

Before and After School Activities
in Connecticut's Elementary and Middle Schools
Final Report

Submitted to: State of Connecticut
Office of Policy and Management
Policy Development and Planning Division

Authors: Eliot C. Hartstone, Ph.D.
Dorinda M. Richetelli

Date: September 18, 2002

This report was supported, in part, by grants from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice to the State of Connecticut.

The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
I. BACKGROUND.....	1
II. PROJECT OVERVIEW	2
III. ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY	3
A. METHODOLOGY	3
1. Data Collection.....	3
2. Data Analysis.....	5
B. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	6
C. SURVEY FINDINGS.....	6
1. Importance of Locating Before/After School Activities at Schools.....	6
2. Before/After School Activities Currently Operating in Schools.....	13
3. Perceived Barriers to Operating Before/After School Activities	20
4. Desired Improvements for Before/After School Activities	28
5. Designing a Brand New Before/After School Program	36
6. Comparison of 2001 to 1990 Administrator Survey Findings	43
IV. PARENT SURVEY	50
A. METHODOLOGY	50
B. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	52
C. SURVEY FINDINGS.....	53
1. Importance of Locating Before/After School Activities at Schools.....	53
2. Perceived Availability of Before/After School Activities.....	57
3. Participation in Before/After School Activities.....	58
4. Barriers to Participating in Before/After School Activities	59
5. Improving Before/After School Activities.....	62
6. Designing a New Before/After School Program	65
7. Comparison of 2001 to 1990 Elementary School Parent Survey Findings.....	68
V. MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS	72
A. METHODOLOGY	72
B. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	72
C. FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS.....	73
1. What Middle School Students Do After School.....	73
2. Reasons for Participating or Not Participating in After School Activities	79
3. Differentiating Good vs. Bad After School Activities.....	84
4. Preferred Location for After School Activities.....	85
5. Perceived Importance of After School Activities	87
6. Desired Role in Designing After School Activities.....	88
7. Participants' Ideal After School Program for Their School.....	89
VI. JUVENILE JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS	94

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Research suggests that before and after school programs are important for helping children to broaden their skills and perspectives, learn academic and interpersonal skills, and stay out of trouble during the high risk after school hours.

Spectrum Associates Market Research (Spectrum Associates) was retained by the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to undertake an extensive research project to provide insights into before and after school activities currently available at the state's elementary and middle schools, barriers to operating and accessing these activities, and opportunities for enhancing the activities in the future.

METHODOLOGY

Spectrum Associates initially conducted a study on before and after school activities available at the state's elementary schools in 1990 that included a mail survey with administrators and a telephone survey with elementary school parents. In 2001, Spectrum Associates was retained to conduct an expanded study that included:

- ◆ a repeat of the elementary school administrator mail survey and parent telephone survey;
- ◆ expanding the mail and telephone surveys to address middle schools; and
- ◆ focus groups with middle school students.

This executive summary presents the key findings and implications of the 2001 survey, including relevant comparisons to the 1990 survey. A comprehensive report of the study's findings follows this executive summary.

KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Parent and Administrator Surveys

1. Both administrators and parents believe it is important for elementary and middle school children that before/after school activities are available at their schools. It should be noted that survey respondents believe it may be even more important to have activities at the middle schools than at the elementary schools.

About 90% of the administrators and parents surveyed said it was “very important” or “important” to have before/after school activities at elementary and middle schools. For elementary and middle school students, administrators and parents frequently attributed the importance of these programs to the child’s exposure to enrichment and learning opportunities, the child being in a productive/positive/structured/safe/supervised environment, and the child being provided with social development and growth opportunities. For middle school children, parents and administrators also emphasized keeping the child out of trouble.

While respondents described before/after school activities as important to both elementary and middle school children, more respondents said it was “very important” to have these activities at the middle schools than said it was “very important” to have them at the elementary schools (i.e., administrators, 78% vs. 59%; and parents, 74% vs. 69%).

2. Almost all of the elementary and middle schools in Connecticut have before/after school activities, and offer their students a variety of before/after school activities. Moreover, the percentage of elementary schools that have these programs and the range of activities offered have both increased since 1990 (note: no comparative data are available for middle schools).

The 2001 administrator survey revealed that almost all of the elementary school (97%) and middle school (99%) principals surveyed said their schools had before/after school activities.

Moreover, almost all of the parents surveyed (elementary school, 97% and middle school, 99%) said their child's school had before/after school activities.

A comparison to the 1990 elementary school study revealed that more parents of elementary school children said their child's school had before/after school activities in 2001 (97%) than did so in 1990 (91%).

The 2001 administrator survey revealed that four different types of activities were provided by the large majority of elementary and middle schools (i.e., service clubs, enrichment activities, athletics/fitness, and homework help/tutoring). The percentage of elementary schools providing these activities, as well as child care, increased significantly in 2001 compared to 1990 (i.e., service clubs, 83% vs. 56%; child care, 59% vs. 33%; homework help/tutoring, 67% vs. 43%; enrichment activities, 75% vs. 53%; and athletics/fitness, 67% vs. 54%).

3. Middle schools provide a wider range of before/after school activities than do elementary schools.

Based on the surveys with school principals, we found middle schools were significantly more likely than elementary schools to have before/after school: athletics/fitness (97% vs. 67%), homework help/tutoring (95% vs. 67%), enrichment activities (90% vs. 75%), and support groups (59% vs. 19%).

When looking at specific types of enrichment activities available, middle schools were significantly more likely than elementary schools to have: interpersonal skills (49% vs. 30%), computer/technology skills (67% vs. 53%) and special interests (88% vs. 74%). A look at service clubs found that middle schools were much more likely to have community service (80% vs. 33%) and peer programs (72% vs. 24%), while elementary schools were much more likely to have scouting (91% vs. 37%).

4. Elementary and middle schools have placed considerably more emphasis on after school than before school activities.

School principals reported that, with the exception of child care at elementary schools, before/after school activities are usually available only after school (middle school, 73% - 91% had specific activities only after school; and elementary school, 74% - 92% had specific activities only after school). Rarely are activities available only before school (middle school, 0% - 3%; and elementary school, 3% - 9%). The one exception is that almost two-thirds of the elementary schools operating child care activities did so before and after school (63%), while about one-third (31%) of the elementary schools only had child care after school.

5. Overall, the major barriers to operating before/after school activities at elementary and middle schools are insufficient funds to run activities, lack of transportation for children, and insufficient school staff to oversee building use. However, progress has been made in addressing these issues for elementary schools as fewer administrators described these potential obstacles as major barriers in 2001 than did so in 1990 (note: no comparative data are available for middle schools).

The obstacles cited most often by administrators as “major barriers” to operating before/after school activities at elementary and middle schools were: insufficient funds to run activities (middle school, 61%; and elementary school, 57%), lack of transportation for children (middle school, 43%; and elementary school, 46%), and insufficient school staff to oversee building use (middle school, 37%; and elementary school, 40%).

The 1990 administrator survey found the same three concerns were the greatest barriers to elementary schools at that time. However, a comparison of 2001 to 1990 findings reveals that the percentage of administrators describing these potential obstacles as “major barriers” declined significantly -- insufficient funds (57% vs. 75%), lack of transportation for children (46% vs. 53%), and insufficient school staff to oversee building use (40% vs. 56%). In addition, significantly fewer 2001 administrators described the following as major barriers: no organization available to run the activities (24% vs. 39%), parents unable to afford fees (15% vs. 24%), school administration not interested in housing the activities (3% vs. 6%), and parents not interested in enrolling their children (2% vs. 6%).

6. While two-fifths of the state’s elementary schools do not offer child care at the school, the data suggest the reasons likely reflect a lack of parent interest in this type of school-based program rather than obstacles posed by the schools to the child care directors.

As noted earlier, our administrator survey found that 41% of elementary schools do not offer before/after school child care. We also found many child care programs (58% of the child care programs included in our survey) were located outside the schools. These data raise the question of why aren’t some of the child care programs that are located elsewhere operating at the schools that lack these programs.

Our research suggests the reason does not appear to reflect roadblocks at the schools, as we found: (a) over 80% of the directors of child care programs found it easy to locate their program at the school, and (b) 88% of those located outside the school never attempted to locate their program at an elementary school. Moreover, we did not find a large demand on the part of parents for child care programs at the schools. Specifically, our parent survey revealed: (a) only 23% of the parents of elementary school children with child care programs available at the school enrolled their children in these programs (compared to 50% - 51% for enrichment, athletics/fitness and service clubs); (b) 82% of those not participating in available child care programs said they were not enrolled because there was no need as a parent was home to care for the child; and (c) only 22% of parents without child care offered at the school said they would be “very likely” to enroll their child in a child care program if it were offered at the school (compared to 58% for athletics/fitness, 56% for enrichment activities, and 36% for homework help/tutoring). These data suggest that parents who have the need for before/after school programs may simply prefer other types of activities (e.g., athletics/fitness and enrichment) to traditional child care.

7. About two-thirds of elementary and middle school parents said their child or children participate in before/after school activities at the school, and the percentage participating in elementary school activities has increased since the 1990 study. Reasons for not participating in specific activities most often focused on lack of need or interest.

Consistent with the increase in availability cited earlier, the percentage of parents saying their children participate in before/after school activities at the elementary schools was up significantly in 2001 (70%) from 1990 (56%). Significant increases were observed for athletics/fitness (51% vs. 40%) and child care (23% vs. 9%). Differences were sizable, though not quite significant, for homework help/tutoring (30% vs. 19%) and service clubs (51% vs. 43%).

Relatively few elementary and middle school parents said the reason for not participating in offered programs was due to lack of transportation, lack of space available, the hours the program operated, cost, or program quality. Parents of elementary and middle school students not participating in service clubs, athletics/fitness, and enrichment activities most often said it was because the child was not interested in the activities offered or he/she participated in this type of activity outside of the school. Parents of those not participating in homework help/tutoring activities said it was because the child did not need the help.

Parents of middle school students were significantly more likely than elementary school parents to say children not participating in enrichment activities (36% vs. 17%) were not enrolled because their children were not interested in the activities offered.

8. Administrators believe efforts to improve their existing before/after school activities should: (a) emphasize enhancing the school's after school activities; (b) expand the types of activities offered; (c) increase activity capacities, particularly at the middle schools, and for enrichment activities and homework help/tutoring at the elementary schools; and (d) focus on both elementary and middle schools, with slightly more attention directed at middle schools.

Our administrator survey revealed that one-half (50%) of the respondents thought more emphasis is needed on improving/expanding elementary school after school programs, and only 8% said more emphasis should be placed on before school activities. With regard to middle schools, two-thirds (67%) of the respondents felt more emphasis is needed on improving/expanding after school programs, and 16% said more emphasis should be placed on before school activities.

Typically, the specific type of improvement identified by the elementary and middle school principals as most needed for the various before/after school activities was starting new activities in that area. In addition, middle school principals want to increase capacities (i.e., enrichment activities, 38%; homework help/tutoring, 33%; support groups, 31%; and service clubs, 23%).

When asked about emphasizing elementary or middle schools, we found slightly over one-half (54%) of the administrators (excludes elementary and middle school principals) surveyed said equal attention should be placed on both elementary and middle schools, 29% suggested more attention to middle schools, and 17% thought more attention needed to be devoted to elementary schools.

9. Administrators suggested efforts to design a new before/after school program should: (a) include enrichment activities and homework help/tutoring, and offer a variety of activities; (b) obtain adequate funding; (c) have quality, qualified, and trained staff/volunteers; (d) seek to offer diverse and creative programs that include curriculum related and fun activities; (e) get support from school administrators, staff and the community; and (f) elicit input from children and parents.

The two activities seen as most critical by administrators for a new before/after school elementary or middle school program were enrichment activities and homework help/tutoring. Athletics/fitness was ranked in the middle, and support groups and service clubs were ranked at the bottom.

Administrators suggested on an unaided basis that new before/after school programs for elementary schools focus on: (a) having quality, qualified, and trained staff/volunteers for the program (33%); and (b) obtaining adequate funding (32%), including funding from the state and

funds for transportation. Other suggestions offered were to: offer diverse and creative programs that include curriculum related and fun activities (19%); include specific types of activities, e.g., enrichment, homework help/tutoring, and athletics (16%); get support from school administrators, staff and the community (11%); and elicit input from children and parents (10%).

With regard to middle schools, administrators most often suggested obtaining adequate funding (39%), including funds from the state, and for staff and transportation. Other suggestions were to: offer diverse and creative programs that include curriculum related and fun activities (23%); include specific types of activities, e.g., athletics, enrichment, homework help/tutoring (20%); elicit input from students and parents (18%); have quality, qualified, and trained staff/volunteers for the program (15%); and get support from school administrators, staff, and the community (13%).

10. Parents of elementary school children need after school programs to run later in the day than do parents of middle school students. They were also more likely to want activities to run five days a week.

We found 68% of the middle school parents would have their needs met if the program ended by 5:00 p.m., compared to only 43% of the elementary school parents. Moreover, about one-third (35%) of the elementary school parents said the program should run until 6:00 p.m., compared to only 22% of the middle school parents.

We also found that more elementary school parents than middle school parents said they wanted programs to be offered five days a week (57% vs. 44%).

11. Parents of middle school children expressed great interest in a multi-faceted after school program. In fact, middle school parents expressed more interest in a multi-faceted program than any of the specific types of activities currently offered.

We found 88% of the parents of middle school children said their child would be “very likely” (52%) or “somewhat likely” (36%) to participate in a multi-faceted program that offered a wide range of activities Monday – Friday. This was higher than the interest expressed by parents in

any of the individual types of activities that could be added to the school’s before/after school offerings.

Middle School Student Focus Groups

1. Almost all of the middle school students attending the focus groups were participating in organized after school activities, and most spend a lot of time participating in a variety of activities throughout the year.

Consistent with the high percentage of parents who said their middle school child was participating in before/after school activities at their school, almost all of the students who attended the focus groups indicated that they participate in organized after school activities.

Students appear to spend a lot of time at after school activities, as: each activity usually averages about 1½ to 2 hours; many activities go year round (e.g., dance, music lessons, cheerleading, orchestra, singing, reading club); and those engaged in seasonal activities (e.g., sports teams) often engage in activities in multiple seasons.

2. Middle school students gave many reasons for participating in after school activities, and indicated that they believe participation in these activities is important.

Middle school students participate in after school activities for a wide variety of reasons. The most frequent reasons given for participating in after school activities were: the specific activity is fun, interesting, and enjoyable; they feel like they are accomplishing something (e.g., “learn new things,” “keeps me thinking,” “challenging”); and it enables them to stay in shape (different sports activities).

Focus group participants indicated that they thought it was important for students to participate in after school activities as they: keep them out of trouble, give them something to do, and keep them away from peer pressures.

3. Students participate in activities located at the school and elsewhere, but prefer attending activities located elsewhere. More important than the physical location of the activities is that the nature of the activities be different than school classes.

The participants listed after school activities that are conducted at the school, elsewhere and at both locations. Specifically:

- ◆ Activities conducted at the school included: cheerleading, orchestra, sports, plays, singing group, ski club, student council, helping the teacher, and teacher help sessions.
- ◆ Activities conducted elsewhere included: dance lessons, gymnastics, plays, music instrument lessons, sports, choir, arts & crafts, and volunteering.

While the focus group participants typically felt it was okay to have after school activities at the school, many preferred to have the activities somewhere else. Reasons given for preferring other locations were: they are at school all day, there are better accommodations other places, teachers are “on their backs” and “annoying,” and they don’t want to always have to behave.

Middle school students said they do not want to attend activities that: are run by adults who were very controlling and/or strict, are too much like school, are dorky and filled with nerds, are boring, and keep them seated at a desk.

4. Middle school students want to have a role in designing after school activities, and had many suggestions for an “ideal” after school program for their school.

The participants said they want to have a role in designing after school programs, and believe if they are involved students will better relate to these activities. Participants suggested that middle school students: make suggestions as to what activities are offered, participate in organizing the activities, and help run the activities.

For an “ideal” after school program, middle school students want:

- ◆ an after school program that offers a wide range of activities they can choose from rather than one specific activity, and the option to do different things the same day;
- ◆ activities that reflect their interests, rather than what adults think they should be doing;
- ◆ to take trips as part of the program; and
- ◆ outdoor activities.

Some additional interesting suggestions were to: have activities run by high school students (e.g., old enough to supervise, young enough for them to related to); include students from different schools and towns (meet new people, promote diversity); and have students vote on the activities to be included in the program.

JUVENILE JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Important Note

The Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) developed the recommendations provided in this section to inform the reader of the direction the JJAC feels should be taken in Connecticut with regard to before and after school activities and programs in elementary and middle schools.

The mission of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee of the State of Connecticut is to prevent juvenile delinquency and improve the juvenile justice system in Connecticut. To this end the JJAC is committed to providing resources for building strong healthy communities where all young people have opportunities to grow in positive ways and to become fully prepared for successful living.

There is a growing appreciation that after school programs can provide children with positive and healthy alternatives to drug, alcohol and tobacco use, criminal activity and other high-risk behaviors during the peak crime hours of 3 to 6 p.m. Because of the importance of before and after school programs in preventing delinquency, the JJAC commissioned Spectrum Associates Market Research to conduct two studies, one in 1990 and a follow-up in 2001. From the findings in these studies, the JJAC has obtained systematic data on: the scope and accessibility of before and after school activities located in Connecticut's elementary and middle schools, the change over a ten-year period with respect to elementary schools, and the opportunities for enhancing school-based before and after school programs in the future. Some of the key findings are:

- ❖ Both administrators and parents believe it is important that before and after school activities are available at their schools.
- ❖ The percentage of elementary schools that have these programs and the range of activities offered have both increased since results of a similar study were released in 1990.
- ❖ Overall the major barriers to operating before and after school activities at elementary and middle schools are insufficient funds, transportation and lack of adequate school staff to oversee building use.

This report adds important data to the Connecticut information available to providers and advocates for planning programs and seeking funding. However, it should be noted that the intent of these studies was not to inventory after school activities in Connecticut, determine the number or percentage of Connecticut's elementary and middle school children that participate in after school activities, or count the hours or days children and youth participate in these activities. Because of ongoing changes in capacities and programs, these tasks are best done in the communities where the programs are located.

The following recommendations are made in response to the key findings and implications of the 2001 study. The term "after school," used throughout the recommendations section, includes before and after school time, vacations, weekends and summers. The term "program" refers to all offerings on the continuum from stand-alone activities to comprehensive programs. The term "community" includes local communities such as cities, towns and neighborhoods as well as state communities such as the juvenile justice community.

1. After School Programs for All Children and Youth

All elementary and middle school aged children and youth should have access to programs during after school hours that provide developmentally appropriate, enriching, safe and well-supervised activities of interest to them.

The JJAC, in agreement with the parents, school principals and superintendents, local government officials and board of education chairpersons who participated in this study, recognizes the importance of after school programs as an investment in the healthy development of all children and the safety of communities. After school programs for children and youth are vitally important to student development and achievement and to the prevention of violence and crime. After school programs keep children safe, help working families, improve academic achievement and provide opportunities to learn social and leadership skills.

2. Community Based Planning

Every community should have a mechanism in place to regularly inventory the capacity and accessibility of after school programs, both within schools and in other locations, to assess and plan for the needs of their children and youth.

Community collaborations are the most effective mechanism to plan for the needs of community children and youth. Through creative partnerships with local and state public and private agencies serving children and youth, government agencies, businesses and other partners, communities will be positioned to:

- Identify desired outcomes for all community children and youth.
- Identify community assets and needs.
- Evaluate existing approaches to meeting needs.
- Allocate resources most effectively.
- Reach out to all children and families, particularly those who are less likely to participate.
- Design programs that accommodate children and youth with varying abilities and interests.
- Ensure that school and community based programs communicate effectively with one another.

3. Funders and Communities as Partners

Funders and policymakers should work closely with communities, recognizing and supporting them as the experts in identifying needs and planning for their after school programs.

National, state and private funding initiatives often direct resources at problems with limited attention to feedback from the communities that access such funds. Program design requirements often offer limited flexibility to address special circumstances. Funders should have more individualized relationships with communities while maintaining the larger goals of promoting positive development for all children and youth and of creating strong, creative, cohesive communities for them to grow in. Further, providing resources for data collection could be exceedingly useful in supporting planning for after school initiatives and accountability for the use of federal, state, local and private dollars.

4. *Government Support for After School Programs*

State and local governments should budget for consistent ongoing support of successful after school programs.

Many sources of funding for youth programs provide “seed monies” or limited year funding. This leaves after school program providers devoting energy to fund-raising rather than to programming. Consistent ongoing support could alleviate this burden while providing better accountability data and outcomes. Budget line items in local and state budgets for after school programs are necessary and over time could reduce budget line items for welfare and corrections.

5. *Program Setting*

Programs should be located in safe, appropriate, accepting and accessible settings including schools and other suitable locations in the community.

Resources should continue to be provided for after school programs at schools, however the JJAC recognizes that community-based after school activities and programs also offer appropriate settings for young people who may not find what they need in a school-based setting. The study found that both administrators and parents preferred locating after school programs at the school, while the middle school students in the focus groups preferred activities located elsewhere. More importantly, the JJAC believes that each location needs to provide physical and psychological safety in an appropriate facility that is comfortable for children and youth to get to, enter and spend time in.

6. *Program Staff*

After school programs should maintain adequate levels of qualified, accepting and committed staff, with appropriate experience and realistic expectations of children and youth. Programs should also provide attractive compensation and work environments to retain staff.

Staff should have experience working with school-age children and should participate in regular and ongoing professional development to sustain quality programming. Attention should be given to the quality of interpersonal skills of staff hired to work with children and youth after

school. Child development theory and positive youth development principles are just a few of the foundations staff will need. Managers of after school programs will also need strong supervisory skills to maintain program quality and safety. After school programs could be positively impacted by a statewide initiative to aim resources at professional development.

7. Child and Youth-Centered Programming

After school programs should provide enriching, integrated learning opportunities and meet the social, emotional and physical development needs of children and youth.

Programs should also be appropriate to the age, maturation level, gender and culture of participants.

Appropriately planned programs and activities provide structure and limits, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, and opportunities to learn and practice skills. Children and youth have invaluable information and ideas about what will be successful for activities, and they should be part of designing, planning and running them. The feedback from middle school focus group members in this study showed that they wanted opportunities to plan programs and felt that attendance would be better at programs designed by youth. The youth provided valuable information about what they would like to see in the programs, namely to have a variety of activities that reflect their interests, not what adults think they should be doing, and NOT be like school.

I. BACKGROUND

Research across the country has documented the importance of before and after school programs for our nation's school children. These programs "provide enriching experiences that broaden children's perspectives and improve their socialization" as well as "help to improve the academic achievement of students who are not achieving as well as they need to during regular school hours." (Fashola, 1998)¹ Moreover, after school programs would appear to offer an opportunity to keep children out of trouble. An analysis of the FBI's *National Incident Based Reporting System* for the years 1991-1998 by Snyder and Sickmund found that 60% of all juvenile gang crime occurs on school days and, along with all other types of juvenile crime, peaks in the hours immediately following school dismissal.²

The perceived importance of before/after school programs was documented by Belden Russonello & Stewart Research and Communications in their survey of school principals. Their national survey found that 77% of the principals with after school programs said it was "extremely important" for their school to maintain an after school program, and the greatest successes attributed to these programs were improving the student's academic achievement (34%) and providing a safe haven for the children after school (26%).³

While looking for national trends in the types of after school activities most commonly offered to students may provide insights into the perceived needs of these students, many professionals emphasize that school programs are and should be unique, reflecting the specific needs of their students. The best programs are based on an assessment of the needs of the students in their community.

¹ Fashola, Olatokunbo S. *Review of Extended-Day and After-School Programs and Their Effectiveness*. Baltimore, MD: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk, Report No. 24, 1998.

² Snyder, H. and M. Sickmund. *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999.

³ Belden Russonello & Stewart. *Principals and After School Programs: A Survey of PreK-8 Principals*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2001.

As argued by the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice:

“From school to school, neighborhood to neighborhood, and community to community, every after school program is different. Successful programs respond to community needs: Their creation is the result of a community effort to evaluate the needs of its school age children when school is not in session.”⁴

Moreover, Fashola stated:

“There is no straightforward answer to the question of what works best in after school programs. The answer depends on why the program was set up, the extent to which the program designed addresses the needs of the participants, and the extent to which the program shows positive outcomes when evaluated for evidence of effectiveness.”⁵

II. PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 1990, Spectrum Associates Market Research (Spectrum Associates) was retained by the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to conduct a study on before/after school activities operating in Connecticut’s elementary schools. The study was used to assist the State of Connecticut in its planning efforts. In 2001, Spectrum Associates was retained by OPM to conduct a similar study on before/after school activities, and asked to expand the study to include middle schools. Spectrum Associates’ study of before/after school activities includes three components:

- ◆ A statewide mail survey completed by elementary and middle school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, chief elected town officials, and directors of child care centers.
- ◆ A statewide telephone survey conducted with parents of elementary and middle school children.

⁴ U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice. *Working for Children and Families: Safe and Smart After-School Programs*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2000.

⁵ Fashola, 1998.

- ◆ Focus groups conducted with parents of elementary school children and with middle school children.

This report presents the findings from all three research components.

III. ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY

This section of the report describes: (a) the methodology used for the administrator survey; (b) the 2001 research objectives addressed for the survey; (c) the 2001 findings for the elementary and middle schools; and (d) key comparisons of 2001 vs. 1990 findings for elementary schools.

A. Methodology

1. Data Collection

Mail surveys were distributed across the state of Connecticut in November 2001 to:

- ◆ elementary and middle school principals;
- ◆ school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected town officials; and
- ◆ directors of school-age child care centers.

The surveys were developed by Spectrum Associates with input from the Advisory Subcommittee on Before/After School Programs Study.⁶ OPM compiled the mailing lists used for the study.

⁶ The Advisory Subcommittee is an ad-hoc subcommittee of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee convened to provide assistance on this study.

To increase the percentage of questionnaires that were completed and returned:

- ◆ The mailings were personalized to the recipient (by name and/or title); included a cover letter from the Office of Policy and Management underscoring the purpose and importance of the study, and requesting participation; and included a pre-addressed, postage-paid return envelope.
- ◆ Reminder cards were mailed the week after the surveys encouraging respondents to complete and return the surveys, and a second wave of questionnaires were sent when response rates so warranted.

Figure III.A.1 displays the number of surveys distributed, the number of completed surveys returned, and the response rates. In addition, the confidence range at a 95% confidence level is provided for each respondent category.

**Figure III.A.1
2001 Mail Survey Distribution and Completion**

	Surveys Distributed	Surveys Completed	Response Rate	Confidence Range*
Elementary School Principals	672	369	55%	+/- 3.4%
Middle School Principals	185	116	63%	+/- 5.6%
School Superintendents	197	107	54%	+/- 6.4%
Board of Education Chairpersons	163	46	28%	+/-12.4%
Chief Elected Town Officials	208	80	38%	+/- 8.6%
Directors of School-Age Child Care Centers	877	321	37%	+/- 4.4%
Total	2,302	1,039	45%	+/- 2.3%

* Confidence range at the 95% confidence level.

As displayed in Figure III.A.1, the overall response rate was 45% (a total of 1,039 completed surveys). By category the response rate reached a high of 63% for middle school principals, followed by 55% for elementary school principals and 54% for school superintendents. The response rates for the other groups were somewhat lower (i.e., chief elected town officials, 38%; directors of school-age child care centers, 37%; and board of education chairpersons, 28%).

For four of the respondent groups (i.e., elementary school principals, directors of school-age child care centers, middle school principals, and school superintendents), the margin of error is quite small, and, as such, provides for highly reliable generalizations from the sample. The confidence ranges for the chief elected town officials and board of education chairpersons are considerably larger, making generalizations for these groups less precise.

In 1990, a total of 815 surveys were completed across five respondent categories (surveys were not distributed to middle school principals in 1990).

2. Data Analysis

For the administrator mail survey, the data were analyzed in multiple ways, as described below.

- ◆ The 2001 data were first analyzed for elementary schools and middle schools in aggregate (i.e., includes all respondent types as applicable). These tables and charts are integrated into the main body of the report.
- ◆ The 2001 elementary school data were then contrasted to the 1990 elementary school data to identify changes over time. Any tables/charts that reveal important changes are provided within the report.
- ◆ The 2001 elementary school and the 2001 middle school data were crosstabulated by respondent type (i.e., school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, chief elected town officials, and directors of child care centers). The most interesting findings from this analysis are discussed within the report.

B. Research Objectives

The specific objectives for the 2001 administrator mail survey were to determine:

- ◆ The importance attributed to having before/after school activities available at elementary and middle schools (Section III.C.1).
- ◆ The extent to which before/after school activities are available at elementary and middle schools across the state, and the sponsors of these activities (Section III.C.2).
- ◆ The barriers faced in operating before/after school activities at elementary and middle schools (Section III.C.3).
- ◆ The changes that administrators feel should be made to improve before/after school activities (Section III.C.4).
- ◆ Administrators' suggestions for designing a new before/after school program (Section III.C.5).
- ◆ The extent to which changes have occurred in elementary school before/after school activities since the 1990 survey was conducted (Section III.C.6).

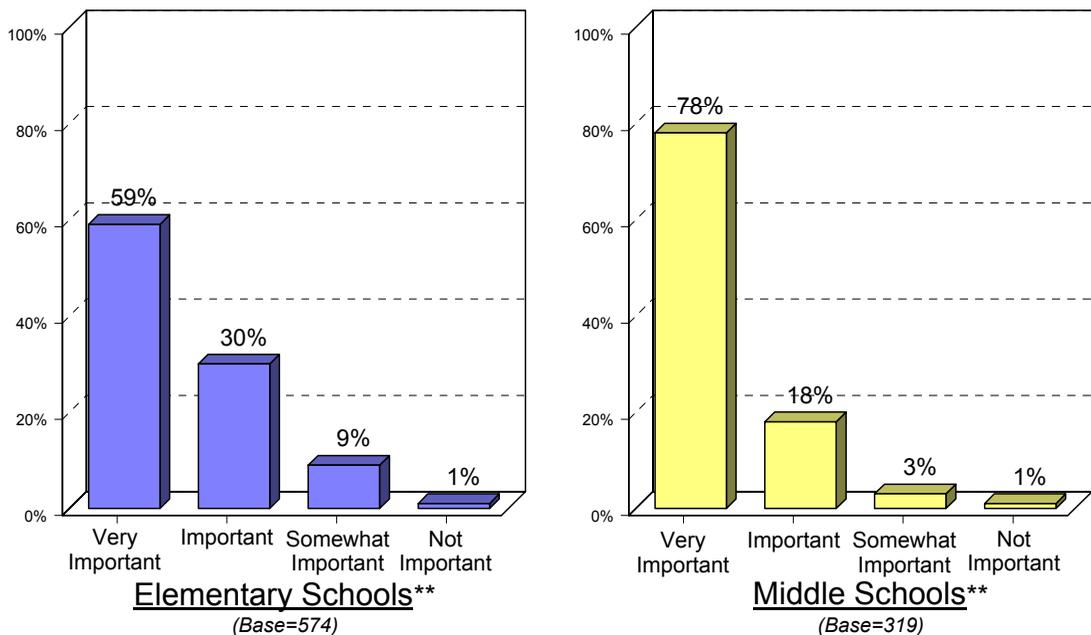
C. Survey Findings

1. Importance of Locating Before/After School Activities at Schools

a. Perceived Importance

Principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected officials were asked how important they thought it was to have before/after school activities available at the elementary and middle schools. Aggregate responses for elementary schools and for middle schools are displayed in Figure III.C.1.

Figure III.C.1
Perceived Importance of Operating Before/After School Activities at
Elementary and Middle Schools*



* This chart includes responses from school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected town officials.

** Statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary schools and middle schools.

As shown in Figure III.C.1:

- ◆ Almost all of the respondents said it is “very important” or “important” to have before/after school activities at the middle (96%) and elementary (89%) schools.
- ◆ Respondents were significantly more likely to say it is “very important” to have these activities located at middle schools (78%) than at elementary schools (59%).

Elementary and middle school responses were crosstabulated by respondent type. This analysis revealed the following:

- ◆ Elementary Schools: Board of education chairpersons (45%) were less likely than other respondents (58% - 61%) to say it was “very important” to have before/after school activities available at the elementary schools.
- ◆ Middle Schools: Board of education chairpersons (67%) and chief elected officials (68%) were less likely than school principals (88%) and school superintendents (80%) to

say it was “very important” to have before/after school activities available at the middle schools.

b. Reasons Behind Perceptions

Respondents who said it was “very important” or “important” to have these programs available at the schools were asked why it was important to do so. Those who said it was “somewhat important” or “not important” were asked why they did not feel it was important.

Responses to these open-ended questions were coded and aggregate data are displayed in Figure III.C.2 (why important) and Figure III.C.3 (why not important) (see pages 10-11).

Figures III.C.2 and III.C.3 reveal the following.

Elementary Schools

- ◆ The main reasons given by respondents for saying it is important to have before/after school activities at the elementary schools were that children benefit from: enrichment opportunities (33%); academic or learning opportunities (30%); a safe/supervised environment (25%); and a productive, positive, structured environment (22%).
- ◆ Those saying it was not or only somewhat important to have these activities at the school most often said it was because: many alternatives are already available elsewhere (39%), the children’s days are already too scheduled (25%), and it is the parents’ responsibility to be home (16%).

Middle Schools

- ◆ The main reasons given for saying it is important to have before/after school activities at the middle schools were that children benefit from: a productive/positive/structured environment (30%); the social development and growth opportunities (29%); a safe/supervised environment (25%); and enrichment opportunities (24%).
- ◆ 27% of these respondents said it is the middle school students who most need before/after school activities.

- ◆ The few respondents that said it was not or only somewhat important to have these activities at the middle schools most often said it was because many alternatives are already available elsewhere (60%).

Comparison of Elementary Schools to Middle Schools

- ◆ Respondents more often focused on enrichment activities and academics for elementary than middle school students.
- ◆ Respondents more often emphasized social development, keeping children out of trouble, and having the students in a productive/positive/structured environment for middle than elementary schools students.

Figure III.C.2
Reasons it is Important to Have Before/After School Activities at
Elementary and Middle Schools*

	Elementary Schools (Base=474)	Middle Schools (Base=284)
Benefits to Children		
Enrichment/enhancement opportunities	33%	24%
Academic/learning opportunities	30%	19%
Safe/supervised environment	25%	25%
Productive/positive/structured activities B/A school	22%	30%
Social development and growth	16%	29%
Increase student involvement in school - connect positively	7%	12%
Organized way for children to exercise/sports	7%	9%
Fun opportunity for children/be with friends/make friends	5%	5%
Convenient location for children to go to	5%	2%
School has the facilities/faculty	4%	1%
Keep children from getting into trouble	3%	14%
Children are comfortable at the school, with faculty, staff	3%	1%
Rural community (few opportunities to meet outside school)	2%	2%
Lack of opportunities in community	2%	2%
Urban community (provides safe haven)	2%	1%
Expand student/teacher relationship	1%	5%
Community service	1%	0%
Middle school children most in need of B/A school activities	0%	27%
Other benefit to children	2%	1%
Benefits to Parents		
Convenient for parents (location/transportation)	11%	4%
Daycare - child care for elementary	10%	2%
Affordable	2%	1%
Peace of mind (know children are safe)	1%	0%
Other benefit to parents	1%	0%

* This table includes responses from school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected town officials.

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

Figure III.C.3
Reasons it is Not Important to Have Before/After School Activities at Elementary and Middle Schools*

	Elementary Schools <i>(Base=51)</i>	Middle Schools <i>(Base=10)</i>
Many alternatives already available	39%	60%
Children's days are already too scheduled	25%	0%
Parents' responsibility to be home	16%	0%
Shouldn't be school's responsibility to house these programs	8%	10%
School day is long enough/need free time	4%	0%
Lack of funds	4%	0%
School personnel already over-worked	4%	0%
Difficulty in finding volunteers/staff	2%	0%
Other reasons	14%	30%

* This table includes responses from school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected town officials.

Responses were analyzed by respondent type for both elementary and middle schools. We found:

- ◆ Responses were typically similar across respondent types.
- ◆ Middle school principals were more likely than school superintendents, board of education chairpersons and chief elected officials to say that it was important to have these activities at the schools because of enrichment activities, and less likely to say that middle school children were the students most in need of before/after school activities.

c. Preferred Location by Activity

Elementary school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, chief elected officials, and child care directors were asked whether they believed it was best to have each type of before/after school activity located at the elementary school or at another location. Middle school principals were asked about middle schools. Figure III.C.4 displays the responses.

**Figure III.C.4
Preferred Location of Different Types
of Before/After School Activities**

	Elementary Schools* (Base=858-872)			Middle Schools** (Base=111-113)		
	At School	Elsewhere	No Preference	At School	Elsewhere	No Preference
Homework Help/Tutoring	82%	4%	14%	88%	0%	12%
Enrichment Activities	75%	5%	20%	71%	1%	28%
Athletics/Fitness	56%	11%	32%	78%	2%	21%
Child Care	52%	24%	24%	-	-	-
Service Clubs	43%	18%	39%	44%	19%	38%
Support Groups	41%	21%	38%	45%	16%	39%

* For elementary schools, this table includes responses from school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected town officials.

** For middle schools, this table includes responses from middle school principals.

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

As shown in Figure III.C.4:

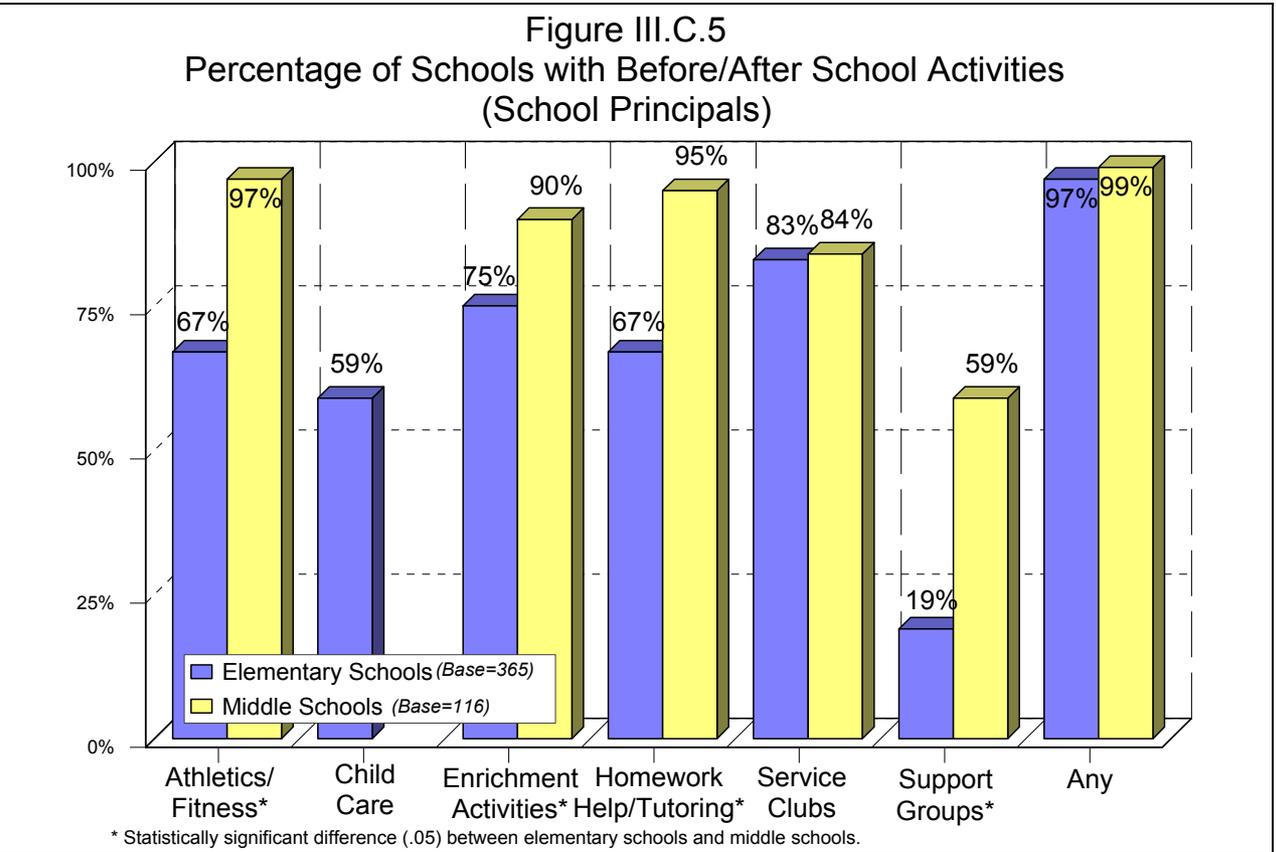
- ◆ For the most part, responses were similar for elementary and middle schools. Specifically, respondents:
 - typically said that homework help/tutoring and enrichment activities should be offered at the school; and
 - expressed split opinions about whether it was preferable to have service clubs and support groups at the school or elsewhere.
- ◆ More respondents said before/after school athletics/fitness activities should be at the school than elsewhere, but this preference was stronger for middle schools than elementary schools.
- ◆ Respondents typically felt that child care activities for elementary school children should be at the schools.

2. Before/After School Activities Currently Operating in Schools

a. Percentage of Schools With Specific Activities

The elementary and middle school principal questionnaires included a list of different types of before/after school activities and principals were asked to record for each: (1) which activities were currently operating in their school; (2) when the available activities were offered (i.e., before school and/or after school); and (3) the type of agencies/organizations that sponsored the activities offered. School principals were also asked to specify the types of before/after school enrichment activities and service clubs that were offered at the school.

Figure III.C.5 displays the percentage of elementary and middle schools with different types of before/after school activities.



As shown in Figure III.C.5:

- ◆ Over 80% of the middle schools and over 65% of the elementary schools have four different types of before/after school activities: athletics/fitness, enrichment activities, homework help/tutoring, and service clubs.
- ◆ While these activities are provided at most schools, middle schools are significantly more likely than elementary schools to have before/after school: athletics/fitness activities (97% vs. 67%), homework help/tutoring activities (95% vs. 67%), and enrichment activities (90% vs. 75%). Responses were almost identical for service clubs (over 80%).
- ◆ In addition to the four activities listed above, middle schools often have support groups before and/or after school (59%). However, only one-fifth (19%) of the elementary school principals said their schools have support groups before and/or after school.
- ◆ About three-fifths (59%) of the elementary schools have child care available at the school before or after school.

b. When Activities Are Operating

Figure III.C.6 displays the time of day that elementary and middle schools provide students the various types of before and after school activities (i.e., before and after school, before only, or after only).

**Figure III.C.6
Types of Activities Operating Before or After School
(School Principals)**

	Elementary Schools				Middle Schools			
	<i>Base</i>	Before & After	Before Only	After Only	<i>Base</i>	Before & After	Before Only	After Only
Athletics/Fitness	244	14%	9%	77%	112	10%	3%	88%
Child Care	217	63%	6%	31%	-	-	-	-
Enrichment Activities	271	23%	3%	74%	104	16%	2%	82%
Homework Help/Tutoring	243	14%	7%	78%	109	25%	2%	73%
Service Clubs	292	5%	3%	92%	94	13%	0%	87%
Support Groups	67	4%	9%	87%	64	9%	0%	91%

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

Figure III.C.6 shows that:

- ◆ Almost two-thirds of the elementary schools providing child care do so before and after school.
- ◆ Unlike child care, all other before/after school activities are usually offered only after school. Rarely are activities offered only before school.

c. Who Sponsors the Activities

Elementary and middle school principals were asked what types of agencies/organizations sponsor or run the different types of before/after school activities that are offered at their school. Responses are displayed in Figure III.C.7 for the schools that have the specific types of activities.

Figure III.C.7
Sponsors of Before/After School Activities
(School Principals)

	<i>Base</i>	School	PTA/ PTO	Town Agency	Faith- Based Agency	Other Private Agency
Elementary Schools						
Athletics/Fitness	242	61%	17%	48%	2%	10%
Child Care	213	20%	2%	29%	4%	51%
Enrichment Activities	274	66%	45%	18%	2%	14%
Homework Help/Tutoring	240	80%	6%	14%	1%	14%
Service Clubs	287	28%	14%	15%	5%	59%
Support Groups	67	70%	15%	27%	6%	24%
Middle Schools						
Athletics/Fitness	112	96%	6%	46%	1%	8%
Child Care	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enrichment Activities	105	96%	24%	20%	0%	10%
Homework Help/Tutoring	110	95%	5%	15%	0%	8%
Service Clubs	94	85%	10%	24%	1%	13%
Support Groups	69	83%	6%	48%	3%	9%

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

Figure III.C.7 reveals the following:

- ◆ For elementary schools, the sponsors vary greatly by activity. Specifically:
 - Child care was most often sponsored by non faith-based private agencies (51%), followed by town agencies (29%) and the school (20%).
 - Athletics/fitness activities were typically sponsored by the schools (61%) and town agencies (48%).
 - Enrichment activities were most often sponsored by the school (66%) and the PTA/PTO (45%).

- Service clubs were usually sponsored by non faith-based private agencies (59%).
- Support groups were usually sponsored by the school (70%).
- ◆ For middle schools, all activities were most often sponsored by the schools (83% - 96%) with town agencies usually the next most frequent sponsor (e.g., support groups, 48% and athletics/fitness, 46%). The PTA/PTO was more active in sponsoring enrichment activities (24%) than it was in sponsoring any other type of activity.

d. Types of Enrichment Activities and Service Clubs Operating

Elementary and middle school principals were displayed a list of five specific types of enrichment activities, and those respondents with before/after school enrichment activities at their schools checked off those currently operating in their school. Similarly, principals were given a list of three types of before/after school service clubs and asked to indicate which types of service clubs were currently operating at the school. Responses are displayed in Figure III.C.8.

Figure III.C.8
Types of Before/After School Enrichment Activities
and Service Clubs Operating at School
(School Principals)

	Elementary Schools	Middle Schools
Type of Enrichment Activities	(Base=274)	(Base=102)
The Arts	81%	83%
Special Interests	74%	88%
Curriculum Related	69%	77%
Computer/Technology Skills	53%	67%
Interpersonal Skills	30%	49%
Other	12%	10%
Type of Service Clubs	(Base=305)	(Base=94)
Scouting	91%	37%
Community Service	33%	80%
Peer Program	24%	72%
Other	12%	9%

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

Figure III.C.8 reveals the following.

Enrichment Activities

- ◆ Both elementary and middle schools most often had the arts, special interests, and curriculum related before/after school enrichment activities.
- ◆ Middle schools were significantly more likely than elementary schools to have enrichment activities that addressed interpersonal skills, computer/technology skills, and special interests.

Service Clubs

- ◆ Elementary schools most often had scouting (91%).
- ◆ Middle schools most frequently had community service (80%) and peer programs (72%).

e. Availability of Child Care Programs

Child care directors were asked if their center operates within an elementary school. Those who said “yes,” were asked how easy or difficult it was to locate their center at the school, and those who said “no” were asked if they had ever attempted to locate their child care program within an elementary school. Responses are displayed in Figure III.C.9.

**Figure III.C.9
Locating Child Care Centers at Elementary Schools
(Child Care Directors)**

Where is Child Care Center Located	<i>(Base=316)</i>
At Elementary School	42%
Elsewhere	58%
Ease of Having Located Their Child Care Center at Elementary School	<i>(Base=129)</i>
Very Easy	37%
Somewhat Easy	47%
Somewhat Difficult	10%
Very Difficult	6%
Have Directors of Child Care Centers Located Elsewhere Tried to Locate at an Elementary School	<i>(Base=180)</i>
Yes	12%
No	88%

As shown in Figure III.C.9:

- ◆ About two-fifths (42%) of the child care directors said their program was located at an elementary school and three-fifths (58%) said the program was located elsewhere.
- ◆ 84% of the child care directors whose programs were located at an elementary school said it was either “very easy” (37%) or “somewhat easy” (47%) to locate their program at the school. About one in seven (16%) said it was “somewhat difficult” (10%) or “very difficult” (6%) to locate at the school.
- ◆ Only 12% of the child care directors of programs located outside the school said they tried to locate their program at an elementary school.

3. Perceived Barriers to Operating Before/After School Activities

a. Overall Barriers

School principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected officials were given a list of possible barriers to operating before/after school activities within elementary and middle schools, and asked if each was a “major barrier,” “minor barrier,” or “not a barrier” to operating before/after school activities at elementary and middle schools. The percentages of these respondents who said each was a “major barrier” are displayed in Figure III.C.10 (see page 21).

As displayed in Figure III.C.10:

- ◆ Insufficient funds to run activities was identified most often as a “major barrier” to operating before/after school activities at both elementary schools and middle schools. Insufficient funding was followed by lack of transportation for children and insufficient school staff to oversee building use.
- ◆ A comparison of elementary and middle school barriers reveals that:
 - Lack of available building space (32% vs. 22%) and having no organization available to run the program (24% vs. 17%) were described as “major barriers” more often for elementary than middle schools.
 - Children not being interested was described as a “major barrier” more often for middle school than for elementary schools (11% vs. 2%).

**Figure III.C.10
Major Barriers to Operating Before/After School Activities
at Elementary and Middle Schools**

	Elementary Schools <i>(Base=563-573)</i>	Middle Schools <i>(Base=314-324)</i>
Insufficient Funds to Run Activities	57%	61%
Lack of Transportation for Children	46%	43%
Insufficient School Staff to Oversee Building Use	40%	37%
Lack of Available Building Space	32%	22%
Unable to Identify Qualified Staff/Volunteers to Run Program	25%	22%
No Organization Available to Run the Activities	24%	17%
Parents Unable to Afford Activity Fees	15%	14%
Lack of Community Support for Children's Services	9%	8%
Parents Concerned with Child's Safety	8%	10%
School Administration Not Interested in Housing the Activities	3%	3%
Parents Not Interested in Enrolling Children	2%	3%
Children Not Interested	2%	11%

* This table includes responses from school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected town officials.

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

Elementary school responses were crosstabulated by respondent type. This analysis revealed that:

- ◆ All four respondent types most frequently cited insufficient funding as a major barrier. However, school superintendents (71%) and board of education chairpersons (70%) were more likely to do so than were elementary school principals (51%) and chief elected officials (59%).

- ◆ Chief elected officials were less likely than others to say insufficient school staff to oversee building use (27% vs. 41% - 47%) was a major barrier, and more likely to say school administration not being interested in housing the activities was a major barrier (11% vs. 2%).

Middle school responses were also crosstabulated by respondent type. This analysis revealed that:

- ◆ Insufficient funds was the factor identified most often as a major barrier by all respondent types. However, middle school principals described it as a “major barrier” less often than did the other three respondent types (49% vs. 63% - 71%).
- ◆ Only 3% of the middle school principals said lack of community support was a “major barrier,” compared to 17% of board of education chairpersons and 12% of school superintendents.

b. Barriers by Activity Type

Elementary school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected officials were asked to select in rank order the three greatest barriers to operating each of the various activities at their elementary school(s). Middle school principals were asked to rank order the three greatest barriers to operating these activities at the middle schools.

Figure III.C.11 (see page 24) displays respondents’ rank order ratings for elementary schools. This table displays total points for each potential barrier, calculated by assigning 3 points for being ranked as the greatest barrier, 2 points for being ranked 2nd, and 1 point for being ranked 3rd.

As revealed in Figure III.C.11:

- ◆ Responses were similar across activities in that:
 - Insufficient funds was perceived as the greatest barrier by a wide margin for all six types of before/after school activities.

- Difficulties identifying qualified staff and volunteers to run the program and lack of transportation for the children were usually ranked 2nd and 3rd, with the order varying by activity.

◆ Observed differences across activities were:

- Lack of transportation was less likely to be viewed as one of the greatest barriers for child care than for other activities.
- Lack of available building space was more problematic for child care and athletics/fitness than most of the other activities.
- Parents being unable to afford the activity fees was viewed as most problematic for child care.

Not having an organization to run the activities was a greater problem for service clubs and support groups than for the other activities.

**Figure III.C.11
Greatest Barrier for Specific Before/After School Activities at
Elementary Schools ***

	Athletics/ Fitness (Base=378)		Child Care (Base=344)		Enrichment Activities (Base=400)		Homework Help/ Tutoring (Base=369)		Service Clubs (Base=262)		Support Groups (Base=262)	
	Total Points**	Rank	Total Points**	Rank	Total Points**	Rank	Total Points**	Rank	Total Points**	Rank	Total Points**	Rank
Insufficient Funds to Run Activities	599	1	442	1	694	1	614	1	329	1	409	1
Unable to Identify Qualified Staff/Volunteers to Run Program	251	4	210	3	329	3	310	3	222	2	258	2
Lack of Transportation for Children	314	3	142	6	337	2	345	2	197	3	176	3
Lack of Available Building Space	331	2	355	2	216	5	121	5	141	6	121	6
Insufficient School Staff to Oversee Building Use	250	5	186	4	245	4	244	4	141	5	144	5
No Organization Available to Run the Activities	110	6	126	7	116	6	72	6	154	4	169	4
Parents Unable to Afford Activity Fees	51	7	158	5	75	7	48	8	24	10	45	9
Parents Not Interested in Enrolling Children	22	9	46	9	28	8	35	9	34	8	67	7
Lack of Community Support for Children's Services	21	11	51	8	24	10	26	11	52	7	50	8
Children Not Interested	22	10	13	11	17	11	58	7	32	9	27	10
Parents Concerned with Child's Safety	27	8	13	12	27	9	33	10	15	11	12	12
School Administration Not Interested in Housing the Activities	16	12	33	10	16	12	15	12	13	12	13	11

* This table includes responses from elementary school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected town officials.

** Total points are based on: three points for first, two points for second, and one point for third. Comparisons between activities should be based on ranks rather than total number of points due to differences in number of respondents for each activity.

Figure III.C.12 displays middle school principals' rank order ratings of the three greatest barriers to operating before/after school activities at middle schools.

**Figure III.C.12
Greatest Barrier for Specific Before/After School Activities at Middle Schools
(Middle School Principals)**

	Athletics/ Fitness (Base=79)		Enrichment Activities (Base=87)		Homework Help/ Tutoring (Base=75)		Service Clubs (Base=72)		Support Groups (Base=68)	
	Total Points*	Rank	Total Points*	Rank	Total Points*	Rank	Total Points*	Rank	Total Points*	Rank
Insufficient Funds to Run Activities	121	1	142	1	99	1	83	1	85	1
Lack of Transportation for Children	79	2	82	3	73	2	76	2	59	2
Unable to Identify Qualified Staff/Volunteers to Run Program	38	5	57	4	42	5	63	3	51	3
Children Not Interested	32	6	29	5	57	4	33	5	42	4
Insufficient School Staff to Oversee Building Use	59	3	84	2	63	3	39	4	41	5
Parents Not Interested in Enrolling Children	4	10	8	8	15	6	14	7	28	6
No Organization Available to Run the Activities	6	8	22	6	10	7	32	6	24	7
Parents Unable to Afford Activity Fees	6	9	6	10	2	10	5	10	6	8
Lack of Community Support for Children's Services	0	11	0	11	0	11	3	11	6	9
Lack of Available Building Space	58	4	17	7	7	9	12	8	5	10
Parents Concerned with Child's Safety	9	7	6	9	10	8	8	9	4	11
School Administration Not Interested in Housing the Activities	0	12	0	12	0	12	0	12	0	12

* Total points are based on: three points for first, two points for second, and one point for third. Comparisons between activities should be based on ranks rather than total number of points due to differences in number of respondents for each activity.

As revealed in Figure III.C.12:

- ◆ Insufficient funds was seen as the greatest barrier for all five types of before/after school activities, and lack of transportation was described as the 2nd greatest barrier for four of the five activities and 3rd for the other activity.
- ◆ Being unable to identify qualified staff/volunteers to run the program was seen as a greater problem for service clubs and support groups than athletics/fitness, enrichment activities, or homework help/tutoring.

- ◆ Lack of available building space was described a greater barrier for athletics/fitness than for the other activities.

c. Barriers to Locating Child Care Programs in the Schools

Child care directors who had attempted (successfully or not) to locate their child care program at an elementary school were given the same list of potential barriers and asked to what extent each potential obstacle served as a barrier to locating their program within an elementary school, and to rank order the three greatest barriers.

Figure III.C.13 displays the percentage of child care directors classifying each possible obstacle as a “major” or “minor” barrier to operating their program at an elementary school.

**Figure III.C.13
Barriers to Operating Child Care Programs
at Elementary Schools
(Child Care Directors, Base=150)**

	Major Barrier
Lack of Available Building Space	39%
Unable to Identify Qualified Staff/Volunteers to Run Program	29%
Insufficient Funds to Run Activities	22%
School Administration Not Interested in Housing the Activities	16%
Parents Unable to Afford Activity Fees	11%
Insufficient School Staff to Oversee Building Use	10%
Lack of Transportation for Children	10%
Lack of Community Support for Children's Services	8%
Parents Concerned with Child's Safety	3%
Parents Not Interested in Enrolling Children	1%
Children Not Interested	1%

As revealed in Figure III.C.13:

- ◆ Lack of available building space was perceived as the greatest barrier to their operating a child care program at an elementary school (39% said “major barrier”). The next most frequently cited obstacles were being unable to identify qualified staff/volunteers to run the program (29%) and insufficient funds (22%).

Figure III.C.14 displays child care directors’ rank order ratings for barriers to operating child care programs at elementary schools.

Figure III.C.14
Greatest Barrier to Operating Child Care Programs
at Elementary Schools
(Child Care Directors, Base=128)

	Total Points*	Rank
Lack of Available Building Space	183	1
Unable to Identify Qualified Staff/Volunteers to Run Program	159	2
Insufficient Funds to Run Activities	98	3
School Administration Not Interested in Housing the Activities	74	4
Parents Unable to Afford Activity Fees	63	5
Insufficient School Staff to Oversee Building Use	56	6
Lack of Transportation for Children	33	7
Lack of Community Support for Children's Services	26	8
Parents Not Interested in Enrolling Children	5	9
Parents Concerned with Child's Safety	2	10
Children Not Interested	1	11

* Total points are based on: three points for first, two points for second, and one point for third.

As revealed in Figure III.C.14:

- ◆ Consistent with the findings in Figure III.C.13, the obstacles identified by child care directors as the two greatest barriers to operating child care programs at elementary schools were lack of available building space and being unable to identify qualified staff/volunteers to run the program.
- ◆ Other factors seen by some as one of the three greatest barriers faced were: insufficient funds to run activities, school administrators not interested in housing the activities, parents unable to afford the activity fees, and insufficient school staff to oversee building use.

4. Desired Improvements for Before/After School Activities

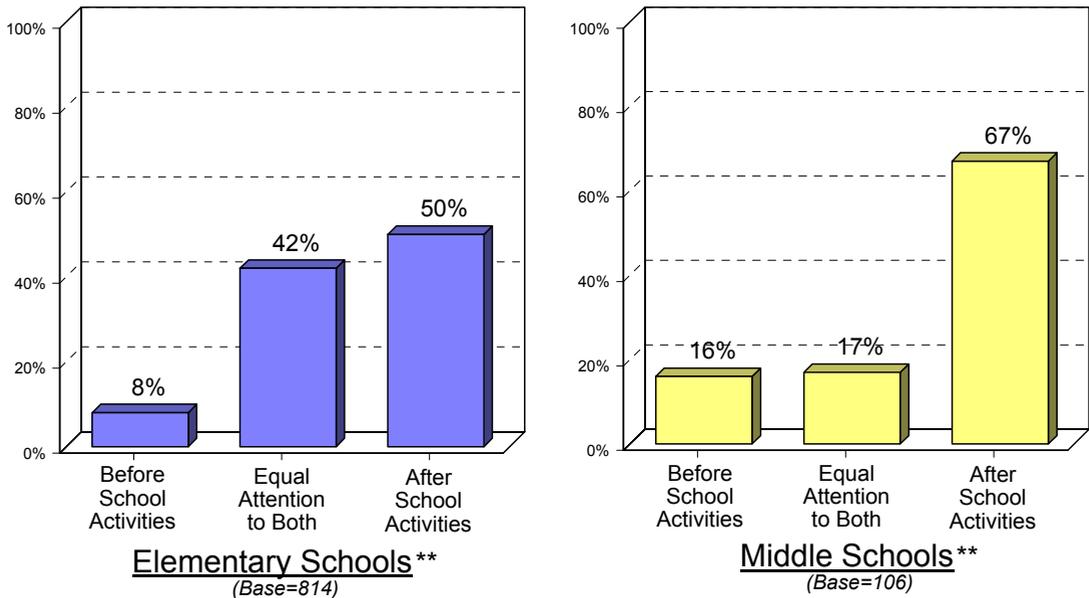
a. Before vs. After School Emphasis

Elementary school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, chief elected officials, and child care directors were asked whether efforts to improve before/after school activities at the elementary school(s) should focus more attention on improving before school activities, after school activities or devote equal attention to both. Middle school principals were asked this question about the middle schools. Responses are displayed in Figure III.C.15 (see page 29).

Figure III.C.15 reveals the following.

- ◆ With regard to elementary schools, one-half (50%) of the respondents said more emphasis is needed on improving/expanding after school programs, about two-fifths (42%) said equal attention needs to be devoted to both, and only 8% said more emphasis should be placed on before school activities.
- ◆ With regard to middle schools, two-thirds (67%) of the respondents said more emphasis is needed on improving/expanding after school programs, 17% said equal attention needs to be devoted to both, and 16% said more emphasis should be placed on before school activities.

Figure III.C.15
Should More Attention be Focused on Improving/Expanding Before or After School Activities at Elementary and Middle Schools*



* For elementary schools, this chart includes responses from school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, chief elected town officials and child care center directors. For middle schools, this chart includes responses from middle school principals.

** Statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary schools and middle schools.

A break out of elementary school responses by respondent type revealed that child care directors were much less likely than other respondents to say more attention needs to be directed at after school programs and more likely to say equal attention needs to be devoted to both before and after school programs.

b. Desired Changes to Before/After School Activities

School principals were given a list of five possible changes that could be made to the different types of before/after school activities, and asked to indicate which type of changes, if any, they believed would be desirable for their school. Responses are displayed for elementary schools and middle schools in Figure III.C.16 (see page 31).

Figure III.C.16 reveals the following.

- ◆ Elementary school principals most often said the before/after school activities available in their school needing change were enrichment activities (75%) and homework help/tutoring activities (67%). For enrichment activities, the most frequent need

identified was to start new activities. For homework help/tutoring, respondents were divided between starting new activities, expanding capacity, and expanding hours. Though needed changes were cited less often, about one-half of the elementary school principals said there was a need to improve before/after school athletics/fitness, support groups, and child care. The most frequent need mentioned was to start new activities.

- ◆ Middle school principals were most likely to say the before/after school activities available in their school needing change were enrichment activities (87%), support groups (80%), and homework help/tutoring (75%). For support groups and enrichment activities, principals said the greatest need was to start new activities. For homework help/tutoring, principals were most likely to say there was a need to expand the capacity and hours. Though cited less often, about two-thirds of the principals said the service clubs and athletics/fitness activities available in their school needed change. Starting new activities was the change suggested most often for both of these activities.
- ◆ For both elementary and middle schools, respondents were most likely to say some type of change is needed for enrichment activities (elementary schools, 75%; and middle schools, 87%) and homework help/tutoring (elementary schools, 67%; and middle schools, 75%).
- ◆ Across elementary and middle schools:
 - the most frequently requested type of change was to start new activities, and expand capacity was usually the second most requested change; and
 - fewer respondents felt there was a need to improve the quality of the activities or increase access to students with disabilities than believed other changes were needed.

Figure III.C.16
School Principals' Perceptions of Changes Needed
to Before/After School Activities in Their Schools

		Elementary Schools <i>(Base=311-341)</i>	Middle Schools <i>(Base=106-114)</i>
Athletics/Fitness	No Change Needed	44%	36%
	Start New Activities	41%	40%
	Expand Hours	11%	21%
	Expand Capacity	13%	25%
	Improve Quality	9%	17%
	Increase Access to Students With Disabilities	7%	16%
Child Care	No Change Needed	53%	-
	Start New Activities	20%	-
	Expand Hours	8%	-
	Expand Capacity	12%	-
	Improve Quality	14%	-
	Increase Access to Students With Disabilities	2%	-
Enrichment Activities	No Change Needed	25%	13%
	Start New Activities	47%	55%
	Expand Hours	16%	28%
	Expand Capacity	28%	38%
	Improve Quality	13%	13%
	Increase Access to Students With Disabilities	3%	11%
Homework Help/ Tutoring	No Change Needed	33%	25%
	Start New Activities	30%	21%
	Expand Hours	21%	37%
	Expand Capacity	25%	33%
	Improve Quality	12%	19%
	Increase Access to Students With Disabilities	1%	1%
Service Clubs	No Change Needed	63%	32%
	Start New Activities	26%	45%
	Expand Hours	3%	19%
	Expand Capacity	9%	23%
	Improve Quality	5%	8%
	Increase Access to Students With Disabilities	2%	4%
Support Groups	No Change Needed	47%	20%
	Start New Activities	45%	52%
	Expand Hours	5%	20%
	Expand Capacity	9%	31%
	Improve Quality	5%	8%
	Increase Access to Students With Disabilities	1%	7%

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

School superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected officials were given the same list of possible changes and asked which changes were desirable for the majority of elementary and middle schools in their town/district. Responses are displayed in aggregate Figure III.C.17 (see page 33).

As shown in Figure III.C.17:

- ◆ Respondents were most likely to say their town/district elementary and middle schools needed changes in their before/after school enrichment activities (elementary schools, 88%; and middle schools, 80%) and homework help/tutoring activities (elementary schools, 83%; and middle schools, 82%). Respondents most often wanted to start new activities, expand capacity, and expand hours.

Though desired by fewer respondents, the majority of the respondents expressed interest in making changes to elementary and middle school before/after school athletics/fitness, support groups, and service clubs, as well as child care at the elementary schools.

Figure III.C.17

**Changes Perceived as Needed to The Majority of Schools Within Their Town/District
(School Superintendents, Board of Education Chairpersons, & Chief Elected Officials)**

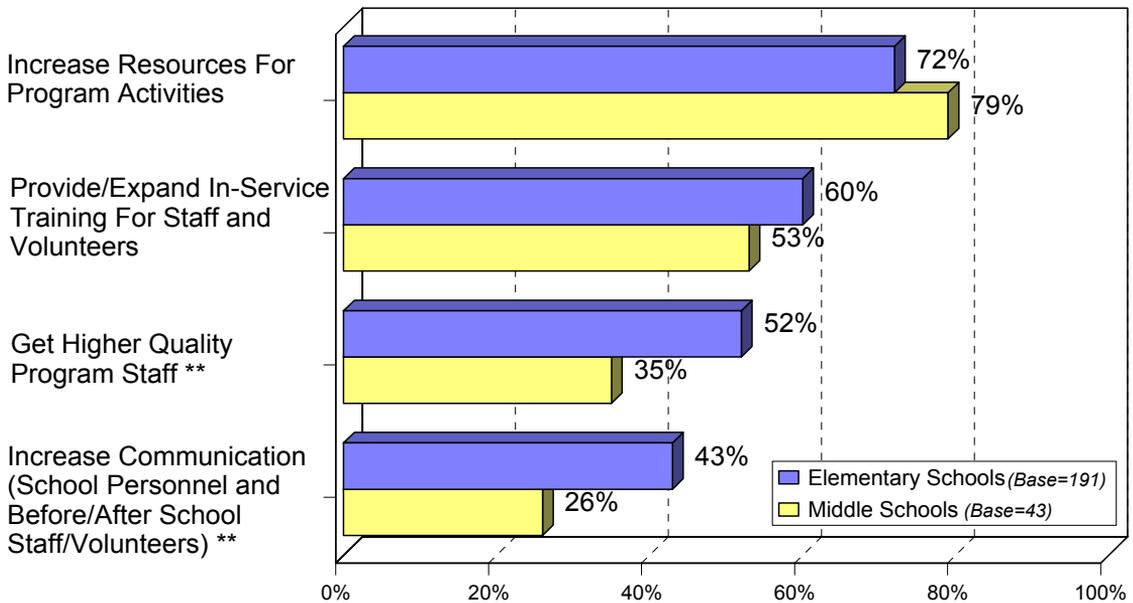
		Elementary Schools <i>(Base=207-220)</i>	Middle Schools <i>(Base=197-208)</i>
Athletics/Fitness	No Change Needed	28%	30%
	Start New Activities	48%	36%
	Expand Hours	21%	31%
	Expand Capacity	28%	39%
	Improve Quality	13%	15%
	Increase Access to Students With Disabilities	17%	17%
Child Care	No Change Needed	27%	-
	Start New Activities	29%	-
	Expand Hours	26%	-
	Expand Capacity	33%	-
	Improve Quality	20%	-
	Increase Access to Students With Disabilities	7%	-
Enrichment Activities	No Change Needed	12%	20%
	Start New Activities	49%	47%
	Expand Hours	31%	29%
	Expand Capacity	40%	39%
	Improve Quality	18%	15%
	Increase Access to Students With Disabilities	7%	9%
Homework Help/ Tutoring	No Change Needed	17%	18%
	Start New Activities	40%	32%
	Expand Hours	29%	40%
	Expand Capacity	40%	41%
	Improve Quality	14%	16%
	Increase Access to Students With Disabilities	4%	7%
Service Clubs	No Change Needed	42%	30%
	Start New Activities	42%	43%
	Expand Hours	13%	17%
	Expand Capacity	17%	29%
	Improve Quality	5%	10%
	Increase Access to Students With Disabilities	3%	5%
Support Groups	No Change Needed	37%	30%
	Start New Activities	46%	43%
	Expand Hours	13%	19%
	Expand Capacity	20%	28%
	Improve Quality	4%	8%
	Increase Access to Students With Disabilities	4%	7%

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

c. *Ways to Improve Quality*

Elementary school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected officials who said there was a need to improve the quality of any of the before/after school activities at the elementary school were given a list of four different approaches for improving these activities and asked to check those they felt were needed. Middle school principals were asked the same question for the middle schools. Aggregate responses for elementary schools and middle schools are displayed in Figure III.C.18.

Figure III.C.18
Desired Changes to Improve the Quality of Before/After School Activities at Elementary and Middle Schools*



* For elementary schools, this chart includes responses from school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected town officials. For middle schools, this chart includes responses from middle school principals.

** Statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary schools and middle schools.

As shown in Figure III.C.18:

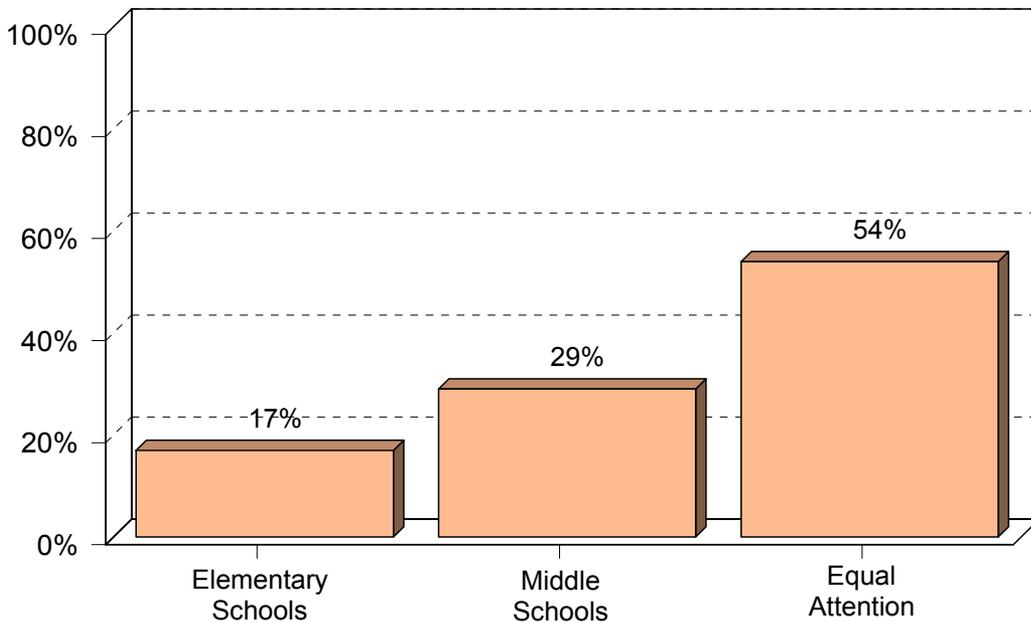
- ◆ For both elementary and middle school responses, respondents’ rank order was the same: increase resources for program activities, followed by expanding in-service training for staff/volunteers, getting higher quality program staff and increasing communication between the school and before/after school staff/volunteers.

- ◆ Elementary school respondents were significantly more likely than middle school principals to say there is a need for higher quality program staff (52% vs. 35% of those saying improvement is needed) and to increase the communications of school personnel and before/after school staff/volunteers (43% vs. 26% of those saying improvement is needed).

d. Elementary School vs. Middle School Emphasis

Respondents (other than elementary and middle school principals) were asked whether they felt more emphasis needed to be placed on improving/expanding elementary or middle school before/after school activities. Responses are displayed in Figure III.C.19.

Figure III.C.19
Should Emphasis Be Placed on Improving/Expanding
Elementary or Middle School Before/After School Activities*
(Base=203)



* This chart includes responses from school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected town officials.

As shown in Figure III.C.19:

- ◆ Slightly over one-half (54%) of the respondents said equal attention should be placed on both elementary and middle schools, 29% suggested more attention to middle schools, and 17% thought more attention needed to be devoted to elementary schools.

5. Designing a Brand New Before/After School Program

a. Most Important Activities for a New Before/After School Program

Elementary school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, chief elected officials, and child care directors were asked which of the basic types of before/after school activities they would choose 1st, 2nd or 3rd for a brand new before/after school program located at an elementary school. Middle school principals were asked about middle schools. The analysis assigned 3 points for each 1st ranking, 2 points for each 2nd ranking and 1 point for each 3rd ranking. Aggregate responses for both elementary and middle schools are displayed in Figure III.C.20.

**Figure III.C.20
Desired Activities for a New Elementary and Middle School Before/After School Program ***

	Elementary School Program (Base=871)		Middle School Program (Base=111)	
	Total Points**	Rank	Total Points**	Rank
Enrichment Activities	1535	1	190	2
Homework Help/Tutoring	1445	2	196	1
Child Care	1069	3	-	-
Athletics/Fitness	697	4	174	3
Service Clubs	243	5	58	4
Support Groups	218	6	47	5

* For elementary school program, this table includes responses from elementary school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, chief elected town officials, and child care center directors. For middle school program, this table only includes middle school principals.

** Total points are based on: three points for first, two points for second, and one point for third. Comparisons between groups should be based on ranking of activities, rather than the total number of points due to differences in sample size per group.

As revealed in Figure III.C.20:

- ◆ Responses were similar for elementary and middle schools.

- ◆ Though the order was different, the two activities seen as most desirable for before/after school activities at elementary and middle schools were enrichment activities and homework help/tutoring. Athletics/fitness was ranked in the middle, and support groups and service clubs were ranked on the bottom.
- ◆ Child care, given as an option for elementary schools, was ranked 3rd and substantially behind the 2nd choice (i.e., homework help/tutoring) but way ahead of the 4th choice (i.e., athletics/fitness).

A breakout of elementary school responses by respondent type revealed very similar responses across respondent types. The only exception was that child care directors ranked child care 1st whereas most others ranked child care 3rd behind enrichment activities and homework help/tutoring.

b. Suggestions for Designing New Before/After School Activities at the Schools

Elementary school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, chief elected officials, and child care directors were asked what suggestion(s) they would make about designing school-based before/after school activities at elementary schools. Middle school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected officials were asked the same question about middle schools. Responses to the open-ended questions were coded and aggregate elementary and middle school responses are displayed in Figure III.C.21.

Figure III.C.21
Suggestions for Developing a New School-Based Before/After School Program at Elementary and Middle Schools

	Elementary Schools <i>(Base=724)</i>	Middle Schools <i>(Base=261)</i>
Focus on quality/qualified/trained staff and volunteers	33%	15%
Obtain funding for program	32%	39%
Offer diverse creative programs that include curriculum related & fun activities	19%	23%
Include specific activities (e.g., homework help, enrichment, sports)	16%	20%
Obtain support from school administration, teachers & community	11%	13%
Elicit input from children and parents	10%	18%
Provide sufficient space for program	8%	2%
Expand hours/days	4%	5%
Make available to all children	3%	2%
Other suggestions	9%	4%

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

As revealed in Figure III.C.21:

Elementary Schools

- ◆ The most frequent suggestions were to focus on: (1) having quality, qualified, and trained staff/volunteers for the program (33%); and (2) obtaining adequate funding (32%); including funding from the state and funds for transportation.
- ◆ Other suggestions were to: offer diverse and creative programs that include curriculum related and fun activities; include specific types of activities (e.g., homework help, enrichment, sports); get support from school administrators, staff and the community; and elicit input from children and parents.

Middle Schools

- ◆ The most frequent suggestion was to focus on obtaining adequate funding (39%), including funding from the state, for staff and for transportation.
- ◆ Other suggestions were to: offer diverse and creative programs that include curriculum related and fun activities; include specific types of activities (e.g., homework help, enrichment, sports); elicit input from students and parents; having quality, qualified, and trained staff/volunteers for the program; and get support from school administrators, staff and the community.

Representative verbatim responses are provided below.

Elementary Schools

Staff/Volunteers

- “Get good people to conduct the programs. Quality time requires quality adults conducting the programs.”
- “Have quality people to supervise it who will make a long-term commitment.”
- “It’s great to have volunteers and agencies willing to work with our students, but more training is necessary to allow greater success for the volunteers.”
- “High quality, very well compensated (staff) with clear expectations and lines of responsibility/accountability.”
- “Adequate, well-trained, adult supervision is essential.”

Funding

- “That money be made available to operate programs based on the school’s needs.”
- “There needs to be a strong commitment by the state to provide funding for all districts.”
- “Funding should be school-based. There should be no cost to parents who have children involved in any type of before or after school program.”
- “There is a definite need for funding more academic-based programs for language arts and math improvements.”

- “Help find ways to fund transportation. This is very costly and if we don’t provide transportation, we often don’t get the students that we want to encourage to stay after school.”

Diverse/Creative Program with Curriculum Related and Fun Activities

- “It is important that that children have a choice of activities. They may want to play a game/participate in fitness one day and take drawing lessons another. A program that offers a wide variety of activities everyday best meets children’s needs.”
- “Provide a wide variety of activities to meet the needs and interests of a diverse student population.”
- “That the programs be integrated with the regular curriculum so that the students receive perspectives and enrichment conducive to their own educational experiences.”
- “After school programs should provide opportunities for more in-depth study of curriculum topics presented during the regular school day.”
- “Regardless of what the activity is, it needs to be fun for kids of this age group. We are still talking about kids here and each activity is a learning experience for them. Make it fun so they can enjoy learning.”
- “Children need to have time to relax and participate in fun, meaningful activities after school.”

Specific Types of Activities

- “Offer enrichment, athletics, homework help and support, while providing child care for working parents.”
- “Keep students active and involved while stressing the completion of academic work.”
- “Homework assistance programs are necessary to provide students with an opportunity to succeed academically.”
- “My suggestion would be to develop enrichment programs based on the fine arts. These types of programs enrich the lives of children in numerous ways.”
- “After school programs should be a time for children to explore areas of interest in order to develop multiple talents.”

Get School/Staff/Community Support

- “Whatever school-based activity is recommended, it should enjoy the full backing of all the stakeholders in the educational community. Broad-based support is necessary in order to have the participation of teachers, parents and students.”
- “Community and school personnel should collaborate to plan/implement before/after school activities.”

Elicit Input from Parents/Children

- “Survey population of users (students) to find out what services they are most interested in or need.”
- “When developing programs, parent input and involvement is vital to the development and success of any program.”

Middle Schools

Funding

- “Schools should be allotted a consistent amount of funding each year to support programs. It is hard to go year to year wondering how the after school program will be paid for.”
- “Each school should be given a special grant to fund the type of activities that are needed for that school.”
- “My suggestion would be to have our local board of education make a financial commitment to our after school programs. . . . We need to be consistent with funding.”
- “Provide adequate funding for transportation so all students can participate fully.”
- “Adequate funding is necessary to hire qualified staff to run an effective program.”

Diverse/Creative Program with Curriculum Related and Fun Activities

- “Offer a variety of activities (sports, clubs, drama, music, service, etc.) to match student interests.”
- “That there be ample choices for students to pursue their interests, but not too many as to make the program unmanageable.”
- “It would need to be upbeat, use catchy advertising to infect middle-school aged children, to make it “the place” to be.”

- “Expand programming for all students’ interests. Connection to age appropriate activities is very important.”
- “Make the programs exploratory and interactive whether it’s academic, experiential, or supportive guidance.”
- “Don’t lecture them. They’ve had enough school that day; play.”

Specific Types of Activities

- “Athletic/fitness programs help students learn respect and cooperation. The energy expended during athletic activities can help students focus. The fun from fitness activities can be the draw that get students to school on time.”
- “Include academic assistance, enrichment (arts, etc.), and the introduction of a variety of athletic activities that are not the standard sport related activities.”
- “Increase from two days a week to four days a week and offer intramurals, additional homework help/tutoring, computer use, photography, arts and crafts, foreign language, etc.”
- “After school programs are critical for at-risk students, especially homework clubs.”
- “Focus on combination of academic achievement and enrichment – e.g., homework help and music/athletic programs.”
- “All sites must offer a wide variety of enrichment activities that are tailored to the needs and differences of their students.”
- “The establishment of after school enrichment programs would offer some positive non-academic experiences for the non-athletic youngsters. Needs and interests should be clearly identified.”

Elicit Input from Parents/Children

- “The programs have to be packaged for student interests. Middle school students need to be part of the planning of after school programs.”
- “Ask students for direction. Base programs on student interest.”
- “Strive to provide what students want and/or need as determined by discussion or surveys. Parents and staff should also be polled for their input. Determine the results and build a program to match expressed needs or desires.”
- “Have parent support.”

Staff/Volunteers

- “Select qualified staff that can create a vitality filled set of activities that encourage student participation.”
- “Staffing is crucial to the success of any program.”
- “Qualified staff is a major issue.”

Get School/Staff/Community Support

- “Communicate with the community to ascertain interests and needs and solicit support.”
- “I would get the school staff involved in significant ways, so that there is support and investment by them for all program activities.”
- “Make sure you have the support of the staff.”

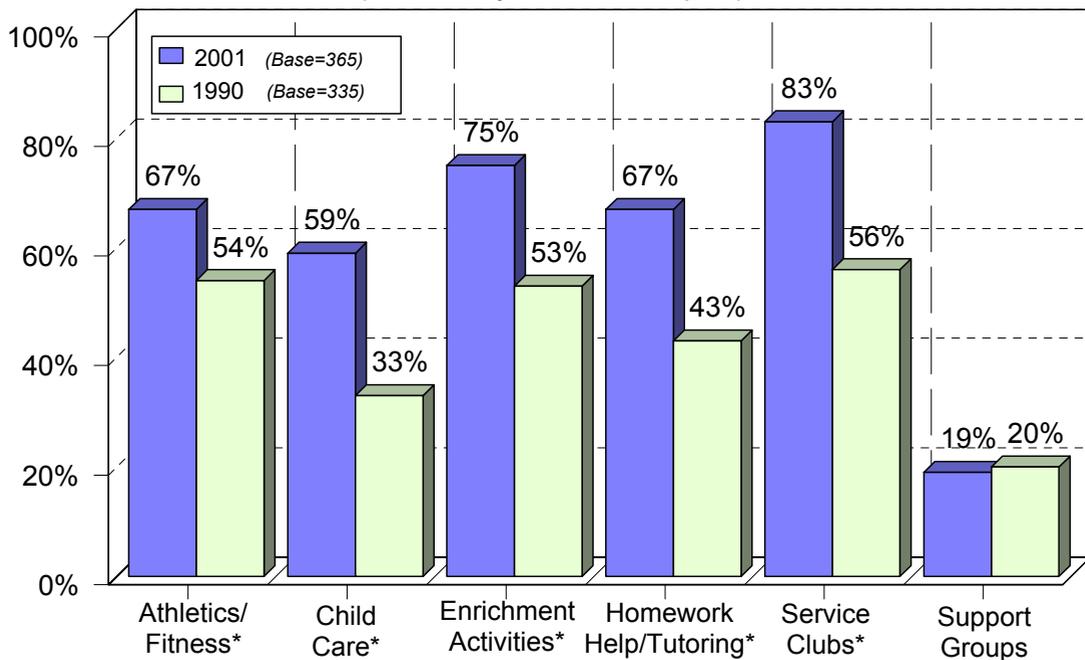
6. Comparison of 2001 to 1990 Administrator Survey Findings

This section of the report displays key differences in 2001 and 1990 survey findings. As a reminder, the 1990 study focused solely on elementary schools so comparisons are provided for elementary schools only.

Comparisons are provided for: availability of various before/after school activities, sponsorship of before/after school activities, types of enrichment activities offered, perceived barriers to operating before/after school programs at elementary schools, child care program access to operating activities at elementary schools, and preferences for activities to be included in designing a new before/after school program.

Figure III.C.22 contrasts elementary school principals’ descriptions of the types of before/after school activities offered at their elementary schools.

Figure III.C.22
Percentage of Elementary Schools with
Before/After School Activities
 (Elementary School Principals)



* Statistically significant difference (.05) between 2001 and 1990.

As show in Figure III.C.22:

- ◆ There has been a large increase in the percentage of elementary schools that have specific types of before/after school activities.
- ◆ Specifically, significant increases were observed for: service clubs (83% vs. 56%), child care (59% vs. 33%), homework help/tutoring (67% vs. 43%), enrichment activities (75% vs. 53%), and athletics/fitness activities (67% vs. 54%).
- ◆ The only activity not displaying a significant increase is support groups (remaining at about 20%).

Figure III.C.23 displays the sponsors of the various types of before/after school programs for 2001 and 1990.

**Figure III.C.23
Sponsors of Before/After School Activities
(Elementary School Principals)**

	<i>Base</i>	School	PTA/ PTO	Town Agency	Faith- Based Agency	Other Private Agency
2001						
Athletics/Fitness	242	61%	17%	48%	2%	10%
Child Care	213	20%	2%	29%	4%	51%
Enrichment Activities	274	66%	45%	18%	2%	14%
Homework Help/Tutoring	240	80%	6%	14%	1%	14%
Service Clubs	287	28%	14%	15%	5%	59%
Support Groups	67	70%	15%	27%	6%	24%
1990						
Athletics/Fitness	179	63%	13%	40%	10% *	
Child Care	111	7%	2%	27%	67% *	
Enrichment Activities	172	63%	35%	13%	15% *	
Homework Help/Tutoring	140	85%	4%	9%	9% *	
Service Clubs	180	15%	21%	19%	56% *	
Support Groups	65	54%	14%	23%	22% *	

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

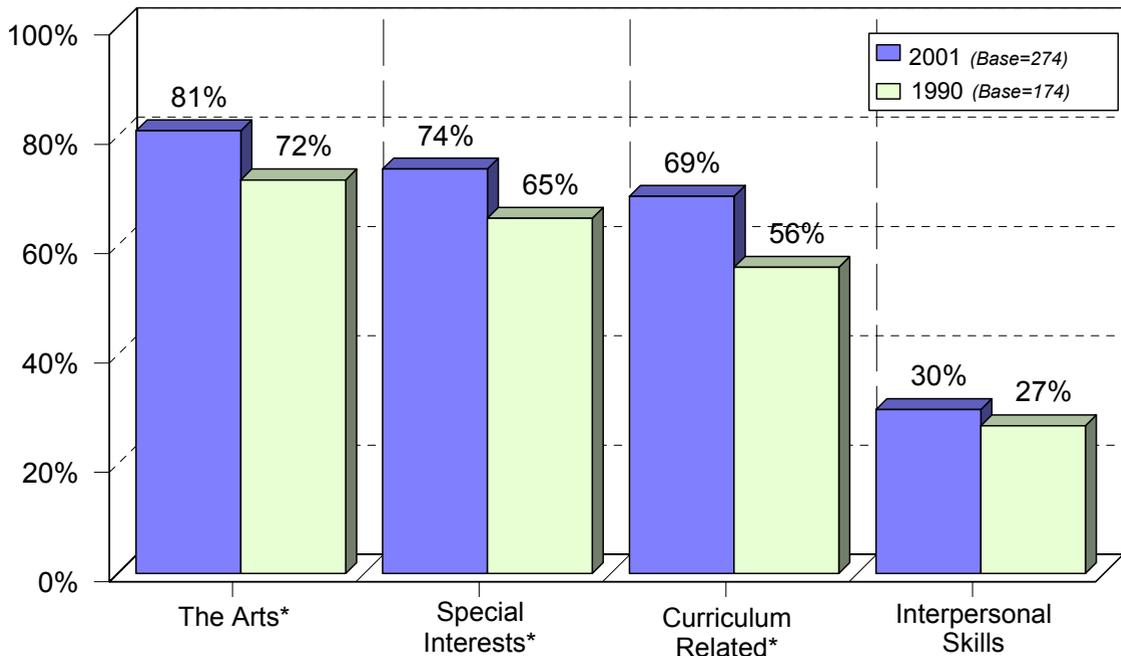
* In 1990, the term "private agency" was used. In 2001, the category was split into two, "faith-based agency" and "other private agency."

As shown in Figure III.C.23:

- ◆ Schools are more likely to sponsor some of the before/after school activities that are offered at the schools than they used to be. Significant differences are observed for child care (20% vs. 7%) and service clubs (28% vs. 15%). Though not statistically significant due to the small bases, an increase was also observed for support groups (70% vs. 54%).

Figure III.C.24 contrasts the types of enrichment activities school principals said were available before or after school.

Figure III.C.24
Types of Before/After School Enrichment Activities
Operating at the School
 (Elementary School Principals)



* Statistically significant difference (.05) between 2001 and 1990.

As displayed in Figure III.C.24:

- ◆ The range of enrichment activities offered at elementary schools has increased greatly.
- ◆ Significant increases were observed in the percentage of elementary schools with enrichment activities that offer: the arts (81% vs. 72%), special interest activities (74% vs. 65%), and curriculum related activities (69% vs. 56%).

Figure III.C.25 contrasts the major barriers survey respondents attributed to operating before/after school activities at elementary schools.

Figure III.C.25
Major Barriers to Operating Before/After School Activities
at Elementary Schools *

<i>Base</i>	2001	1990
	(563-573)	(500-525)
Insufficient Funds to Run Activities	57%	75%
Lack of Transportation for Children	46%	53%
Insufficient School Staff to Oversee Building Use	40%	56%
Lack of Available Building Space	32%	30%
Unable to Identify Qualified Staff/Volunteers to Run Program	25%	-
No Organization Available to Run the Activities	24%	39%
Parents Unable to Afford Activity Fees	15%	24%
Lack of Community Support for Children's Services	9%	15%
Parents Concerned with Child's Safety	8%	-
School Administration Not Interested in Housing the Activities	3%	6%
Parents Not Interested in Enrolling Children	2%	6%
Children Not Interested	2%	3%

* The total includes: principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, and chief elected town officials.

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

As shown in Figure III.C.25:

- ◆ In 1990 and 2001, administrators identified the same three greatest barriers to operating before/after school activities at elementary schools – insufficient funds to run the activities, a lack of transportation for the students, and insufficient school staff to oversee building use. However, in 2001, significantly fewer administrators identified

these and other problem areas as “major barriers” to operating before/after school activities than they did in 1990.

- ◆ Specifically, significantly fewer respondents cited the following as “major barriers”: insufficient funds (57% vs. 75%), lack of transportation (46% vs. 53%), insufficient school staff to oversee building use (40% vs. 56%), no organization available to run the activities (24% vs. 39%), parents unable to afford fees (15% vs. 24%), school administration not interested in housing the activities (3% vs. 6%), and parents not interested in enrolling their children (2% vs. 6%).

Figure III.C.26 contrasts child care directors’ responses about locating programs at elementary schools.

Figure III.C.26
Locating Child Care Centers at Elementary Schools
(Child Care Directors)

	2001	1990
Where is Child Care Center Located	(Base=316)	(Base=264)
At Elementary School	42%	37%
Elsewhere	58%	63%
Ease of Having Located Their Child Care Center at Elementary School	(Base=129)	(Base=98)
Very Easy	37%	28%
Somewhat Easy	47%	46%
Somewhat Difficult	10%	24%
Very Difficult	6%	2%
Have Directors of Child Care Centers Located Elsewhere Tried to Locate at an Elementary School	(Base=180)	(Base=166)
Yes	12%	16%
No	88%	84%

As displayed in Figure III.C.26:

- ◆ There has been a slight, though not significant increase in the percentage of child care centers that operate at the elementary schools (42% vs. 37%) rather than other locations.
- ◆ Though not statistically significant, more child care directors have found it “very easy” to locate their centers at the schools (37% vs. 28%) and less have found it very/somewhat difficult (16% vs. 26%).

Figure III.C.27 contrasts respondents’ preferences for activities to be included in designing a new before/after school program.

**Figure III.C.27
Desired Activities for a New Elementary School
Before/After School Program ***

	2001 (Base=871)		1990 (Base=752)	
	Total Points**	Rank	Total Points**	Rank
Enrichment Activities	1535	1	1166	1
Homework Help/Tutoring	1445	2	1037	3
Child Care	1069	3	1159	2
Athletic/Fitness	697	4	725	4
Service Clubs	243	5	143	6
Support Groups	218	6	267	5

* This table includes responses from elementary school principals, school superintendents, board of education chairpersons, chief elected town officials, and child care center directors.
 ** Total points are based on: three points for first, two points for second, and one point for third. Comparisons between groups should be based on ranking of activities, rather than the total number of points due to differences in sample size per group.

As revealed in Figure III.C.27:

- ◆ For both 1990 and 2001, administrators said the most important before/after school activity is enrichment activities.

- ◆ However, in 2001 homework help/tutoring moved ahead of child care into the second most desired activity, and support groups moved ahead of service clubs in perceived importance.

IV. PARENT SURVEY

This section of the report describes: (a) the methodology used for the parent survey; (b) the 2001 research objectives for the survey; (c) the 2001 findings of the elementary and middle school parents; and (d) key comparisons of 2001 vs. 1990 elementary school parent findings.

A. Methodology

For the 2001 study, Spectrum Associates purchased a list of elementary and middle school children selected randomly across the state of Connecticut. Using this list, Spectrum Associates randomly surveyed 400 parents of elementary school children and 400 parents of middle school children⁷. A sample of 400 provides for a confidence range within +/- 5.0 at a 95% confidence level.

All respondents were screened to ensure that they: (1) had children in the appropriate grades, and (2) were the person in the household most involved in the child's school activities.

The telephone interviews were conducted by experienced interviewers who were briefed in person by Spectrum Associates' professional staff. Interviews were conducted from October 29, 2001 – November 12, 2001, and households were contacted during the weekends and weekday evenings (6:00 – 9:00 p.m.) to enhance the representativeness of the sample. Parent cooperation rate for the survey was extremely high (67%), and interviews averaged 11 minutes to complete.

⁷ In addition to parents (99%), other guardians (e.g., grandparents) who were responsible for the children were also included in the survey (1%). Parents who had both elementary and middle school children were randomly selected to complete the elementary or middle school survey.

It should be noted that the data gathered from the 2001 telephone surveys were weighted by the size of the community in which the respondents live to ensure that respondents from the various size communities had the appropriate representation in the findings.

Figure IV.A.1 displays the demographic characteristics of the parents surveyed.

**Figure IV.A.1
2001 Respondent Demographics**

	Elementary School Parents	Middle School Parents
Gender	<i>(Base=400)</i>	<i>(Base=401)</i>
Male	23%	26%
Female	77%	74%
Number of Children in K-12 Grade	<i>(Base=392)</i>	<i>(Base=397)</i>
1 child	31%	34%
2 children	49%	46%
3 children	17%	16%
4 or more children	3%	4%
Number of Parents/Stepparents in the Household	<i>(Base=396)</i>	<i>(Base=395)</i>
One	11%	12%
Two	89%	88%
Anyone 16+ at Home on School Days Between 3 - 6 p.m.	<i>(Base=388)</i>	<i>(Base=391)</i>
Yes	46%	50%
No	54%	50%
Household Income	<i>(Base=335)</i>	<i>(Base=338)</i>
Under \$15,000	3%	2%
\$15,000 to \$25,000	7%	4%
\$25,000 to \$40,000	8%	11%
\$40,000 to \$60,000	25%	19%
\$60,000 to \$80,000	20%	21%
Over \$80,000	36%	43%

As shown above:

- ◆ About three-quarters of the respondents were female and one-quarter was male.

- ◆ Over two-thirds of the respondents had two or more children in grades K – 12.
- ◆ About 90% of the respondents lived in a household with two parents or stepparents, and 11% – 12% lived in a single parent household.
- ◆ Over one-half of the households had no one 16+ years of age at home during the after school hours of 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

It should be noted that the 1990 survey was conducted using similar sampling and data collection procedures. The main difference was that in 1990 the study was limited to parents of elementary school children (N=400), while the 2001 study included parents of middle school (N=400) and elementary school (N=400) children.

B. Research Objectives

The specific objectives for the 2001 parent survey were to determine:

- ◆ Parents' perceptions of the importance of having before/after school activities available at elementary and middle schools (Section IV.C.1).
- ◆ Parents' perceptions of the availability of school-based before/after school activities at their child's school (Section IV.C.2).
- ◆ Child participation in school-based before/after school activities, the reasons for not participating in available activities, and the likelihood that their child would participate if the activities were offered (Section IV.C.3).
- ◆ Parents' opinions about possible barriers to their children participating in before/after school activities (Section IV.C.4).
- ◆ The changes parents felt should be made to improve before/after school activities (Section IV.C.5).
- ◆ Parents' suggestions for designing a new before/after school program (Section IV.C.6).

- ◆ If and how elementary school parents' perceptions have changed since the 1990 parent survey (Section IV.C.7).

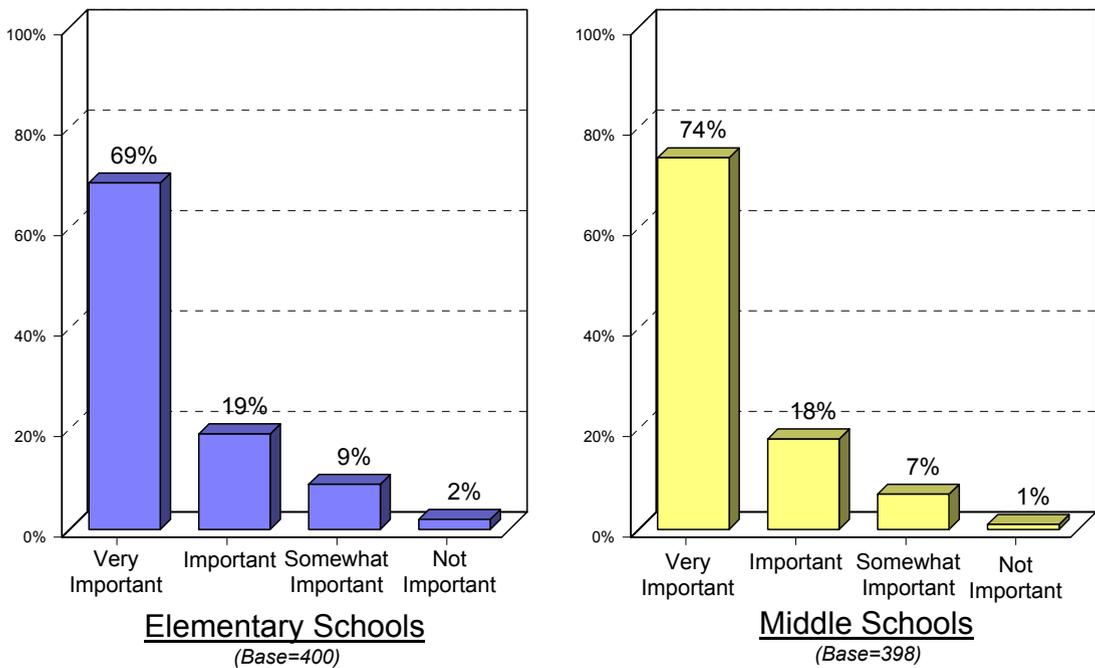
C. Survey Findings

1. Importance of Locating Before/After School Activities at Schools

a. Perceived Importance

Parents were asked how important they thought it was for before/after school activities to be available at elementary and middle schools. Responses are shown in Figure IV.C.1.

Figure IV.C.1
Parents' Perceived Importance of Having
Before/After School Activities at Elementary and Middle Schools



As shown in Figure IV.C.1:

- ◆ About three-fourths of the middle school parents (74%) and two-thirds of the elementary school parents (69%) said that it was “very important” to have these programs available at the schools. Most of the other parents said it was “important.”
- ◆ Only a handful of parents surveyed said it was “not important.”

b. Reasons it is Important to Locate Activities at the School

Respondents were asked why they thought it was important to offer before/after school activities at the school. Responses to this open-ended question were coded and are displayed in Figure IV.C.2 (see page 55).

As shown in Figure IV.C.2:

- ◆ For elementary school children, parents most often said it is important to have before/after school activities at the schools because of: the enrichment/enhancement opportunities (26%), social development and growth (24%), the child having productive/positive/structured activities during these hours (21%), and the convenience for parents (23%) and for children (18%).
- ◆ For middle school students, parents most often said it is important to have before/after school activities at the schools because of: social development and growth (28%), keeping children from getting into trouble (28%), having productive/positive/structured activities during these hours (24%), and the enrichment/enhancement opportunities (20%).

Figure IV.C.2
Reasons it is Important to Have Before/After School Activities at
Elementary and Middle Schools

	Elementary Schools <i>(Base=348)</i>	Middle Schools <i>(Base=359)</i>
Benefits to Children		
Enrichment/enhancement opportunities	26%	20%
Social development and growth	24%	28%
Productive/positive/structured activities B/A school	21%	24%
Convenient location for children to go to	18%	10%
Keep children from getting into trouble	13%	28%
Safe/supervised environment	12%	18%
Academic/learning opportunities	10%	9%
Kids comfortable at school	8%	2%
Organized way for children to exercise/sports	8%	6%
Fun opportunity for children/be with friends/make friends	7%	11%
School has facilities/faculty	4%	3%
Community service	4%	9%
Other benefit to children	2%	3%
Benefits to Parents		
Convenient for parents (location/transportation)	23%	13%
Piece of mind (know children are safe)	5%	6%
Affordable	3%	1%
Other benefit to parents	1%	0%

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

c. Importance of Locating Specific Activities at the School

For each type of before/after school activity, parents were asked whether they believed it was best to offer that type of activity at the school or at a location other than the school. Responses are displayed in Figure IV.C.3.

**Figure IV.C.3
Parents' Preferred Location for Different Types of
Before/After School Activities**

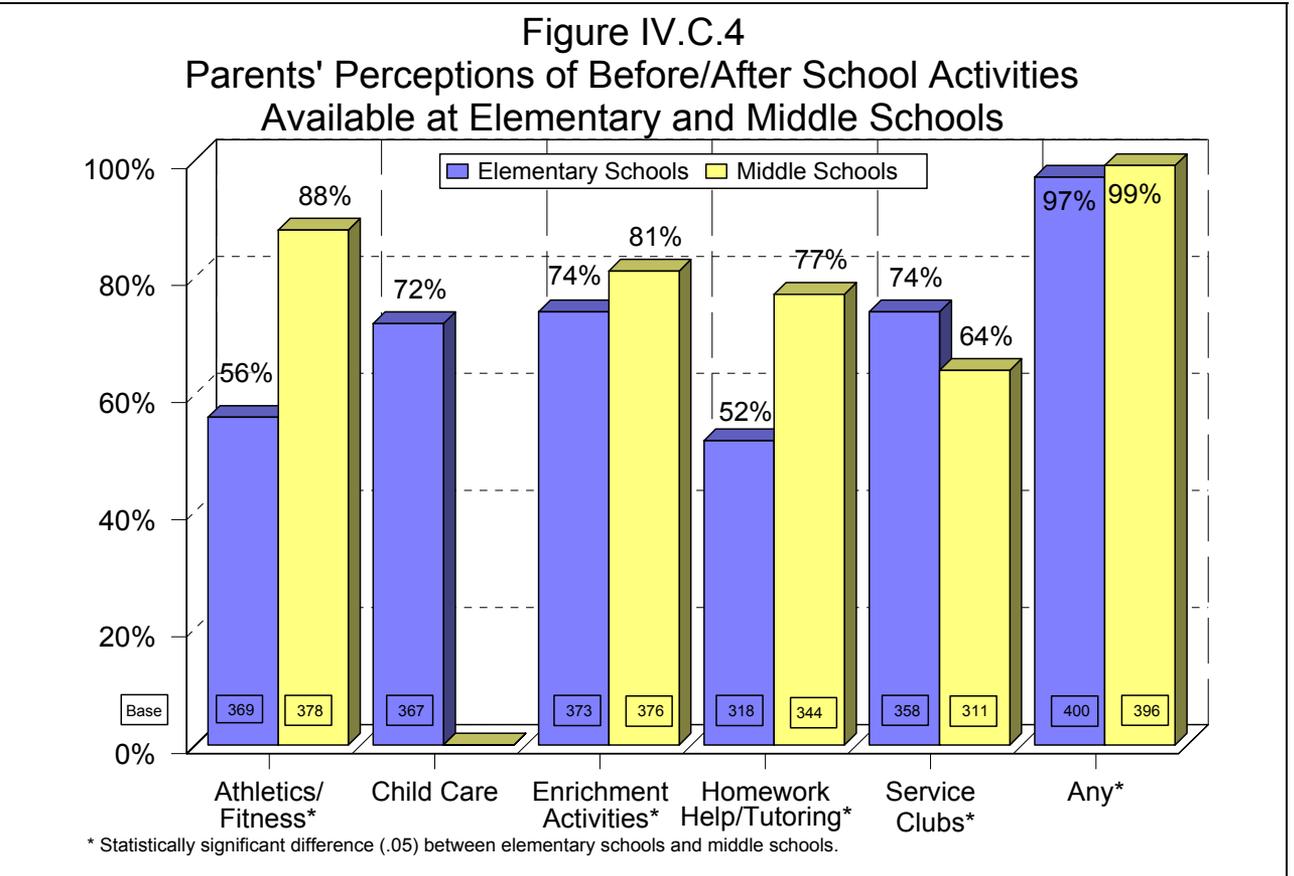
	Elementary Schools <i>(Base=394-399)</i>			Middle Schools <i>(Base=397-399)</i>		
	At School	Elsewhere	No Preference	At School	Elsewhere	No Preference
Homework Help/Tutoring	84%	1%	16%	87%	1%	12%
Enrichment Activities	82%	1%	17%	76%	1%	23%
Athletics/Fitness	71%	2%	27%	71%	1%	28%
Child Care	74%	2%	24%	-	-	-
Service Clubs	60%	3%	37%	61%	3%	36%

As shown in Figure IV.C.3:

- ◆ Overall, parents clearly preferred to have the various before/after school activities at the schools. While some parents expressed no preference, very few participants preferred a location outside the school.
- ◆ For homework help/tutoring, enrichment, child care, and athletics/fitness over 70% of the parents surveyed said they preferred locating these activities at the school, and almost all of the others said they had no preference.
- ◆ A sizable percentage of parents said they had no preference regarding the location of service clubs.

2. Perceived Availability of Before/After School Activities

Parents were asked if various types of before/after school activities were available at the child’s school (elementary or middle school). Responses are displayed in Figure IV.C.4.



As shown in Figure IV.C.4:

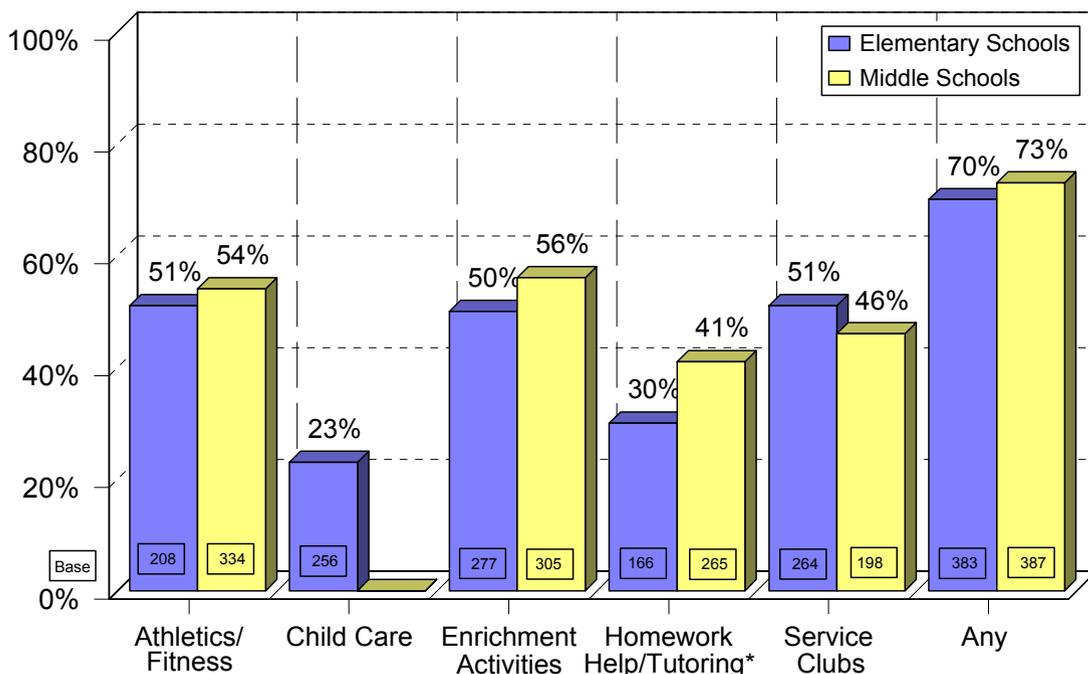
- ◆ Almost all of the parents surveyed said there was some type of before/after school activity at their child’s elementary (97%) or middle (99%) school.
- ◆ While there were some similarities, there were also differences when comparing responses of elementary and middle school parents. Specifically:
 - Parents of middle (81%) and elementary (74%) school children typically said their child’s school offered before/after school enrichment activities.

- Middle school parents were significantly more likely than elementary school parents to say that their child's school offered before/after school athletics/fitness (88% vs. 56%) and homework help/tutoring (77% vs. 52%) activities.
- Elementary school parents were significantly more likely than middle school parents to say their child's school had service clubs available (74% vs. 64%).

3. Participation in Before/After School Activities

Parents were asked if their child was participating in any of the before/after school activities offered at their elementary or middle school, and if so, in which activities he/she currently participated. Figure IV.C.5 displays the percentage of parents who said their children participated in before/after school activities available at the child's school. Those parents who said the activity was not available at the school are not included in this chart.

Figure IV.C.5
Percentage of Parents Whose Children Participate if Before/After School Activities Are Available at the School



* Statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary schools and middle schools.

As revealed in Figure IV.C.5:

- ◆ The large majority of the parents who said before/after school activities were offered at their child's school said their child participates in at least one of the activities (middle school, 73% and elementary school, 70%).
- ◆ The types of available activities that children appear to utilize most often were as follows:
 - Elementary schools: athletics/fitness (51%), service clubs (51%), and enrichment activities (50%).
 - Middle schools: enrichment activities (56%) and athletics/fitness (54%).
- ◆ Middle school children were significantly more likely than elementary school children to participate in available homework help/tutoring activities (41% vs. 30%).

4. Barriers to Participating in Before/After School Activities

a. Reasons for Not Participating

Parents who said their children do not participate in a specific type of before/after school activity offered at the elementary and middle schools were asked for the reasons why their child was not participating in that activity. Responses are displayed in Figure IV.C.6 (see page 60).

As revealed in Figure IV.C.6:

- ◆ Relatively few elementary and middle school parents said their non-participating child did not participate due lack of availability, lack of transportation, the space available, the hours the program operated, cost, or quality.
- ◆ Parents of elementary and middle school students not participating in:
 - service clubs, athletics/fitness, and enrichment activities most often said it was because the child was not interested in the activities offered or he/she participated in this type of activity outside of the school; and

– homework help/tutoring activities said it was because the child did not need the help.

- ◆ Parents of middle school students were significantly more likely than elementary school parents to say children not participating in enrichment activities were not enrolled because their children were not interested in the activities offered.

Figure IV.C.6
Parents' Reasons for Child Not Participating in Offered Activities

	Elementary Schools					Middle Schools			
	Athletics/ Fitness (Base=102)	Child Care (Base=197)	Enrichment Activities (Base=137)	Homework Help/ Tutoring (Base=116)	Service Clubs (Base=129)	Athletics/ Fitness (Base=150)	Enrichment Activities (Base=129)	Homework Help/ Tutoring (Base=154)	Service Clubs (Base=105)
Child not interested	33%	0%	17%	1%	45%	44%	36%	3%	44%
Go to program/activity outside of school	21%	7%	25%	7%	23%	32%	31%	3%	26%
Age (child too old/young)	20%	1%	14%	8%	10%	1%	4%	0%	5%
No activities currently offered at the school	4%	0%	9%	3%	5%	8%	2%	1%	1%
Too busy with other activities	2%	0%	3%	1%	7%	2%	0%	1%	10%
No transportation available	2%	1%	1%	3%	2%	3%	10%	2%	4%
Capacity (no space available)	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	5%	2%	0%	3%
Need to expand hours	4%	1%	4%	3%	1%	2%	1%	0%	2%
Cost (parents can't afford)	3%	4%	11%	1%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Poor quality program/staff	4%	1%	1%	0%	3%	0%	4%	2%	2%
Not needed, parent home to care for child	1%	82%	6%	0%	0%	-	-	-	-
Child doesn't need homework help or tutoring	-	-	-	70%	-	-	-	87%	-
Other	8%	4%	11%	1%	3%	8%	15%	3%	6%

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

b. Likelihood of Enrolling in Added Activities

Parents who said specific types of before/after school activities were not offered at their schools were asked how likely their child would be to participate in these activities if they were available at the school. Responses are shown in Figure IV.C.7.

**Figure IV.C.7
Parents' Perceptions of Likelihood That Child Would Participate if
Before/After School Activities Were Offered at the School**

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Somewhat Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Total	
Elementary Schools						
Athletics/Fitness	58%	30%	5%	7%	100%	187
Enrichment Activities	56%	32%	5%	7%	100%	122
Homework Help/Tutoring	36%	29%	13%	21%	100%	232
Service Clubs	28%	47%	14%	11%	100%	134
Child Care	22%	18%	6%	54%	100%	131
Middle Schools						
Athletics/Fitness	50%	23%	14%	14%	100%	66
Enrichment Activities	42%	32%	17%	9%	100%	95
Homework Help/Tutoring	39%	27%	13%	22%	100%	134
Service Clubs	26%	38%	17%	19%	100%	193

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

As revealed in Figure IV.C.7:

- ◆ A large percentage of elementary and middle school parents said their child would be likely to participate in these various activities if they were to be made available at their child’s school. With the exception of child care, 64% - 88% of the elementary and middle school parents said their child would be at least somewhat likely to participate in the various activities if they were offered at their child’s school.
- ◆ A look at specific activities revealed that the children would be particularly likely to participate in before/after school athletics/fitness activities and enrichment activities, and least likely to express interest in new child care programs.

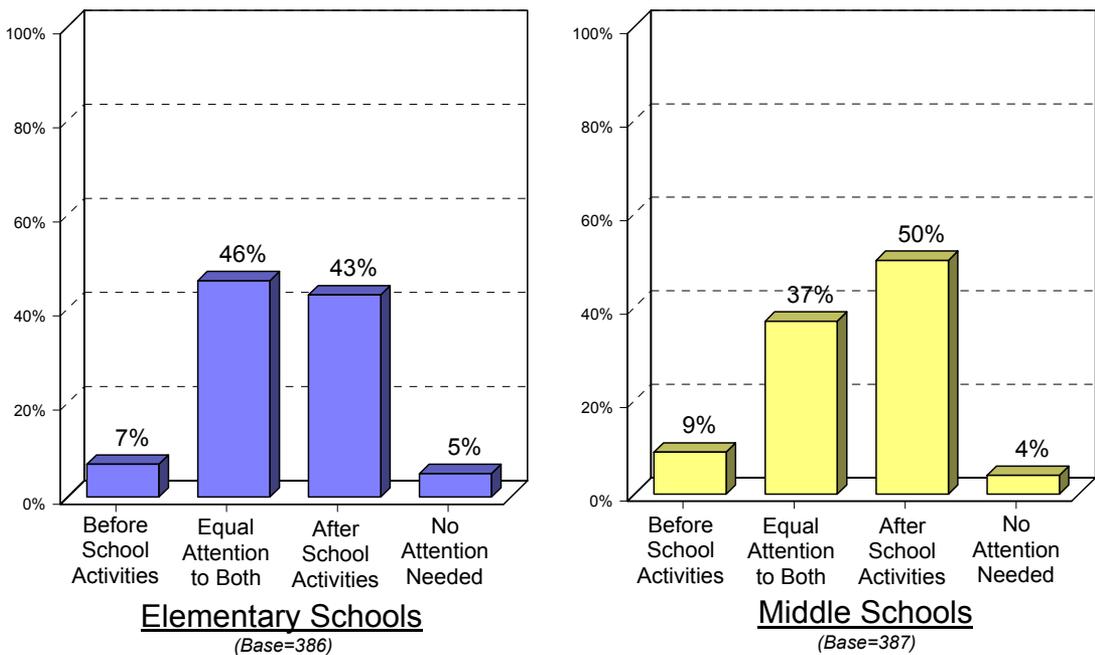
5. Improving Before/After School Activities

a. Before vs. After School Emphasis

Parents were asked whether efforts to improve/expand the before/after school activities at their child's school should focus more attention on before school activities, after school activities, or both equally. Responses are displayed in Figure IV.C.8.

Figure IV.C.8

Parents' Perceptions on Whether Schools Should Focus More Attention on Improving/Expanding Before or After School Programs at Elementary and Middle Schools



As shown in Figure IV.C.8:

- ◆ Both elementary and middle school parents were much more likely to say attention needed to be focused on after school activities than on before school activities (elementary schools, 43% vs. 7%; middle schools, 50% vs. 9%).
- ◆ A sizable percentage for both elementary (46%) and middle (37%) school parents said both equally.

b. Desired Changes to Before/After School Activities

For each type of before/after school activity offered at their child’s school, parents were asked whether they felt their child’s school needed to improve each by: starting new activities, improving the quality of the existing activities, expanding the hours the activities were offered, serving more students, or increasing program access to students with disabilities. Responses are shown in Figure IV.C.9.

**Figure IV.C.9
Parents' Perceptions of Needed Changes***

	Elementary Schools					Middle Schools			
	Athletics/ Fitness (Base=208)	Child Care (Base=265)	Enrichment Activities (Base=277)	Homework Help/ Tutoring (Base=166)	Service Clubs (Base=264)	Athletics/ Fitness (Base=334)	Enrichment Activities (Base=305)	Homework Help/ Tutoring (Base=265)	Service Clubs (Base=198)
Start New Program	41%	18%	46%	34%	27%	37%	30%	35%	28%
Expand Hours	31%	19%	35%	31%	23%	29%	26%	38%	21%
Serve More Students	40%	31%	43%	38%	35%	50%	43%	41%	31%
Improve Quality	32%	30%	37%	33%	27%	40%	38%	39%	27%
Increase Access to Students w/Disabilities	40%	26%	31%	32%	35%	42%	38%	35%	31%
No Change Need	21%	14%	18%	30%	29%	16%	14%	19%	32%

* Parents responding "don't know" are considered as not feeling a particular change is needed.
 Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

As shown in Figure IV.C.9:

- ◆ Parents of elementary school children were particularly interested in improving before/after school:
 - enrichment activities by starting new activities (46%) and serving more students (43%); and
 - athletics/fitness by starting new activities (41%), increasing access to students with disabilities (40%), and serving more students (40%).

- ◆ Parents of middle school children expressed particular interest in improving before/after school:
 - enrichment activities by serving more students (43%), improving the quality (38%), and increasing access to students with disabilities (38%);
 - athletics/fitness by serving more students (50%), increasing access to students with disabilities (42%), and improving their quality (40%); and
 - homework help/tutoring by serving more students (41%), improving the quality (39%), and expanding the hours (38%).

Parents who said they wanted the school to start new enrichment activities were asked to specify the types of enrichment activities they would like to see added. Their responses are displayed in Figure IV.C.10.

Figure IV.C.10
New Enrichment Activities Parents Would Like Added

	Elementary Schools <i>(Base=112)</i>	Middle Schools <i>(Base=75)</i>
The Arts	51%	49%
Academic Clubs	36%	37%
Computer Club	12%	7%
Social Development Programs/Clubs	11%	6%
Foreign Language Clubs	10%	4%
More Variety	7%	10%
Other Clubs	7%	8%
Morning Programs	2%	10%
Peer Run Programs	4%	4%
Other	8%	21%

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both elementary and middle schools.

As displayed in Figure IV.C.10:

- ◆ About one-half of elementary and middle school parents want new enrichment activities in “the arts.” These parents were interested in having music, art, and drama clubs/activities available to their children.
- ◆ Other types of enrichment activities suggested by parents included: academic clubs, computer club, social development programs/clubs, and foreign language clubs.
- ◆ Middle school parents suggested morning programs more often than elementary school parents (10% vs. 2%).

6. Designing a New Before/After School Program

a. Most Important Activities for a New Before/After School Program

Respondents were asked which of the basic types of before/after school activities they would choose 1st, 2nd, or 3rd for a brand new before/after school program at their child’s school.

Responses are displayed in Figure IV.C.11.

**Figure IV.C.11
Parents' Desired Activities for a New
Before/After School Program**

	Elementary School Program (Base=396)		Middle School Program (Base=395)	
	Total Points*	Rank	Total Points*	Rank
Enrichment Activities	691	1	673	2
Homework Help/Tutoring	687	2	741	1
Athletics/Fitness	551	3	597	3
Service Clubs	219	4	341	4
Child Care	203	5	-	-

* Total points are based on: three points for first, two points for second, and one point for third.

As revealed in Figure IV.C.11:

- ◆ Though the order is reversed, elementary and middle school parents felt it was most important for the school to have before/after school programs offering enrichment activities (1st for elementary school parents, and 2nd for middle school parents) and homework help/tutoring (1st for middle school parents and 2nd for elementary school parents).
- ◆ Athletics/fitness activities was third for both elementary and middle school parents.
- ◆ Far fewer parents said child care and service clubs.

b. Desired Hours and Days

Respondents were asked at what time they felt after school programs should run until, and how many days a week before/after school programs should be offered. Responses are shown in Figure IV.C.12 (see page 67).

As shown in Figure IV.C.12:

- ◆ Parents of elementary school children required longer programs than the middle school parents. Specifically, 68% of the middle school parents would have their needs met if the program ended by 5:00 p.m., compared to only 43% of the elementary school parents.
- ◆ About one-third (35%) of the elementary school parents said the program should run until 6:00 p.m., compared to only 22% of the middle school parents.
- ◆ The majority of the parents preferred to have the program run five days per week (elementary school parents, 57%; and middle school parents, 44%).

**Figure IV.C.12
Parents' Preferred Scheduling
for a Before/After School Program**

	Elementary School Parents	Middle School Parents
Time of Day Run Until*	<i>(Base=393)</i>	<i>(Base=392)</i>
Earlier than 4:00 p.m.	1%	3%
4:00 p.m.	4%	14%
4:30 p.m.	11%	14%
5:00 p.m.	27%	37%
5:30 p.m.	14%	8%
6:00 p.m.	35%	22%
6:30 p.m.	4%	1%
Later than 6:30 p.m.	4%	2%
Number of Days Programs Should be Available*	<i>(Base=396)</i>	<i>(Base=397)</i>
1 Day	1%	1%
2 Days	9%	8%
3 Days	20%	27%
4 Days	13%	20%
5 Days	57%	44%

* Statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary schools and middle schools.

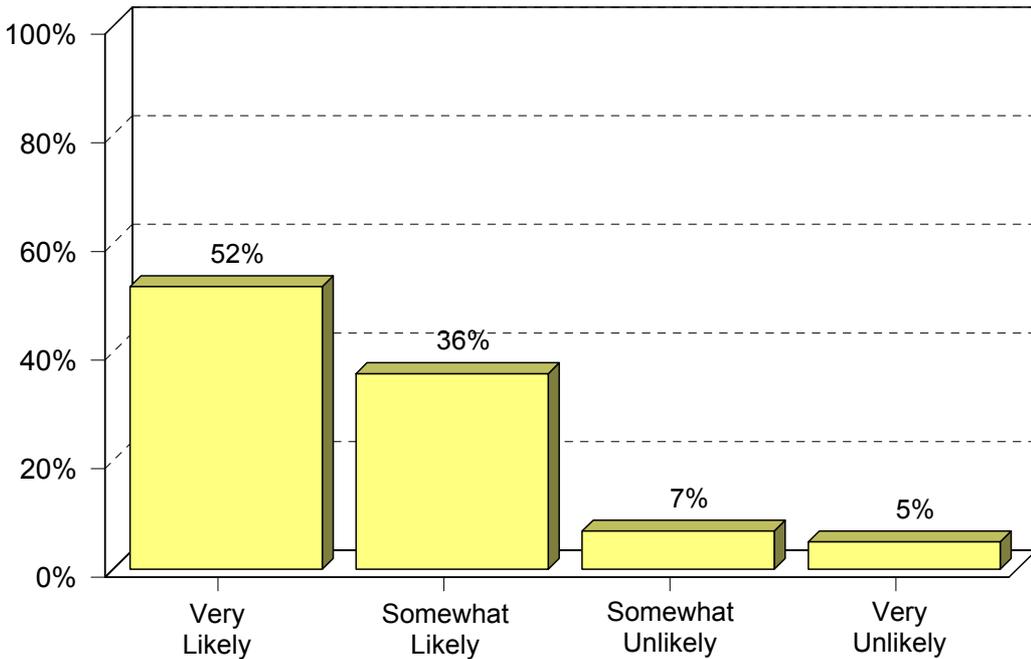
c. Interest in a Multi-faceted Middle School Program

Parents of middle school children were asked how likely their child would be to enroll in an after school program, operated at the school Monday - Friday, that offered a wide variety of activities. Responses are displayed in Figure IV.C.13 (see page 68).

As shown in Figure IV.C.13:

- ◆ One-half (52%) of the parents said their child would be “very likely” to enroll in a multi-faceted program, and another 36% said “somewhat likely.”
- ◆ Only 12% said it was “somewhat” (7%) or “very” (5%) unlikely that their child would enroll.

Figure IV.C.13
Parents' Perceptions of Likelihood that Middle School Children
Would Enroll in a Multi-faceted Daily Before/After School Program
(Base=387)



7. Comparison of 2001 to 1990 Elementary School Parent Survey Findings

This section of the report displays key differences when contrasting 2001 and 1990 parent survey findings. As a reminder, the 1990 survey focused solely on elementary schools so comparisons are provided for elementary schools only.

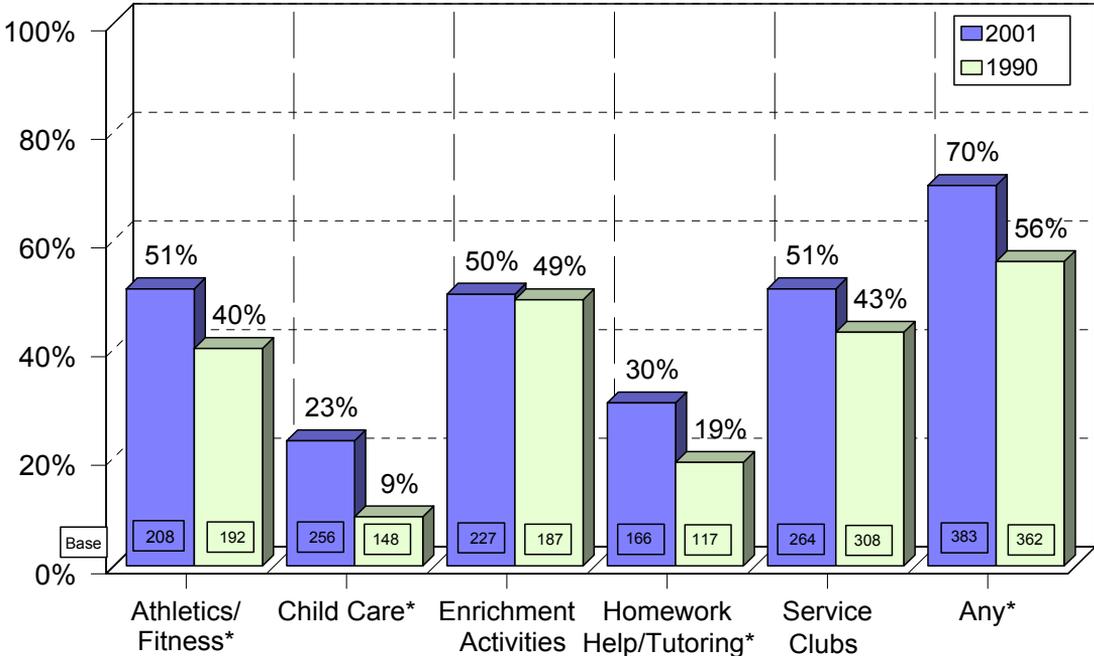
Provided in this section are comparisons regarding: perceived access to before/after school activities, enrollment of children in available before/after school activities, preferred location of before/after school activities (school vs. elsewhere), perceived need to improve/enhance existing activities, and rank order prioritizing of specific types of activities in a before/after school program.

A comparison of the 2001 and 1990 elementary school parent responses to the question on the availability of before/after school activities at their children’s schools revealed that a somewhat,

but not significantly, larger percentage of 2001 than 1990 parents said their child’s schools offered at least one of the before/after school activities (97% vs. 91%).

Figure IV.C.14 displays the percentage of parents who said their elementary school children participate in before/after school activities offered at their school.

Figure IV.C.14
Percentage of Parents Whose Children Participate if Before/After School Activities are Available at the School



* Statistically significant difference (.05) between 2001 and 1990.

As revealed in Figure IV.C.14:

- ◆ A significantly larger percentage of 2001 than 1990 parents said their elementary school child enrolled in at least one of the before/after school activities offered at the child’s school (70% vs. 56%).
- ◆ With the exception of enrichment activities, which remained about the same, a greater percentage of 2001 than 1990 parents said their child participated in each of the available elementary school before/after school activities. Differences were statistically significant for child care (23% vs. 9%), athletics/fitness (51% vs. 40%), and homework

help/tutoring (30% vs. 19%), and sizable, though not quite significant, for service clubs (51% vs. 43%).

Figure IV.C.15 displays parents' preferences for the location of before/after school activities.

**Figure IV.C.15
Parents' Preferred Location for Different Types of
Before/After School Activities**

	2001 <i>(Base=394-399)</i>			1990 <i>(Base=395-399)</i>		
	At School	Elsewhere	No Preference	At School	Elsewhere	No Preference
Homework Help/Tutoring	84%	1%	16%	78%	1%	20%
Enrichment Activities	82%	1%	17%	74%	2%	24%
Athletics/Fitness	71%	2%	27%	71%	2%	28%
Child Care	74%	2%	24%	59%	6%	35%
Service Clubs	60%	3%	37%	52%	5%	43%

Note: A statistically significant difference (.05) between elementary and middle schools is indicated by shading the numbers for both 2001 and 1990.

Figure IV.C.15 reveals that:

- ◆ While both 2001 and 1990 respondents typically preferred having all of the different types of before/after school activities located at the school, a higher percentage of the 2001 respondents preferred these activities at the schools than did 1990 respondents.
- ◆ Differences were significant for: child care (74% vs. 59%), enrichment activities (82% vs. 74%), homework help/tutoring (84% vs. 78%), and service clubs (60% vs. 52%).

A comparison of the 2001 and 1990 elementary school parent responses desiring specific changes to before/after school activities at their child's school revealed that 2001 respondents were typically less likely than 1990 respondents to say that they thought it was necessary to increase the capacity and improve the quality of the various before/after school activities.

Figure IV.C.16 displays parents' rank order priorities for including specific activities in a new elementary school before/after school program.

**Figure IV.C.16
Parents' Desired Activities for a New Elementary School
Before/After School Program**

	2001 (Base=396)		1990 (Base=398)	
	Total Points*	Rank	Total Points*	Rank
Enrichment Activities	691	1	680	1
Homework Help/Tutoring	687	2	584	3
Athletics/Fitness	551	3	617	2
Service Clubs	219	4	184	5
Child Care	203	5	323	4

* Total points are based on: three points for first, two points for second, and one point for third.

As shown in Figure IV.C.16:

- ◆ In 2001, parents said that enrichment activities were most important for designing a new before/after school program, with homework help/tutoring a very close 2nd and athletics/fitness 3rd.
- ◆ In 1990, enrichment activities were also 1st, but athletics/fitness activities were 2nd and homework help/tutoring 3rd.

V. MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS

This section of the report describes: (a) the methodology used for the focus groups; (b) the research objectives addressed by the focus groups; and (c) the findings from the focus groups.

A. Methodology

Spectrum Associates conducted a total of four focus groups. Two groups were conducted in Wethersfield, Connecticut with suburban and rural middle school students⁸ and two groups were held in North Haven, Connecticut with students attending New Haven middle schools⁹. In each location, one group was held with girls and one with boys. All participants were in middle school, grades 5 – 8. Each group included six to nine participants, and was 1½ hours in duration.

The focus groups were facilitated by Ms. Wynne Tyree, a moderator who specializes in conducting focus groups with children.

B. Research Objectives

The specific objectives for the focus groups were to explore:

- ◆ The formal and informal activities middle school students engage in after school (Section V.C.1).
- ◆ The reasons why middle school students participate or don't participate in formal after school activities (Section V.C.2).
- ◆ The criteria middle school students use to differentiate good and bad after school activities (Section V.C.3).

⁸ Participants represented middle schools from 15 different towns: Andover, Bolton, Canton, Cromwell, Durham, Enfield, Glastonbury, Manchester, Middletown, Newington, Rocky Hill, South Windsor, Wethersfield, Windsor, and West Hartford.

⁹ Participants represented nine different middle schools: Betsy Ross Arts School, Conte West Hills Magnet, East Rock Global Studies, Edgewood, Fair Haven Middle, Jackie Robinson Middle, Nathan Hale, Roberto Clemente Middle, and Worthington Hooker.

- ◆ Middle school students' preferences for the location of after school activities (i.e., at the school or elsewhere) and the reasons for their preference (Section V.C.4).
- ◆ Middle school students' perceptions of the importance of middle school students participating in organized after school activities (Section V.C.5).
- ◆ The role that middle school students want to have in designing after school programs for their schools (Section V.C.6).
- ◆ Middle school students' thoughts on what should be included when designing an after school program at their school (Section V.C.7).

C. Focus Group Findings

WORD OF CAUTION

Spectrum Associates cautions the reader to keep in mind that this section of the report is based on qualitative research methods and, as such, the findings can not be statistically extrapolated from the sample to the target populations. Rather, the reader should use the findings in the spirit in which they are intended -- to provide *indications* of the behaviors, attitudes and opinions of middle school students.

1. *What Middle School Students Do After School*

Participants were asked several questions on what they do during their after school hours. The moderator first asked participants what they do after they get out of school, and if they participated in organized after school activities. Those that participated in organized activities were asked: how many days a week they participated in these activities, how long these activities usually lasted, whether they participated throughout the year or only part of the year, and where they went for these activities (i.e., school or elsewhere). The focus groups revealed the following.

- ◆ Almost all of the middle school students in the four focus groups said that they participated in organized after school activities during the school year.

- ◆ In both locations, the girls were more involved in organized after school activities than were the boys, and participated in a wider variety of formal activities. Specifically:
 - The girls mentioned: various sports teams and intramural sports activities (e.g., basketball, soccer, softball, volleyball, hockey, track), watching school basketball/baseball games, dance lessons, singing clubs and choirs, orchestra, instrument lessons, cheerleading, gymnastics, ski club, swimming, student council, volunteering, and helping the teacher. When not participating in formal after school activities they were: hanging out with friends, doing homework, babysitting, watching television, going online, reading, doing chores, riding their bike, or talking on the telephone.
 - Most of the boys said their after school activities consisted primarily of different types of sports, and when they were not playing organized sports they were usually hanging out with friends, playing sports in the neighborhood, skateboarding, listening to music, going online, playing videogames, watching television, doing homework, or sleeping.
- ◆ While many girls in both groups said they participated frequently in organized after school activities, the girls in the suburban/rural focus group engaged in more organized after school activities than did the girls in New Haven. Specifically, seven of the nine girls in the suburban/rural group said they participate in organized after school activities four or five days a week, compared to four of the eight girls in the New Haven group.
- ◆ The participants listed after school activities that were available at their school, elsewhere, and both. Specifically:
 - Activities conducted at the school included: cheerleading, orchestra, sports, plays, singing group, ski club, student council, and helping teachers.
 - Activities conducted elsewhere included: dance lessons, gymnastics, plays, music instrument lessons, sports, choir, arts & crafts, and volunteering.

- ◆ Most of the after school activities take about 1½ to 2 hours, though some are longer and some students do more than one thing in the same day.
- ◆ The sports teams, plays, and skiing/snowboarding activities were described as seasonal, whereas many other activities (e.g., dance lessons, music lessons, cheerleading, orchestra, singing group, reading club) were said to be year-round activities.

Representative verbatim responses are provided below.

What Students Do After School

Girls

- “I usually babysit and cheerleading practice and gymnastics.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Usually on Tuesdays, I went to dance and I’d go watch the baseball games, the basketball games and stuff.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “In the winter, I did ski club because I snowboarded. I do dance, soccer.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “I did the volleyball team and swimming. I did intramural soccer and intramural basketball.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Depending on the season, I have softball, basketball or soccer. Then, every Wednesday, I have orchestra. Violin.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “On Mondays, I had an after school singing group, a special audition kind of thing. Every Sunday and Wednesday, I had play rehearsal at the Jewish Community Center.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “I have lessons for flute.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “I did cross country and student council and pretty much everything else I did is up there.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “I didn’t really go to the after school activities, but I knew about them. It’s kind of like two or three days. (The school has) something on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. They’d have basketball on Fridays. Just different activities that you’d do. I usually do my homework and then watch TV and stuff.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “I stay after school and do the after school program. Basketball after school program or I get help from a teacher or something.” (Urban)
- “I have soccer practice, play baseball. I have after school programs. Basketball, hockey, soccer. That’s it. I watch TV. I go on the Internet. I go over to my friend’s house to see her dog.” (Urban)
- “During basketball season, I have basketball games. I have softball games. I have track practice in my school.” (Urban)

- “I went to dancing school. Four days a week. I was volunteering at Lincoln Basset Elementary School. I read sometimes.” (Urban)
- “I usually go over a friend’s house or go (watch) a baseball game.” (Urban)
- “I was in a play at my school.” (Urban)
- “I get the mail and bring it in and separate it. I get right on the phone and do my homework at the same time I’m talking. And watch TV.” (Urban)
- “I play outside with my friends and ride my bike until it’s time to go in the house.” (Urban)
- “I go on my computer and watch TV.” (Urban)
- “I babysit my nephew.” (Urban)
- “I hang out with my friends after school.” (Urban)
- “I just go to the beach with my friends and hang out. I ride my bike.” (Urban)

Boys

- “I play basketball.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Listen to music.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Skateboard.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Hockey.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “I do a little bit of skateboarding and I listen to music.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Football.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Swim. I recreationally swim.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Fence.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Football (in the neighborhood) and bike ride.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Listen to music and skateboard a little bit.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Hang out with friends.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Sleep.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Homework.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Watch TV.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Go on computer. Instant messaging.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Play video games.” (Suburban/Rural)

- “Soccer.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Talk on the phone.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Ski in the winter.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Practicing violin with my music teacher. Do my homework. I do my compass learning. It’s a program where it has math, reading, English, everything. I get extra credit for doing it after school. Help clean up my teacher’s room. I clean the rabbit’s cage. Reading Club.” (Urban)
- “Monday through Friday, the same thing. Get off the bus, go home, get something to eat, do homework, go back outside, do whatever (friends are) doing, go back inside, eat, talk on the phone until about 10 and go to sleep. Hang out with my cousins.” (Urban)
- “Come home, usually watch TV, or go onto the Internet. Do my homework. Go outside and ride my bike around the neighborhood. Go over my friend’s house. Come home, eat dinner, and go on the Internet again.” (Urban)
- “I stay at school sometimes, either I’m like playing with girls or I’m helping teachers or if I have homework I go to one of my teachers and they help me at school or whatever. I do my project, science project. It’s part of my school grade. Monday I’ll run track and Monday and Tuesdays I play basketball or sometimes football or baseball. I go home on the city bus. I go play basketball down at the park.” (Urban)
- “I don’t really do anything after school. Most of the time, I just go to sleep. By 3:30 I’m on the school bus, by 4:30 I’m getting home, by 4:30 – 5:00 I go to Jackie Robinson to visit an old teacher and then I go home. I watch TV from 5:00 to 8:00, and then I go to sleep. That’s like Monday through Wednesday and Thursday and Friday I go to my friend’s house after school. And stay there until like 9:30, then I go home, eat and go to sleep.” (Urban)
- “After school I have baseball practice, if I don’t have baseball practice I go to my friend’s house. Go on the computer. Listen to music and eat.” (Urban)

Time Spent Participating in After School Activities

Girls

- “Sometimes it’s an hour. Other times, it’s two hours. It depends on what you’re doing.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “During volleyball season, I had volleyball and then right after, I had to go to swim meets. By the time I got home, it was like 6:30 or seven o’clock. Then I had to eat dinner and do all my homework. It was kind of hard.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “It really depends on the season. Sometimes it can be from two or three hours and then other times, it can be one or two.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Mine takes two hours. Some of them take two hours. My baseball game starts at six and sometimes it ends at nine. My soccer practice is an hour and then a half hour.” (Urban)

- “My softball games are an hour-and-a-half. My basketball games are two hours.” (Urban)
- “We get out at 1:45 and I usually used to stay (and help the teacher) until 4:00.” (Urban)
- “Each (dance) class is an hour, but as you get closer and closer to recital, they start to be five hours. They do it for rehearsals so you have to stay for the whole thing.” (Urban)
- “(Art and pottery class is) two hours.” (Urban)
- “Soccer is an hour-and-a-half.” (Urban)

Boys

- “Two hours. Soccer and hockey are about two hours to 2½ hours.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “2½ hours. Football.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “About an hour.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Two hours.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Two to three hours.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Once I get out of class at 3:15, then I go straight to Ms. Casmin and I stay there until 4:30. And then after 4:30 to about 4:45 I do my homework because it’s not that much and after that I do compass learning. At the school until 8:00 p.m. We have dance class, we have drama.” (Urban)
- “It could be a good hour or two.” (Urban)
- “The yearbook is from 3:15 to 4:15.” (Urban)
- “(Get out at) 1:45 and then I go to baseball for about three or four hours and sometimes I play football after that.” (Urban)

Seasonality of Participation

Girls

- “If you do a sport, usually there’s a fall sport and a winter sport and a spring sport or spring whatever. In the fall, I did cross-country. In the winter, I did cheerleading. Then in the spring, I did the play. I think that I’m probably more active (than most kids). Usually a person does two things. Usually someone plays soccer and then softball. That’s most of the girls in our grade, in our school, do that. But not many do activities all year round. Usually in the winter, no one really does anything, because our school only offers basketball and cheerleading for the girls and basketball and wrestling for the guys. Not many people do those.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “I have flute lessons and I have that all year long.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Singing is all year round, all the school year. Dance was all year round, too.” (Suburban/Rural)

- “The play rehearsals. Sometimes they do a spring play, sometimes they do a fall play. It’s never both. It’s in a season, because they don’t really take nine months or anything.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Swimming is from October to March, and then starts back up in May and then goes until the beginning of August. A winter season and a summer season.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Cheerleading (can be year round). If you go to competition, then it’s basically all year long, between practicing and basketball and everything.” (Suburban/Rural)

Boys

- “Basketball, football, baseball (are seasonal).” (Urban)
- “Track and Field (is seasonal).” (Urban)
- “Violin practice isn’t seasonal.” (Urban)
- “Reading club is all year.” (Urban)
- “The yearbook is not all year.” (Urban)

2. Reasons for Participating or Not Participating in After School Activities

a. Why Students Participate in After School Activities

Middle school students who participated in after school activities were asked why. Their responses revealed:

- ◆ Middle school students participate in after school activities for a wide variety of reasons.
- ◆ The most frequent reasons given for participating in after school activities were: (1) the specific activity is fun, interesting, and enjoyable; (2) they feel like they are accomplishing something (e.g., “learn new things,” “keeps me thinking,” “challenging,” “doing something with my time,” “educational”); and (3) it enables them to stay in shape (different sports activities).
- ◆ Boys and girls in the New Haven focus group also said they participate in the activities to stay out of trouble (e.g., “keeps them off the street,” “not get into drugs,” “don’t go to juvenile,” “don’t do violence”).

- ◆ The girls in the suburban/rural group added that after school activities are an “escape” (e.g., “don’t have too worry,” “forget about your troubles,” escape from social or family problems), parents sometimes pressure them to participate in certain activities, and they sometimes do things because their friends are doing them.
- ◆ Several of the girls in the urban group said they participate so they don’t need to go home (e.g., “boring,” “mother yells at you,” avoid chores and responsibilities).
- ◆ Other reasons mentioned by the focus group participants were to: go on field trips, meet new people, get extra credit at school, help people, compete, and play rough.

Representative verbatim responses are provided below.

Enjoyment/Fun/Interest

Girls

- “Because it’s something that you like to do. Because sometimes your parents influence you to do something.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Well, (I take piano because) I really enjoy music.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Because it’s an interest that you like to do. It’s what you like to do for fun.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Because it’s fun. Sometimes it’s because you’re good at it. Other times it’s just fun.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “For me, fun is if I’m laughing a lot or smiling.” (Urban)
- “As long as you don’t have pencil and paper, that means it’s fun.” (Urban)
- “It’s something that you want to do and that you enjoy doing instead of being forced to do something.” (Urban)

Boys

- “Because it is fun. I like to do it.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Because I am good at it.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Because it’s excitement and it’s fun. You enjoy it. Like you’re having fun, (you) like playing.” (Urban)
- “To me it’s like if you’re having fun, when it’s something you really like and you want to be there and you’re enjoying it with other people.” (Urban)

Accomplish/Learn Things

Girls

- “Piano. I just like playing. It’s fun for me. It’s interesting. Sometimes it makes you feel like you’ve accomplished something.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Sports, I’m actually doing something, instead of just sitting on a log.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “(I do gymnastics) because I’ve been doing it since I was five years old, so I just got used to doing it. You learn new things, like a back handspring and stuff.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “This probably doesn’t go to most people, but it sort of does to me. To keep my mind open, I guess. If I sit at home, I would be online for three hours and not doing anything, but if I was there, even after then, I would start to read more or do something else to keep me thinking and not just sitting there. Participation.” (Urban)

Boys

- “Doing something with my time.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “It’s educational. And I like violin because it challenges me to read the music and practice.” (Urban)
- “Make you do better, challenging for me too. Hanging out and try new things.” (Urban)

Stay in Shape/Exercise

Girls

- “When I do sports, I feel like I’m in shape.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “For exercise mostly. It keeps you in shape. I want to be healthy. I don’t eat things that aren’t healthy.” (Urban)
- “We don’t want to get fat.” (Urban)
- “I do all these sports because I was a Popeye cartoon freak and I was trying to get my muscles like his. After I stopped liking Popeye, I just liked the sports and I got good muscles.” (Urban)

Boys

- “Stay in shape. Like if you play a sport for a couple of months, you stay in shape.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Basketball gives you exercise.” (Suburban/Rural)

Stay Out of Trouble

Girls

- “To keep us off the street.” (Urban)
- “To some people, it means to help us not get into drugs or to keep us safe.” (Urban)
- “Out of trouble.” (Urban)

Boys

- “To stay out of trouble. Don’t go home and do bad things like don’t go to juvenile. Stay out of the street.” (Urban)
- “Keeps you so you don’t do violence.” (Urban)

Release/Escape

Girls

- “I do the play, because it’s kind of like a rush I get when I do it and it’s kind of neat. Yes, I get that when I’m dancing. Dancing, for me, is kind of like a release thing.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “I think for me it’s like I’m a different person. I don’t have to worry about homework, grades and school.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “If you’re at home and having trouble and stuff, you just go to dance or something and kind of just forget about it.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Because you just forget everything else and just concentrate on what you’re doing. (Can escape from) family problems or social things or whatever.” (Suburban/Rural)

Parental Pressure

Girls

- “Our cheerleading team at school is kind of pathetic, so my friend and I said I think it’d be cool if we could do flips and stuff, but we don’t. We’re awful. My friend and I just kind of wanted to see what it was like and my mom wouldn’t let me quit because she felt that I had a commitment to it.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “(Can’t quit) things (we started) and that they have to pay for. I take music lessons and I don’t like my teacher, but I have to have her for like a year because they paid a lot of money to have her.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “My parents are making me play my instrument through high school. I don’t know why. I told them that I want to quit and they’re like, you can’t quit. I think it’s that they like it or something.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Like my sister, my mom wanted her to work with mentally challenged people, so that when she goes to college, it will look better on her transcripts.” (Suburban/Rural)

Everyone/Friends Doing It

Girls

- “Usually, for school activities, it’s because it’s involved with the school and everything. Everyone does it. Like for cheerleading, there was like 200 people who tried out. It was just something, since everyone else is doing it, why don’t I try it?” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Because your friends are doing it.” (Suburban/Rural)

So Don’t Need to Go Home

Girls

- “I don’t want to go home after school because it’s boring.” (Urban)
- “Sometimes you don’t feel like hearing your mother yell at you.” (Urban)
- “You don’t have to go sit home and watch TV.” (Urban)
- “To avoid some of the responsibilities at home, like chores, babysitting, dishes.” (Urban)

b. Reasons for Not Participating in After School Activities

Participants were asked why some students at their schools do not participate in after school activities. Participants were asked specially if transportation or cost were barriers to participation. We found:

- ◆ Participants indicated that most students participate in organized activities, but that some do not or may only do one activity.
- ◆ Students listed a variety of reasons why some students do not participate in after school activities, but none of the reasons given stood out as major barriers (including cost and transportation).
- ◆ Reasons given for students not participating included:
 - needing time to relax;
 - having a lot of homework;
 - not finding the activities to be fun or interesting;
 - not finding out about activities;

- always want to look nice (girls only);
- friends not participating;
- having family obligations;
- don't feel they are good at it;
- afraid they will get into trouble at the activity;
- being lazy;
- transportation; and
- cost.

3. Differentiating Good vs. Bad After School Activities

Participants were asked questions to try to determine what distinguishes a good from a bad after school activity. These questions revealed that middle school students do not want to attend after school activities that:

- ◆ are run by adults who are very controlling and strict (e.g., “hovering over you,” “say do this and do that,” and don't give students a say in what they do);
- ◆ are too much like school (e.g., activity is working on school subjects like math club, need to “use your head”) as school is “boring enough”;
- ◆ are dorky and filled with nerds;
- ◆ are boring; and
- ◆ make them sit at a desk rather than move around.

Representative verbatim responses on “bad activities” are provided below.

Adults Too Controlling/Too Strict

- “Cheerleading was bad for us, because our captain wouldn't listen to us. Then we weren't allowed to change our routines. We have kind of lame ones and a lot of us wanted to change them, but our coach wouldn't let us. It was kind of lame.” (Suburban/Rural Girl)
- “It's when there's an adult like hovering over you, watching your every move kind of thing.” (Suburban/Rural Girl)

- “(Saying) don’t do this, and don’t do that.” (Suburban/Rural Girl)
- “It’s really important (that we have a say).” (Suburban/Rural Girl)
- “Too many adults and you have to do everything right. If you’re doing math or something and you have to do it right or you have to redo it. If you’re doing a sport, then you can just mess up and just keep going.” (Suburban/Rural Girl)
- “You probably never heard of this, but it’s a thing called Wu Shu, like Karate. A friend of mine says that the teacher is always yelling if you do something wrong.” (Urban Girl)
- “It just depends on how hard the teacher is, if they’re strict or if they’re not.” (Urban Girl)
- “They ask for suggestions but they don’t even say anything.” (Suburban/Rural Boy)
- “We have a suggestion box and at the end of the week they throw them all out.” (Suburban/Rural Boy)

Too Much Like School

- “(Don’t like it) if it’s like school.” (Suburban/Rural Girl)
- “(Not interested in) Math Counts. I’d say because you go to school all day. You don’t want to go after school. You want to do more stuff that you wouldn’t get to do during school.” (Suburban/Rural Girl)
- “If you’re at school and you’re in cross country club or something like that, that you don’t get to do during the day. You don’t get to go outside or run track during the day, so people like that. But with Math Counts, you sit at a desk and do math problems, when you already had math that day.” (Suburban/Rural Girl)
- “Tiring. Because you have to use your head and you’re already out of school and you don’t want to do that. You use your brain for the whole day and then after school, they want you to use it again. Give me a break.” (Urban Girl)
- “School is boring enough.” (Urban Girl)
- “Because I go to math class at school. Why would I want to be in math club after school?” (Urban Boy)

4. Preferred Location for After School Activities

Participants were asked if they preferred to go to after school activities at the school or located elsewhere, and why. We found:

- ◆ Participants typically felt it was okay to have activities at the school, but many preferred to have them somewhere else.

- ◆ Reasons given for preferring other locations were: they are at school all day, there are better accommodations other places, teachers are always on their backs, don't need to always behave, and teachers are "annoying."

Representative verbatim responses are provided below.

Girls

- "That's fine (to have it at school)." (Suburban/Rural)
- "It's okay (to be at school)." (Suburban/Rural)
- "Teachers always on your back. Oh, you can't dance like this. You can't do that or you'll be kicked out." (Suburban/Rural)
- "Better accommodations at other places." (Suburban/Rural)
- "You spend your day at school, you don't want to be there any more time than that." (Suburban/Rural)
- "It's usually more fun to go somewhere (else) than to stay (at school)." (Suburban/Rural)

Boys

- "(Prefer activities) away from school." (Suburban/Rural)
- "We see enough (school) during the day. Six hours is enough." (Suburban/Rural)
- "We just want to forget about (school). It is not a good memory." (Suburban/Rural)
- "As long as we can talk and don't have to behave (it can be at the school)." (Urban)
- "They say that if you come after school, you can have fun and do all this stuff, then you try to walk around and they yell at you." (Urban)
- "It depends on where you go. (If we're away from the school) there could be less rules. It could be more fun. Be more free." (Urban)
- "The teacher won't be all in your business, like what are you doing for this club and this and that." (Urban)
- "Because I don't like any of my teachers, they are very annoying." (Urban)

5. *Perceived Importance of After School Activities*

Participants were asked if they felt it was important for middle schools students to participate in organized after school activities. While participants typically did not feel it was critical, many indicated that they thought it would be good for students to do so. Specifically, the middle school students said participation keeps them out of trouble, gives them something to do, and keeps them away from peer pressures.

Representative verbatim responses are provided below.

Girls

- “Usually, the popular people are always involved with like basketball or whatever. The people who don’t do it are the lazy or whatever.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “In my school, it’s the way it is at my school. People, if they want to go home and watch TV, if that makes them happy, then let them go do that. People might think different of them, but no one’s going to say, ‘Oh, you’re bad because of this.’ It’s just the way it is.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Important. Because you can either hang out with your friends that you didn’t get to see during school or it can keep you out of the streets and from doing different things or even killing yourself. Serious. A little boy hung himself on Lilac Street the other day.” (Urban)

Boys

- “I think it is (important) because it keeps you out of trouble.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “It gives you exercise.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Because you get to do something.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “It’s important. It keeps you out of trouble.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “I think it’s important because most kids start to get into drugs and stuff and smoking and drinking. And when you’re at school, or whatever, participating in something you won’t have to worry about having to run home after school and someone trying to beat you up.” (Urban)
- “Because at my age, I’m 14 going to be 15, most of the pressure now is like peer pressure. To pressure you to do like different things like drugs, alcohol, sex, or other type of stuff. And after school programs keep you away from the peer pressures, that you learn how to control yourself, this way if you do get pressured, you’ll know exactly what to do, when to do it and how to do it.” (Urban)

- “My cousins they have problems with people, like fighting problems and if I come home I have to be in there fighting for my cousin. One night I was trying to go to a party, then my cousin saw this boy he don’t like, he’s going to go up there and punch him because he don’t like him.” (Urban)
- “Basically, same reason, to stay out of trouble.” (Urban)
- “It helps you for the grade you’re in, and then after for the next level you’re going to, academically.” (Urban)

6. Desired Role in Designing After School Activities

Participants were asked if students should have a role in designing after school programs at school, and what type of role they want students to have. We found:

- ◆ Middle school students want to have a role, and believe if they are involved in designing the programs students will better relate to the activities.
- ◆ Participants suggested that middle school students: make suggestions on what activities are offered, participate in organizing the activities, and help run the activities.

Representative verbatim responses are provided below.

Girls

- “There’s a youth group at my synagogue and you do an activity once a month or something. We do get to have a say. There’s a chapter leader who’s an adult and then you have board members. I just became some assistant of programming or something, so now I get to help decide the events and stuff. That, they let you say what you want to do and where you want to do it kind of thing. That’s a better activity, because you get to decide. It’s not some adult saying, ‘Let’s go to the Science Center.’ We can go on a haunted hayride or anything like that. I like it when people listen to me.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “We can suggest after school programs and they can organize them and put them together.” (Urban)
- “They should let the kids organize it and pick what (musical) instruments that they want to learn. Have a say in it.” (Urban)

Boys

- “If an adult is making it up it is going to be what they like.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Plus they are going to be like, this is what we liked to do when we were kids and times change.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Like (should) have a kid committee. A committee that says what do you think we should have.” (Urban)

- “Better ideas. So the kids can relate to the subject they are doing, instead of a teacher’s point of view.” (Urban)
- “The students should be able to help run the group also. Like last year I ran a drill program with one of my friends and the students actually helped make stuff.” (Urban)

7. Participants’ Ideal After School Program for Their School

Participants were asked to describe their ideal after school program. We found:

◆ Middle school students want:

- An after school program that offers a wide range of activities they can choose from rather than one specific activity, and the option to do different things the same day.
- Activities that reflect their interests (e.g., dancing to hip-hop, skateboarding, basketball), rather than what adults think they should be doing.
- To take trips as part of the program.
- Outdoor and sports activities.

◆ Some additional interesting suggestions were to:

- Have activities run by high school students (e.g., old enough to supervise, young enough for them to relate to).
- Include students from different schools and towns (meet new people, promote diversity).
- Have students vote on the activities to be included in the program.

Representative verbatim responses are provided below.

Girls

- “I said kind of like a camp kind of place. You’d be separated into groups, by age, and it would be from all over, not necessarily from your school, or from your town, even. Just from all over the place. Your counselor-type people, the head of your group, would be a high schooler or something, so that you can kind of relate to them and they’re not an adult yet, but they’re still older than you. You just have a bunch of activities and your group picks one or two per session and then you go there and learn all about it. I used soccer and photography as one. Soccer, you play for half the time and then photography, you could take a bunch of pictures of all your new friends and then develop them and stuff. I said that the benefit of this would be that you meet new people. You get to choose your activities each session. And you get to explore new things, not necessarily what you would normally do, but you would do new things.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Basketball. A ton of kids in high school are big basketball fans. We always have a couple hundred kids try out. We have school basketball teams for boys and girls. We always have a lot of upset people, but the people who don’t make the teams can play intramural basketball that we also have. Also, the kids that don’t make the teams get to go to our school games and those are always packed with a lot of people. That’s why it draws a lot of interest. We also have a lot of teachers that are basketball fans. They usually coach the teams and it’s good for the teachers to coach the teams, so we know who they are. That’s it. We just started having school basketball. We only have a two-year program for all the sports we’re having right now, so we should have it more, because it’s such a big attraction to people.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Trip club. You can go places, like the movies and Six Flags. Sometimes I want to go, but I don’t really have a ride.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “A skate park. Near our school, in our town somewhere. Because there are a lot of kids in my grade who skateboard. We have a rule at our school that skateboards aren’t allowed there any more, because they require wearing helmets or something and they didn’t want to have to (be responsible) if someone got hurt or something. It’s a common activity. If you wanted to go to a skate park, you’d have to go out of town and it’s like a half hour ride.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “I did charity groups, like to do car washes or buy or ask people for food for the poor and clothes, or cleaning the older people’s homes or hanging out with them, bringing them dinner or something, and clean the parks and stuff. That it just helps other people around your community.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “I don’t really have an idea, but I put the activity should be fun and something that kids would probably like to do. It should be interesting and exciting and something that you don’t really have to relate to school, like doing math. Something like yoga. At my school, one of the teachers taught yoga.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “I said it would be cool if we could just go to the park, like our town park or something. There are fields and a swimming pool there. And tennis courts, basketball and a skate park there. Everyone would kind of have their own thing and we’d just go there every day. It would be fun if, every once in a while, we could go on a trip somewhere. I thought that would be cool.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “I put down a club for dancing. People in my school like to dance a lot, dance to things that are on the radio. I think they would like that.” (Suburban/Rural)

- “I would want an after school program that teaches students how to start a band. It’s a program that teaches you how to play modern instruments like the guitar and drums and bass and stuff like that. Because I know lots of people who want to start a band, but they don’t know how. They don’t know how to get discovered or get gigs or anything.” (Urban)
- “I wrote down rock climbing, soccer, basketball, baseball, dodge ball, hockey, golf, miniature golf. I put down food fights. I guess some kids might like food fights. It might just be like a pie fight. And my other stuff is water balls in the summertime. My mom got me this set, a tennis water ball set, and you soak the ball and there’s a tennis racket. If they don’t like my stuff, they can read a book.” (Urban)
- “I put it would be a free choice program where the kids could vote for what they want to happen. The four things that the most kids voted for would be the school program. The kids get to pick the program and the teachers who would teach it. I said what I would want. I kind of want what _____ wants because I’m learning how to play the guitar so I want to start a band, too. I would want instrument class, a computer class, a school play class. And the dance class would just be like odd types of dances and then the instrument thing would be how like she said, how to do a band and then do different lessons and stuff. The computer class would be teaching people how to type well and how to use the Internet if they don’t know how to use it. The school play would be how the kids would pick what play they wanted and then the teachers would do that. The school or the group of people that were going to do it would have a ballot card and if there were four things that a lot of people chose, then that would be in the program.” (Urban)
- “The program of my dreams is where you can do different things at the same time as you can do something else. If you get bored, I can give them a list of things and have a number of people that can join the team or the program. They are volunteering, cheerleading, tennis, softball, dance, theater and writing. You can do all of these different things in a day. They would like my program because they can do different things.” (Urban)
- “I kind of got a variety. I mostly put down things that I would want to do. Dancing, broadcasting, (fashion) designing, and singing. Like TV broadcasting. You can decide what you want to do because it’s four different groups. There is dancing, broadcasting, designing and singing. Dancing you would get to pick your own music and the moves that you wanted to do so it will be more fun for you instead of having to dance to a certain song and do a certain move. Broadcasting you would be able to experience what it is to be behind the scenes. Designing because you can share your ideas and routines with other people who really don’t know where to get started. Clothes designing. Singing to exercise your voice. It’s something for people who want to sing.” (Urban)
- “My after school program would consist of dance, art, music and a sports class. There would be a lot of kids, a whole lot. It would be very diverse and they would all be from different neighborhoods and cities. I think it would probably just be better if it was in Connecticut though. And there would be no pressure on the students to come and it would be like a thing where you just come after school if you want to. If you have to go somewhere else, you can just go ahead. That would probably be better because the students would probably come because of the fact that they’re not forced to come. Variety. Diversity.” (Urban)
- “Maybe if there was a class for homework where people just could come and do homework and get help with it. I would like to do that.” (Urban)

Boys

- “Me and other kids I think would like to make up their own games. They would like this because they would like what they do. They would not be sitting around and doing nothing.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “I would make a basketball team because a lot of people like to play basketball and it would give you some good exercise.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “What I would like to do for a great after school activity would be to have fencing club at my school and to beat my friends and it would be fun. At my school.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “The after school activity would be to go to the movies or something. Other people would like that. It would be a good activity because you get to eat candy and drink soda. At the movies.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “An after school club for Frisbee. Frisbee is fun and a lot of people would like it because it is fun to hang around and toss the Frisbee around. Ultimate Frisbee. Ultimate Frisbee would be cool.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “A skateboard club after school would be a good after school activity because a lot of kids in my school skateboard. It would also be good because it would give kids a chance to do what they wanted to do and not what they would normally do in school.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “If I could design any after school activity, I would design a weightlifting program. The proper way to lift and get stronger and I think other kids like this activity because it is a fun activity.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “I had kids should go to a gym after school and work out and run or whatever. It would be good because if you could get physically fit and learn the right way to do it and get stronger and meet new people and stuff.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “No supervision.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Activities with a reward. I am thinking like money.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “Extra credit in school.” (Suburban/Rural)
- “A sports center, because a lot of kids enjoy playing sports after school and my school doesn’t have one, so after school programs aren’t really popular at my school. So pretty much all the kids go home. Have all different kinds of sports, like because at my old school I had a sports center after school and we only played one thing and I think we should have different things to play, like a variety, baseball, wiffleball not with a hard ball, football – flag, competitive and goof-aroundish at the same time.” (Urban)
- “There would be snacks and fun learning activities, talking about what kids like to do these days, then a little bit of sports competition, talking, more snacks and then more talking. Talking what the kids want to do, not what the teachers want to do. Don’t get in trouble for what you said.” (Urban)

- “We should have a dance program because there are a lot of students from our school that enjoy dancing and to have a dance program, which we personally did not have for the past six years that I’ve been at _____ School. We have not had a dance program, this will actually help the student, enable them to listen to the different R&B, reggae, and rap music that they like to listen to. For them to have an older student, but still one of their peers bring the music to school that they like, edit it so they won’t get in trouble and actually be able to dance the way that they like to. And to perform to different people, this will actually help them and they will enjoy it. An after school program they will enjoy and they will like to do. It would help them in the way of knowing they would be able to perform and they wouldn’t have stage fright.” (Urban)
- “I picked dancing because when you go to a school dance, when you’re dancing with somebody it will help you learn how to dance. I picked acting because some of them may want to go to acting school and be an actor. Reading because it will help with TDP (three degrees of power). Typing so you will get used to it. Singing because people like to sing. A talent show because it’s like a free talent show when you have a talent show and the whole school is coming because it will help you find out what other kids like to do.” (Urban)
- “This program would be the most best program. It will have basketball, football, baseball, and it will have a party room where kids can come and dance at times. I think it will be the most best place for kids because first it will keep kids out of trouble, second it will help kids that are on drugs and who need help, third it will help the kids who are in need for help.” (Urban)
- “The way I wrote it, it wouldn’t really matter what kind of group or activity it would be. Kids should be as important as the teachers. It should be fun, maybe extra credit depending on what type of activity it would be, exhilarating. Kids could design what happens in the group. Kids could get up and actually do things instead of sitting at their desk if it was at school. To meet new people. Ability to socialize, they should get up and talk to people. Snacks. It shouldn’t be too long that it gets to the point where it’s boring. Teaches you new things and challenging.” (Urban)

VI. JUVENILE JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Important Note

The Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) developed the recommendations provided in this section to inform the reader of the direction the JJAC feels should be taken in Connecticut with regard to before and after school activities and programs in elementary and middle schools.

The mission of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee of the State of Connecticut is to prevent juvenile delinquency and improve the juvenile justice system in Connecticut. To this end the JJAC is committed to providing resources for building strong healthy communities where all young people have opportunities to grow in positive ways and to become fully prepared for successful living.

There is a growing appreciation that after school programs can provide children with positive and healthy alternatives to drug, alcohol and tobacco use, criminal activity and other high-risk behaviors during the peak crime hours of 3 to 6 p.m. Because of the importance of before and after school programs in preventing delinquency, the JJAC commissioned Spectrum Associates Market Research to conduct two studies, one in 1990 and a follow-up in 2001. From the findings in these studies, the JJAC has obtained systematic data on: the scope and accessibility of before and after school activities located in Connecticut's elementary and middle schools, the change over a ten-year period with respect to elementary schools, and the opportunities for enhancing school-based before and after school programs in the future. Some of the key findings are:

- ❖ Both administrators and parents believe it is important that before and after school activities are available at their schools.
- ❖ The percentage of elementary schools that have these programs and the range of activities offered have both increased since results of a similar study were released in 1990.

- ❖ Overall the major barriers to operating before and after school activities at elementary and middle schools are insufficient funds, transportation and lack of adequate school staff to oversee building use.

This report adds important data to the Connecticut information available to providers and advocates for planning programs and seeking funding. However, it should be noted that the intent of these studies was not to inventory after school activities in Connecticut, determine the number or percentage of Connecticut's elementary and middle school children that participate in after school activities, or count the hours or days children and youth participate in these activities. Because of ongoing changes in capacities and programs, these tasks are best done in the communities where the programs are located.

The following recommendations are made in response to the key findings and implications of the 2001 study. The term "after school," used throughout the recommendations section, includes before and after school time, vacations, weekends and summers. The term "program" refers to all offerings on the continuum from stand-alone activities to comprehensive programs. The term "community" includes local communities such as cities, towns and neighborhoods as well as state communities such as the juvenile justice community.

1. After School Programs for All Children and Youth

All elementary and middle school aged children and youth should have access to programs during after school hours that provide developmentally appropriate, enriching, safe and well-supervised activities of interest to them.

The JJAC, in agreement with the parents, school principals and superintendents, local government officials and board of education chairpersons who participated in this study, recognizes the importance of after school programs as an investment in the healthy development of all children and the safety of communities. After school programs for children and youth are vitally important to student development and achievement and to the prevention of violence and crime. After school programs keep children safe, help working families, improve academic achievement and provide opportunities to learn social and leadership skills.

2. Community Based Planning

Every community should have a mechanism in place to regularly inventory the capacity and accessibility of after school programs, both within schools and in other locations, to assess and plan for the needs of their children and youth.

Community collaborations are the most effective mechanism to plan for the needs of community children and youth. Through creative partnerships with local and state public and private agencies serving children and youth, government agencies, businesses and other partners, communities will be positioned to:

- Identify desired outcomes for all community children and youth.
- Identify community assets and needs.
- Evaluate existing approaches to meeting needs.
- Allocate resources most effectively.
- Reach out to all children and families, particularly those who are less likely to participate.
- Design programs that accommodate children and youth with varying abilities and interests.
- Ensure that school and community based programs communicate effectively with one another.

3. Funders and Communities as Partners

Funders and policymakers should work closely with communities, recognizing and supporting them as the experts in identifying needs and planning for their after school programs.

National, state and private funding initiatives often direct resources at problems with limited attention to feedback from the communities that access such funds. Program design requirements often offer limited flexibility to address special circumstances. Funders should have more individualized relationships with communities while maintaining the larger goals of promoting positive development for all children and youth and of creating strong, creative, cohesive communities for them to grow in. Further, providing resources for data collection could

be exceedingly useful in supporting planning for after school initiatives and accountability for the use of federal, state, local and private dollars.

4. Government Support for After School Programs

State and local governments should budget for consistent ongoing support of successful after school programs.

Many sources of funding for youth programs provide “seed monies” or limited year funding. This leaves after school program providers devoting energy to fund-raising rather than to programming. Consistent ongoing support could alleviate this burden while providing better accountability data and outcomes. Budget line items in local and state budgets for after school programs are necessary and over time could reduce budget line items for welfare and corrections.

5. Program Setting

Programs should be located in safe, appropriate, accepting and accessible settings including schools and other suitable locations in the community.

Resources should continue to be provided for after school programs at schools, however the JJAC recognizes that community-based after school activities and programs also offer appropriate settings for young people who may not find what they need in a school-based setting. The study found that both administrators and parents preferred locating after school programs at the school, while the middle school students in the focus groups preferred activities located elsewhere. More importantly, the JJAC believes that each location needs to provide physical and psychological safety in an appropriate facility that is comfortable for children and youth to get to, enter and spend time in.

6. Program Staff

After school programs should maintain adequate levels of qualified, accepting and committed staff, with appropriate experience and realistic expectations of children and youth. Programs should also provide attractive compensation and work environments to retain staff.

Staff should have experience working with school-age children and should participate in regular and ongoing professional development to sustain quality programming. Attention should be given to the quality of interpersonal skills of staff hired to work with children and youth after school. Child development theory and positive youth development principles are just a few of the foundations staff will need. Managers of after school programs will also need strong supervisory skills to maintain program quality and safety. After school programs could be positively impacted by a statewide initiative to aim resources at professional development.

7. Child and Youth-Centered Programming

After school programs should provide enriching, integrated learning opportunities and meet the social, emotional and physical development needs of children and youth.

Programs should also be appropriate to the age, maturation level, gender and culture of participants.

Appropriately planned programs and activities provide structure and limits, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, and opportunities to learn and practice skills. Children and youth have invaluable information and ideas about what will be successful for activities, and they should be part of designing, planning and running them. The feedback from middle school focus group members in this study showed that they wanted opportunities to plan programs and felt that attendance would be better at programs designed by youth. The youth provided valuable information about what they would like to see in the programs, namely to have a variety of activities that reflect their interests, not what adults think they should be doing, and NOT be like school.