

A Unified Approach: OST and School Day in Sync

Research and Resource Guide

Introduction

This research and resource guide summarizes lessons from the session, provides additional topical resources to further develop your application of the topic, and offers research to expand your knowledge.

Lessons from the Session

In **A Unified Approach: OST and School Day in Sync** we explore ways to partner with school staff, and ensure that the importance of OST programs are understood and supported by everyone in the school community. We brainstorm collaborative approaches to planning and craft clear, impactful messages that communicate the value of OST programs in a way that aligns with school day goals.

Alignment with the school day^{1,2,3,4} - Research supports the value of OST-school partnerships and their value. Studies point to SEL, exposure, and intellectual needs of students being met by OST programs and indicate that school day alignment supports gains that are reported in metrics reported by schools.

Collaboration levels^{5,6} - The depth of collaboration falls along a continuum from awareness to full integration. For OST programs and schools, a variety of activities can be done along this continuum but making sure that the collaboration progresses from

¹ Ruhr, L. R., & Danforth, L. (2024). School Staff Perceptions of Community Afterschool Partnerships. *Afterschool Matters*, 38, 29-38.

² Gonser, S. (2020, February 12). *Powerful SEL is happening after school, too*. Edutopia.

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/powerful-sel-happening-after-school-too>

³ Afterschool Alliance. (2024, September). *The latest research on the impact of afterschool and summer programs*. Afterschool Alliance. <https://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/The-Latest-Research-on-the-Impact-of-Afterschool-and-Summer-Programs-2024.pdf>

⁴ Sparr, M., Frazier, S., Morrison, C., Miller, K., & Bartko, W. T. (2020). *Afterschool programs to improve social-emotional, behavioral, and physical health in middle childhood: A targeted review of the literature*. Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation & Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/265236/4_MCASP_LiteratureReview.pdf

⁵ Teagle Foundation. (n.d.). *Collaboration continuum*. Teagle Foundation.

<https://www.teaglefoundation.org/Teagle/media/GlobalMediaLibrary/documents/resources/CollaborationContinuum.pdf?ext=.pdf> [teaglefoundation.org](https://www.teaglefoundation.org)

⁶ Education Development Center. (2019). *Levels of collaboration*. Solutions.edc.org.

<https://solutions.edc.org/sites/default/files/Levels-of-Collaboration-508-Compliant.pdf>

networking to cooperation to coordination and finally to collaboration requires attention and intentionality.

Advocacy statements⁷ - Advocacy statements are designed to clearly communicate why your work matters to your audience and position OST programs as strategic partners to schools. Their purpose is to build trust and open doors for collaboration by showing alignment with school priorities and shared benefits. A strong advocacy statement includes three key parts. Connection to shared goals links OST activities to school priorities. Highlighting mutual benefit demonstrates how collaboration supports both missions. A call to action gives the invitation to partner on specific strategies. When crafted well, these statements serve as conversation starters that move relationships from networking toward full collaboration.

Resources and Tools

- [Working Together: A Toolkit for Fostering Academic-Community Partnerships⁸](#)
- [The Power of After-School Programs⁹](#)
- [Out of school time – Free to low-cost afterschool and summer programs for Philly youth¹⁰](#)
- [Learning Opportunities in Out-of-School Time¹¹](#)

Research and Information

- [The Value of Out-of-School Time Programs¹²](#)

⁷ National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care. (2024). Crafting an effective advocacy message [PDF]. The Consumer Voice. https://theconsumervoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Crafting_an_Effective_Advocacy_Message_han.pdf

⁸ MacIntyre, G., Karadzhov, D., Simon Community Scotland, McKay, B., Docherty, O., & Thomas, S. (2024). *Working Together: a Toolkit for Fostering Academic-Community Partnerships*. University of Strathclyde. [Working Together: a Toolkit for Fostering Academic-Community Partnerships](#)

⁹ TMJ4 News. (2019). *The power of after-school program* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQqv4JeC3bs>

¹⁰ Philly DHS. (2025, July). *Out of school time – Free to low-cost afterschool and summer programs for Philly youth* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/LaV6uXTLdEg>

¹¹ Edutopia. (2018). *Learning opportunities in out-of-school time* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/tEwFnfuMwy0>

¹² McCombs, J., Whitaker, A., & Yoo, P. (2023). *The value of out-of-school time programs*. RAND Corporation. Wallace Foundation. <https://wallacefoundation.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/The-Value-of-Out-of-School-Time-Programs.pdf> [[wallacefou...dation.org](#)]

- [Getting Started with Advocacy - North Sound ACH Resource Library](#)¹³
- [5 Reasons Your After-School Practitioner Is Your Biggest Ally | Edutopia](#)¹⁴
- [Increased OST Connections Provide Continued Benefits](#)¹⁵
- [Out-of-School Programs Provide Essential Benefits for Children and Youth; More Support Is Needed to Help These Programs Thrive](#)¹⁶

¹³ North Sound ACH. (n.d.). *Getting started with advocacy*. Community Commons.

https://northsoundach.communitycommons.org/cc_collection/getting-started-with-advocacy/

¹⁴ Edwards, N. (2016, December 15). *5 reasons your after-school practitioner is your biggest ally*. Edutopia.

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/5-reasons-your-after-school-practitioner-your-biggest-ally-nicole-edwards>

¹⁵ Youth Today. (2014, July 1). *Increased OST connections provide continued benefits*. Youth Today.

<https://youthtoday.org/2014/07/increased-ost-connections-provide-continued-benefits/>

¹⁶ Fuller, H. (2025, May 1). *Out-of-school programs provide essential benefits for children and youth; More support is needed to help these programs thrive*. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/news/out-of-school-programs-provide-essential-benefits-for-children-and-youth-more-support-is-needed-to-help-these-programs-thrive>