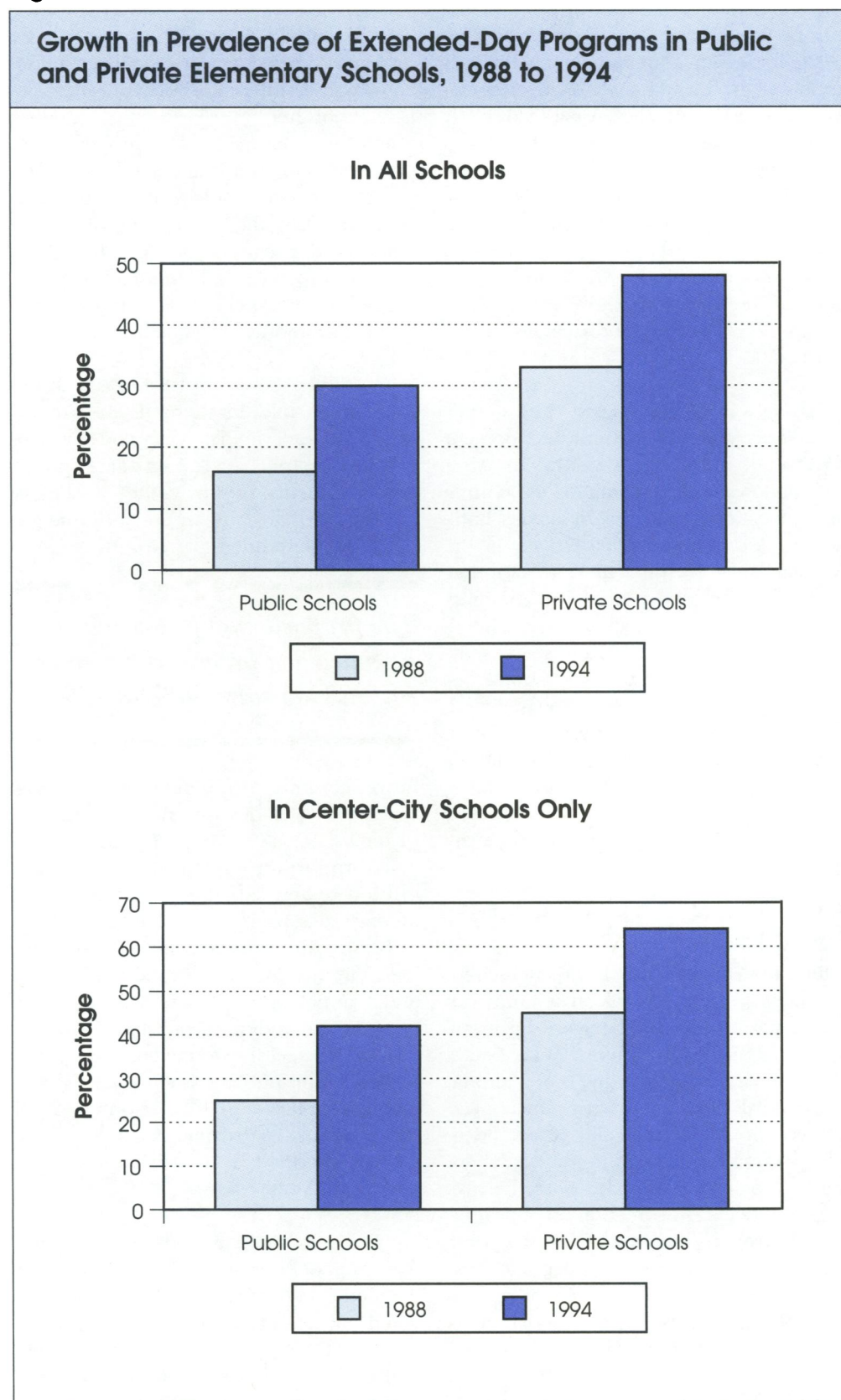
A different survey in 1994 looked at the number of children attending the schools with extended hours. Extended-day programs were available to about 41% of public school students, mostly at the elementary grade level in the more advantaged schools.¹⁸ Extended-day programs were

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more common in elementary schools (present in 41% of schools) than in middle or high schools (8% and 7%, respectively). The proportion of students who were offered extended days ranged widely among states, from a low of less than 10% in Nebraska, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and West Virginia; to more than 45% in Nevada and Kentucky, and 66% in Hawaii. These data do not indicate how many students took advantage of extended-day programs, however. The public schools offering programs in 1994 reported that only 10% of the students participated, and private schools reported a participation rate of 18% of students.¹⁷

The 1991 National Study of Before- and After-School Programs is the only source of detailed data on programs.² This study surveyed not schools but programs that operated for at least two hours per day, four days per week. Slightly more than one-fourth of the programs were located in schools. At that time, it was estimated that some 600,000 children were enrolled in before- or after-school programs located in

Figure 1



Source: Percentages include elementary schools and combined schools (schools where elementary and secondary grades are combined). As summarized in U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Issue brief: Schools serving family needs: Extended-day programs in public and private schools*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, February 1997.

schools, with an average of 44 children per site. Most of the participants were in kindergarten to third grade. The before-school programs were open for an average of two hours per day, and after-school programs were open from three to four hours daily (the programs not sponsored by schools operated for longer hours). Only 7% to 11% of the programs were available after 6:00 P.M., and none were offered on weekends. However, 53% of school-sponsored programs and 69% of those sponsored by other agencies provided full-day care during summer holidays.

Given the increasing demand for after-school programs, the supply of programs has grown since 1991 when 13,500 programs in schools were identified. More than 20,000 public schools now offer extended-day activities. As the next section of this article explains, new varieties of programs are being developed as well.

Types of School-Based Programs

School buildings are being used for extended hours in a wide range of ways. Some schools adhere to the traditional "extracurricular activities" model; others house child care programs on site; still others provide comprehensive community education and services. Table 1 presents a simple typology delineating three major types of school-based programs according to the sponsoring agency: those administered by schools, those administered by community-based organizations (CBO's), and community/school partnerships.

All three types of school-based programs are described here, with attention to program goals, content, organizational structure, and evaluation findings. The new wave of school-based initiatives is sweeping in the demand for proof that these programs make a difference. While many research projects are under way, they are several years from results. Despite the limitations of available research, early evaluation results are reported for each type of program. Selected studies have shown that school-based programs of various types improve academic achievement, increase the amount of time spent on academic activities, help children adjust to school and learn new skills, prevent

high-risk behaviors, and promote healthy youth development.¹⁶

School-Administered Programs

The new generation of school-administered programs has branched out from the traditional provision of extracurricular activities and community events. Many now focus on educational enhancement and positive youth development. Schools are featured as lead agencies in the significant recent federal funding initiative to create more after-school services through 21st Century Community Learning Centers described in Box 1.¹⁹

Traditional Extracurricular Activities and Events

Many activities are carried on after school in school buildings. Athletics have always taken place in the afternoons and even on

Schools are featured as lead agencies in the significant recent federal funding initiative to create more after-school services through 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

Saturdays, and gyms stay open longer hours than the rest of the school. In addition, school buildings often stay open after school for such activities as detention for behavior infractions, teachers' meetings, back-to-school visits and exhibitions, dramatic presentations, concerts, and school-sponsored dances.

Most schools probably do not report such extracurricular activities as after-school or extended-day programs. The 1994 survey of schools reported that only 7% of 12th graders were in schools that offered extended-day programs,²⁰ but in a 1992 survey, 82% of high school seniors reported that they had participated in some extracurricular activity during the year, most often in sports.²¹ This survey of students showed a relationship between student achievement and participation: 92% of those in the highest achievement group were involved in some activity, compared to 75% in the lowest achievement group.

Formal Extended-Day Programs

Some school systems have organized formal after-school programs that they do report as extended day. These programs may offer child care, tutoring and enrichment, or

Table 1

Typology of After-School Programs in Schools					
Type of After-School Program	Key Features	Staff	Goals	Sources of Support	Outcomes
School Administered Extracurricular activities Extended-day programs School-age child care	School is the lead agency. School remains open for regular school activities (for example, sports clubs, tutoring). School may collaborate with CBO's to provide specific activities.	School personnel School and CBO personnel	Recreation Academic achievement Safe haven, educational enhancement, reduction in crime and drug use	School budgets Local funds State and federal grants Child care subsidies Parent fees	Scattered returns include improved academic achievement, better school adjustment, new skills learned, and high-risk behaviors prevented.
Community-Based Organization (CBO) Administered Beacons Bridges to Success	CBO is the lead agency. CBO operates program in school and brings in activities and services.	CBO personnel	Prevention of high-risk behaviors Safe haven Community development	Local funds Foundation grants Private contributions (for example, United Way)	Preliminary returns include improved school climate, reduced fighting and suspensions, improved reading scores, and reduced high-risk behaviors.
Community Schools Children's Aid Society University-assisted *CoZi	School and CBO services are integrated. Continuity established between academic and after-school programs. School open to the community at large.	School and CBO personnel	Academic achievement Parent involvement Community development	Foundation grants University funds Federal and state funds Donations	Early results include improved academic achievement, improved attendance, and reduced neighborhood crime.
* CoZi: Refers to the integration of the Corner School Development model with the Zigler Schools of the 21st Century model.					

youth development activities for older students. Teachers, college students, parents, and other volunteers in some school-administered programs conduct "homework clubs" and other after-school activities that are tied to the academic program.²²

For example, in the Bailey Gatzert Elementary School in Seattle, the program is targeted to low achievers who receive one-on-one tutoring from volunteers and college interns. A Saturday morning session gives students and parents access to the computer lab or to classes in sign language and language arts. In Murfreesboro, Tennessee, elementary schools remain open from 6:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. five days a week, all year long. In one such school, the Cason Lane Academy,

college students supplement the teaching staff. More than one-half of the students stay through the afternoon to attend academic, art, recreation, and life-skills classes. At the Carmen Park Elementary School in Flint, Michigan, a computer lab remains open and supervised until 5:00 P.M., and classes are held during the summer to prevent learning loss in reading and other subjects. And in Chicago, more than 300 schools now have after-school programs offering dinner and recreation, along with an extra hour of math and reading instruction, in a program that serves close to 100,000 students.²³

Many school systems are evaluating their extended-day enrichment programs, yielding some encouraging results. An evaluation

Box 1

21st Century Community Learning Centers

During 1998, the U.S. Department of Education launched the 21st Century Community Learning Center program by awarding \$40 million to 98 grantees to support 315 rural and inner-city schools in 36 states to create safe, drug-free, supervised environments for children and youths during nonschool hours. In October 1998, an additional \$140 million was approved for after-school programs in Fiscal Year 1999. The new funds will support 183 new grants from among the 2,000 applications received in 1998, as well as renewal grants for the existing recipients. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education will launch a new after-school grant competition. President Clinton's budget for the year 2000 calls for an increase to \$600 million for after-school and summer programs.

To win funding through the 21st Century Community Learning Center program, schools are required to collaborate with other public and nonprofit agencies, local businesses, and universities in proposing after-school, weekend, and summer programs to meet the educational needs of their communities. Possible program activities include integrated education, health, social service, employment, technology, recreation, or cultural programs, along with child care, senior citizen activities, and parenting supports. With foundation support, the National Center for Community Education has organized a major technical assistance effort to help the new centers plan and develop comprehensive services. A formal evaluation will be conducted.

Sources: The White House, Office of the Press Secretary. Fact sheet: President Clinton announces new grants for after-school programs. White House Education Press Releases and Statements. November 12, 1998. Available online at <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/11-1998/afschool.html>; Editorial. Federal leadership on education. *New York Times*. February 4, 1999, at A26.

of L.A.'s BEST, an after-school enrichment program in 24 Los Angeles elementary schools, compared outcomes for 80 fifth to seventh graders who participated in the program for two years with those for 66 non-participants. Results showed that 75% of the children liked school more after participating in the program; their parents reported less tension at home; teachers reported improved behavior; student grades improved; and school-based crime decreased by 40% to 60% in the participating schools.²⁴ An after-school program in Waco, Texas, resulted in better school attendance and less delinquent behavior; juvenile crime dropped by 10% in the city following the start of the program.²⁵ Of 40 schools involved in a citywide after-school program run by the Chicago Public Schools, 30 schools showed gains in students' reading scores, and 39 schools showed gains in mathematics scores.²⁶ These promising results have played an important role in encouraging policymakers to invest increasing funding in school-administered after-school programs.

Community-Based After-School Programs

Alongside the expansion of school-administered programs, the past 20 years have brought growing efforts by community-based organizations (CBO's) to organize activities for children and families in their local school buildings. Many of these are school-age child care programs, such as those studied in the 1991 National Study of Before- and After-School Programs. The school-based programs sampled for that study were as likely to be sponsored by community organizations as they were to be run by the host school. Within the past decade, a new type of school-based after-school program operated by CBO's has emerged that offers not only child care but also safe havens, positive youth development, educational enhancement, parent involvement, and community development.¹⁰

One prototype of a CBO-administered program is the "Beacon school," introduced in New York City in 1991 and replicated in

San Francisco and around the country.²⁷ The purpose of Beacons, also known as "lighted schoolhouses," is to allow CBO's to utilize school buildings during nonschool hours for youth activities and community enhancement. The Beacons include educational enrichment or tutoring, recreation and sports, arts, community service, drug prevention efforts, and creative activities suited to a culturally diverse population. (See Box 2 for a detailed example.)

Another model of a CBO-administered program is "Bridges to Success," which originated in Indianapolis in 1991 and is also being replicated at sites across the country.²⁸ Bridges to Success brings the local United

In New York City, 200 public schools have been transformed into "virtual YMCA's" that offer literacy training, character education, and drug prevention.¹⁶ Boys and Girls Clubs, Girls Incorporated, 4-H, and the Police Athletic League also may offer their programs on school property. Several of these large youth-serving organizations have evaluated their youth development programs, showing reductions in high-risk behaviors among program participants. (See the article by Quinn in this journal issue for more information on these evaluations.) Although the studies did not focus on school-based versions of these programs, it is reasonable to assume that holding the program activities at school sites would produce similar positive results.

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Way together with schools, community-based organizations, and other public and private institutions to deliver services to youths in public school buildings. The main thrust is to promote youth development during nonschool hours through educational enrichment, career development, arts and culture, life-skills training, counseling, case management, health and mental health services, and recreation.

Research on CBO-administered school-based programs such as Beacon schools and Bridges is fairly limited, although a number of the models are being studied now. Preliminary evidence from an evaluation of Beacon schools suggests that some schools have been successful at improving the school climate and at reducing fighting and suspensions.²⁹ In one Beacon school in New York City, reading test scores inched up from 580th out of 620 elementary schools to 319th over a three-year period.³⁰

Even without a Beacon or Bridges to Success program, many CBO's use school buildings to provide youth development services after school. For instance, the pioneer New Jersey state-supported School-Based Youth Services Program combines after-school youth development activities with in-school enrichment and prevention services.

Community/School Partnerships

Some practitioners have pushed the youth development concept further to integrate classroom and after-school activities in a unified program that touches on school reform. These efforts create partnerships in which the school is seen as a resource to the entire community, and the school perceives the community as integral to its efforts to increase student learning and enhance the development of children and youths.³¹ The goals of enhanced education and access to needed human services are joined in schools that serve as community hubs. Three community/school partnership models are discussed here: (1) the Children's Aid Society's "Settlement House in a School" program; (2) university-assisted schools; and (3) "CoZi" schools (named for James Comer and Edward Zigler, whose ideas are merged in this program model).

Settlement House in a School

A total school reform approach permeates this program model developed by the Children's Aid Society in conjunction with the local community school district in the low-income immigrant New York neighborhood of Washington Heights. The "Settlement House in a School" model combines quality education with an array of health, mental health, social support, and recreational services in four community schools. These sites include primary health and dental health clinics, family resource centers, preschool programs, and community service projects. A study of schools implementing this model found that the

Box 2

Beacon Schools

The Beacon program was introduced in New York City in 1991 through the New York City Department of Youth Services. Currently, 40 New York schools have programs, and about 37 more are under development. Initially, grants went largely to high schools in poverty areas, but now programs are spread across all school levels in all community school districts. The city contracts directly with community-based organizations (CBO's) to provide programs and services in a designated school in a needy area, after approval by the local community school district. Each CBO, along with a Community Advisory Council, designs its own array of services, depending on the strengths of the agency and the needs of the students and their families.

Most of the Beacon schools are open 13 to 14 hours a day, seven days per week. The average enrollment is 1,700 community residents of all ages. Each Beacon receives \$450,000 annually from the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development. Private foundations also provide funding for special projects.

A visitor to one Beacon program described the school as "... alive with activity from sunup to well after sunset. Games, sports, music, and medical services are on the agenda ... today's offerings are also designed to equip students, parents, and citizens with tools they need to transform their community. A voter-registration desk sits in the school's foyer ... local residents get help settling civil disputes from a mediation team of volunteer lawyers. In the cafeteria a youth council plans community-service events. In classrooms, students learn everything from computers to tae kwon do. ... Therapists are on hand to counsel troubled children and child-welfare workers work to marshal resources for families at risk of splitting up or having a child put in foster care. ... Later tonight, a group of students and parents will make their way to the school for African dancing and drumming. ... Students have also planted trees and flowers around the neighborhood ... and sown seeds to help stem local drug activity."

Activities in other Beacons around New York City include a Men's Unity Day, with workshops on employment, violence, relationships, effective parenting, and being substance free. In some schools, community police officers and volunteers provide escort services to ensure that everyone gets home safely. Others offer SAT preparation courses and sponsor college tours. Five have Alcoholics Anonymous groups, and two host Narcotics Anonymous. One Beacon Youth Council produces a local television show; another is participating in an Adopt-a-Highway program.

Sources: U.S. Department of Justice. *Beacons of hope: New York City's school-based community centers*. National Institute of Justice program focus. Washington, DC: Office of Justice Programs, January 1996. See also, Cohen, D.L. Live and learn. *Education Week* (June 7, 1995) 14:29.

percentage of elementary school children who were reading at grade level increased from 10% in grade three to 35% in grade five, and middle school math performance rose from 37% of students scoring at grade level in 1994 to 51% in 1996.³² Attendance levels in the evaluated program are now among the highest in New York City, student behavioral problems are lower than in similar schools, and parent involvement is high. The "Settlement House in a School" model is being replicated in St. Paul, Minnesota, and other sites throughout the

country.³³ A technical assistance center organized by the Children's Aid Society serves hundreds of visitors each year.

University-Assisted Schools

Another approach that combines school improvement with after-school programs builds community/school partnerships by linking schools in disadvantaged communities to nearby universities that are interested in supporting community development.³⁴ The "University-Assisted Schools" program developed by the University of

Pennsylvania's Center for Community Partnerships helps universities to establish formal relationships with designated schools and then sponsor a range of activities in the schools. For instance, university faculty work with teachers on curriculum and with school administrators on school restructuring; university students do practice-teaching in the schools and volunteer in after-school activities. This effort is under way in more than a dozen comprehensive community schools in West Philadelphia, where evaluators are finding higher test scores, improved attendance, and lower suspension rates.³⁵ Observers also note changes in community climate that reflect the program's focus on neighborhood enhancement.

"CoZi" Schools

The Comer School Development model has been integrated with the Zigler Schools of the 21st Century model to integrate education reform ideas with school-based child care and family support. Schools imple-

has a different purpose and vision. Extracurricular activities are primarily intended as enrichment, while extended-day programs respond to the increased demand for child care and safe havens. The most ambitious approach is that of community schools that integrate advanced thinking about both quality education and support services into their programs.

Implementation Issues Facing School-Based Programs

As the accumulating experience discussed in this article reveals, many forces are feeding the demand for more school-based programs to provide child care for younger children, educational enrichment, and positive youth development opportunities for older students. With the advent of significant foundation, state, and now federal initiatives, attention is turning toward implementation challenges that must be resolved to meet this demand. Among these are issues of governance, use of space, program quality, funding, and accountability. Of course, the process of implementation varies depending on the organization and goals of the program. The range in complexity is broad, from the school that wants to extend its hours and add a program, to the community/school partnership that seeks to change the organization of the school, transform educational and support strategies, and keep the school open from early in the morning until late at night.

Governance

Issues of governance arise to differing degrees depending on the structure of the after-school program. When schools offer extracurricular programs and school-operated child care, governance is not an issue. All operations remain in the hands of the school system, although the principal has to be willing to identify funding, keep the custodians on duty, and make sure that the program runs efficiently.

For programs like the Beacons that are administered by CBO's, however, governance is a key issue. Here, an outside organization comes into a school building, bringing its own funds, staff, and program coordinator or director. While the principal remains in charge of the school, the pro-

Because schools are publicly owned buildings that are used at less than one-third of their potential, some experts argue they should be opened for community use.

menting this model offer home visits to parents of children from birth to age 3, all-day child care for children ages 3 to 5, before- and after-school and vacation care for children ages 3 to 12, support and training for family child care providers, and attention to nutrition and health. CoZi schools also have strong parent involvement in the schools, a school-planning management team, and extensive mental health services.³⁶ This model is being tested in Norfolk, Virginia, where a parent survey attests to the popularity of full-time child care services at the school site. Both replication and evaluation efforts are under way.

Summary

The types of school-based programs discussed in this section span the continuum from traditional extracurricular activities, to more formal extended-day programs, to restructured, full-service community schools. All of these programs help to fill the gap outside regular school hours, yet each

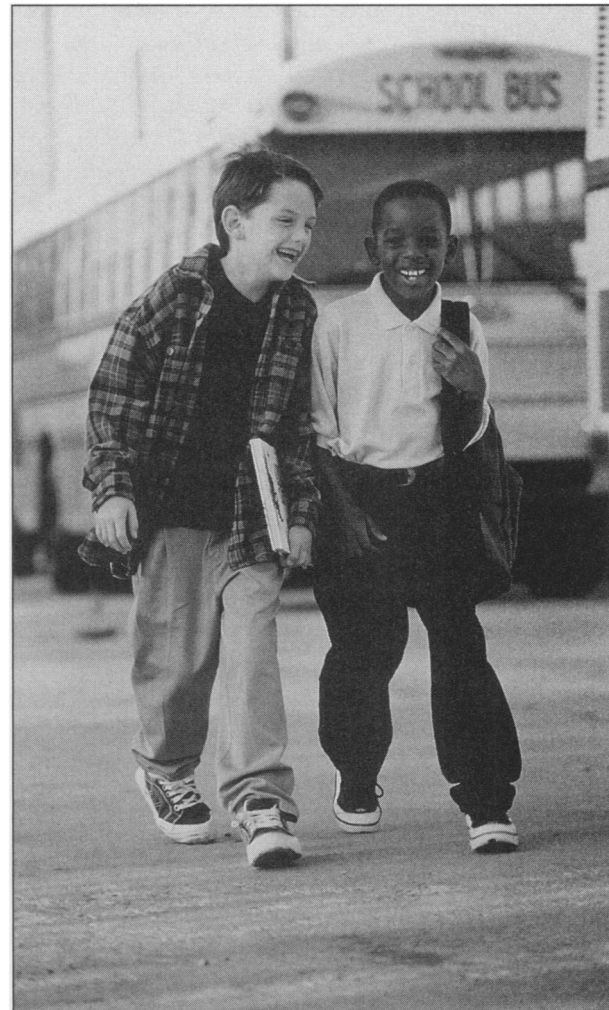
gram director and staff are responsible for the space and facilities after hours. The relationship between the community organization and the school is often uneasy, although it can be facilitated by a strong community advisory board.³⁷

A community school such as the "Settlement House in a School" model gives joint decision-making and problem-solving responsibility to the principal and the community school coordinator, demanding both constant communication and infinite patience. Some efforts to replicate this program encountered difficulties when the program was imposed on the school by an outside agency without adequate orientation of the principal or the teachers. Among the questions that arise are these: Who should influence what goes on in the classroom? Who should have access to student records? How should the school nurse, social worker, or psychologist work with parallel professionals who enter the school as part of the outside team? The competing professional cultures represented by the staffs of youth development programs and schools often pose communication challenges.

Indeed, experience has shown that careful initial planning of programs that involve the school and community agencies is fundamental to success. This planning process (often called "shaping a shared vision") generally takes a year prior to the program's start. Regular meetings keep things running smoothly. Parents, education authorities, human services staff, youth advocates, and child care agencies have all contributed to the thrust for after-school services, and all have to sit down together to figure out who should do what, and to devise ways to work together and be flexible.

Sharing Space and Equipment

Before- and after-school programs that are housed in school buildings have many advantages over those located elsewhere in the community. These include institutional credibility, continuity of care for the youngsters, and easy access to child-friendly facilities. The children do not require transportation to another program location,³⁸ and the program can extend students' learning time, particularly if its activities are



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integrated with the school curriculum. Moreover, because schools are publicly owned buildings that are used at less than one-third of their potential, some experts argue that they should be opened for community use.³⁹

Use of regular school facilities by the after-school staff can create challenges, however. One observer described "chalk and eraser wars":⁴⁰ The morning after the program, teachers find their classrooms cluttered with debris, with chalk and erasers missing. To combat this problem, which can jeopardize the success of an entire program, some programs have monitors check all the rooms at the end of each evening. Other maintenance concerns may lead school officials to deny traditional after-school programs access to classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias, with the result that many programs located in schools lack adequate space to accommodate physical activity—even though an unused gym lies just down

the hall. A report by the Department of Education argues that good after-school programs should have access to the school library, computers, art room, music room, and playground.¹⁶

It is true, however, that a building can be overused. If the school is occupied from early morning until 10:00 P.M., it leaves little time for custodial work (although it is often possible to hire a midnight shift). Questions may be raised about liability insurance, as well, although often the after-school or community school program can bring its own insurance coverage, or the school can extend its coverage to include the full day. Finally, some experts worry that not only the building but the school as an institution may be overloaded if it tries to serve more than

Some experts worry that not only the building but the school as an institution may be overloaded if it tries to serve more than educational purposes.

educational purposes. In 1994, business leaders in the Committee for Economic Development expressed the opinion that "schools are not social service institutions; they should not be asked to solve all our nation's social ills and cultural conflicts."⁴¹ Nevertheless, that august group supports the placement of additional services in schools, as long as they are not funded by local school systems.

The alternative of operating after-school programs in nonschool community facilities offers some advantages, as well. For example, some organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, Girls Incorporated, and the Urban League have their own facilities, and so may not have to contend with negotiations for school space and custodial service. Placing an after-school program in a community agency is also a way of protecting it, should the school budget be cut, or should new ideas for the building receive priority. Moreover, in some communities, a CBO may be perceived as more welcoming for local people, and children may prefer to leave the school building for after-school recreational activities.

Program Quality

The uneven quality of after-school programs is a matter of concern among child advocates. Standards for quality have been promulgated by the National Institute for Out-of-School Time at Wellesley College and the National Association of Elementary School Principals.⁴² These standards call for an after-school program to provide an environment where children can pursue their own interests, learn new skills, and participate in a social development curriculum. The standards encourage school and after-school staff to work together to develop common goals for children and to design after-school activities that enhance the learning that goes on in the classroom.

Experience in the broader field of youth development and prevention programs also suggests key components of effective programs for school-age youths—wherever those programs are located. (See the article by Quinn in this journal issue.)⁴³ Several factors are particularly relevant to those housed in schools.¹⁴ The strength of the relationship between the after-school program and the classroom is an important consideration, but the activities offered in after-school programs must also be stimulating, fun, and developmentally appropriate. For instance, young people are attracted by programs that provide food and that celebrate occasions with special cultural relevance, like African-American rites of passage and Hispanic holidays. If youths perceive the program to be either glorified "baby-sitting" or an extension of classroom time, they will lose interest. Many successful programs in inner-city areas offer young people opportunities to give back to their communities through community research projects or service projects in hospitals, senior citizen homes, and nursery schools.

Staffing is a key component to quality programs. After-school staff need to understand contemporary young people; to be aware of cognitive, emotional, and physical development; and to have mastered skills from counseling to basketball. In programs that seek to prevent high-risk behaviors, the participants may require intense and sustained personal attention. In community/school partnership programs that attempt to create a strong tie

between the academic program and the after-school activities, teachers and other staff need a shared understanding of youth development issues. That common understanding may be best cultivated by graduate training that integrates the strengths of education and social work in a cross-disciplinary approach.⁴⁴

Opening all the schools that want to offer after-school services will require a large cadre of trained personnel. The recommended staff/student ratio in after-school programs is 1:10 or 1:15.^{16,45} In some schools, credentialed teachers stay on to teach special classes or to supervise extracurricular activities, either contributing their time or receiving an hourly stipend.⁴⁶ However, most after-school programs are staffed by youth workers who may have training in youth development and experience with diverse populations, but who are paid at a lower hourly rate than teachers. Tensions can accompany these compensation disparities, especially if the two types of staff are expected to work side by side. Some states certify youth workers and require special courses in child development, school-age care, or recreation. Most programs, however, rely on staff with minimal training, and staff turnover is high. Advocates in the professional association called the National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA) have created an accreditation system tailored to this field, to promote and recognize skilled staff and high-quality programs.⁴⁷

Funding

Until recently, not much public money was available for after-school programs. The 1991 National Study of Before- and After-School Care found that 83% of program income came from parent fees, and only one-third of the programs received any governmental funding.² In 1991, the average parent fee for after-school programs was about \$2 per hour per child; data from 1998 indicate that the median fee for after-school programs sponsored by the YMCA was \$7 per day per child.⁴⁸ One study in Minneapolis found that the inability to pay the tuition and fees charged by after-school programs was one of the barriers to participation most frequently mentioned by parents.⁴⁹ Even so, many after-school programs charge parents much less than the actual cost of providing the program

because they receive funds from other public or private sources. For instance, the Children's Aid Society charges parents only \$35 per child for annual enrollment in the "Settlement House in a School" program discussed earlier. As more public funding flows into after-school programs, particularly in low-income neighborhoods, more low-cost or free options should become available to school-age children and their families.

The cost for a school-based after-school program ranges from \$50,000 per year to \$500,000 per year, depending on the model and the number of students served. Extending school days on a large scale will require funds from diverse sources, because school budgets are already strained by efforts to improve the academic program to raise educational outcomes. Schools that offer full-day comprehensive services

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must pull together complex funding packages, using varied resources such as federal and state grants, school funds, Medicaid reimbursements, user and registration fees, PTA funds, and volunteer services to defray expenses. In 1998, a group called the Coalition for Community Schools was organized to disseminate information on community/school partnerships to encourage federal and state governments to provide new support and revise regulations to make existing funding streams more flexible.³¹

Initiatives by federal, state, and local governments, as well as foundations, are helping to make after-school programs more available. At the federal level, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act puts more than \$8 billion annually into schools serving low-income areas. These resources may be used for projects that extend school hours. Schools can also access federal resources through the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program, and the Juvenile Justice and

Delinquency Prevention Program, as well as the new 21st Century Community Learning Centers program described in Box 1. This program received bipartisan support in the Congress, which appropriated \$200 million in funding in October 1998—a substantial increase over the \$40 million appropriated the previous year.⁵⁰

States and cities have also joined this new direction. For example, Kentucky supports youth centers, New Jersey and Iowa finance comprehensive school-based youth services programs, Georgia offers an after-school reading program, Missouri

The thorniest problem is attributing outcomes to the after-school program itself, as distinguished from the influences that family, school, and community all have on young people.

provides school-based services through a program called Caring Connections, and California recently passed a \$50 million after-school initiative. Philadelphia has awarded 34 grants of \$5,000 each to schools and communities to help them plan programs; Los Angeles is ready to commit \$10 million to private educational enterprises that will provide tutoring; and the Mayor's Office in Boston has launched an initiative to keep schools open from 2:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Foundations are also actively supporting the movement to open up schools after hours with little cost to parents. For example, the Mott Foundation, long a leader in this field, has committed \$80 million over five years to conduct evaluations and train the workers in the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. The DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund sponsors an "extended-service school initiative" that will provide about \$13 million over three years to support replication and research. The Open Society Institute, financed by philanthropist George Soros, created The After-School Corporation in New York City, with a promise of \$125 million over five years if the funds can be matched.⁵¹ Under this initiative, programs in the first 50 schools opened in 1999.

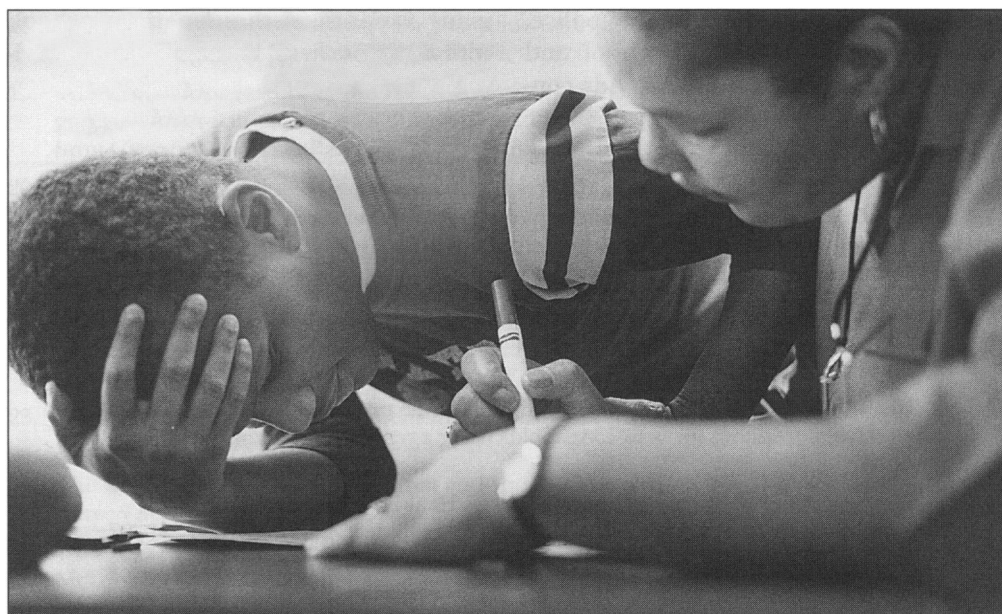
The millions of dollars pouring into after-school programs may represent the beginning of a long-term change in school funding or a short-term fad. Schools could divert many of the new funds directly into classroom instruction. Community-based agencies may claim that the support should go directly to youth development programs, sidestepping the schools. Both new opportunities and increased potential for conflict appear on the horizon. (See the commentaries by Seligson and by Brown in this journal issue.)

Accountability

To ensure that the newly popular after-school programs are effective in meeting their goals, more evaluation is needed. The Department of Education recently noted that assessments of after-school activities are based mostly on the opinions of experts, not on formal evaluations.¹⁶ Youth programs, in general, create substantial evaluation challenges. Random assignment is rarely possible because of technical and ethical barriers, and appropriate comparison groups are seldom identified. Mobility rates are very high in disadvantaged communities, so the turnover among participants may exceed 50% within a year. Perhaps the thorniest problem is attributing outcomes to the after-school program itself, as distinguished from the influences that family, school, and community all have on young people.

Despite these challenges, several key questions must be addressed by evaluators to guide this burgeoning field: (1) Is value added by placing programs in school buildings? (2) Does it make a difference if the program is integrated with the regular school day? and (3) What outcomes, other than improved school performance, are acceptable for accountability purposes?

Given the apparent widespread interest in extending the school day, it would be helpful to compile an inventory of the programs that are now taking place in schools to document what hours the doors are open, which activities take place, who administers and provides the after-school activities, how much those cost, and how much parents pay. Such an inventory could then serve as a sampling frame to gather more detailed information on staffing,



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resources, and participant characteristics according to the type of program. Finally, a small number of school sites could be subjected to outcome and cost-benefit analyses that would give new insight into how much the after-school program adds to the impact of the regular academic program on students.

Future Prospects

The role of the school in after-school programs is changing. In the past, fewer than one-third of all public schools provided space to small child care programs, mostly for children from kindergarten to third grade. More recently, societal forces for change have led schools to open their doors to all age groups, both earlier and later in the day. It is possible that all schools of the future will be open extended hours, serving as true community hubs.

As this article has explained, the forces behind this movement are diverse. Working parents are pushing for child care before and after school, as are welfare recipients who cannot pursue job training and placement without these services. The innovative community-school models are proliferating in inner-city schools that serve immigrant populations and very disadvantaged families, yet well-off suburban families also seek after-school programs for their children and are willing to pay for the services. What priority will these different groups receive as policymakers create new programs?

Pressures come from professionals and service providers, as well. Community-based agencies are seeking the opportunity to use school buildings to expand services for children and families. The national thrust toward higher educational standards and school reform has heightened educator interest in an extended school day with more time for academic pursuits and tutoring. Moreover, full-service community-school advocates maintain that school reform will not succeed unless it is integrated with the guarantee of on-site support services for children and their families.

The various forces for change are pushing up the demand for after-school programs, but those forces are so diverse that no one model will be a satisfactory response. A cafeteria of school-based after-school models have proliferated: school-age child care, Beacons, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, university/school partnerships, and others. Activities of every description can be found in one school or another, and each school has its own configuration of hours and services. In the most complex new models, schools and community agencies have formed partnerships to integrate school reorganization strategies with human support services and to create "one-stop" modern-day settlement houses in schools. This broader view of the school as the neighborhood hub draws together university faculty and students, health and mental

health practitioners, community police, welfare workers, as well as school and youth program staff. If these trends continue, the twenty-first century will see many variants of the American school, with the most flexible use of school buildings and the most diverse packages of services ever created.

1. In this article, the term “after-school programs” is used to refer to programs that operate outside traditional school hours—including programs before school, in the evenings, or during vacation periods.
2. Seppanen, P., deVries, D., and Seligson, M. *National study of before- and after-school programs*. Washington, DC: Office of Policy and Planning, U.S. Department of Education, 1993. See p. 2 for a history of after-school programs.
3. See note no. 2, Seppanen, deVries, and Seligson. These projections were based on data gathered from programs for 5- to 13-year-olds using a representative sample of 1,300 identified sites.
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration. Current population survey, March 1996. In *Child Health USA '96-'97*. Washington, DC: U.S. DHHS, HRSA, September 1997, p. 13.
5. Seligson, M., Gannett, E., and Cotlin, L. Before- and after-school child care for elementary school children. In *Yearbook in early childhood education*. Vol. 3. B. Spodek and O. Saracho, eds. New York: Teachers College Press, 1992, pp. 125–42.
6. U.S. Department of Education, Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. *Family involvement in education: A snapshot of out-of-school time*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1998.
7. The National Education Goals Panel. *Report 1995*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996.
8. Some 64% of eighth graders in urban schools and 42% in nonurban districts attend schools where school officials say lack of parent involvement is a moderate or serious problem. Olsen, L., and Jerald, C. School climate. *Education Week, Quality Counts '98* (January 8, 1998) 27:18.
9. In the final four years of secondary school, U.S. students receive an estimated 1,460 hours of core academic instruction while students in Japan receive 3,170, students in France receive 3,280, and students in Germany receive 3,528. National Education Commission on Time and Learning. *Prisoners of time*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, April 1994.
10. Dryfoos, J. *Safe passage: Making it through adolescence in a risky society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
11. Henderson, A., and Champlin, S., eds. *Promoting teen health: Linking schools, health organizations and community*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1988. See pp. 58–77, 78–88, 132–50, 166–80.
12. Zill, N., Nord, C., and Loomis, L. *Adolescent time use, risky behavior, and outcomes: An analysis of national data*. Rockville, MD: Westat, September 11, 1995.
13. Edwards, P., and Biocchi, K. *Community schools across America*. Flint, MI: National Center for Community Education, 1996.
14. Ringer, J., and Decker, L. *School community centers: Guidelines for interagency planners*. Charlottesville, VA: Mid-Atlantic Center for Community Education, 1995.
15. National Center for Education Statistics. *The condition of education, 1995*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. See p. 122 for information about the Schools and Staffing Survey; see p. 126 for the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, Second Follow-up.
16. U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice. *Safe and smart: Making after-school hours work for kids*. Washington, DC, 1998. Available online at <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/SafeandSmart/title.html>.
17. National Center for Education Statistics. *Issue brief. Schools serving family needs: Extended-day programs in public and private schools*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, February 1997. This school survey gives a rough measure of school effort but does not indicate what services were provided, or how.

18. See note no. 15, National Center for Education Statistics, p. 122, for a discussion of extended-day program growth between 1988 and 1994.
19. The White House, Office of the Press Secretary. Fact sheet: President Clinton announces new grants for after-school programs. Press release. November 12, 1998. Available online at <http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/11-1998/aftschool.html>.
20. See note no. 15, National Center for Education Statistics, p. 122, for a discussion of high school seniors' participation in after-school programs.
21. See note no. 15, National Center for Education Statistics, p. 126.
22. Examples of formal extended-day programs mentioned in text are summarized in U.S. Department of Education, Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. *Keeping schools open as community learning centers: Extending learning in a safe, drug-free environment before and after school*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, July 1997.
23. Chicago Public Schools. Innovations in American Government application, 1999. Available from Mayor Daley's Education Liaison Office.
24. The Local Collaboration for Children and Youth. *Community collaboration for children and youth: A report from the 1996-1997 awards for excellence*. Washington, DC: National Association of Counties, 1997, p. 39.
25. McLennon Youth Collaboration. *Communities in school case management staff evaluation*. Waco, TX: Lighted Schools, 1997.
26. Chicago Public Schools Office of Schools and Regions. *The McPrep Lighthouse Program*. Chicago: Chicago Public Schools, 1998.
27. Technical assistance for the expansion is provided by the Youth Development Institute of the Fund for the City of New York and the San Francisco Community Network for Youth Development.
28. Bridges to Success is being replicated in Central Falls, RI; Flint, MI; Greensboro and High Point, NC; Jacksonville, FL; Mesa, AZ; Missoula, MT; and Philadelphia. Technical assistance is provided by The Institute for Educational Leadership.
29. Interview with Michelle Cahill, Fund for the City of New York, April 5, 1998.
30. Cohen, D. Live and learn. *Education Week* (June 7, 1995) 14:29.
31. Emerging Coalition for Community Schools. *An emerging vision for community schools*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership, March 1998.
32. Coltoff, P. *Community schools: Educational reform and partnership with our nation's social service agencies*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America Press, 1998, p. 15.
33. The Settlement House in a School model is being replicated in Boston, Salt Lake City, and Long Beach, CA; and in five schools in St. Paul, MN. Replication plans are under way in 12 other cities.
34. Such community/school partnerships have been launched by the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Alabama in Birmingham, Miami University in Ohio, and the University of Kentucky in Lexington.
35. Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania. Interview with Joann Weekes, February 14, 1998.
36. Finn-Stevenson, M., and Stern, B. CoZi: Linking early childhood and family support services. *Principal* (May 1996) 6.
37. When the Beacons were first announced in New York City in 1991, many principals resisted the idea of outsiders in the school, but as Michele Cahill of the Fund for the City of New York recently observed, "Now, no one doesn't [sic] want a Beacon." After the announcement about the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants by the U.S. Department of Education, queries came in from more than 10,000 public schools (out of 85,000 eligible) and 2,400 applications were submitted in March 1998.
38. Buses run according to schedules and contracts that usually follow the patterns of school openings and closings. Transportation may therefore be an issue, although schedules can often be modified to accommodate after-school programs. Approximately 58% of public school students are currently bused to school, reports the U.S. Department of Education, in the Digest of Educational Statistics, 1997, Table 51, 1997. Available online at <http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubs/digest97>.
39. See note no. 14, Ringer and Decker, p. 8.

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40. U.S. Department of Justice. *Beacons of hope: New York City's school-based community centers. National Institute of Justice program focus*. Washington, DC: Office of Justice Programs, January 1996, quote on p. 7.
 41. Committee for Economic Development. *Putting learning first: Governing and managing the schools for high achievement*. New York: Committee for Economic Development, 1994.
 42. Seligson, M. School-age child care comes of age. *Child Care Action News* (January–February 1997) 14,1.
 43. See note no. 10, Dryfoos, chapter 8.
 44. See note no. 10, Dryfoos, pp. 151–52 for a discussion of training programs involving education, social work, nursing, public health, and community medicine.
 45. Schwartz, W. After-school programs for urban youth. *ERIC/Clearinghouse on Urban Education Digest* (October 1996) 114.
 46. Teachers' union contracts typically limit the amount of time that teachers can stay in school (around seven hours), but most allow teachers to work additional hours outside of the contract if they receive a stipend.
 47. Roman, J. *The NSACA standards for quality school-age care*. Boston, MA: The National School-Age Care Alliance, 1998.
 48. Approximately 20% of families receive financial assistance and pay less than the full fee. *Y-School age: Fast facts on YMCA school-age child care*. See the YMCA of the USA Web site. Available online at <http://www.ymca.net/b/1/1c.html>.
 49. Search Institute. *Places to grow: Youth development opportunities for 7- to 14-year-olds in Minneapolis*. Minneapolis: Search Institute, 1995.
 50. The budget proposed by President Clinton for the year 2000 includes \$600 million for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, but it is not certain that this item will remain in the final budget.
 51. The required three-to-one match can be made up of a mixture of public and private funds. The After-School Corporation. Interview with Lucy Freedman, president, February 3, 1999.