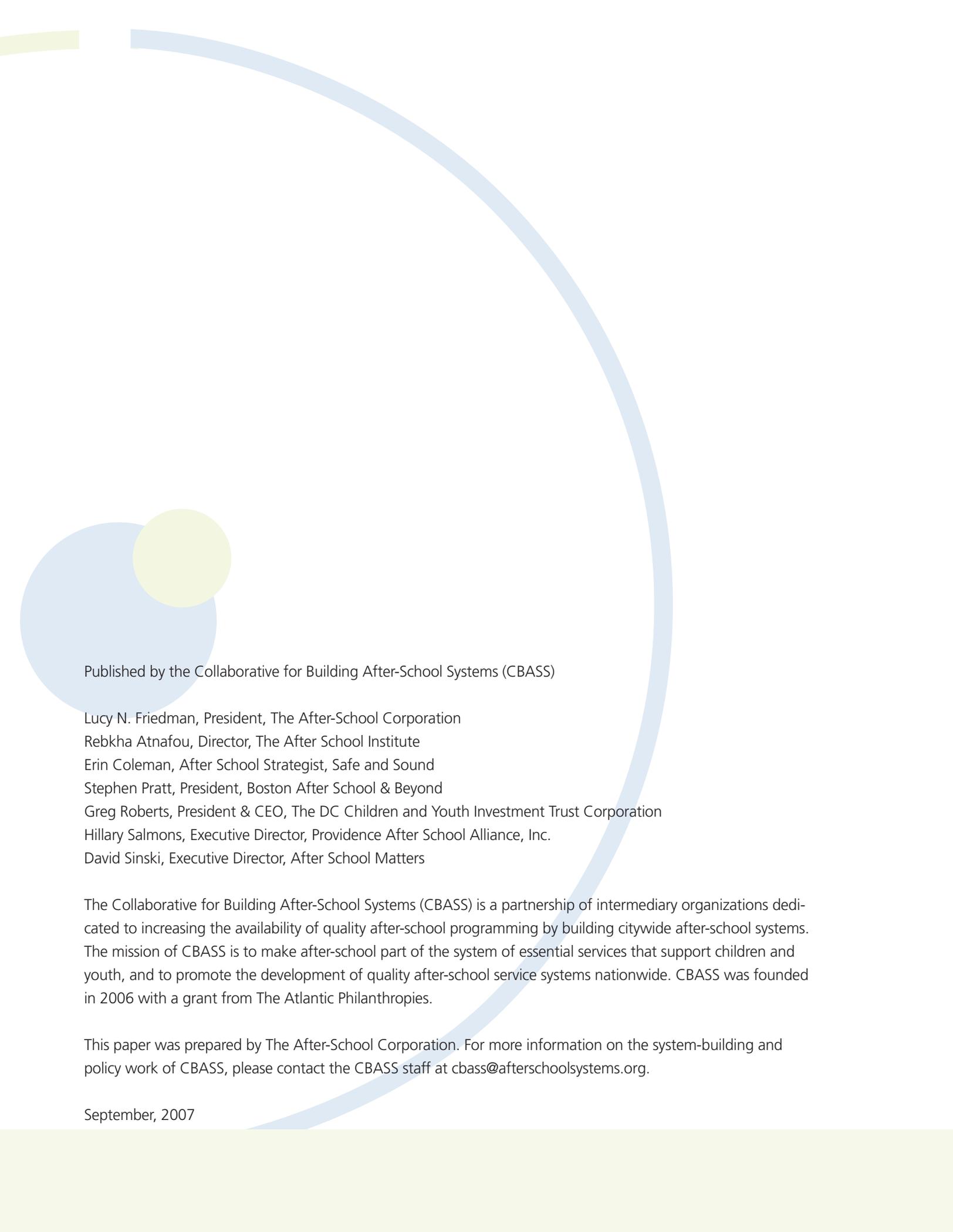




Shaping the Future of After-School

The essential role of intermediaries
in bringing quality after-school
systems to scale

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page features two overlapping circles: a larger light blue one and a smaller light green one. A large, thick, light blue arc curves from the top left towards the bottom right, framing the text. The background is white with light green accents at the top left and bottom right corners.

Published by the Collaborative for Building After-School Systems (CBASS)

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The Collaborative for Building After-School Systems (CBASS) is a partnership of intermediary organizations dedicated to increasing the availability of quality after-school programming by building citywide after-school systems. The mission of CBASS is to make after-school part of the system of essential services that support children and youth, and to promote the development of quality after-school service systems nationwide. CBASS was founded in 2006 with a grant from The Atlantic Philanthropies.

This paper was prepared by The After-School Corporation. For more information on the system-building and policy work of CBASS, please contact the CBASS staff at cbass@afterschoolsystems.org.

September, 2007

I. The Case in Brief

For most of their history, spanning more than a century, out-of-school time programs thrived on their particularity. Individual, small, independent activities mainly grew not from the top-down initiative of school systems or governments, but from the energies of local organizations or volunteers usually serving a single neighborhood, congregation, or town. Even when after-school activities were provided through large regional or national institutions such as libraries, Y's, and Boys and Girls Clubs, they tended to be customized local programs, designed and operated by individual local chapters and branches.

Because these programs were popular with parents, schools, and communities, they multiplied. But even through decades of rapid growth in the field, providers mostly kept their individuality intact. Only recently have they begun to form organized networks of programs serving multiple sites, and those networks have thus far become strong and durable in a relatively small number of places. In fact, it was precisely the idiosyncrasies of the various programs — their specific strengths and styles, their intimate ties to their communities, the differing backgrounds of their participating adults — that helped make them a distinct experience, different from school. Rather than seeming like a lengthening of the school day, they were an effective and popular transition between the formality of school and the more free-flowing diversity of community and family activities.

Yet in the past 20 years, as the demand for out-of-school time programs has soared and expectations about their outcomes have broadened, that pattern of particularity and distinctness from the school day has come under new pressure. Parents, students, and educators still value the individual features of their local providers. Increasingly, however, they want these programs to satisfy needs that are becoming more and more standard across whole jurisdictions. And they also often expect out-of-school time programs to contribute to young people's development in ways that can be measured, compared, and managed with consistent data. Pressure has mounted on after-school programs to help improve

students' academic achievement, to enrich an often constrained school-day curriculum, to extend more attention to underserved groups and communities, and to demonstrably increase young people's chances of success later in life.

The resulting combination of demands — the desire for diversity in style, an increase in scale, and greater standardization in outcomes — is not contradictory. It is possible, in fact necessary, to achieve all of these. But doing so calls for an extraordinary degree of care, planning, skillful implementation, management flexibility, and collaboration among many essential partners. As a result, a growing number of programs, at least in some cities, are now affiliated with supportive networks, often embodied in organizations that stand as *intermediaries* between the public and private sectors, between school and community, and between the individuality of particular programs and the commonality of demands these programs face.

Participants in these networks and intermediaries interact together in several important ways. They may share curricula, materials, or other basic resources with one another. They attempt to relate collectively to school systems, funders, or other civic organizations. And, at least to some degree, they maintain a running consultation with each other and with school personnel. Through these actions, they have raised the bar for after-school program quality in their cities. To maintain this high level of quality throughout their jurisdictions, intermediaries have developed and implemented operating standards for after-school programs. This city-wide collaborative work has been an overwhelmingly positive development, and has contributed markedly to the continued expansion of the field.

Yet as the reach of out-of-school time programs continues to broaden — especially in large cities and metropolitan areas — the difficulties and complexities of maintaining these networks and alliances have multiplied. Bringing service to most or all of the schools and neighborhoods in a large city — making efficient use of

“Intermediaries are helping shape and strengthen relationships among the many institutions – providers, funders, regulators, resource organizations and families – that share a stake in after-school programming in their cities.”

all the available resources and sources of talent; ensuring consistent quality of service; reaching the full range of racial, ethnic, and income groups, as well as both genders and all ages; and focusing particular care on the most underserved neighborhoods — is a massive strategic, organizational, and logistical challenge. To manage growth on that scale, providers need a more coherent *system* of funding, policy, and technical resources on which to rely. Building a true system from a still-inchoate field of emerging networks and alliances calls for a central, galvanizing force: a clearinghouse of resources, expertise, political alliances; a nexus of information sharing; and a locus of deliberation over methods, standards, and best practices.

That galvanizing force has, in fact, emerged in a number of cities and metropolitan areas. Here, large out-of-school time intermediaries have come to serve as the nucleus for cooperation among many of the practitioners and providers in their cities. In several cases, intermediaries have become the principal means of channeling resources, services, and information among their members. Not coincidentally, where these diverse, citywide intermediaries have taken shape and formed productive

relationships with local governments and school districts, the elements of a true out-of-school time system have begun to solidify. In addition to supporting the development of individual programs, intermediaries are helping shape and strengthen relationships among the many institutions — providers, funders, regulators, resource organizations and families — that share a stake in after-school programming in their cities.

Sometimes governments and school systems have sponsored or actively encouraged the formation of these core intermediaries, providing essential start-up resources, steady collaboration, mutual consultation, and ongoing political support. In other cases, governments have been keen to take over intermediary functions. Yet in doing so, they risk losing intermediaries' distinctive value-added: the fact that intermediaries, because of their relative autonomy, can do things that government cannot. Simply put, intermediaries are typically stronger, more versatile, and more responsive to the needs of the field when they retain a formal independence from government — functioning as a true bridge between the public and private activities that together make up a mature after-school field.

II. A Bridge Linking Policy to Practice, Funding to Outcomes

The experience of some of the more established intermediaries, described in greater detail in this section, suggests that *the intermediary structure is, in itself, an essential step* in changing public policy to aid the formation of an out-of-school time system — one that advances the interests of public and private stakeholders including youth, parents, communities, and schools; that accounts consistently for the quality and effectiveness of its services; and that makes the most of the diversity, adaptability, and responsiveness of local provider organizations and programs. Intermediaries' distinctive value has by now been demonstrated in enough places, with enough different models and approaches, to suggest that the main question about intermediaries is no longer “Can they make a difference?” but rather “How much difference could they make, measured against what outcomes, given sufficient support and latitude for expansion?”

The ultimate purpose of an after-school intermediary is the same as that of each individual service provider, and that of the funding and policymaking organizations that fuel the after-school sector: to contribute to the healthy, successful development of young people as they progress through their school years, graduate from high school, and enter into adulthood. But intermediaries pursue that goal at a level that is not readily accessible to either frontline providers or centers of funding and public policy. As technical specialists in out-of-school time services, intermediaries can work more closely with providers and schools, at a level of greater operational detail, than is normally possible for funders and public agencies that have wider-ranging responsibilities. Intermediaries enable programs to remain rooted in their communities. Yet because of their equally close collaboration with funders and policymakers, intermediaries can also help shape and translate many of the interests of these organizations into effective practice, with reliable accountability, at the school and community level.

What Do Intermediaries Do?

How Intermediaries Add Value to the Out-of-School Time Field

Simply put, intermediaries are the glue that holds together many out-of-school time (OST) systems. They serve as a practical connection between the overall aims of the funding and policy systems and the technical and operational abilities of individual service providers — with a consistent eye to achieving the best possible results for young people and their families. They do so, by and large, by pursuing the following seven core functions:

Brokering relationships. Intermediaries can draw service providers, funders, policymakers, schools, and other stakeholders into functioning alliances around issues of common concern. Intermediaries' firsthand experience with the needs and interests of the various players gives them an advantage in building trust, finding common ground, and working out effective solutions to problems that cut across many kinds of organizations and levels of operation.

Convening local organizations. Because of its diversity and history of bottom-up growth, the after-school field is highly fragmented and dispersed in most cities. By maintaining steady working alliances with large numbers of local providers in their communities, intermediaries have the ability to draw a wide range of organizations into more collegial, collaborative networks. In so doing, intermediaries facilitate the flow of information, methods of data collection and analysis, and common ideas and concerns.

Rationalizing and expanding services. Intermediaries can enlist support from large public and private funders more efficiently than individual, often small, provider agencies seeking funding one-by-one. These resources in turn make possible a significantly greater scale of service, helping to expand the work of existing providers and drawing new organizations into the field.

Increasing program quality. By raising and re-granting money from large funders, intermediaries can develop and promote consistent accountability mechanisms for recipients of these funds. Intermediaries thus help funders and providers manage resources for greatest results, connecting providers with high-quality curricula and other quality improvement strategies.

Strengthening and supporting the after-school workforce. Intermediaries often provide centralized training and professional-development opportunities for after-school workers, managers, and volunteers across the full range of local provider agencies. The result is an expanding network of well-trained adults delivering and managing services for young people citywide.

Research and evaluation. Gathering, analyzing, and comparing performance and outcome data can be costly and technically demanding responsibilities that are often beyond the fiscal and technical ability of individual providers. Intermediaries can perform these tasks efficiently, and with a degree of independence that is valuable to providers, funders, policymakers, schools, and parents.

Promoting sustainability. The precariousness of many after-school funding streams calls for concerted attention not only to fundraising, but to developing policies and systems that ensure a steadier, more reliable, and sustainable stream of resources to the field. This is an area in which intermediaries excel, for all the reasons described on this list of core functions.

Last year, six local intermediaries came together to form the Collaborative for Building After-School Systems, or CBASS, a national agent committed to promoting and expanding out-of-school time systems across the country. Partners' success will ultimately be measured by high school completion rates in their six cities, as their practice demonstrates that high-quality out-of-school time (OST) programs are inextricably linked to academic success. Because of their size and breadth of experience, the CBASS partners illustrate how these functions work together when taken to a scale that encompasses a sizeable part of a city's OST universe. Although each of the CBASS participants is designed to serve the specific needs of its city's after-school funding and policy structure — and therefore has developed its own subset of goals and methods — each of their histories, chronicled below, offers a distinctive example of the complex, interwoven advantages of an effective intermediary operating at citywide scale.

1. The Baltimore After School Strategy

In 1997, participants in a citywide summit organized by Baltimore's Safe and Sound Campaign identified after-school as a top priority for the city. Safe and Sound, along with an ad-hoc team of after-school program providers, funders, youth development experts, evaluators, and others, created the After School Strategy to increase the quantity, quality, and utilization of after-school programs. Unlike the other after-school intermediaries, the Strategy operates through three organizations working together to perform core intermediary functions. The Family League of Baltimore City manages contracts with program providers and

helps with data tracking, evaluation, and quality management. The After School Institute (TASI) is responsible for training program staff, providing technical assistance, building relationships — especially between community-based organizations (CBOs) and schools — and conducting program observations. Finally, designated staff from Safe and Sound identify and secure funding for the Strategy, develop policy agendas, and serve as coordinators and advocates for after-school at the system level.

In 2004, the Strategy introduced the Baltimore Out of School Time (BOOST) program model. At each BOOST program site, a CBO provider, working in the school building, leads students in academic, enrichment, and athletic programming five afternoons per week. In 2006-2007, BOOST programs served nearly 6,000 Baltimore youth. (The Strategy directly serves 9,000 of Baltimore's 85,000 public school students.) The Strategy also set the bar for program quality by developing the official operating standards for all Baltimore OST programs. After-school providers in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and Kansas City, MO, modeled their quality standards after Baltimore's.

To promote higher-quality programs, TASI has built a professional development system that includes targeted site-based technical assistance, monthly "network meetings" for program staff, three joint meetings for school-based OST providers and principals, and a regional conference for eastern states. In January 2007, TASI began partnering with Baltimore City College to offer a certificate program for after-school educators.

2. Boston After School & Beyond (known informally as Boston Beyond)

Boston After School & Beyond (Boston Beyond) was created in 2004 as a successor to two earlier out-of-school time initiatives: Boston's After-School for All Partnership and The Boston 2:00 to 6:00 After-School Initiative. Boston Beyond seeks to catalyze a partnership of the City of Boston, the local philanthropic community, and the city's business and civic leadership to design and implement a successful youth strategy for the children of Boston, including a full array of out-of-school time opportunities. As part of its mission, Boston Beyond has committed to "...learning what works, securing resources to test what works, and organizing and support-

ing public and private stakeholders who can act on what works."

Boston Beyond's predecessors built numerous structures to improve the quality of OST in the city, and consequently the new organization had many partners in place by its first year. These included Achieve Boston, an agency dedicated to training and preparing OST staff for youth development and academic enrichment work, and the Boston Public Schools, which created the Department of Extended Learning Time, Afterschool and Services (DELTAS) to provide professional development for OST educators, increase the number and capacity of OST programs, and ultimately create an organized system for after-school.

Boston Beyond leveraged \$8.5 million in 2006 for its first major independent project: the Partners for Student Success (PSS) initiative. PSS targets elementary school students who score in the mid-range on achievement tests. Each PSS school has a Manager of Extended Learning Services (MELS) who works full-time with other school staff to identify students requiring additional support and to place each child in a program that will meet their individual needs, including social services and academic enrichment. MELS also ensure that there is a communication system in place between school staff and CBO staff, and that PSS programs offer instruction that is aligned with school learning goals. After serving 546 students in five elementary schools in the spring semester of 2007, PSS is expanding to ten schools in 2007-2008 and 15 by 2008-2009. As of this writing, the program expects to serve at least 1,000 students in the fall, 2007, semester.

3. Providence After-School Alliance, Inc. (PASA)

Under the leadership of Mayor David N. Cicilline, the Providence After School Alliance, Inc. (PASA) was formed in 2004 with the mission of expanding and improving after-school opportunities for all the youth of Providence by building a system of "neighborhood campuses" called AfterZones. Guided by a business plan developed by Mayor Cicilline, along with over 100 after-school partners, PASA seeks to coordinate programming, improve quality, and build capacity throughout the after-school system. Their experience as a young intermediary in a small city brings an important perspective to CBASS. In

many small U.S. cities, local systems — from schools to transportation networks — have more in common with Providence than they do with larger city systems. PASA's recommendations are invaluable as CBASS partners seek scalable solutions to after-school challenges that can be implemented in cities of a comparable size.

In its first years, PASA worked closely with community partners and the school department to organize after-school programs across the city. These three groups of partners established a common operating schedule for PASA-funded enrichment programs, school-based tutoring services, and extracurricular clubs funded through Title I. This coordination allows program providers to share bussing costs with the city and to offer transportation to more students. PASA has also taken the lead in increasing program quality and promoting accountability among after-school programs throughout the city. Broadly speaking, PASA has established professional development and capacity building as key elements of the after-school agenda. More specifically, PASA facilitated a community process that established quality standards and created a self-assessment tool for after-school providers.

PASA designed the AfterZone program model to offer enrichment activities for middle-school youth. Youth sign up for classes in the arts, sports, and “skills” (e.g., cooking, homework help, environmental education) that meet one or two afternoons per week in a school, library, or community center somewhere in their AfterZone. Many youth register for several classes at a time; 38 percent of students are enrolled for three or more days per week. Of Providence's 6,000 middle school students, 2,216 were served by AfterZones in the 2006-2007 school year. Ultimately, PASA would like to serve 50 percent of middle school students at least three days a week.

4. The After-School Corporation (TASC)

When TASC was created in 1998, with a \$125 million challenge grant from the Open Society Institute, its goal was as simple as it was audacious: to make after-school a public responsibility and universally available. In order to influence conditions in New York City, TASC was structured to perform several intermediary functions at once. On the finance side, TASC raised money for after

school programs, re-granted funds, and managed the grants. On the program side, TASC established systems for monitoring—and improving—program quality, while also taking on training, curriculum development, and advocacy. In its nine years of operation, TASC has increased the availability, quality, and sustainability of programs in New York City, New York State, and New Jersey; leveraged more than \$490 million in public and private funds; and served over 250,000 children and youth.

TASC supports programs operated by community-based organizations in public schools. Programs operate every day school is in session, and offer academic activities that are connected to — but different from — school day lessons. Young people have a full complement of enrichment activities such as arts, community service, and sports programs. The programs have a full-time site coordinator who works in the school and leads a diverse staff of community members, teaching artists, high school and college students, and school teachers. In 2007, TASC shifted its focus to increasing program quality through more rigorous university-based professional development, activities that are sponsored by its Center for After-School Excellence.

5. Chicago After School Matters

Founded in 2000 by Maggie Daley, wife of Chicago's Mayor Richard M. Daley, After School Matters (ASM) is a public-private partnership dedicated to expanding out-of-school opportunities for Chicago teens in underserved communities. ASM partners with schools, parks, libraries, city agencies, and community-based organizations to support programs that help high school students learn work skills that simultaneously increase students' commitment to succeed in school. Thanks in large part to its ties to City Hall, ASM enjoys robust public support, with 81 percent of its operating revenue coming from public sources. Of that amount, 30 percent comes from the in-kind contributions of city agencies. ASM leveraged more than \$25 million in funds during the 2006 fiscal year.

ASM's signature programs are *apprenticeships*, in which professionals from the business, sports, journalism, and art world apply to design their own programs. The instructors meet with students three afternoons a week to teach them marketable skills of their trade. The ten-week course culminates with youth producing perform-

ances, products, or commissioned works. Youth participants are paid stipends to acknowledge the importance of their work. Young people who successfully complete apprenticeships are eligible to enroll in an *advanced apprenticeship* or a paid internship to further their knowledge in the field. Other program models offer high school students less structured after-school opportunities such as drop-in themed clubs and neighborhood sports leagues.

The largest program of its kind for high school students, ASM served about 14,000 teens in fiscal year 2007, with a strategy to engage young people in sequential programming over the course of the year, thereby funding over 28,000 slots. It has a permanent staff of 75, but contracts with more than 750 instructors and groups to lead 1,700 programs located in 58 high schools, parks, and libraries during the school year. In the summer, ASM runs an additional 149 programs in 80 CBOs. It also provides extensive training and technical assistance to program operators. All apprenticeship instructors enroll in an Advanced Youth Development Training course to better prepare them for working with adolescents. ASM's goal is to reach 50 percent of Chicago's high school students or about 55,000 youth. The success of their program has led to the opening of *After-School Matters II*, operated by the After School Strategy in Baltimore.

6. The DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation (The Trust)

In 1999, Washington, D.C., Mayor Anthony Williams asked The DC Children and Youth Investment Partnership and other stakeholders from the youth development and education fields to form The DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation. The Trust was

designed to fund out-of-school time activities, develop a set of OST standards, create a system for tracking and monitoring student data, and foster communication among key stakeholders. The creation of The Trust represented a policy shift for D.C. It was the first local initiative to use a private not-for-profit agency to distribute government funds to CBOs in support of youth development activities.

The Trust underwrites a full spectrum of OST services. It offers programs for school-aged children and youth. For youth who are no longer in school, The Trust offers employment-training and youth development programs. The Trust also runs family centers where young parents have access to literacy training, English as a second language classes, and parenting seminars. The Trust is committed to working in the neighborhoods of greatest need – approximately 50 percent of its grants are disbursed to CBOs operating in the two wards with the highest concentrations of poverty in the city. Of the 60,000 youth enrolled in the D.C. public schools, 84 percent of whom are African-American, less than half graduate from high school, and only 9 percent ever complete college. The Trust is committed to working with older youth and students of color to change these statistics.

Since its creation, The Trust has raised and leveraged more than \$120 million in public and private money. Between 2000 and 2007, it disbursed more than \$70 million to CBO grantees, including approximately \$31 million for OST programs, \$12 million for older youth programs, \$7 million for parent centers, and \$20 million for summer programs. OST and youth programs funded by The Trust currently serve about 18,000 children and youth; 2,000 adults use Trust-funded parent centers.

III. First Generation Accomplishments

CBASS partners have had significant successes in their local environments, building systemic structures for OST where none previously existed. By creating new institutions and service delivery mechanisms, strengthening the relationships among stakeholders, and building political support for policy change, they have overcome a first generation of challenges in bringing quality after-school systems to scale. In the process, they have become leading proponents of after-school

systems in their cities—in many cases securing investments in their programs from the ground up. Equally important, CBASS partners have brought the positive aspects of OST to an audience of superintendents, police chiefs, librarians, governors, business leaders, and countless other stakeholders. The growing interest in after-school — the prospects of longer school days, the success of community schools, and the interest among foundations and government officials of building after-

school as a career-path — are testament to the accomplishments of CBASS partners and other OST intermediaries over the past decade.

Brokering Relationships

CBASS partners have had great success in drawing various constituencies—providers, funders, policymakers, schools, businesses, religious and professional development organizations, and other stakeholders—together around issues of common concern. In many cases, these groups have formed durable alliances based on clear goals and a shared understanding of the challenges before them.

In Providence, for example, the lack of a public transportation system was a major barrier to creating a large-scale after-school program for middle-school students. The school district's transportation policy meant that after-school participants would have to walk home by themselves after dark while the district's fleet of buses, half-filled with detention students, drove right by. By the same token, Parks Department vans went unused for want of drivers, and recreation centers were empty in the after-school hours because kids couldn't get to them. PASA convinced school principals to let AfterZone participants use detention busses, and it helped the Parks Department recruit drivers, who transport students to and from recreation centers, which are now buzzing with activity.

Boston Beyond's Partners for Student Success (PSS) initiative is another good example of uniting stakeholders around a shared mission. Each school's Manager of Extended Learning Services, who identifies the most at-risk elementary-school students and tailors interventions to their specific needs, weaves resources and talent from several different systems into a rich menu of options for each child. These include tutoring, mental health services, learning therapy, or family services. The partnership is being piloted in five of Boston's lowest-performing schools, those slated for "corrective action" under No Child Left Behind. By aligning services and reducing logistical barriers, PSS seeks to ensure that young people have access to the right program for their individual needs, both in the classroom and in their out-of-school time.

With strong mayoral support, Chicago's ASM was able to leverage and coordinate the resources of the City's Parks and Recreation Department, the public libraries, and the public schools in order to create distinctive apprenticeship programs in the arts, sports, and technology for disadvantaged high school students. Today, it is not uncommon to see a Parks Department staff person training students to coach youth basketball teams, then hiring them to work in Parks Department summer camps.

Convening Local Organizations

CBASS partners have created steady working alliances with large numbers of local providers in their communities, drawing a wide range of different organizations into more collegial, collaborative networks of organizations, sharing information, resources, methods of data collection and analysis, and common ideas and concerns.

Stakeholder convenings by The DC Children and Youth Investment Partnership led to the formation of The DC Trust at the recommendation of Mayor Anthony Williams. The Trust took over as the lead convener of partnership meetings, which brought together representatives from the City Government, Parks and Recreation, the Department of Health, universities, public libraries, and neighborhoods. These participants meet regularly to improve conditions for children and youth in the city.

The Trust continues to use convenings to promote its goals. It has enlisted dozens of local organizations to help find pathways to achievement for students of color who are living in neighborhoods beset by poverty, underperforming schools, and high crime rates. Recognizing that programs, however good they may be, will not alone create these pathways, The Trust has involved providers in research and advocacy. The Trust, along with Concerned Black Men of America–National, is leading the Learning Circle on Boys of Color, a network of after-school providers, researchers, philanthropists, educators, business leaders, policymakers, and young men of color from Baltimore, Washington D.C., and Philadelphia that is seeking to understand and remedy the achievement gap for young men of color.

"CBASS partners have developed and promoted consistent quality assurance and accountability mechanisms for fund recipients."

TASI, the training and professional development branch of Baltimore's After School Strategy, convenes monthly network meetings for practitioners. These meetings typically host 50 or more after-school program providers, who use the time to discuss common challenges and share best practices. Here, representatives from Safe and Sound and the Family League of Baltimore City, employees of the Maryland State Department of Education, and other city resource providers (such as museums and libraries) also contribute their diverse perspectives about Baltimore's after-school system.

Rationalizing and Expanding Services

CBASS partners have helped to expand the scale of service in their cities by attracting support from large public and private funders on behalf of providers, by rationalizing and reprogramming existing funds that were being used inefficiently, and by drawing new organizations into the field as providers.

In New York City, the TASC initiative has resulted in a dramatic increase in the availability of comprehensive after-school services. By fiscal year 2008, the number of children served in comprehensive programs will have increased to more than 110,000 per year, up from 10,000 in 1998. Public funding has increased from \$60 million in 1998 to more than \$200 million. The first stage of this expansion was fueled by TASC's public and private fund development strategy, which included getting the state to fund an after-school initiative that uses TASC as its model. In 2005, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg created the OST Initiative, which institutionalized the TASC program and cost model for programs serving elementary school children. The City financed this program using reprogrammed child care and delinquency prevention funds, as well as new allocations.

TASC's match strategy also promoted sustainability. Beginning in 2000, CBOs were asked to contribute a 10 percent match to TASC grants and this number increased each year, until most programs were providing 75 percent of their own funding. Of the 323 programs TASC has supported since 1998, 267 are still operating, many independently of TASC funding. This service expansion was also made possible by TASC's training and capacity-building activities, which enabled providers to triple the average student enrollment in their programs.

TASC also recruited non-traditional organizations like museums, hospitals, and universities as well as grass-roots neighborhood groups, to operate comprehensive school-based programs, by providing them with funding, training, and technical assistance.

Boston Beyond, in partnership with the City of Boston and BOSTnet, is developing the Boston Out-of-School Time Navigator, a single, unified citywide database of out-of-school time programs in Boston. The Navigator will expand families' understanding of, and access to, local services for youth between the ages of 5 and 18 during out-of-school time, including before school, after school, weekends, school vacations, and the summer. Schools, families, and youth-serving organizations will be able to research programs, check real-time availability of program slots, and make appropriate matches for youth. The Navigator will contain data on each Boston Public Schools (BPS) student, and with access points at BPS, OST programs will be able to run aggregated reports on participants from public schools, thus promoting programming that is better aligned with BPS curriculum.

Increasing Program Quality

As a corollary to raising and re-granting dollars from large funders, CBASS partners have developed and promoted consistent quality-assurance and accountability mechanisms for fund recipients. Intermediaries have also introduced after-school providers to more content-rich and sophisticated curricula that reinforces and complements school day learning, and invested in extensive training programs for OST staff. In aggregate, these activities go a long way towards helping funders and providers manage resources for greatest results.

Baltimore's After School Strategy created an online data system that uses information collected from third-party evaluators, the Family League's contract managers, and the Baltimore schools, to track short- and long-term youth outcomes and citywide outcomes related to their work. Programs that receive grant funds from the After School Strategy are required to meet minimum average daily attendance rates. The Family League observes and evaluates programs, and shares its findings with The After School Institute (TASI), which develops training and technical assistance plans aimed at bringing service providers into compliance with city standards. If perform-

ance does not improve, providers risk losing funding. TASC uses a similar attendance strategy in New York.

Safe and Sound and The After School Institute have also worked together to improve the quality of literacy instruction in Baltimore's BOOST programs. Staff members identified a pair of cutting-edge literacy curricula and integrated the strategies and instructional techniques into their own curriculum. Trainers from TASI now teach their colleagues how to implement the curriculum, which melds fun reading and writing activities with regular practice.

In collaboration with out-of-school time program providers, the Boston Public Schools, and workforce development organizations, Boston Beyond is creating the Teen Initiative. The Initiative seeks to increase the number, quality, and integration of youth development opportunities available for teens after school and during the summer, particularly those involving a work component, by supporting the development of neighborhood service clusters.

In Chicago, ASM staff conducts regular site visits to programs, using rigorous quality standards to evaluate how well instructors are reaching young people. Poorly performing instructors receive technical assistance but ultimately risk having their contracts cancelled if performance does not improve. ASM programs, which not only instruct teens in useful skills but also allow them to "give something back" through their final projects, have raised the standards of after-school services for older youth.

To evaluate the success of its programs, the Providence After-School Alliance has partnered with the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation to develop the Rhode Island Program Quality Assessment Tool (RIPQA). Together with a group of providers and after-school advocates, PASA combined elements of High/Scope's nationally validated program quality assessment tool with Rhode Island's specific quality standards and indicators. The result is a tool that all after-school providers can use to measure their performance and track their improvement over time. The tool will be available to all PASA programs in the fall of 2007.

Strengthening and Supporting the Workforce

CBASS partners understood from the outset that the key to quality after-school programs was the staff. Each has played a lead role in developing sophisticated mechanisms for recruiting and training staff, efforts that have yielded durable networks of well-trained adults to deliver and manage services for young people.

"CBASS partners understood from the outset that the key to quality after-school programs was the staff."

Chicago's After School Matters has been careful to maintain diversity among the instructors that they hire in order to better serve the multi-cultural student body represented in ASM programs. That includes not only introducing young interns to accomplished adults whose interests, abilities, and backgrounds resemble their own, but also drawing instructors and providers of markedly different backgrounds to help widen students' exposure to the full diversity of the adult world. ASM requires instructors to attend Advanced Youth Development trainings, which prepare them for the social and developmental components of working with older youth.

Although both TASC and TASI have also created large and well-regarded training programs in their respective cities, both have recently sought to remedy one of the field's most daunting challenges: the lack of formal post-secondary educational opportunities for the after-school workforce. Seeking to improve quality in the after-school field through a stronger workforce and closer links to institutions of higher education, TASC launched the Center for After-School Excellence in 2006, a partnership with the City University of New York that offers a mix of certificate, undergraduate, and graduate degree programs at campuses throughout the CUNY system. Through new coursework, tuition assistance, salary incentives, and research, the Center fills a critical gap by providing a university infrastructure for the after-school workforce. TASC's goal is to have the Center become a national model of staff development for the youth development field. Likewise, the After School Strategy recently launched a certificate program at Baltimore City College, giving frontline providers a stepping stone to professional advancement and higher pay.

Research and Evaluation

In the era of increased public funding and accountability, after-school programs are being asked to show a return on the public's investment—in short, to demonstrate how they change children for the better in some measurable way. CBASS partners have taken on the responsibility of gathering, analyzing, and comparing performance and outcome data. Given their size and relative independence, intermediaries play this role more efficiently than individual providers, generating data that is valuable to the whole range of stakeholders—providers, funders, policymakers, schools, and parents. CBASS partners have been involved in a range of research and evaluation activities for accountability, quality improvement, and policy purposes which have become foundational supports for their local system-building efforts.

Since 2001, ASM has worked closely with The Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago to research the internships' impact on youth. In a 2007 evaluation of ASM, Chapin Hall researchers noted that positive academic outcomes derived not only from students' involvement in academic activities, but also from their participation in extracurricular clubs, sports, and arts programs. More specifically, they found that young people who participated in ASM apprenticeship programs achieved positive academic outcomes, including increased attendance levels, fewer course failures, and higher graduation and lower dropout rates.

In 1998, TASC hired Policy Studies Associates Inc. (PSA) to conduct a five-year evaluation designed to document TASC's process and to identify impacts, promising practices, and policy implications. PSA research demonstrated that a large urban system could create programs of quality and scale for a reasonable cost, information which was used by the city of New York in developing the OST initiative. PSA evaluations also indicated that students enrolled in TASC programs had greater rates of homework completion, higher grades, and better attendance rates than non-participants.

CBASS partners in Washington, D.C., and Boston used their resources to survey parents, students, and community members about their needs and preferences for after-school programming. By understanding the circumstances of the communities and neighborhoods they serve, these intermediaries have helped program

providers offer targeted, engaging lessons that will keep kids coming back. Support among families, schools, resource organizations, and OST providers is crucial to building sustainable after-school systems. These stakeholders are not only clients of program providers; they can also be their biggest advocates.

Promoting Sustainability

All CBASS partners have succeeded in changing policies and creating systems that ensure a steadier, more reliable, and more sustainable stream of resources to the field, despite the inevitable changes in civic leadership, government, and funding streams. CBASS partners have pursued strategies to bolster their independence, including diversifying funding streams for after-school that include local, state, and federal funds as well as private philanthropy.

CBASS intermediaries have also created strong connections to their city governments, which are exemplified by the partnerships formed in Baltimore, Providence, and Washington, D.C. Baltimore's After School Strategy grew out of a grant given to the city, and the city remains a key Strategy funder. In 2007, Baltimore City allocated more than \$7 million to the After School Strategy, financing the bulk of their youth programs.

In Providence, PASA has maintained a close working relationship with Mayor Cicilline, and his advocacy on the PASA's behalf helped the organization to secure its first public money. In 2007, PASA received \$315,000 from the city, including \$225,000 in tax levy and \$90,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds. PASA also helped three community organizations leverage \$1.5 million in federal 21st Century Community Learning Center funds for AfterZones over the next three years.

The DC Trust's Board of Directors includes three directors chosen by the Mayor and four by the City Council. The current City Council Chairman is a former DC Trust grantee and a big supporter of The Trust's youth development work. The Trust receives the majority of its public funding from city agencies — including The Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services and the Parks Department — though its private funders play a role in The Trust's ability to raise public funds, frequently testifying on behalf of The Trust at budget hearings.

While these partnerships have been crucial to the initial success of these organizations, garnering sustainable funding that is not subject to political changes is an important step for after-school intermediaries. Most CBASS

partners blend private grants with public funds like 21st Century Community Learning Center Program, Workforce Investment Act and AmeriCorps dollars, child care subsidies, and state and local tax levy allocations.

IV. Next Generation Challenges

Despite the success intermediaries have enjoyed in building after-school systems in their communities, they continue to struggle at the local and regional levels for the resources necessary to meet both the demand for services and to support their roles as intermediaries. CBASS partners now face a common set of second-generation challenges as they seek to grow after-school programs to scale in their cities while maintaining high-quality programming. These challenges will best be addressed by working collaboratively to come up with solutions, and by using intermediaries' national prominence to promote large-scale policy change. And unlike their public partners, CBASS intermediaries will have the flexibility and incentive to test out or quickly implement these changes in their jurisdictions. Here are some of the issues CBASS is tackling right now.

1. Meaningful Measures of Productivity and Success

In the past, support for after-school has best been characterized as broad but not deep. Polls reveal most people to be in favor of it but it is rarely their highest priority. This ambiguous status reflects the differing functions after-school has performed and continues to perform, but it also showcases the lack of outcomes specific enough to illustrate after-school's contribution to children's successful development and the public welfare. Instead, after-school systems have been pressured to use standardized test scores to demonstrate their impact, although the developmental benefits of after-school are too varied and subtle to capture quantitatively in tests. The after-school field needs a set of metrics relevant to their youth development work in order to accurately measure their impact.

In order to increase the quality and scale of after-school programs, program providers and systems builders need to be accountable for what they do. Conversely, stakeholders need be confident that programs will lead to

measurable improvements in young people's development. If after-school intermediaries are to guide these quality-improvement and capacity-building efforts, they need measures of productivity and success that relate directly to the goals and objectives of the programs they support, along with tools to measure programs against these standards. Likewise, constituents need to know what it costs to achieve these outcomes and how that cost contributes to the public good. And they want to be confident that they will get the desired results.

All the CBASS intermediaries have developed program-level standards to guide their funding decisions for quality improvement purposes. Most CBASS partners link funding to performance measures such as meeting enrollment and attendance targets and adherence to quality standards. Most also provide training and technical assistance to sites that fail to meet targets. If performance does not improve, providers risk losing funding. But arguably the most pressing need is for a methodology that demonstrates how after-school programming contributes, directly and inferentially, toward the goal of high school completion — and distinguishes the OST contribution from those made by school and family.

According to a recent study by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, quality after-school programs boost young people's feelings of confidence and self-esteem, school bonding, positive social behaviors, grades, and achievement scores. They lower the incidence of problem behaviors like aggression, drug use, and skipping class. A longitudinal evaluation of the TASC initiative found that regular participation in quality after-school programs helped improve kids' attachment to school as measured by attendance rates, especially in the middle grades. And a recent evaluation of the seminal after-school program, LA's BEST, shows that participation in its after-school programs — which only go through the fifth grade — is associated with lower high school dropout rates.

However compelling such findings may be, standardized test scores remain the primary, default outcomes indicator. That is unlikely to change until the after-school field makes a persuasive case for outcome measures that address the fuller scope of young people's growth and development — measures that are critically important to both success in school and the transition to adulthood, and that provide the public with a greater level of accountability.

As a first step, CBASS partners will work with their local partners to adopt a handful of broad practical measures of productivity and success. Ideally, these measures will accomplish two complementary goals: to ensure after-schools' accountability and to illustrate its value to kids, families, and other stakeholders. The next step will be to advocate for the adoption of these measures in other jurisdictions. Meanwhile, CBASS partners will work to secure the additional resources needed to develop a comprehensive, data-driven evaluation matrix that conclusively demonstrates how quality OST programs contribute to increased rates of high school completion.

2. Strengthening the Connections Between In-School and Out-of-School Learning

In order to thrive personally and succeed academically, children need a continuum of learning experiences that are challenging, varied, and mutually reinforcing. Schools, overburdened and generally under-funded, often can't provide the full range of social, academic, artistic, and cultural opportunities that young people need. This is especially true for disadvantaged children, who represent a majority in CBASS partner cities. The school-reform movement has recognized the importance of non-academic learning as an antidote to low achievement and high dropout rates and has responded with a variety of strategies, including extended days, small schools, and community schools. As important as these reforms are, their focus on school-directed activities runs the risk of overloading students with more classroom time, as opposed to offering them the distinct environment and experiences available in after-school activities. By drawing on networks of community-based providers, after-school programs are well positioned to offer opportunities that are both *distinctive from* and *aligned with*

school-day learning. But that requires a close working partnership with schools.

Forging such partnerships starts with recognition of the value that non-academic learning and youth development bring to the classroom. A child who, as a result of her participation in after-school programs, is articulate, trusting, and connected to the adults in her life is much

more likely to succeed academically. As school systems weigh their options for reform and determine where to invest for best results, now is the time for after-school systems to assert themselves as partners, and to demonstrate how after-school programs enhance both systems' ability to achieve the shared goal of increased youth success, including high school completion.

“CBASS partners now face a common set of second-generation challenges as they seek to grow after-school programs to scale in their cities while maintaining high quality programming.”

The CBASS partners have identified three challenge areas in which children are likely to benefit from a stronger connection between their in-school and after-school experiences:

Program Content. After-school programs are a proven venue for addressing nonacademic barriers to youth learning and can thereby support school-day learning, providing an essential bridge between academic learning and real-life implications. After-school programs' curricula should provide a variety of learning experiences that are connected to what youth do in school but remain distinctively different. Quality content helps *prepare* students for classroom learning by promoting the social and emotional skills that support academic achievement. It *enriches* their classroom learning by developing and reinforcing the educational process for kids — for instance, through reading or math games, art, and service learning. And it *integrates* the school-day curriculum by engaging kids in activities that complement or supplement the school-day curriculum in a specific and intentional way.

Staffing. As after-school and school-day programs usually have different but overlapping administrative structures, cultures, and staff, CBASS partners want to create professional development, staffing, and communication strategies that rationalize and strengthen relationships between the two groups. After-school and school-day

staff need to coordinate their work with kids in order to maximize their contributions to kids' learning experiences and create smooth transitions between school-day and after-school learning environments. They also need to have a greater appreciation of their respective roles and skill sets.

Logistics. After-school programs, whether school-based or community-based, face enduring logistical barriers in their efforts to create programs that are aligned with the school day. These barriers, which discourage youth and their families from participating in after-school programs, include a lack of safe transportation to and from after-school programs, as well as scheduling conflicts between programs and other school-sponsored cultural and athletic activities or detention. Better mechanisms are needed to share attendance, behavior, and performance data between schools and after-school programs so that all adults involved in a child's life receive a full picture of their behavior and performance. Finally, school-based after-school programs often face challenges in securing consistent access to school spaces and facilities like the gym and cafeteria, which are central to their operations.

At the same time, CBASS partners are looking at ways to leverage the growing interest in Expanded Learning Time (ELT), a school reform strategy that lengthens the traditional school day/year schedule to increase student learning opportunities. Initiatives are based on the theory that if students are expected to learn more, they must have more time to reach those expectations.^{1, 2} High quality after-school programs perform many of the same functions ELT initiatives are designed to perform during the same timeframe, which means that the current momentum around ELT presents an opportunity to broaden the scale, sustainability, and impact of after-school programs.

But there are also significant differences between the ELT and OST. While proponents of both models acknowledge the value of enrichment activities and alternative

approaches to learning, ELT is primarily an institutional expansion of the school day program and a strategy for *school* reform as opposed to the organized expansion of children's learning experience beyond school. In current ELT demonstrations, the school district has financial and programmatic control over non-traditional school hours (as opposed to shared control with community organizations). Student participation in activities in ELT is mandatory. And the ELT school day usually ends before 6pm, leaving working families with a significant childcare gap. Thus, the proliferation of ELT could also pose a threat to providers and intermediaries by diverting public funds, political support, children, and space away from after-school programs.

“A child who, as a result of her participation in after-school programs, is articulate, trusting, and connected to the adults in her life is much more likely to succeed academically.”

CBASS intends to study the ways that the expansion of ELT could positively benefit children and youth by expanding the availability of free services and streamlining the policies, procedures, expectations, and desired outcomes for schools and after-school providers. CBASS partners will also study the benefits of integrating CBOs — with their youth development expertise and ex-

perience developing engaging activities — into the lengthened school day. The first step in this process will be for partners to study the ELT models that were implemented in Massachusetts schools in 2006-2007, and determine the advantages and disadvantages inherent in these models.

3. Developing programs and services that meet the needs of older youth

Only about two-thirds of all American students who enter high school graduate four years later—and an even smaller proportion of African-American, Hispanic, and urban teens do so. The need to engage and sustain more students through their high school careers is urgent. High quality after-school, summer, and weekend programs that engage older students in meaningful academic, vocational, and recreational activities can bolster young people's attachment to their schools and improve

1 United States. National Education Commission on Time and Learning. Prisoners of Time. Washington: The Commission, 1994.

2 Pennington, Hillary. “The Massachusetts Expanding Learning Time to Support Student Success Initiative”. Center for American Progress. 2007. 30 May 2007 <<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/01/pdf/MALearningTime.pdf>>

their chances to graduate and become successful and productive citizens.

Serving teens effectively, however, is one of the greatest challenges for the after-school field. While younger students' after-school lives are often managed by parents, high school students typically choose their own activities, and they expect a return on their investment of time. They might be interested in exploring subjects not covered during the school day, socializing with other students, or creating something tangible, such as a video project or a work of art. Many adolescents want after-school programming that can help them build job skills, earn money, and prepare for college.

High school students also have more idiosyncratic and varied interests than younger students. Many have work or family commitments that make it difficult to engage them in structured after-school programming. Experience has shown, however, that older students actively seek out after-school activities that are designed for them. The most attractive opportunities are those that help older students acquire skills and demonstrate mastery, allow them to contribute something of value to their communities, help them prepare for future employment, or some combination of these attributes.

Devising and promoting effective programs — and assembling the policies, funding, and delivery systems that make them possible — requires continued experimentation, data-gathering, and assessment of outcomes. Here, CBASS partners have been among the principal innovators in developing programming for older youth. In Chicago, the ASM apprenticeship program appeals to the diverse interests of older youth by connecting them with professionals working in various fields. Instructors meet with teens three times a week for ten weeks to complete a project — such as a play, soccer tournament, or mural — that positively contributes to their community. In 2007, more than 14,000 Chicago teens participated in ASM programs and many enrolled in and completed two or more programs over the course of the year.

In New York, TASC has also increased the number of after-school opportunities for high school students. Programs range from large, comprehensive programs

closely aligned with the school day, to smaller initiatives that target specific affinity groups within larger programs, to free-standing programs that offer job training, support, and leadership opportunities on weekends and over the summer. In the nation's capital, the D.C. Trust has developed an innovative job training program for high school youth, partnering with a pair of government agencies to place young people in positions with community-based organizations and to train them as summer lifeguards.

Despite the emergence of these promising strategies, there is still a lot to learn. The range of partnerships, the approach to recruitment and retention, and the measurement of outcomes all need to be different for older populations than for younger. But how different? Are there areas of continuity in which performance can be compared with that of programs for young people? How different does an out-of-school time system for older youth have to be in its organization, leadership, or funding? With the support of the Mott Foundation, these are a handful of the questions the CBASS partners will be exploring at two upcoming national meetings. In these forums, local and state policymakers, public and private funders, and community leaders will discuss strategies for aligning after-school programs with efforts to improve high school graduation rates among urban youth.

4. Designing Programs That Address Racial, Economic, and Gender Inequities

After-school programs often suffer from the same structural inequalities that plague public education, but without the public visibility and outrage that failing schools evoke. In order to bring quality OST systems to scale, programs need to attract, support, and benefit children and youth of different races, classes, genders, and ethnic backgrounds. Improving the field's understanding of and capacity to support diverse OST populations is important because research and data show that differences across race, class, gender, and ethnicity influence children's educational preparedness and success. High quality after-school programs can enhance children's social, emotional, and educational preparedness, thus helping to level the playing field for disadvantaged groups.

Yet, in seeking to build strong after-school systems, intermediaries must walk a fine line between the impulse to

serve those young people who are most at-risk and the political exigencies of universal service. Focus too narrowly on youth with the greatest need, and they risk alienating middle-class parents, an essential political constituency. Focus too broadly, and they risk creating a system that ignores the structural inequalities and hidden injuries of race and class.

How then can out-of-school time systems provide services that are both universal and responsive? At the broadest level, the answer is found by reframing the issue as a question of providing quality services. If providers are serious about creating quality after-school systems, those programs must *by definition* be responsive to the needs and interests of young people from different backgrounds. In order to effectively support diverse groups, after-school programs need to tailor outreach, participation, funding, and staffing strategies to the needs and preferences of people in diverse communities. CBASS partners realize that they have an important role to play in designing systems and strategies to ensure that programs have the resources and capacity to respond to the differing needs of diverse groups most effectively.

Building responsive out-of-school time programs for young people — ensuring that they meet the desires of parents while still motivating young people to participate — will require systems to grapple with a number of underlying policy questions: What does the data show about the needs and preferences of out-of-school time systems' core customers—low-income, minority youth? What strategies hold the greatest promise for increasing the diversity of out-of-school time leaders? What programs, policies, and practices are most responsive to the needs, preferences, and usage patterns of diverse out-of-school time participants? What are the financial implications of these programs for the overall allocation of resources?

Over the next few years, CBASS partners will take the lead in answering these questions. CBASS partners have begun compiling preliminary demographic and market research data and are working to identify how differences across race, class, gender, and ethnicity influence

after-school participation. The partners may also expand this research to include youth with special needs. Based on these data, CBASS will begin laying the groundwork for the kind of engaging, culturally relevant enrichment opportunities that will lead to stronger academic performance and better preparedness for the workforce and life. The collaborative will develop staffing models and training modules to help recruit and retain diverse program staff — and to give them the tools they need to serve the youth in their charge.

5. Building an OST Workforce Capable of Delivering Quality Services

Although out-of-school time is one of the fastest-growing educational sectors, few cities have the comprehensive systems needed to recruit, train, and support a qualified and diverse workforce. The out-of-school time workforce is remarkably complex. In Baltimore, for example, it consists of mostly part-time workers who tend to cluster at either end of the age spectrum and who possess varied levels of education. All of this makes it difficult to develop a standard curriculum or training strategy. Meanwhile, publicly funded programs spend the greatest proportion of their funding on staff salaries but receive limited public funding for staff development.

Developing a well-trained workforce for the out-of-school time field is a huge challenge. Scale and quality both depend on having skilled after-school providers, including frontline workers, site managers, and executive leaders. Research demonstrates that the number one determinant of positive youth outcomes is the extent to which a young person has developed a strong relationship with a caring adult. If after-school systems are to meet the highest standards of quality and scale, they must create a sufficient supply of qualified adults at all levels: volunteers, frontline staff, site coordinators, and organizational leaders. Creating this pipeline, in turn, demands that out-of-school time systems have strong, capable networks for recruiting and training youth development professionals and gifted volunteers.

The strongest after-school systems have created sophisticated mechanisms for recruiting and training new staff.

“If providers are serious about creating quality after-school systems, those programs must by definition be responsive to the needs and interests of young people from different backgrounds.”

Building on their existing systems, CBASS partners will concentrate on the initiatives they are best equipped to handle. These initiatives include developing training modules for OST staff, from volunteers to executives; working with OST organizations to increase diversity among their leadership; and creating strategies for retaining graduates of OST programs in the OST workforce.

CBASS partners will create clear cost models for each of these initiatives and will make the public policy case for expanded public investments in partner cities and elsewhere. CBASS's first step will be to organize a convening aimed at developing coherent strategies for after-school workforce development. Next, the partners will pilot test strategies in CBASS partner cities.

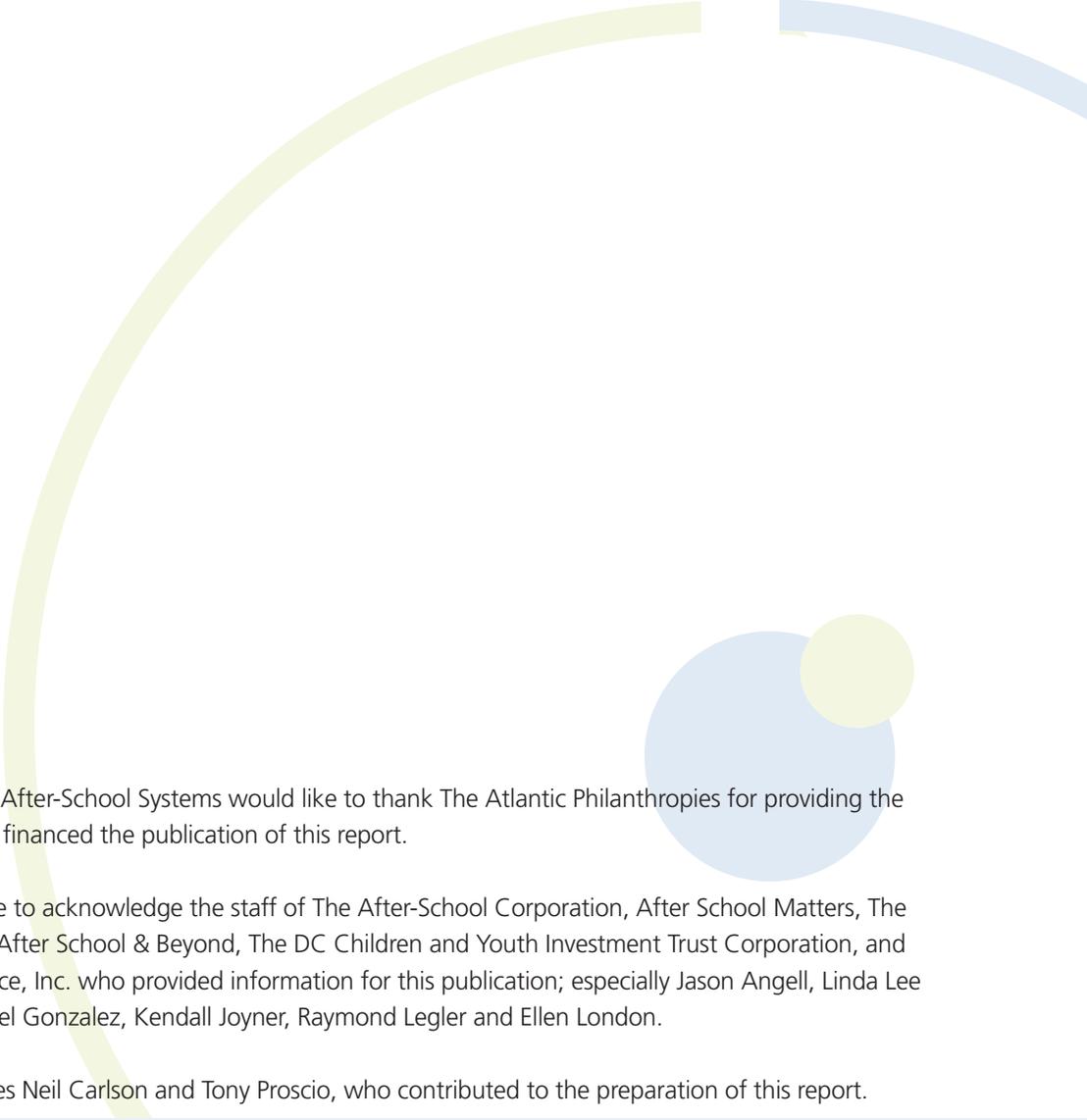
V. Conclusion: Funding After-School at Scale

Even if the CBASS intermediaries succeed in meeting all of these policy goals, the challenge of turning these quality ideas into scalable systems will demand a resolution to the question of sustainable funding. The experience of CBASS intermediaries underscores a fundamental fact: that scalable interventions require both diverse revenue streams *and* robust public financing. Yet the success of different intermediaries also illustrates that there is no simple formula for matching sustainability and scale. For most after-school systems, finding the right blend of public and private financing is a formidable challenge.

To some extent, all the policy initiatives described here are component parts of an overarching strategy to improve and sustain public funding in this field. To make a strong claim on the level of public funds needed for a healthy after-school system, intermediaries and their partners will need to present clear evidence of the outcomes of quality after-school programs, their ability to meet the needs of youth from every background and age group, the programs' contributions to both academic achievement and social development, and the continuous improvement in both the skill and diversity of their workforce. The CBASS partnership has come together in part because its members have in place, or are developing, compelling evidence on all these fronts, and have collectively accepted the challenge of building such a case. By pooling expertise and experience from each member city, they will ensure that their strategies will better reflect the diverse landscape of after-school and that their solutions will be widely implemented.

But assembling and improving evidence of effectiveness is only part of the challenge. Just as important will be widening the base of informed constituents, partners, policymakers, and funders to amplify the out-of-school time message. Adequate, sustainable funding of out-of-school time systems will be achieved not only when the cost-effectiveness of their services is demonstrated, but when the full constituency for these services makes its voice heard in local, state, and federal policy forums where priorities are set and dollars are allocated.

In that sense, the many technical challenges of building quality out-of-school time systems ultimately come together in a larger policy and fiscal challenge: to form a clear and convincing link between the value of services to young people in the out-of-school hours and the public support — both political and financial — necessary to deliver that value to every community, family, and young person who needs it. This is the challenge facing the field and this is the purpose for which CBASS has been formed. Even as partners seek to enhance the intrinsic value of the services they deliver, they are working together to strengthen and clarify the link between program outcomes and policy change in the public mind; and to change public policy so that out-of-school learning experiences are universally available. ●



Acknowledgements

The Collaborative for Building After-School Systems would like to thank The Atlantic Philanthropies for providing the CBASS founding grant, which financed the publication of this report.

The CBASS partners would like to acknowledge the staff of The After-School Corporation, After School Matters, The After School Strategy, Boston After School & Beyond, The DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation, and Providence After School Alliance, Inc. who provided information for this publication; especially Jason Angell, Linda Lee Baird, Elizabeth Devaney, Mariel Gonzalez, Kendall Joyner, Raymond Legler and Ellen London.

CBASS gratefully acknowledges Neil Carlson and Tony Proscio, who contributed to the preparation of this report.



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