

A Report to the After School Project of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

By Tony Proscio and Basil J. Whiting

AFTER-SCHOOL GROWS UP



How Four Large American Cities Approach Scale and Quality in After-School Programs

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Contents

4	Executive Summary
9	Overview: Snapshot of an Expanding Universe <i>Tony Proscio and Basil J. Whiting</i>
24	New York City: The After-School Corporation <i>Tony Proscio</i>
38	Los Angeles: LA's BEST <i>Basil J. Whiting</i>
54	Chicago: After School Matters <i>Tony Proscio</i>
66	San Diego's "6 to 6" <i>Basil J. Whiting</i>
79	Acknowledgments
80	About the After School Project

Executive Summary

THE PROLIFERATION OF BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL SERVICES across the United States testifies to a growing demand among working parents, educators, child-welfare advocates, and public officials for supervised activity for young people beyond the normal school day. Although the demand is widespread, and out-of-school-time programs are multiplying, very few cities have any coherent, firmly established system for funding, promoting, or regulating these activities. The programs constitute, in most places, a patchwork of independent efforts cobbled together by individual neighborhoods and schools, funded by a hodgepodge of often unrelated grants and contracts, and certified or evaluated by no single authority.

Yet in at least four large cities, a more deliberate, organized system for out-of-school programs is beginning to emerge. In one, San Diego, that system now offers before- and after-school programs in every elementary and middle school in the city (though not yet to every interested student in every school). In three others — New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago — ambitious after-school programs are beginning to resemble a broad-based system, touching a significant percentage of neigh-

borhoods and public schools across the city, at least at some grade levels.

In New York and Chicago, where a patchwork of many before- and after-school programs has emerged over many years, recent initiatives could be models for — or at least presage — more coherent ways of organizing after-school services city-wide. And in Los Angeles, a well-known and now well-established initiative for troubled elementary schools has been the stimulus for a citywide bureaucratic structure for potentially comprehensive before- and after-school programming. Though none of these systems is yet fully formed, all are at a stage where other states and localities might begin to find in them a set of useful models, lessons, or at least ideas and experiences to ponder.

This paper examines these four emerging systems in some detail, beginning with an overview that synthesizes the main patterns and themes, and ending with individual studies of each program. The four are:

The After-School Corporation (TASC) in New York City. TASC channels public and private funding to after-school programs in just under 18 percent of the city's 1,100 elementary, middle, and

high schools, as of the end of 2003. The programs are jointly sponsored by the school and a nonprofit organization, which have wide latitude in designing curricula, recruiting staff, and planning activities. All programs operate from 3 to 6 p.m. on all regular school days. New York City and State provide considerable funding through TASC for these activities, but many other, smaller after-school efforts also operate in city schools with separate funding from the city and state. TASC is an independent nonprofit organization created in 1998 by a private foundation, and does not yet have the status of a recognized, permanent, citywide delivery mechanism for New York City after-school programs.

LA's BEST in Los Angeles. Founded in 1988 and thus one of the oldest well-structured, large-scale programs in the country, LA's BEST intentionally operates only in elementary schools in designated "high risk" neighborhoods. Of the 227 schools that meet that definition, the program provides after-school services in 114. It is, in effect, a program of local government, though its structure is unusual, and complex. LA's BEST is mainly governed, promoted, and substantially funded by a nonprofit corporation housed in the Mayor's Office, where

the Chief Executive Officer and her staff work. Its school-level functions, however, are carried out and supervised by an Operations Office that is grafted onto the Los Angeles Unified School District and now resides in a major branch devoted to expanding before- and after-school programming at all levels throughout the district. Staff in the schools and regional supervisors, plus the Chief Operating Officer of LA's BEST, are all on the payroll of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

After School Matters (ASM) in Chicago. ASM owes its existence, most of all, to Maggie Daley, wife of Mayor Richard M. Daley, who first conceived and created a network of summertime and after-school arts programs for teenagers in the early 1990s. Convinced that teenagers are poorly served by most after-school programs nationwide, Mrs. Daley set out in 2000 to expand the arts model to a system of paid apprenticeships in sports, computer technology, and communications, as well as the arts, with facilities and funding provided by the mayor and the city agencies that govern the school, park, and library systems. After School Matters, an independent nonprofit whose board is chaired by Mrs. Daley, channels these resources to programs

in the participating high schools. It also offers a less-structured network of recreational “clubs” where teens can drop in any time, without the structure or rigors of the paid apprenticeships. At the end of 2003, After School Matters was operating in about one-quarter of Chicago’s 100 public high schools.

San Diego’s “6 to 6.” Not only is “6 to 6” the only program in this sample that reaches every elementary and middle school citywide (plus one high school), but it is the only one that universally offers before-school services as well as after-school. It is a regular program of city government, incorporated into the city’s Department of Community and Economic Development. Activity in the schools is carried out by nonprofit organizations working under contracts with the department’s Division of Community Services. To serve every school within the city limits, “6 to 6” must collaborate not only with the San Diego Unified School District, but with nine other independent districts whose boundaries overlap with some portion of the city. In some wealthier neighborhoods where after-school activities are already plentiful, but where many programs charge tuition, the city has chosen to issue tuition vouchers to help lower-income families participate in existing programs, rather than to create new ones. San Diego’s “6 to 6” started in 1998.

Although all four of these programs are big enough to constitute the leading or guiding model for a citywide system of after-school services, only San Diego’s “6 to 6” comes close to being the single comprehensive model or system for out-of-school programs in its city. The other three programs profiled here are beginning to acquire the critical mass from which a complete system could be built, or at least envisioned. Most of these programs face some remaining organizational hurdles before they could reach every student for whom they’re intended. Most struggle with limitations on space in schools or recreation facilities, some might have difficulties in recruiting faculty for a dramatically larger program. But all of them could grow substantially larger than they are today, and do it fairly quickly, if there were simply more money available.

All four programs make up their budgets from a tangle of different funding streams, some of them from sources far removed from traditional education and youth development systems, such as juvenile justice, recreation and health, employment and job training, and community development. All of them use school space rent-free and all except Chicago’s After School Matters draw support from the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. Beyond that, funding for these programs varies in many ways from city to city and often from year to year in complex patterns that even their leaders sometimes struggle to

describe. Still, the fact that all programs draw from essentially the same broad mix of different sources of money suggests the emergence of a kind of funding model, increasingly common but still dizzyingly complicated.

All of these programs juggle multiple demands from multiple constituencies. Defining who their “customer” is and what they are supposed to achieve for their customers remains a challenge, not only for these four programs but for the whole field of after-school activity. Most of the people responsible for these programs would like to see them broaden students’ exposures to the arts, sports, and their social and physical environments; raise their educational performance; contribute to their healthy development; provide safe places for children before and after school; reduce chances that kids might engage in drugs, crime, or gangs; make work days more manageable for parents; and promote interpersonal skills and self-confidence that will serve students in later years. But are all of those goals necessary or even achievable? If one or more of them isn’t met, does that reflect poorly on the program?

Most of these programs are being evaluated with varying degrees of rigor on at least some of these criteria (in L.A.’s case, several scholarly evaluations have already been completed, with favorable results on a number of factors). But considering the difficulty they face in building and maintaining their

funding, organizing and enlarging their scope of operations, accounting to the various public and private agencies that support them, and maintaining good relations with their ultimate constituents — parents and students — it would be remarkable indeed if they were found to have excelled at all their broader purposes.

At this point, parents, schools, and cities increasingly demand after-school programs of at least decent quality and safety to fill in those workday hours when, in most homes, no adult is around. To meet that demand, cities and states, and perhaps the federal government, will need to arrange a more coherent system of support for after-school care than now exists in most places. The programs here represent a credible start in that direction, even before most of them are thoroughly evaluated. Given that most of these programs are not yet a decade old (LA’s BEST, in its 16th year as this goes to press, is the exception) it will be a significant achievement if any or all of them manage to enlarge their cities’ roster of available after-school services, ensure some basic standards of quality, stabilize their funding, and serve more families than are being served today.

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tive, inconclusive, or purely hypothetical. The reality, for most cities, is that there is still no coherent system of funding, administration, service delivery, regulation, and policy formation for widespread after-school activity. All these elements exist to some degree, but usually in a fragmentary or haphazard way. To establish out-of-school activities on a citywide basis, with programs in all (or even most) schools, would mean organizing a system almost from scratch.

Robert Halpern, human services scholar at the Erikson Institute in Chicago, summarized the challenge in a 2003 paper:

There is no one institutional locus, no widely accepted governance mechanisms, no over-arching goals, policies, or regulations guiding or constraining programs, and no commonly determined decision-making structures or procedures. Boundaries are porous and shifting. Leadership is diffuse and informal, based largely on length of involvement in the field, and to some extent self-selected. Different priorities and requirements are stipulated by numerous individual funders and sponsors, often without much attention to what others are requiring (or to the mission of longstanding after-school providers).²

When cities do manage to piece together some form of local after-school system, Halpern writes, the results tend to be:

reliant on and actually made up of parts of other systems — social services, early childhood care and education, public schools, parks and recreation, the cultural and arts sectors — that typically are larger, better funded (at least in relative terms), and have their own dynamics and preoccupations....When [these] other systems are under stress, their marginal activities — including after-school programs — are particularly vulnerable.³

Yet as time goes on, the popular demand for widespread after-school services has created something like an irresistible force for many local officials. The result is that after-school systems, albeit mostly piecemeal and still fragile, are forming in several places. This paper presents four examples of large cities where something like a citywide system is taking shape. None of these yet offers service to every school-age youngster in every neighborhood at every age level. Some aren't intended to go that far; others are still under construction and haven't yet determined how far they can go. But all four are meant to be more than just a way of funding or encouraging after-school pro-

grams here and there. All are designed to be "systems" in the sense that Halpern and others use the term: an integrated set of persistent funding streams, legal or regulatory authorities, authorized providers, and auxiliary organizations (typically called intermediaries) for training, consulting, quality assurance, and financial support.

The four cases are strikingly different from one another (the accompanying table gives a rough summary of their basic characteristics). Although we try, in this introductory discussion, to make comparisons and draw out common themes, it is worth pondering how qualified most of the comparisons are, and how tentative are some of the themes. The main reason for this seems to be that each city is blending the "parts of other systems" differently, each with its own particular mix of funding streams, balance of government and nonprofit roles, and sources of political and administrative leadership. The result, for example, is that each reckons its costs in slightly different ways. If one city gets its custodial or security services directly from the school system, for instance, it may not include those items in its total cost of after-school service. Elsewhere, providers may have to pay for such services and thus have to put them in their budget. Cost comparisons, like most other comparisons, are therefore meant to convey

2 Robert Halpern, "The Challenge of System-Building in the After-School Field: Lessons from Experience," Chicago: Erikson Institute for Graduate Study in Child Development, 2003, p.3.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

This focus on large-scale local programs reflects the reality of how after-school systems are actually developing in most of the United States.

After-School Programs: A Quick Comparison

	New York City TASC*	Los Angeles LA's BEST*	Chicago ASM*	San Diego San Diego's "6 to 6"
School levels served	E/M/H	High Risk E only	HS only	All E/M
Number of funded slots**	41,233	19,000	4,100	24,519
Number of students in city schools	1,050,000	364,906 E only	101,100 HS only	135,794 in E/M
Number of public schools served	193	114	24	194† public + 10 private
Number of public schools in city	1,164	432 elementary, 227 defined "high risk"	100 high schools	193 E/M
Hours of program operation per day	3-6 pm	2:30-6 pm	3-6 pm	6-7:30am; 2:15-6 pm
Days of operation per week	5 days	5 days	3 days	5 days
Adult/student ratio	1:10	1:20	1:10	1:15 E; 1:20 M
Cost per funded slot	\$1,600	\$1,357	\$1,740‡	\$979 (afternoon hours only)
Locus of authority	Nonprofit	Nonprofit Corporation in Mayor's Office; LA Unified School District	Nonprofit + 3 city agencies	City Department of Community and Economic Development
In-school operations conducted by	Community Organizations	LA School District	ASM & Community Organizations	Community Organizations
Year started	1998	1988	2000	1998

* Many other before/after-school programs operate in these cities; the profiled programs are the largest and best known.

** These are estimates in some cases; actual enrollment and average daily attendance vary.

† San Diego's "6 to 6" also serves one high school.

‡ Student apprentices in Chicago are paid an average stipend of \$780 for a full year of participation, bringing the total cost to \$2,520.

rough impressions. They do not reward detailed scrutiny or analysis.

Even to refer to "cities" in this discussion is a risky oversimplification. The Los Angeles after-school initiative, called LA's BEST, covers the whole Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), a metropolitan authority comprising nine municipalities including Los Angeles, plus portions of 18 others. In San Diego, where the "6 to 6" out-of-school-time

program covers every elementary and middle school within the city limits, it was necessary to enlist the cooperation of nine separate school districts whose boundaries not only overlap with those of the city but also reach far out into the metropolitan area. The New York initiative, called The After School Corporation (TASC), serves many areas outside New York City, though the profile in this paper describes only its activities within

the city limits. Yet calling even that portion of TASC's effort a "city" program could suggest more of a connection with municipal government than in fact exists. The drive for a citywide after-school program in New York did not, in fact, originate at City Hall, but in the offices of a prominent international foundation. To this day, the effort is warmly welcomed and fairly well funded by the current mayor and schools chancellor, but is not

All...pay their costs with a combination of federal, state, and local dollars from a wide mix of government programs plus private donations.

officially engraved in any citywide policy.

Still, these definitional issues are minor, compared with the main characteristic that makes all four initiatives significant: All of them started at or near the municipal level, and all of them aim to serve a great percentage of the children in some target age-range within their local jurisdiction. This focus on large-scale local programs reflects the reality of how after-school systems are actually developing in most of the United States. Until 2002, when Californians passed the statewide after-school mandate called Proposition 49, nearly all serious attempts to develop broad and stable after-school systems for all or most students have been local, albeit with increasing amounts of state and federal support.

For large cities especially, these four examples demonstrate that size alone is not a barrier to an expansive vision for citywide after-school services. The examples in this paper represent the three largest U.S. cities plus the seventh-largest, San Diego. The most universal of the four initiatives, San Diego's, covers every elementary and middle school in the city. The rest are less comprehensive than that — Los Angeles' program, for example, is limited just to elementary schools defined as "high risk"; Chicago's After School Matters works only in high schools, and

not in all of them; New York's TASC operates only where invited and lives within a fixed budget that doesn't stretch to every interested school. But the efforts in the three biggest cities are also designed to complement an already widespread patchwork of other, independent after-school programs in those same locales. These other programs were largely set up by individual schools or nonprofit groups, and the drive for a citywide system was typically meant to encourage and expand on them, not replace them. In short, these efforts demonstrate that it is possible, even in the largest and most complex school districts, to extend the universe of available after-school care significantly, to bring it to previously unserved neighborhoods and schools, and to introduce some elements of a real system: recurring funding, general quality expectations, and centralized support and regulation.

How each locality got to that point — the marshaling of money and political support, the selection of goals, and the designing of a program to fit them — is a separate story. Before delving into the particulars of each of those stories, this overview attempts to draw together some general patterns, themes, and caveats, as a contribution to the still-percolating discussion about how far the universe of local after-school programs can expand.

In the briefest strokes, these four cases and other, related trends seem to justify the following conclusions:

- Large-scale after-school initiatives, though neither universal nor inevitable, are gaining momentum in several cities and, by now, a growing number of states.
- Designing a system to bring after-school services to all, or even most, schools and students is an unfinished and still-daunting enterprise nearly everywhere.
- Still, the early experiences of a few big-city pioneers are now far enough along to provide encouragement, a growing pool of experienced leaders, and some reasonably affordable program models to make the job a bit easier for places that are just starting or have not yet begun.

Funding: Sources and Uses

IN THE 2003-04 ACADEMIC YEAR, the four cities in this study spent between \$979 (San Diego⁴) and \$1,700 (Chicago⁵) to serve an average student in an after-school program for a full year. All of them pay their costs with a combination of federal, state, and local dollars from a wide mix of government programs plus private donations. All of them rely on free use of school buildings (and in Chicago's case, municipal parks, recreation facilities, and pools as well), for which the capital cost is not reflected in the annual budget. The

4 To keep costs comparable, these figures refer to the cost of programs in the afternoon hours only. San Diego's before-school services involve fewer hours and less cost — roughly \$652 per slot per year. A student enrolled in both services for a full year would thus cost \$1,631 to serve (\$652 plus \$979), but that would represent five hours of service a day, not three as in the other cities.

5 Chicago, the only city whose program concentrates on high school students and offers skills training, pays its enrollees an "apprenticeship stipend" for the days they attend. For the sake of comparability, the stipend isn't included in this annual per-student cost. If it were included, it would bring the total to \$2,520.

What all four cities [profiled in this report] have in common is that cost has been a decisive factor in limiting their ambitions for a truly citywide system...

costs associated with keeping the buildings open and usable — items like security, utilities, and custodial and engineering services — normally are included, though these are accounted for differently from place to place. Because each system is governed differently, the costs of management and oversight are reflected differently in the total budget. Sorting out the precise differences from city to city would require a team of auditors, and even then would probably raise as many questions as it answers. The figures are therefore offered as rough estimates, and for the purpose of establishing a range of possible costs, not to present an exact price-tag for any particular kind of service.

What all four cities have in common is that cost has been a decisive factor in limiting their ambitions for a truly citywide system, and has further limited the scope of what they can offer children in an after-school program. Each city has struggled, in different ways and with different results, to limit its ambitions to suit the funds available. San Diego, for example, offers less program enrichment than Los Angeles (at least as measured by “extras” like field trips), but it reaches every school in the city and provides services before school as well as after. New York’s TASC program strictly limits the amount it will provide each school per enrollee, over the occasional objections of nonprofit con-

tractors who would prefer a richer service model. Chicago’s program still reaches a minority of the city’s high schools, and not much more than 10 percent of the student body at a typical school. All four cities have waiting lists, and all but San Diego have unserved schools that they still hope to reach. Each program has had to rein in some aspect of its desired level of service — the number of schools covered, the number of students enrolled at each school, the content of the curriculum, the adult/student ratio, the pay level for participating adults, the number of days or hours of service provided, or some combination of these — to live within the available budget.

At first glance, the idea that limited funding translates into limited service hardly seems remarkable. Yet most discussions treat funding as only one of several obstacles that must be overcome in building citywide after-school systems. The need for space, committed and gifted instructors, an accommodating bureaucracy, top-level political will, and astute management are all cited as factors that can be every bit as limiting as money. Each of the cities in this report has confronted — and still confronts — these other obstacles, all of which remain important. But nearly all of them could be swiftly and substantially larger than they are today if funding *alone* were to

increase significantly. (The one possible exception is Chicago, where the After School Matters program is the newest in this sample, and may already be growing as fast as prudently possible.)

It’s worth noting that although the cost per enrollee varies substantially among these four programs, all of them are far less expensive than some estimates of the complete cost of a high-quality after-school program. To take one example, the Massachusetts advocacy group Parents United for Child Care published a report in 2001 estimating “the costs and components of a high-quality out-of-school-time program” in Boston at \$4,349 per slot per year.⁶ That would include salaries, supplies, equipment, transportation, insurance, rent, and basic administrative costs of a “school-year-only program” — meaning that it would cover 38 weeks of after-school care plus four weeks of full-day care during school breaks and holidays, but not the ten weeks of summer vacation. Significantly, none of the four programs profiled here approaches that many hours of service. At least two of them — Chicago and Los Angeles, for different reasons — specifically distance themselves from the mission of full-time child care in the out-of-school hours. (We discuss, under a separate heading, the factors arguing for and against such a mission.) Nor do most of them achieve or even aspire to

6 Samantha Wechsler, Amy Kershaw, Elaine Fersh, and Andrew Bundy, “Meeting the Challenge: Financing Out-of-School Time Programming in Boston and Massachusetts,” Parents United for Child Care, March 2001, p. 3.

...Pay scales after school run far below those of regular work hours, offer no fringe benefits, and are probably not, by themselves, a main attraction for adults to join the staff.

the 10-to-1 child-to-staff ratio on which it is based.

All four programs rely on space offered to them rent-free from their school systems, and thus do not include the cost of rent in their budget. The Los Angeles Unified School District conservatively estimates the value of rent-free space for LA's BEST at some \$23 million, or an additional \$1,327 per funded slot. But that would still bring the total to \$2,684 per slot, 38 percent lower than the cost projected by Parents United for Child Care. The point is not that the Parents United budget is a suitable goal, or even a realistic one at this stage, merely that there is considerable distance between the actual cost of current large-scale after-school programs and the kind of service that some experts and advocates might wish for.

Apart from the scarcity of money, the other distinguishing feature of funding for after-school programs is that it comes from so many unrelated sources. The programs in this study blend dollars from philanthropic and government programs that are officially designed for seemingly disparate purposes: preventing crime and delinquency (particularly programs of the U.S. Department of Justice); enriching public education (like the 21st Century Community Learning Centers and other programs of federal, state, and local education agencies); promoting employment

and skills training (including many state and local jobs programs and the federal Workforce Investment Act); supporting families and children (social services, child-development, and youth services funds, or the proceeds of the 1998 tobacco settlement); or organizing and developing communities (principally the Community Development Block Grant).

Although virtually no one interviewed for this report believed that after-school programs would someday enjoy a single, dedicated source for most of their funding (few programs of any kind are so lucky), most believed that a true "system" of after-school services would eventually require that this thicket of unrelated programs would have to be simplified and coordinated in some way, at least at the local level. In fact, that appears to be one of the principal virtues of central, citywide initiatives for after-school programs: They are able — with great effort and usually with the backing of powerful officials — to blend dozens of funding sources into a simpler stream, so that individual schools and nonprofit groups can use the money in a consistent way, without having to relate separately to every government program and private donor.

Staffing: The Right Adults, At an Affordable Cost

MOST AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS — including all four of the examples in this report — strive to form a relationship between students and adults that is fundamentally different from the standard student/teacher interaction of the school day. Even the professional teachers who work in after-school programs generally make this point. After a full day of classwork, neither students nor teachers are eager for just a continuation of the same regimen. Most find that a more relaxed routine, in which students are more physically active, work in teams, interact more informally with adults, and mingle fun with learning, is both more productive and more appealing to kids. Especially for older participants — the middle and high school students who can simply opt out of these programs if they aren't satisfied — a program that mixes fun with accomplishment is usually considered essential.

That means finding a front-line staff for after-school programs that can establish a less formal relationship with students and still maintain order, teach skills, keep students' attention focused on the tasks at hand, adhere to schedules, and develop or follow plans for productive and interesting activities. In some schools, it's also a plus if the participating

Not surprisingly...the selection of adult staffers has been the subject of careful attention in each of the four cities we studied.

adults know the community, reflect its ethnic composition, and maintain some relationships with its other institutions and activities outside of school. That has led, in many cases, to the recruitment of parents and other community residents, volunteers and older students, and people with particular skills in, say, the arts or sports. Regular teachers do, in some cases, stay on as after-school instructors. But they are almost always a minority of the staff, usually more highly paid than other employees (though less than in their day jobs), and sometimes serve mainly as consultants, making sure that after-school activities contribute to academic enrichment. In other cases, though, teachers sign on as after-school instructors specifically so they can do something quite different from regular teaching. Many of them regard after-school work as a kind of second career, in which they can exercise talents or interests markedly different from the ones that prevail during the day.

Wages for after-school staff, meanwhile, are generally well below those of professional teachers in normal school hours. Even when full-time teachers do stay on as instructors after school, they usually do so at substantially lower wages and, like nearly all other after-school staffers, they typically receive no fringe benefits for the additional hours.

Although pay scales in after-school programs vary widely, hourly rates hardly ever come close to those for a full-time teacher in a normal school day. In San Diego, for example, teachers working after school generally earn less than three-quarters their daytime rate, and other employees earn well under half (some as little as 20 percent) of what a teacher would make during school hours. In New York City, a small number of teachers work after school at their regular contract rate, but the great majority earn closer to two-thirds that amount.

One slight variation from this pattern is in Chicago, where the after-school apprenticeship programs for high schoolers pay adult leaders a rate (up to \$30 an hour) that can be fairly close to a teacher's hourly wage. That is largely because these adults are recruited not from the parents, neighbors, and youth workers typical of other after-school programs, but more often from the ranks of professional artists, sports trainers, and business tech officials. That choice of faculty no doubt contributes to the program's popularity with high school students, who get a chance to interact with accomplished practitioners in their fields of interest. But even in this case, the wage rate for instructors in Chicago's programs is arguably a good deal lower than these same adults would make at

their regular jobs. Although the amounts are somewhat higher than in other cities, the principle is much the same: Pay scales after school run far below those of regular work hours, offer no fringe benefits, and are probably not, by themselves, a main attraction for adults to join the staff.

Not surprisingly, given the unusual job description, complex requirements, and low pay for after-school personnel, the selection of adult staffers has been the subject of careful attention in each of the four cities we studied. In all but one case, the architects of after-school programs have turned to nonprofit and community groups to help recruit, train, and deploy talented adults from outside the ranks of professional teachers. Many administrators pointed out that the nonprofit groups usually have connections with the kind of adults who would do best in these programs — community-minded, interested in kids, skilled in some relevant field of activity, or better still, all of the above.

Even in the one case where nonprofit groups are not key players, Los Angeles, the administrators of LA's BEST took care to create city job titles for the program that are markedly similar to those in nonprofit youth service organizations. The front-line staff of LA's BEST is also more likely to reflect the race and ethnicity of the students. None of this is an accident. When the program was first

I ...a single locus of control and accountability...is still very rare...

created, its staff drew far more heavily from teachers and school personnel than from parents and community residents. The result, as a top official put it, was a program that was “too tight,” “an extension of the school day.” From that observation came the new staffing regimen, carefully designed to distinguish the program from regular class time and make it more of a middle ground between school and community, work and fun.

Locus of Control and Coordination

EVERY CITY IN THIS REPORT has at least one public agency (or division of an agency) officially responsible for some aspect of after-school programs. Yet only in San Diego does such an office actually govern most of what takes place in after-school programs all over the city. Los Angeles comes close to that level of centralized control, with policy leadership, fundraising, accounting, and external relations handled by an independent nonprofit group that resides in the Mayor’s Office, and with control over program content shared with an operations office located in the Los Angeles Unified School District. In Chicago and New York, leadership is even less central than that, with various responsibilities for funding, regula-

tion, and management divided among multiple city offices and an independent, nonprofit intermediary organization.

The vision of a coherent “system” for after-school services would seem, at least ideally, to call for a single locus of control and accountability. But that is still very rare; the actual arrangements these cities have made are more complicated and, in some cases, less fixed than that, and have no foreseeable plans for becoming neatly centralized or streamlined. One reason for the complexity may be that the multitude of funding sources demands a hybrid organizational structure that isn’t too wedded to the methods and priorities of any one discipline. Being answerable to educators, child care and youth development agencies, employment programs, parks and recreation departments, librarians, and elected officials requires a command of different professional and bureaucratic languages, metrics, and philosophies. It’s surely easier, and may sometimes be necessary, for after-school programs to handle at least some of these relationships through distinct staffs or even separate, affiliated organizations.

But another reason for the divided leadership of many programs has to do with the delicate relationship between “regular” school and after-school: Most organizers of after-school programs (and, it seems, many students in those programs) want them to

be significantly different from the normal school routine — with different kinds of activities and a less formal interaction between adults and children. Virtually every official involved in designing these programs added that after-school programs need to retain at least some independence from the school bureaucracy, which most of them regard as too inflexible and too fixated on academic pursuits, to the exclusion of social, artistic, and recreational ones. And as a practical matter, pay scales in most school systems tend to be considerably higher than a typical after-school program can afford. Every program in this report pays teachers less after school than during the school day, at least in most cases. And most of them draw the majority of their personnel from outside the ranks of full-time teachers, with the non-teacher staff earning even less than the after-school teacher salaries.

Yet after-school programs must take place within school buildings, win cooperation and funding from boards of education and school administrators, and involve at least some rank-and-file school personnel in order to run smoothly. A program run entirely within the school system might have a hard time maintaining a separate identity from the normal routine of the classroom, and might prove too costly. But a program entirely *outside* the schools would require the

Overview: Snapshot of an Expanding Universe

FOR 35 YEARS, since the 1960s, the City of San Diego had kept its school playgrounds open in lower-income neighborhoods to give kids a safe place to play after school. Each playground had an adult supervisor from the Park and Recreation Department who threw out a few balls and kept an eye on things. It was a way of making the school useful to the neighborhood in off hours, and of giving kids an alternative to roaming the streets or watching TV. But on a few rainy days in the early 1990s, city officials began to notice something peculiar.

When the weather was inclement, the Park Department normally figured kids wouldn't want to play outdoors, and therefore didn't send the playground supervisors. But more and more, the kids were showing up anyway. The sight of clusters of wet children hanging around rainy schoolyards with apparently nowhere else to go fed a growing concern about the safety of children of working parents. "That," says San Diego Child Care Supervisor Deborah Ferrin, "is when the city realized that families were using this for latch-key child care." Within a few years, San Diego's citywide before- and after-school program, called "6 to 6," was born. It was to become the first truly citywide out-of-school-time system in the United States.

By then, of course, large government-sponsored after-school¹ programs were hardly new. One hundred miles to the north, Los Angeles was nearing the tenth birthday of its seminal after-school program called LA's BEST, which by then was in close to 100 schools in lower-income parts of the city. Antipoverty and anti-delinquency programs dating back to the 1950s featured various kinds of after-hours programs in schools, at least for some neighborhoods and children. What was comparatively new, as San Diego discovered on that series of rainy days, was that a considerable number of families — especially working parents with modest incomes — had come to regard out-of-school-time programs not as an interesting social experiment or useful resource, but as a necessity.

In 1970, 39 percent of mothers with children 18 years old and younger worked outside the home. By 1997, the percentage had exactly doubled: Nearly four of every five mothers had jobs away from home, and children who left school at 3 o'clock to find a parent waiting in the house had become the exception, not the rule. Yet even years later, as this is written, licensed child care remains scarce and, for many families, unaffordable. Other community or extracurricular activities after school may be a welcome

alternative to TV or the streets, but most of them are too episodic to depend on every day. And they are far more common in wealthier neighborhoods than in poor ones. Meanwhile, the risks of unsupervised activity after school have surely grown far worse since those early experiments of the 1950s.

At the same time, cash-strapped schools, especially in less affluent neighborhoods, have become increasingly eager for arts, athletics, and other so-called enrichment programs outside the school day, as more and more normal hours are taken up with basics like reading, math, and science. So, just as parents increasingly look to schools as a safe place for their children to spend the last hours of the work day, schools themselves are looking to the non-school hours as a way to supplement their daytime curriculum.

Federal programs, most notably the 21st Century Learning Centers, and after-school initiatives in most states testify to this growing demand (or perhaps more to the point, the growing political constituency) for after-school services. Increasingly, mayors and school officials have begun looking for ways to extend out-of-school-time activity to every school and neighborhood, or at least to most of them. Yet with very few exceptions, these discussions have been tenta-

¹ To be fully accurate about before-and-after-school programs like San Diego's, and to take account of an important issue in the debates about out-of-school-time services, we would have preferred an alternative to the expression "after-school," which some consider too limiting. Yet alternatives like "before- and after-school" or "out-of-school-time" are both more cumbersome and less familiar to most people. We therefore stick with the common, brief expression, except when describing initiatives that routinely operate in the morning. In general, we encourage readers to interpret this discussion as referring, at least in principle, to services that could be offered before the school day begins as well as after it ends.

One reason for the complexity may be that the multitude of funding sources demands a hybrid organizational structure that isn't too wedded to the methods and priorities of any one discipline.

cooperation of school officials to gain access to the children and buildings, or else would have to move kids from school to other, more expensive space, with the added burden of transportation costs, safety risks, and lost time.

This report deliberately samples four different responses to this difficult balance. At one end of the spectrum is New York's TASC: a completely independent nonprofit organization that blends public and private funding, but that does not have the status of a city program or quasi-public authority. It maintains its relationships with city and school bureaucracies through funding, contracts, and careful diplomacy, not through any executive or legislative mandate. TASC makes grants only to independent community-based organizations working in formal partnership with their respective schools. The nonprofits typically design curricula and recruit and hire non-school employees to give programs a distinct identity, while also using school facilities and resources and accommodating the needs of principals and teachers.

Chicago's After School Matters is more closely woven into the official dealings of city government than is TASC, but it is still a free-standing nonprofit organization. It, too, receives city money through grants and contracts, but its affairs are more directly guided by the heads of

three large city agencies, including the Chicago Public Schools, Park District, and Public Library. All three executives have officially embraced the program and contribute indispensable financial and in-kind support. After School Matters has designed, and often directly operates, a program markedly different from "regular" school, but its relationships with principals and teachers, as well as park officials and librarians, are closely reinforced by a top mayoral aide and the heads of the respective departments.

LA's BEST is likewise governed by a nonprofit organization with mayoral endorsement, but it goes a step further than Chicago: Its "corporate office" is actually resident in the Office of the Mayor, and its "operations office" is technically a separate entity fully incorporated into the school bureaucracy, reporting to an associate superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District (though both the chief of operations and the associate superintendent see themselves as "beachheads" for a looser, more creative culture within that bureaucracy). Los Angeles' dual leadership structure is the most literal example of the school/non-school balancing act that we found, with the school system hosting the program's operating functions but decisions on program content made in cooperation with a separate corporate office.

San Diego alone seems to have resolved these tensions by creating one locus of responsibility nestled securely within a single hierarchy of city government. Significantly, that command center is part of the city's Department of Community and Economic Development, not any of the local school districts. That is partly the result of the peculiar jurisdictional boundaries of the city's school system. The San Diego Unified School District is the largest, but far from the only, school authority operating within San Diego's city limits. Because San Diego's "6 to 6" program was created by the city to serve every elementary and middle school in the city, it necessarily has to work with all nine districts that have schools within its borders. But the program's location in the Community and Economic Development Department is not just an accident of jurisdictional boundaries. It is also a matter of mission and philosophy: Of the four programs we studied, it is the only one that primarily and explicitly sets out to serve working parents and their children as a prime *raison d'être*. This raises an important question that, intentionally or not, ended up shaping and distinguishing each of these programs as they set about defining their purposes and methods: Who is this program mainly *for*?

...the relative weight a program assigns to one constituency or another inevitably influences what services that program will offer, to whom, on what schedule.

Defining the ‘Customer’

IT WOULD BE SIMPLISTIC, of course, to imagine any after-school program (or any government system, for that matter) serving only a single constituency to the exclusion of all others. Yet the relative weight a program assigns to one constituency or another inevitably influences what services that program will offer, to whom, on what schedule. All of the programs in this report offer benefits to parents, students, teachers, school administrators, youth agencies and, indirectly, even the juvenile justice system. All of those are “customers” of after-school programs to one degree or another. But each of the four initiatives was conceived with a subset of those constituencies in mind, and that emphasis has determined, to a striking degree, what the program contains, how it is governed, when it operates, and how it is to be evaluated.

San Diego’s program was born from a realization that, by the mid 1990s, working parents were trusting the safety of their children to an after-school activity that was originally meant solely as a recreational embellishment, not as full-time child care. Faced with an epidemic of gangs and youth crime — from which parents were clearly trying to protect their kids in the only way available — city officials responded with a fundamentally new approach to the out-of-school

hours of a regular work day. The “6 to 6” program offers the same menu of activities as most of the other after-school programs we studied: homework help, arts, group projects, recreation, and so on. But its schedule is designed for the working parent, with service in the morning as well as afternoon, and on those troublesome half days when the regular school session ends early. Children’s safety in the out-of-school hours was a cornerstone of the program, as it was in Los Angeles. But in San Diego, the issue was specifically defined as children’s safety *during parents’ work hours*.

By contrast, LA’s BEST was born directly from alarm over juvenile crime, the young victims of crime, and the general dangers of idle time on the streets, particularly during the afternoon and early evening hours when youth crime measurably spikes. For LA’s BEST, the initial “customers” (at least as conceived by Mayor Tom Bradley, the program’s prime mover) were endangered young people and, as a close second, the neighborhood residents and businesses who might otherwise be prey to youth crime. The early morning hours aren’t a crucial part of that anticrime calculation and don’t figure in the program design of LA’s BEST. Nor do the specific concerns of working parents. Asked about service during non-school days and half days, or

at other times when employed parents need child care, the program’s executive director acknowledged the need and the importance of the issues, but drew a clear boundary between her program’s mission and these other concerns.

In New York, TASC similarly recognizes the child-care needs of working parents and welcomes the extra efforts of some providers in its program to serve those needs. But TASC neither mandates nor funds extended service in the morning, on non-school days, or on half days. In TASC’s case, the question is not one of mission but of funding and priorities. The top priority for the New York initiative is to win the support of city and state governments — and especially their school officials — for universal after-school services. That means demonstrating that such services can be offered at low cost with quality content, and with benefits that translate into improved school performance. Serving the child-care needs of working parents in morning hours and on non-school days would be a welcome plus for TASC, but not its top priority. As a result, when some local programs make an extra effort to serve kids outside TASC’s normal hours, they have to raise funds for that effort on their own.

Chicago’s program is unique in this line-up because its main “customer” is teenagers, an age group not likely to want

It would be virtually impossible to conceive of any of these large-scale programs taking shape without...a high-profile inventor/champion.

a five-day-a-week program, and not normally a prominent part of the child-care market. Operating three days a week, After School Matters is not a full-time solution for working parents, nor is it meant to be. Nor is it primarily a service to schools and teachers, given that it doesn't prominently include services like homework help that teachers and principals often favor. But by focusing on high school students, a group that other after-school programs tend to shun, and giving them an opportunity to develop skills and demonstrate leadership, After School Matters performs an indirect service to parents, teachers, and others who worry about teenagers without having much to offer them beyond the school day.

None of these programs was designed for just one "customer," and this discussion isn't meant to simplify the many purposes they serve. In truth, beyond the driving forces mentioned, all of the programs also sought to enrich and broaden the educational experience of children, with the hope of improving academic performance. The point, rather, is to illustrate the relationship between the design of the initiative and the main needs it addresses. Those needs normally were identified at the time each initiative was conceived, usually by a prominent individual facing particular concerns or pressures of the moment, who took the critical first step in

creating the program. Comparing the interests, constituencies, and political styles of those first actors is another way of viewing the similarities and differences of the programs in this study.

The 'Prime Movers'

LA'S BEST WAS THE BRAIN CHILD of Mayor Tom Bradley, and Chicago's After School Matters was instigated, in major part, by Maggie Daley, with firm support from her husband, Mayor Richard M. Daley. Both initiatives continue to bear the stamp of those mayors' overriding concerns (gangs and youth crime for Mayor Bradley, and idle, neglected teenagers for the Daleys). San Diego's program was conceived by Mayor Susan Golding, but with a powerful assist from a coalition of religious groups called the San Diego Organizing Project. In that case, unique among the cities in this study, the impetus for after-school programs drew much of its momentum from organized public pressure, as well as from a mayoral initiative. Still, all three efforts stemmed from chief executives with strong personal feelings on the subject of after-school services, and a willingness to adopt the issue as a personal hallmark. Only in New York City did the after-school initiative come from outside local government. But there, the prime

mover was still a powerful institution and leader with a clear point of view: the Open Society Institute, led by financier philanthropist George Soros.

All four stories therefore start with a mandate from someone with influence, money, and a "bully pulpit" from which to woo partners, solicit other funders, appoint initial implementers, and track results. It would be virtually impossible to conceive of any of these large-scale programs taking shape without such a high-profile inventor/champion. To illustrate the point, consider the myriad other after-school programs in these same cities that are not part of the initiatives studied here. All but one of these cities (San Diego) is home to many other after-school programs conceived by expert minds and run by experienced organizations. Many have flourished and grown; several have been favorably evaluated in one way or another. But none of them has reached the scale or public prominence of the four initiatives on this list. And the main reason for that appears to be the galvanizing power of the prime movers.

Still, having a powerful sponsor or patron is not the same as having a stable system. Mayors can create programs, but not compel their successors to sustain those programs. Even during their tenures, mayors almost never command enough money (or, in most cases, enough

The “prime movers” in these stories are important...because they reached out effectively to other centers of power on which that system would depend.

authority) to create an after-school regimen by fiat. The “prime movers” in these stories are important not just because they embraced after-school programs and worked hard to create a sustainable system, but also because they reached out effectively to other centers of power on which that system would depend. Thus the mayor of Los Angeles determined to establish a partnership with the independent School District to operate LA’s BEST. Chicago’s mayor and first lady started by forming a three-way partnership of the school, park, and library systems — distinct bureaucracies separated by longstanding rivalries that only a deft exercise of mayoral statesmanship could reconcile. The mayor of San Diego, supported by the advocacy of religious groups, enlisted the cooperation of no fewer than nine independent public school districts, seven private school operators, and nine community-based service providers to make the “6 to 6” program reach every school in the city.

In New York, the process is inverted, yet the point is strikingly similar. There, instead of starting with a mayoral embrace, the TASC initiative set out to *entice* the mayor, the governor, and their respective legislative branches and school systems to support a citywide after-school system. It is not yet clear whether that effort will succeed. But it is virtually cer-

tain that it would not even have begun without a sponsor of the international stature of George Soros to put credibility behind the search for partners and money. (Another example of personal prominence dedicated to the pursuit of universal after-school services was the case of then-movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger, who personally championed the California after-school initiative that became Proposition 49. In that case, however, Schwarzenegger later went on to win the state’s chief executive office, and thus to buttress personal salesmanship with official authority.) In New York, as elsewhere, it is possible to find excellent after-school programs that are not sponsored by Soros or TASC. But none of them had any realistic chance of becoming the basis of a citywide system, nor any express intent of doing so. Only with an extraordinary \$125 million grant and the very public endorsement of George Soros’ foundation was TASC able to build a network of service in New York that is big enough to command the official attention (if not yet the full assent) of city and state decision-makers.

It is worth noting that all four of these initiatives deliberately avoided a protracted planning and coalition-building process, preferring instead to get started quickly and build support and enhancements as they grew. This is no doubt partly the

result of the already-powerful people and forces standing behind the new initiatives. When a new effort bears the official stamp of the mayor of Chicago or, in Los Angeles, the combined authority of the mayor and the superintendent of schools, in the face of a clear and widely accepted need, there may be little necessity for broad coalition-building and public education. All of these initiatives did begin with some amount of *operational* planning or preparation, but generally lasting only a few weeks or months — long enough to organize the fiscal and administrative structure of the program, set priorities, and launch pilot projects. In all four cases, public support, new streams of funding, and a circle of collaborating organizations gradually formed and grew as the early stages of implementation were in progress. One participant in Chicago’s program went so far as to predict that “if we had really gotten serious about planning this thing in advance, and if we’d found out ahead of time all the complications and issues we were going to face, we’d *still* be planning, and thousands of kids would have finished school without ever seeing this program.”

Evaluation: What Constitutes Success?

IN THE FALL OF 2002, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's After School Project, which commissioned this paper, published a report to the after-school field that raised the following question:

Is it reasonable, at this stage, to measure after-school activity by whether it boosts academic performance, cuts crime, improves health, strengthens neighborhood cohesion, promotes parental involvement in schools, and advances half a dozen other worthwhile goals? All these claims appear here and there in the literature of this field, and each of them has some reasonable basis in theory and practice. Taken together, however, they seem to promise too much too fast.

All of the projects in this report are the subjects of evaluations, either in progress or completed, that illustrate the breadth of purposes that after-school programs are expected to address. None of them is quite as wide-ranging as the rhetorical question just quoted, but taken together, they do describe a universe of goals and ambitions nearly that broad.

The most complete evaluation so far is that of LA's BEST, conducted by the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation

and summarized in a final report dated June 2000. It found that the program contributed to parents' and children's feelings of increased safety after school, to students' motivation and enthusiasm for school, to their aspirations for finishing school and going on to college, and to improvements in school attendance and academic performance that were directly proportional to the degree of their participation in LA's BEST's programs. The evaluation took particular note of this last point, acknowledging that "[t]he fact that we can detect *any* change on standardized achievement measures in itself is notable, for most educational interventions are unable to show impact on measures not tightly tied to the curriculum."⁷ In this case, the evaluation included safety, motivation, and student achievement, and found encouraging results in all three categories.

Evaluations of San Diego's "6 to 6" Program, conducted by the evaluation firm Hoffman and Clark, found some reason to believe that the program may be contributing to an improvement in reading and math scores, though the reports did not include comparisons with a control group. The evaluation found "6 to 6" to be popular with parents, principals, teachers, and kids, and just as safe as licensed child care programs for school-age youngsters. The program's organizers and San Diego's former police

chief separately cite strong circumstantial evidence that the program may have contributed to a drop in after-school crime.

In New York City, preliminary reports in TASC's evaluation, which is still under way, have found that participation in the program is associated with rising rates of school attendance and widespread improvement in math scores, compared with a similar group of non-participants. Fuller findings, due in the 2004-05 school year, will measure other effects on student achievement as well as the characteristics of students who enroll, the program's ability to attract and retain good staff and managers, its relations with schools and neighborhoods, and the satisfaction of parents, principals, and senior school officials.

After School Matters, the newest of these programs, is still in the early stage of its evaluation plans, though research by the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago has found strong evidence that the program is popular with students and that they value the apprenticeships both as a way of acquiring skills and as a way of spending rewarding time with adults. Effects of the program on students' performance in and out of school and the consequences of different types of program activity still remain to be studied.

The subjects of all these evaluations are

⁷ Denise Huang, Barry Gibbons, Kyung Sun Kim, Charlotte Lee, and Eva L. Baker, "A Decade of Results: The Impact of LA's BEST After-school Enrichment Program on Subsequent Student Achievement and Performance," UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation (CSE), Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, June 2000, p. 9.

Boosting reading and math scores, keeping children and neighborhoods safer, contributing to young peoples' social development and behavior, and building bridges between the child care and education systems — all...are worthwhile goals...

reasonably well connected with the particular purposes and designs of their respective programs. But taken together, as the After School Project suggested in 2002, they do represent an especially wide range of goals and visions. Boosting reading and math scores, keeping children and neighborhoods safer, contributing to young peoples' social development and behavior, and building bridges between the child care and education systems — all of these are worthwhile goals, maybe even achievable ones. But together, they form a soberingly long list, on which the odds of a few discouraging findings will surely be high.

It will be important, as evaluation results begin to pile up, for programs to note that each of these various goals is logically plausible and certainly desirable, but achieving *all* of them is not necessary for justifying universal after-school services. It would be enough, as one principal said to us, “for kids to have a safe place to spend time after school, do their homework, have a little fun, and not have to have their minds ground into dust by TV. If we just do that — or better still, if we expose them to music or dance, give them a chance to work in teams or get some exercise — we’ve accomplished something that most parents and schools really value. Do we have to show with statistics that we also raised their math

scores? That would be great, but I’m not staying up nights worrying about it.”

Unfortunately, some of those charged with administering the new funding streams for after-school programming do find it necessary to justify the continued existence and growth of these funds on the basis of their direct effect on grades and standardized tests. Evaluation reports done after only one or two years and disclosing little or no such impact have been used to question the utility of these programs and to cut their funding.

Conclusion: Order Out of Chaos

MOST OF THIS DISCUSSION has amounted to a compare-and-contrast exercise involving four very different efforts to bring after-school services to a large percentage of local students. Yet it’s important not to lose sight of a crucial unifying theme linking these disparate stories: *The needs of schools, elected officials, community organizations, students, neighborhoods, and parents (especially, but not exclusively, employed parents) are increasingly converging around a demand for some form of extended school day.*

The relationships among these various interests, their level of involvement or leadership in any given initiative, and their potential for greater involvement

later all vary from place to place. And in any given place, the fact that the various interests are converging is far from enough to ensure that a functioning system will result. Available money and other resources are still not great enough to translate even the strongest of these alliances into a truly universal after-school system. And in a climate of straitened budgets in federal, state, and local governments at the start of the 21st century, the odds that such resources will grow dramatically are probably slim. Yet despite the discouraging fiscal picture and the difficulty of organizing new social systems of any kind, the news in this report is not that these initiatives are still fragile. The news is that they are happening.

A second possible headline for this story, though more tentative, is that the four initiatives are actually more similar to one another than they might at first appear. Most of them depend heavily on community-based nonprofit groups working in partnership with schools to offer a program that meets the needs of both kids and educators, blending academic content and constructive, creative fun. All of them get a good portion of their basic necessities — their facilities and some of their funding, at a minimum — from the school system. Nearly all piece the rest of their income together from essentially the same sources: grants

| *...but achieving all [these various goals] is not necessary for justifying universal after-school services.*

from the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, city tax levies, dollars from youth development and social-service programs, and general federal support from programs like the Community Development and Social Services Block Grants.

None of this yet constitutes a pattern or blueprint that other cities can simply adopt and follow. Each initiative in this report went through a laborious, sometimes painful, growth process that was not made materially easier by the existence of precedents elsewhere. Much of the process still depends on exigencies of politics, administrative control, jurisdictional boundaries, and fiscal circumstances that vary starkly from city to city. And even in Los Angeles, among the earliest pioneers of big after-school programs, a senior administrator writes that “the security of this partnership [between city government and the independent School District] is entirely dependent upon the priorities of the mayor and superintendent” — though the same official adds that LA’s BEST “has been a priority for three successive mayors and five superintendents,” and has attained the status of a “sacred cow.”

In short, even if none of these cities can yet claim to have a universal after-school “system” on a par with their police, school, or water systems, neither

can their after-school activity be thought of as merely a hodgepodge of independent efforts with no gravitational core. By now, both organizationally and politically, there is something to each of these initiatives that is more routine, better supported, and more important to individual citizens and voters than after-school programs have tended to be in the past. That can still unravel, but it is a more durable achievement than seemed at all likely just a decade ago.



Photographs courtesy of TASC.

New York City

The After-School Corporation (TASC)

BY TONY PROSCIO

CREATING A CITYWIDE NETWORK of after-school programs in New York — the nation's largest city and therefore its largest public school system — means, almost by definition, embarking on the biggest municipal after-school enterprise in history. As if that weren't daunting enough, starting such an attempt in 1998 would be like building a house in a whirlwind.

As the '90s were drawing to a close, the decades-long war between New York City mayors and the city's independently elected school board was entering a round of decisive battles. Within three years, the city would have a new mayor, three schools chancellors in quick succession, a new state law abolishing the board and granting mayors control of the schools, a new Department of Education in new headquarters, a historic legal battle in state courts over equitable funding of city schools, and a completely reorganized school hierarchy — all as the city headed into the worst fiscal crisis since its near-bankruptcy in the 1970s. Amid the ensuing political drama over how the schools would now be run, and by whom, and at what cost, the prospect of bold city leadership on after-school issues was close to zero.

Yet 1998 was the year that one of the

largest New York-based foundations, the Open Society Institute (OSI), chose for launching The After-School Corporation, a citywide intermediary aimed at building the largest after-school system in the United States, without any firm promise of support from the mayor or the school system. To be sure, mayors and chancellors and other top officials often spoke supportively of after-school programs generally, welcomed TASC, provided more-than-modest funding, and generally cheered its efforts. But even as this is written, in TASC's sixth year of operation, there is still no clear commitment from either the schools or City Hall to adopt the TASC model as a city program or to help it expand, much less to extend it to every school. Nor is anyone expecting such a commitment any time soon.

After-school programs in New York long predated TASC, of course, and many continue to function today independently of TASC. The largest, and most nationally known, are the Beacon Schools, whose purpose extends well beyond after-school activity for kids, to include vocational training and education for adults, community meetings, and neighborhood social activities. There were 78 Beacons operating at the time TASC started work, and some 90 "Virtual Y's" — a 3-to-6-p.m. program of the YMCA of Greater New York that operates in

schools rather than in YMCA buildings. Between 50 and 100 other after-school programs were operated around the city by three prominent organizations: the Children's Aid Society, a large family-service agency; the Police Athletic League; and the Sports and Arts in Schools Foundation, a relative newcomer (founded 1992) that runs more than 30 summer and after-school programs in New York.

But these programs are based on various models, offer varying levels of program enrichment, and work on different schedules for slightly different purposes. None of them set out to be a model for the whole city, as TASC did, nor is any of them yet widespread enough to be seen that way. Some programs are more richly funded and offer more service than TASC, but at a cost that would be hard to replicate citywide. Others are less extensive than TASC, operating fewer than five days a week, only at certain kinds of schools, or with fewer kinds of activity, and thus are not an answer for every neighborhood's needs.

Each of the large sponsoring organizations today collaborates with TASC to some degree, usually as the nonprofit sponsor of some number of TASC-funded programs. For example, some 25 TASC programs are now operating in Beacon Schools, as part of their menu of services. YMCAs are sponsors of 21 programs, and

The creation of TASC was, by any standard, a huge philanthropic wager on the political durability of a good idea...

the Children's Aid Society sponsors 11. In every case, though, the sponsoring organizations also operate other programs elsewhere that are not part of the TASC network.

As this is written, TASC is by far the largest, but far from the only, after-school initiative in New York City. Its support from city government is growing, but it does not yet approach a level at which it could extend to every school in the city. Even so, its effort to demonstrate that a citywide after-school network is feasible in New York City has won it widespread credibility and increasing attention from City Hall. At the end of 2003, TASC supports after-school activity, combining academic, arts, and recreational programs, in 193 schools, including elementary, middle, and high schools, for more than 41,000 students at a time across New York's five boroughs. Each school's program is developed jointly by the local school and a nonprofit organization, often one with a base or branch in the surrounding community. The program is constantly expanding, with the aim, eventually, of reaching every school in the city.

Theory: A Program So Big, So Popular, It Can't Be Undone

THE CREATION OF TASC WAS, by any standard, a huge philanthropic wager on the political durability of a good idea when that idea is given wide enough dissemination and time to take root. The theory, in brief and rough strokes, was that the widespread operation of a good, relatively low-cost after-school program, open from 3 to 6 p.m. five days a week and funded initially with a challenge grant from OSI, would create such demand from parents and school officials that the city would ultimately have no choice but to continue and enlarge it. The Open Society Institute, an international foundation created and led by financier George Soros, committed up to \$25 million a year for five years — an unprecedented aggregate gift of \$125 million to after-school programs in a single metropolitan area. (TASC operates at a smaller scale in other parts of New York State as well.)

The Soros gift, the foundation's largest initiative in the United States, has since been extended to cover seven years instead of five, at a rate of about \$20 million a year in recent years. That annual contribution must be matched at least three-to-one from public and private sources. The matching requirement has been met over time, with most of the

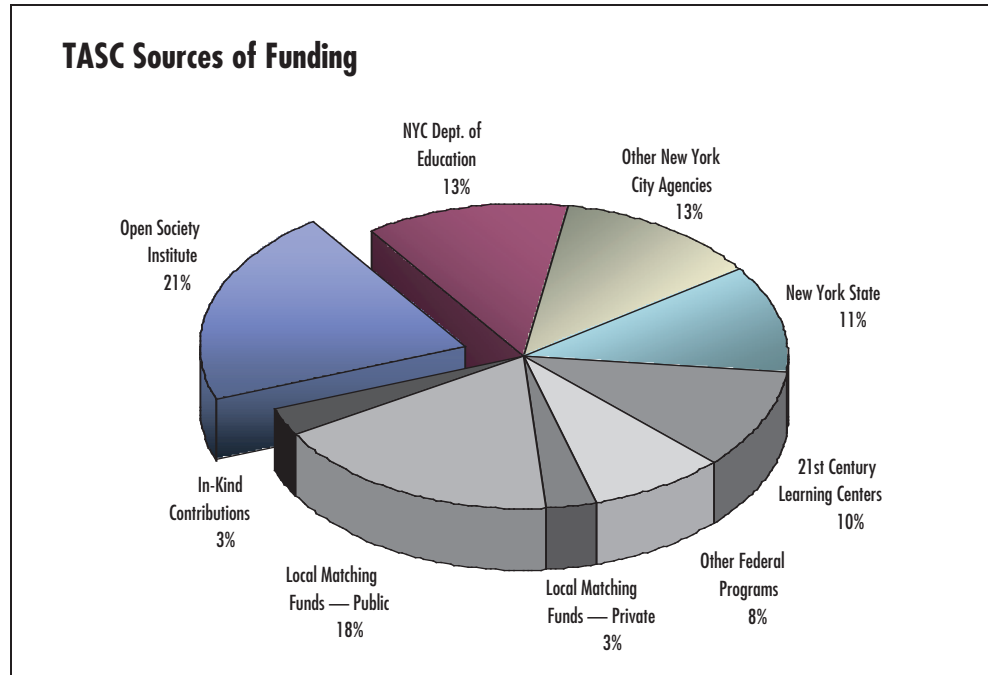
match being raised centrally by TASC from public and private grants, and the remainder coming from less-stringent matching requirements that TASC expects from local programs. In most years, programs at each school have been expected to raise a higher percentage of match money than they did the year before, though TASC often helps them with the fundraising. Most local programs started with 100 percent funding from TASC in their first year, or close to that, but by the end of 2003, nearly all were meeting or exceeding a target of 40 percent — that is, at least 40 cents of every dollar being raised by the local program. The locally raised money is included, alongside TASC's own fundraising, in the total three-to-one matching challenge set by OSI. The Soros and matching funds together have produced a total TASC budget of some \$80 million or more a year citywide, with the total reaching \$85 million in 2003.

Viewed one way, the strategic purpose of these matching funds — lining up a critical mass of public support behind the citywide after-school mission — seems to be working. Public funding thus far has hovered around two-thirds of the total TASC budget, at an average of roughly \$60 million a year. But that support is not yet a regular commitment of any single agency — particularly the crucial

...a single, dedicated source of public funding for after-school services is neither necessary for TASC's success nor even much of a goal.

Department of Education. Government money has instead come from something like a dozen city and state departments. The city's school system provided just under \$7.5 million directly to TASC. Additional money from the school system does make its way into the matching funds that local programs raise, as when an individual school chooses to contribute some of its discretionary funds or teachers' time toward the local match. These cash and in-kind contributions from schools amount to some \$1.4 million in local matching funds. But as a system-wide commitment, Education Department dollars now make up less than 40 percent of the total city contribution, and not much more than 10 cents of every TASC dollar. The remainder of the city and state contribution comes from departments responsible for youth and community development, employment, criminal justice, social services, and antipoverty programs. The single biggest public contributor is the city's Department of Youth and Community Development, at \$10.5 million a year.

In truth, a single, dedicated source of public funding for after-school services is neither necessary for TASC's success nor even much of a goal. Most municipal functions in New York, including essentials like police and sanitation, blend multiple streams of funding. And in some



ways the mix of sources can be viewed as an asset. TASC President Lucy Friedman believes a mix of sources “gives us more potential for sustainability, because we’re not dependent on one source of funds, or even on one [fixed] combination of funds. If we lose one [source], it’s not the end of the program.”

For now, signals from City Hall and the school system are increasingly friendly, and city funding generally steady, even as the city’s fiscal troubles and the schools’ administrative flux continue. It is encouraging, to say the least, that a mayor still facing the prospect of

historic deficits, embroiled in serial feuds with an equally cash-strapped state government, and dodging an assortment of local controversies, nonetheless took the initiative to convene an “Out-of-School Time Summit” at City Hall in late 2003, with TASC among the participants. Advocates see the summit as perhaps a precursor to some eventual consolidated policy on citywide after-school funding. Yet in Year Six of OSI’s seven-year demonstration, no such policy change is in the offing, and the ultimate success of OSI’s big after-school wager is therefore still impossible to gauge.

TASC's scope is intentionally citywide, and it funds programs based primarily on the strength of their proposals and plans...

Scope: School-Community Partnerships In Every Borough, and Growing

AS OF 2003, TASC supported after-school programs in 193 of New York's 1,290 schools. Because many of the sites in the roster of city schools are in fact small or specialized programs, rather than full-service schools, it is probably reasonable to estimate that TASC-supported programs now serve about one-fifth of New York's standard elementary, middle, and high schools. The number of TASC sites has been growing steadily, with a 28 percent jump in the number of schools between 2002 and 2003 alone. Most important, in the often Balkanized landscape of New York City politics, TASC operates in all five of the city's boroughs, from quasi-suburban Staten Island and parts of Queens to densely urban, blue-collar neighborhoods of Brooklyn and the Bronx, and including a cross section of Manhattan's wealthier and poorer enclaves. In fact, TASC's enrollment closely mirrors the distribution of the city's population by borough. On balance, its programs tend to over-represent lower-income areas and schools where students perform below average — with the result that the poorer Bronx is slightly better served, per-capita, than the more middle-class Queens. But that reflects needs and demand in those areas, not an explicit tar-



get of the program. TASC's scope is intentionally citywide, and it funds programs based primarily on the strength of their proposals and plans, not on their location or demographics.

After-school activities in each site are sponsored jointly by the school and a nonprofit organization, and managed by the nonprofit. Schools and nonprofits are free, within broad limits, to organize their own curricula, hire staff, and establish whatever management structures suit them. As a result, any description of how the local programs are designed, staffed, and governed necessarily rests on generalizations and typical arrangements, not

hard-and-fast rules. TASC does insist that every program it funds operate at least from 3 to 6 p.m. on every normal school day throughout the year.¹

The involvement of nonprofit organizations was a cornerstone of the TASC idea even while it was still percolating in OSI's foundation offices. The program's initial architect, OSI board member Herbert Sturz, now chair of TASC's board, insisted from the outset that the program would need to be driven partly by community-based organizations, for the sake of both program content and administration.

The administrative issues — including management, staff selection, and cost —

¹ For a more detailed summary of TASC's program model and expectations, see "TASC in Focus: A Guide for After-School Principals," available in pdf form from TASC's Web site, at http://tascorp.org/pages/promising_tascfocus.pdf.

...one of the goals was to show that [TASC] could run an after-school program for less money than the Board [of Education] was doing it for, with the same results or better.

are in some ways the most obvious and inescapable reason for nonprofit involvement. A participating principal, speaking off-the-record, explained the issue this way:

When we started this five years ago, one of the goals was to show that we could run an after-school program for less money than the Board [of Education] was doing it for, with the same results or better. And that's pretty safely what has happened in reality. When the Board runs an after-school program, they have to pay union scale and observe all the other restrictions, work rules, seniority, and so on. You get an applicant for a position, and you must accept that applicant because of seniority, whether they're the person you want or not. Working with a CBO [community-based organization], at the end of the year, if a counselor hasn't performed well or met the needs of the children, we let them go and we'll bring on someone else. That's *much* harder to do and say when you're under the thumb of the Board.

For these reasons, among others, TASC programs are all administered through the local nonprofit, not through the school. Because the school system is not technically the employer during the after-school

hours, most teachers who participate are paid at an hourly rate below that provided in the city's contract with teachers. A few schools do pay teachers to work in the after-school program, and then treat those teachers' time and compensation as an in-kind contribution to the TASC program. In that case, all union rules, wage rates, and benefits apply. In a few other cases, nonprofits pay teachers at their normal hourly rate, but without accrual of most city benefits. In all, just over one-quarter of the teachers working in TASC programs receive the school system's regular rate, which averages \$40 an hour, compared with an average of \$25 an hour in the remaining programs.² Because of union pay scales alone, one observer estimated that a typical program in the TASC network would cost at least 40 percent more to operate if it were run by the school system, without the intervention of the nonprofits.

Most instructors in TASC-supported programs are not full-time teachers. And that is where the other advantage of a nonprofit partner — the programmatic one — comes into play. As Sturz envisioned it, the nonprofits would bring a fresh approach to learning and adult supervision, attracting additional personnel whose credentials and interests are intentionally different from those of the

teachers with whom students have already spent an entire school day. They are more likely to come from the surrounding community, know the parents and children, and reflect the neighborhood's ethnic or cultural mix. Researcher Elizabeth Reisner, who heads a team of independent evaluators tracking TASC's performance, says there is evidence that the nonprofits' ability to recruit fresh talent has been a real success of the program:

The nonprofits' biggest contribution, and what makes them so important in this demonstration, is that they bring in unusual, gifted, and committed people, with interesting and offbeat talents, who can really connect to kids. The nonprofits have identified adults who can work within a very rigid schedule, with fixed start and ending times in a designated space, five days a week, and yet who can fill that time with interesting and unusual activity. [The nonprofits] find people who really enjoy working with kids and find this activity satisfying, even though it pays relatively little. But the job also places very little constraint on the actual content of what they do within those set hours and locations, so it can be a very satisfying experience for the right kind of person. And apparently

2 Working for a TASC-affiliated nonprofit, even at a lower hourly rate, can still be an attractive opportunity for a full-time teacher. Under union rules, if a teacher stays on the school's payroll after regular hours, she or he can work only seven additional hours a week, less than half of TASC's 15-hour weekly schedule. So while a teacher working for a nonprofit at \$25 an hour could earn \$375 for a full week of after-school work, a teacher working solely under the school system contract would earn only \$280 for seven hours' work at \$40 an hour. Quite apart from the economics, many teachers have also told TASC's evaluators that they value the opportunity to "do something different" after hours, organizing creative programs for small groups, enjoying more direct involvement with each student, and being unconstrained by mandated curricula.

The goal of the demonstration is to make after-school programs so popular with parents — i.e., with voters — that the city will do everything possible to keep them alive and extend them to every community.³

it is, because TASC's rate of retention of participating adults is very high.

Yet important as the nonprofits are in the management of local programs, it would be misleading to describe the school-community relationship as an equal partnership. Ultimately, as one participating nonprofit leader observed, "the most crucial resource in this program, even more than the money, is the building. If the school building isn't available, there's no program. And the principal effectively controls everything that happens in that building. If the principal doesn't want you, good-bye. So there's not much question who the ultimately authority is in any site."

The importance of the building extends beyond questions of control and leadership. The use and availability of school premises also determines the limits on after-school enrollment in each TASC site. Under TASC rules, every student in the school must be equally eligible to participate in the after-school activity. But there are usually many fewer slots than eligible students. As a result, many schools maintain waiting lists for after-school programs. Often the reasons are fiscal, but sometimes they're related to space — including restrictions the school may place on the use of some of its rooms after hours, or competing uses of

the building by other programs or activities. In some cases, nonprofit program managers believe that enlarging the program would strain their ability to manage it well, or would dilute the quality of the children's experience.

Other factors limit enrollment as well: TASC strives for an average adult/student ratio of 1 to 10. That means that, even if space were ample, the program would have to pay at least one additional salary for every ten additional students it enrolled. Attendance requirements may be another constraint on enrollment: Not every student wants or needs an after-school program five days a week, and many have other activities or commitments between 3 and 6 p.m. on some days. But TASC expects students to attend every day, and reduces funding for programs where average daily attendance drops below 70 percent. The result of all these considerations is that, on average, roughly one-third of the students in a typical TASC school participate in the after-school program. But significantly, that enrollment is a reasonable cross-section of the whole student body. In TASC programs, the students' race, ethnicity, gender, age, language proficiency, test scores, and need for special education are all nearly identical to those of the schools as a whole.

The insistence on five-day-a-week pro-

gramming serves more than one purpose. On one hand, for both students and schools, the full 15-hour weekly schedule provides ample time for social, academic, and creative activity. The steady, daily attention to homework and academics, the ability to engage in long-term projects with other students, and the ability to form steady relationships with caring adults all contribute to the quality of the program and its odds of making a valuable contribution to children's development. But the full-week schedule is also meant as a service to working parents, who can then rely on the program for after-school child care, at least on regular school days. (Almost no TASC programs operate on school holidays and half-days, so parents still need a backup plan for those times.) In that respect, the five-day-a-week schedule is also a strategic political choice: The goal of the demonstration is to make after-school programs so popular with parents — i.e., with voters — that the city will do everything possible to keep them alive and extend them to every community.³

3 Then again, not all communities may want a five-day-a-week program. In at least one upper-income neighborhood, parents objected to the 15-hour schedule on the grounds that their children had other activities that also needed to fit into the after-school hours. But that view appears to be limited only to the most fortunate neighborhoods, and even there, not all parents were of the same opinion.

“...Principals don’t necessarily see academic content as the only important activity any more.”

Content and Quality: Variety, but With an Academic Slant

TASC PICKS PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT based on proposals from schools and community groups. The proposals set out how a program will be organized and managed, what activities it will offer, and how it will meet TASC’s basic requirements (hours and days of service, adult/student ratios, limits on total and per-student costs, among other things). They outline curricula that generally reflect each school’s priorities, the needs and interests of its parents and students, the resources of the nonprofit organization, and the available talent pool of participating adults. TASC favors programs with varied and innovative curricula, but it doesn’t dictate what those curricula should contain. Once the program is in operation, it is run mainly by a site coordinator employed by the nonprofit, with an office in the school building, under the joint direction of the principal and the nonprofit partner.

TASC’s staff includes 10 program managers, each of whom oversees up to 25 local programs. Besides trouble-shooting, fiscal oversight, and general monitoring, the program managers specifically work with local staff on curriculum issues, even after the program is up and running, to ensure that the quality stays close to (or exceeds) the standards set in

the original proposal. They make sure that after-school staff get regular training and other professional-development opportunities, including an extensive catalogue of seminars offered by TASC through contracts with a variety of training and educational organizations. But the managers’ role is to guide, channel resources, raise suggestions, and resolve problems, not to prescribe activity.

In practice, schools typically offer a mix of language arts, science, math, fine and performing arts, and sports. Nearly all of them set aside some time for homework help, but most also offer group activities that give students a chance to interact with adults and one another without the formalities typical of the regular school day. Some offer organized sports or other play and recreation, though that depends partly on the availability of a gym, a playground, or other suitable space.⁴

The result of all these considerations is a curriculum tailored to each school, community, and nonprofit, with wide variations from place to place. In middle and high schools, students themselves frequently participate in the planning of activities, and some high school students are trained and employed in TASC-sponsored programs with younger children. Some instructors use formal, published curricula for certain subjects, though most

do not. About a quarter of the programs use computers regularly, but nearly one-third don’t use them at all. Group activities often, though not always, culminate in some product or performance that students can present to a wider audience.

The one element that virtually all programs have in common is an emphasis on academic enrichment. The activity that claims the single greatest share of after-school time across all three school levels — some 20 percent, on average, and sometimes much higher — is homework help. Even beyond that, other activities in math, the language arts, and science are expressly related to the goals of the school day, even if the style of the activity is quite different from the conduct of day-time classes. The reason is partly tactical: an attempt to prove the value of after-school programs to school officials, for whom academic achievement is the overwhelming priority. But another part of the reason is inherent in the TASC structure: principals wield considerable influence, and principals tend to be among those officials for whom academics are paramount. As one observer put it:

The only way you’re ever going to make after-school [activity] a reality citywide is if it’s essential to the biggest funding source in the city. That means it has to be supportive of the core mission of the

4 Information on curriculum content is mostly drawn from interim reports by the TASC evaluation team, especially “Supporting Quality and Scale in After-School Services to Urban Youth,” by Elizabeth R. Reisner et al., Washington, D.C.: Policy Studies Associates, Inc., March 29, 2002. This and other evaluation reports are available from TASC’s web site at <http://tascorp.org>.

New York public schools. So a nonprofit, or a parent, or a kid, may have other things in mind, things they'd like to do that aren't really school-related, things that would be fun and keep the kids coming back every day. And those may be great. But if the program isn't demonstrably connected to improving student achievement, it's not going to be a high enough priority to get very scarce money from the only deep pockets in town. Impact on achievement is the only reason most principals are going to put up with the inconvenience of having all these people running around their schools and causing them to put in extra work hours at the end of a long day.

But principals aren't the only force behind academic programming. Parents, in an early survey by TASC evaluators, listed homework help among their top priorities, apparently in the hope that by the time they come home from work, the school assignments will be done, and parents and children will be able to spend some quality time together before the lights go out.

To be sure, not all principals take such a rigid view of after-school academics. As funding for the arts and sports becomes scarcer in schools' regular budgets, offering these activities after school becomes as important to principals as to anyone

else. One principal articulated this view in especially strong terms:

The art, to me, is important in and of itself. The literature says we'll get some academic benefit from that, which is wonderful. But to get a kid turned on to music or to drama, that's essential.... There's too much emphasis, in talking about after-school programs, on whether it improves test scores. To me, the arts and after-school are an enrichment, quite independent of the effect on test scores. Appreciating the arts, or having an opportunity to perform or create, is an essential part of making people good human beings. We don't have enough wonderful memories, all of us. I'm trying to create as many good memories for kids as possible. When a kid performs and hears the applause, they'll never forget that moment.

Noting views like these, Lucy Friedman, TASC's president, suggests that "the pendulum is swinging slightly back on this issue.... Principals don't necessarily see academic content as the only important activity any more." Particularly in middle and high schools, when students are relatively freer to wander off and skip the after-school program entirely, emphasis on enjoyable activity and on practical opportunities like career planning or computer

training becomes at least as important as brushing up on science or math.

Cost: Maintaining a Replicable Budget, but With Flexibility

BY TASC'S ACCOUNTING, its program costs between \$1,500 and \$1,600 per student per year. That number includes \$1,000 to \$1,100 made up of a combination of grants from TASC and the matching funds required from each program. It also includes another \$200 per student from the school system, used mainly for staff development and some operating expenses in the school buildings, like supplies, snacks, or extra security after normal school hours. TASC then allocates an additional \$200 to each program's budget, half of which is for training and technical assistance that TASC will provide to the program over the course of the year. The other half is for a portion of TASC's overhead. The last \$200 is paid from grant funds that TASC raises, including those from OSI, not from public dollars.

Of the basic \$1,000 to \$1,100 per student, TASC initially provided most, and often all, of the money for the earliest participating sites to get up and running. Thereafter, the local school and nonprofit were expected to raise escalating amounts of matching money, eventually reaching

The integrity of the standard TASC budget — keeping costs close to the prescribed amount from site to site — is an important tenet of the demonstration.



40 percent in 2004. The exact level of TASC's contribution at any given school has depended partly on what other sources of support might have been available to that school and nonprofit. Some sites, for example, were already getting regular funding from city or state programs or later became regular grantees of one of those programs. In those cases TASC contributed less than it did to other schools that may have been starting from scratch, with no other funding available. Today, the norm is roughly 60 percent TASC funding with 40 percent coming from matching sources, but that norm is surrounded by many exceptions and variations, including half a dozen

schools whose programs now run with no Soros funding at all.

The annual increases in required matching are intended partly to provide an exit strategy for OSI — that is, by the end of the seven-year demonstration, when the Soros grant runs out, each school's program should be operating on a budget that comes primarily from public dollars, whether raised by the local program or centrally by TASC. Because TASC expects to remain in business, it foresees a continued role in raising and channeling money to local after-school programs, but in most places, TASC's share of the local budget will be smaller than it is today. Hence the expectation of

increased local fundraising. Realistically, if the level of government grants doesn't increase substantially by the end of the OSI demonstration, it's likely that TASC will have to re-examine the way it distributes its support, given that there will not be enough money to keep all current programs afloat.

For now, with \$1,300 per student (including the \$200 grant from the school system, but not counting TASC's \$200 in allocated training and overhead), each program is expected to pay its site coordinator, instructors, and community outreach or liaison staff, buy supplies, food, and equipment, and pick up whatever other administrative costs are required to operate the program. Everyone, including TASC, acknowledges that some costs are often covered outside the strict limits of this budget — some schools provide supplies and equipment at no cost; some nonprofits do the same; some programs have volunteers doing work that must be paid for elsewhere. As in most after-school accounting, the capital costs of using the school building, and some of the building's operating costs, aren't reflected in this budget either. One example is utility bills, which TASC programs don't pay. Another is custodial services: The work hours of New York City custodians are staggered over the course of the day, with at least one custodian in each school

working until 6 p.m. That is normally sufficient to cover the 3-to-6 p.m. after-school time, thus posing no additional cost to the program. Most local budgets don't include transportation, either — which, in subway-rich New York, isn't much of an issue. In other places, that would be a substantial additional cost.

The integrity of the standard TASC budget — keeping costs close to the prescribed amount from site to site — is an important tenet of the demonstration. In the early years, in fact, it was more than a tenet. TASC started off with the hope of demonstrating and testing a single fiscal model that would be replicable across the whole system: not so thin that it compromised quality, but not so rich that it wouldn't be realistic as a citywide model. If schools or nonprofits used additional resources or raised extra money, TASC reduced its funding in proportion. To say the least of it, this policy was unpopular with local program operators.

"Initially," says President Lucy Friedman, "we asked people not to use other funds to increase their budget, mainly for research reasons. We wanted to be able to study whether the program was truly effective and replicable, and for that, we really wanted all the sites to be more or less the same in terms of cost. But after two years of that, we gave in. We didn't want to keep kids from getting extras."

Today, she says, of the nearly 200 programs around the city, "the funding structure of every one is different. That maybe makes the research and accounting more difficult, but it is great for creativity, for getting local buy-in, and for fundraising. And those are all essential, too."

Yet the flexibility goes only so far. Even under the more permissive rules, when schools or nonprofits raise major public grants for their after-school programs, TASC will still reduce its funding somewhat, in the hope of spreading its dollars farther. In fact, TASC's development staff deliberately helps nonprofits find outside sources of funding beyond their required match, in the hope that this funding can offset scarce OSI dollars and sustain the nonprofits' funding after the OSI demonstration is over. But there is no longer a deliberate policing of local budgets to adjust for every dollar raised above the initial budget. Not only did that policy prove unworkable, but as one participant put it, "it was really an incentive for us to hide things from [TASC] and do things off-the-books. Not only does that screw up your supposedly clean research, but it makes for a dishonest relationship that doesn't help anybody." It wasn't long before TASC agreed.

Even so, some real costs of the program still go unreflected in the official budgets, not so much through deliberate conceal-

ment as through the vagaries of accounting. Besides the school operating costs already mentioned, unreckoned costs include some overhead of the operating nonprofits, including some management costs that are made necessary specifically because of their participation in the TASC demonstration. One example: Raising an escalating portion of the after-school budget every year means, for many organizations, dedicating part of a fundraising director's or consultant's time to raising new grants every year. Another example is specific to larger nonprofits that operate more than one local TASC program. In those cases, the organization's central office incurs some extra costs in managing and accounting for the operations of several far-flung sites, which usually aren't reflected in their TASC accounting.

TASC doesn't refuse to acknowledge these costs, but any reimbursement for them would have to fit into the standard \$1,500 to \$1,600 per-student budget. Not every participating nonprofit is able to fit into that restriction, and some end up devoting the lion's share of that amount to direct program expenditures — mostly instructors' and coordinators' salaries — rather than to management. One participating nonprofit estimated that "a TASC program that they budget at \$300,000 actually costs us \$360,000. But they'll give us 80 percent of \$300,000" for the first

If the ultimate purpose of TASC is to create a program of indispensable value to parents, educators, and executives of the school system, then the findings of independent researchers will be crucial in establishing [the program's value].

year, leaving another 20 percent, or \$60,000, as the required match. Including the unfunded management costs, this organization estimates that it actually needed to raise \$120,000 to match TASC's first-year contribution, and then increase that target by some \$30,000 a year as the matching requirement escalated.

However difficult these considerations may be for the participating schools and nonprofits, they generally amount mainly to accounting disputes. The cost structure of the basic program probably varies more than it might appear on paper, but not so much that it undermines TASC's fundamental desire for a standard, replicable program model. Yet the program's "basicness," its deliberate limitation on frills and enrichments, still rankles some participating nonprofits whose philosophy demands more services than TASC considers essential.

One example among many is the provision of services outside of TASC's 3-6 p.m. slot on official school days. When schools are closed, or open for only half a day, some nonprofits feel a need to protect parents from the disruption of their normal child-care routine. One such organization accepts students from its TASC program into its other day care programs on non-school days. The cost and administrative complexities are considerable, but the organization believes it

owes this service to its constituents. The result is a program that isn't quite comparable to other TASC sites, either in cost or possibly in outcomes. TASC has no objection to these additional expenditures, and even supports them philosophically. But it does not fund the additional service, and does not count the additional expenditures for that service toward the matching requirements for its basic program.

It isn't unusual, in fact, for nonprofits to want a richer program than TASC's funding model would allow, and several of them therefore supplement their programs well beyond what TASC would willingly fund. For TASC, raising additional private grants for program enrichment is fine, so long as the program first meets its annual matching requirement in the basic budget. When programs raise additional public dollars, however, TASC normally will respond by reducing its own contribution, rather than allow the public grant to be spent entirely on enhancements. Government dollars, says Friedman, "are more sustainable, so those are the basis on which the [local programs] ultimately should be supported. They can't be dependent forever on the Soros dollars, and the sooner those can be replaced by more sustainable sources of money, the better — for them, as well as for the whole effort."

Most participants seem to understand

this calculation and the limits it imposes. As one observer explained it:

A lot of projects wanted to enrich their programs not because they couldn't fit into TASC's budget, but because they didn't fundamentally share TASC's concern about keeping this affordable.... Lucy [Friedman] and Herb [Sturz] are interested not only in offering high-quality programs, but more important, they're interested in serving as many kids as possible. It's got to be good but also really big. You can't do that by constructing a program that's too expensive to do in more than a few lucky places that maybe have great nonprofits or easy access to private grant money or something extraordinary like that.

Evaluation: Quality, Scale, Outcomes, and Replicability

AT THE OUTSET OF THE PROGRAM, TASC commissioned an independent evaluation that will run at least through the five years of OSI's initial demonstration period. With funding from four large national foundations, TASC chose as its evaluator Policy Studies Associates (www.policystudies.com), a 20-year-old research firm that specializes in education and youth development. The firm has so far produced

eight interim reports for TASC, either presenting general preliminary findings or zeroing in on particular research subjects like student outcomes, program content and scale, and participant satisfaction. There will be a more complete evaluation report, in 2004, corresponding to the end of TASC's fifth year. The findings will be based particularly on the schools where after-school programs opened in TASC's first two years of operation — thus providing a relatively long series of data from which to draw conclusions.

In the meantime, the interim reports from Policy Studies Associates provide at least a rough — and so far favorable — impression of how TASC and its constituent programs are performing. The December 2002 report (the most recent one available at the time this is written) offers these tentative conclusions:⁵

- The program is on track to achieve its goals, and is producing positive opportunities and experiences for participating schools, students, and families.
- Students are reacting to these efforts with steadily rising rates of after-school attendance, which means that participating students are experiencing increasing levels of exposure to TASC activities and hence to the benefits that participation confers.
- Results so far are consistent with the findings from comprehensive evaluations of similar after-school programs. Full-term evaluations of those programs eventually concluded that they contributed to improved school atten-

dance and achievement, better social adjustment, the development of useful skills and constructive attitudes, and reductions in some harmful behaviors.

- Though still under way, the research already shows that TASC programs are promoting improved achievement in math, with students at greatest academic risk deriving the greatest benefit from regular TASC participation.
- Participation in a TASC program is associated with significant gains in school attendance and hence greater exposure to the academic programs of the host schools.

The most immediate purpose of the evaluation and interim reports is, of course, to help TASC manage the program, and to inform OSI on how well the goals of its grant were pursued. But in the longer run, the research is itself a strategic element in reaching those goals. If the ultimate purpose of TASC is to create a program of indispensable value to parents, educators, and executives of the school system, then the findings of independent researchers will be crucial in establishing how much value the program really represented, and what the city and its schools would lose if TASC's accomplishments aren't sustained.

The Future: Preservation, Growth, and Sustainability

AT THE END OF 2003, with one year left in the OSI demonstration period, there are just over half a dozen TASC sites whose after-school programs function without the Soros dollars. Their support comes mainly from the federal 21st Century Learning Centers program and a combination of city and state funds. The rest continue to rely to varying degrees on grants from OSI that will no longer exist come 2005.

To help preserve and enlarge public contributions for after-school programs, OSI and TASC helped form the After School Alliance, a national advocacy and policy network. The Alliance's goal is something like a national version of TASC's: to make after-school services available by 2010 to every young person who wants them. Although a rising federal deficit makes it unlikely that Washington will soon contribute significantly more toward that goal than it now does, advocacy by the Alliance at least helped to keep the 21st Century program whole in fiscal 2004, when the Bush Administration had proposed a 40 percent reduction. The Alliance also hopes to promote more effective after-school policies in state and local governments around the country. That prospect got a boost in 2003 when Alliance Honorary Chairman (and now California Governor) Arnold

5 This summary is drawn from "What Have We Learned from TASC's First Three Years?," Policy Studies Associates, December 2002, especially pp. 8-9. The full text can be downloaded from <http://tascorp.org/pages/psaYear3.pdf>.

At best, it seems, public policy will move in TASC's direction only gradually, and will need a lot of guidance and encouragement along the way.

Schwarzenegger himself took charge of a state government, having run partly on a record of supporting universal after-school programs.

Yet for now in New York City, it is not yet clear whether any likely combination of private and public dollars will be enough to fund sustainable service in every New York City school. At some point, as Lucy Friedman sees it, “the solution will probably come through statewide legislation that says, in effect, ‘after-school for all.’...That could start with the consolidation of the three major funding streams [the federal 21st Century program and two state initiatives] and eventually produce a formula something like 30 percent federal, 30 state, 30 local, and 10 percent private or fees.”

Within those broad categories might still lurk a hodgepodge of different funding streams not necessarily very different from the mix that supports TASC today. But if the amounts were great enough in aggregate, and the rules for each funding source were flexible enough to allow the money to be used and combined where needed, a continued *mélange* of different funding agencies would be manageable. In fact, given the many functions ascribed to after-school programs — youth development, academic reinforcement, physical fitness, cultural enrichment, child care for working parents — it is reasonable to

assume that many budgets would ultimately be tapped to fund a complete system. Untidy as the result might be, if it brought some official consensus on how the burden would be shared, with recurring line items securely written into the various agencies’ budgets, that would still be a giant step forward. It might, in reality, be as firm and clear a system as any other public function in New York, and good enough to make citywide after-school programs a reality.

But just past TASC’s sixth birthday, these thoughts are mostly speculation. Political support for after-school services is clearly building, and New York’s experiments (of which TASC is by far the largest, but not the only one) continue to draw interest and, here and there, new funding. Whether that will eventually lead to a full-scale, officially sanctioned citywide program remains a matter of speculation.

“With so much in flux in New York City,” Friedman says, “you can’t just take it on faith that somehow the system will bend over backwards to take care of after-school. There’s still just too much going on in the school system for anyone to have figured out how to do that, or make it their number one priority.” In that respect, the school system isn’t alone. New York State politics and budgets are likewise in turmoil, leadership is fractured at the best of times, and the consequences of

court-ordered changes in statewide education funding are still uncertain as this is written. At best, it seems, public policy will move in TASC’s direction only gradually, and will need a lot of guidance and encouragement along the way. To that end, Friedman and her staff work closely with policymakers in education and youth services at the state and local level, conduct research locally and nationally on after-school policy and funding, and join forces with after-school programs in other cities to build a national constituency for greater funding and better policy.

“We don’t expect a statewide mandate soon” for after-school programs, Friedman says, and “funding for universal after-school is probably still a ways off...But we’d be happy if we could just get more order and efficiency in the current funding. Before we started, one principal had four after-school programs running in her school at one time. Even then, there was money, but little planning, system, or infrastructure. Money is getting spent, but there’s no system. That’s why the mayor’s Out-of-School Time Summit is so important.” For now, TASC is as broad, consistent, and complete an after-school network as New York City has ever had. It is not yet the system that Friedman and OSI hoped to create. But the prospect no longer looks quite as remote as it did when the big wager first began.



Photographs courtesy of LA's BEST.

Los Angeles

LA's BEST

BY BASIL J. WHITING

IN EARLY 1988, LOS ANGELES was concerned about a rising tide of juvenile crime, drugs, and gang activity in poor neighborhoods. Not only were adults and businesses being victimized, but so were other, often younger, children. A later research report noted of that era¹ that “overall, an estimated 85 percent of the children interviewed mentioned ‘guns’ or ‘shootings’ as a common feature in their immediate surroundings.” Some of what the children said:

Too many gang-bangers in our neighborhood and they shoot a lot....They try to rob you, or kill you over your colors....They try to beat you up....Last time they shot a pregnant woman... Sometimes when I'm outside with my friends, we feel that people might come and grab us....

As a result, the children said,

We have bars on the windows and bars on the doors....They keep me inside, they don't let anyone come in....My mother doesn't let us out if she's not home....Most of the time, I'm in the house.

Alarmed at such conditions, then-

Mayor Tom Bradley gave a speech calling for the creation of after-school programs for 100,000 kids in poor neighborhoods. At the time, the city was not devoid of youth-serving activities in the hours from roughly 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. For instance, the Youth Services Division of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) did (and still does) provide adult supervision at playgrounds at every elementary and middle school in the after-school hours. Some of these had (and more now have) a spectrum of well-organized activities, but they are permissive, drop-in programs, with no sign-in and only two youth service workers per playground, regardless of how many kids attend. While the playground programs are free, the few other existing after-school programs in 1988 were limited and costly to parents. The LAUSD operated licensed child care centers adjacent to or on the property of some elementary schools for a sliding-scale fee based on parental income. And various Boys and Girls Clubs and YM/WCAs offered after-school care on a fee-for-service or similar sliding scale.

Mayor Bradley had something else in mind — well-staffed, sign-in after-school programs that would be free, keep children safe and out of trouble, give them something positive to do with their after-school time, enrich their educations, and broaden their exposures to arts, athletics,

and the outdoors. Where to start? Los Angeles was and still is a massive school district, now counting over 800,000 students, over 400 elementary schools, over 70 middle schools, 60 high schools, and several dozen multi-level, magnet, and continuation high schools. Its school population is four-fifths Latino, 10 percent African American, 4 percent Caucasian, and 3 percent Asian, with less than a percent made up of Filipino/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans. Seventy percent of all students meet federal poverty guidelines. The transience rate (kids who move into or out of a school during the school year) is 25 percent. In 1988, facing only slightly lower levels of total enrollment, ethnic diversity, and poverty, Bradley determined to begin his initiative in elementary schools whose neighborhoods faced the greatest problems of gangs, crime, drugs, low educational performance, and poor test scores.

Why elementary schools, when gangs were composed mainly of older kids? None of those involved in after-school programs in Los Angeles would say that it was too late to have an impact on the older kids, but instead maintained that such kids were a tougher problem, and there were few good models of what to do for them. It was a better strategic choice, they said, to begin with younger kids for whom successful, or at least promising,

¹ Denise Huang, Barry Gibbons, Kyung Sun Kim, Charlotte Lee, and Eva L. Baker, “A Decade of Results: The Impact of LA's BEST After-school Enrichment Program on Subsequent Student Achievement and Performance,” UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation (CSE), Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, June 2000, p. 20. The report cited interviews made in March 1990, and notes that a decade later, in May 2000, “the bleak conditions of families and children in economically poor areas have...worsened, rather than improved.”

[Mayor Tom] Bradley appointed a 53-member Education Council of civic leaders and charged it with creating a public/private partnership to support an enriched after-school program and a City/LAUSD partnership to operate it.

after-school programming models had been developed, models that might have greater leverage in getting such kids on the right track and keeping them there.

Creation and Evolution

LIKE MANY BIG (AND SMALL) CITY MAYORS, Tom Bradley had no direct control over the School District, which reported to an independently elected board. Bradley wanted closer working relations between the city government and LAUSD, and he thought that one way to do that was to run after-school programs via a city/School District partnership, starting in troubled elementary schools and extending eventually to all city schools. The mayor would commit city funding to start the program and support it during its early years, but he would need the cooperation of LAUSD to host the after-school program and broad civic support to design, promote, and support it.

Bradley appointed a 53-member Education Council of civic leaders and charged it with creating a public/private partnership to support an enriched after-school program and a City/LAUSD partnership to operate it. One of the appointees was Carla Sanger, then a consultant to the California Department of Education on school readiness who had been executive

director of the Los Angeles Child Care and Development Council for almost eight years. Previously, she had been one of several supervisors of day care services for the state of New Jersey and had started a nationally recognized after-school program in Perth Amboy in 1973.

With the LAUSD expressing willingness to cooperate, the council worked into the summer of 1988 and produced a plan for elementary after-school programming that set the values of what became LA's BEST (Better Educated Students for Tomorrow). It would provide a balanced program of educational supplementation and homework help, enrichment activities of all kinds, recreation, and a snack, during the period from 3 to 6 p.m. on school days in school facilities. The mayor promised \$1 million per year in city tax-increment money for the first two years of operation.

There was some thought on the council about using state funds for licensed child care, but the child care and child development agencies did not want the broad after-school mission. Further, the licensed child care system had limited funds, a strong bureaucracy, and staffing requirements with mandatory hiring credentials that the council thought too restrictive and expensive. The council's after-school plan called for an adult/child ratio of 1 to 20, not the 1 to 14 that the child care system required. Further, that plan required

hiring flexibility to utilize a range of local community people as staff: parents, college students, other neighborhood people, as well as some certified teachers.

LA's BEST began operations in the fall of 1988 in ten elementary schools for about 200 children in each school. In October of that year, the Education Council asked Carla Sanger to visit some of the schools and assess progress. Sanger says:

I visited five schools and did not like what I was seeing. Everything was too tight; there was no laughter and fun; it was like an extension of the school day. It had to be fun, because if it were just more school, then the kids would vote with their feet and not come. I wrote a position paper for the mayor, who called me in, heard me out, and asked how I'd change things. I said we had too much formal curricula, too much rigidity, and not enough staff who were well-suited for after-school programming.

The Education Council responded by recommending that LA's BEST establish a full-time position of after-school executive director and chose Sanger for the job. Over the next year or so, Sanger transformed the large, 53-member Educational Council, which had done its job, into a 35-person board for what became a nonprofit corporation: the LA's BEST

What evolved was a complex structure of formal and informal, overlapping relationships...

administrative core, called the Corporate Office, located in the Office of the Mayor. This central coordinating and management entity applied for and received its 501(c)(3) tax exemption from the Internal Revenue Service in 1990 — making it, in effect, a nonprofit organization responsible both formally to its board and informally to the mayor.

The mayor and the School District, however, had agreed on a full partnership, with the district “running” the after-school programs in the schools. What evolved was a complex structure of formal and informal, overlapping relationships in both the mayor’s office and the District that is often confusing to outsiders but reflects a balance of interests and resources between these two independent forces that has stood the test of time.

To structure the School District’s role, Sanger worked to create an LA’s BEST Operations Office within LAUSD and formally accountable both to the school board and the schools administrators. This operations staff runs the after-school programs in the participating schools and is employed by and reports formally to the School District (but is informally responsible to the LA’s BEST board as well). To run the Operations Office, Sanger chose Debe (pronounced Debby) Loxton as Program Coordinator. The LA’s BEST corporate board later changed

Sanger’s title to President & CEO, and she prevailed upon LAUSD to change Loxton’s title to Chief Operating Officer or COO. Sanger says she and Loxton also worked “long and hard” with the LAUSD personnel commission and School Board to create other LAUSD Operations Office positions, which will be described in a later section.

In September 1989, LA’s BEST expanded to 15 schools and grew further over the next few years until it reached about 24 schools in 1993, when Richard Riordan was elected mayor. Its budget had risen to more than \$2.5 million, with the city providing almost \$2 million and private funds the rest. Riordan was a Republican succeeding a Democrat, and thus brought in new and different relationships. Sanger says,

They thought differently and bigger. He was for after-school but he told me, ‘You only have 24 schools. You have got to go to scale.’ He wanted me to revamp the board. Well! I wasn’t happy about that at all; I loved my board. I’d worked with them a long time. We’d created this and built the ‘branding’ of the LA’s BEST name.

I was digging my heels in on this when along came this management consulting firm, Bain and Company. It was looking for a nonprofit poised for expansion to

which it could donate \$500,000 in pro-bono consulting services. We won the interview for their services; and they came in, took a good look at us, and basically told me I was wrong. They said I should in fact go to scale and revamp my board.

Sanger set up a strategic planning committee of herself and LA’s BEST board members. It recommended restructuring the board into two bodies: a governing board for the LA’s BEST corporation and an advisory board of programming experts to work with the LAUSD after-school Operations Office. With Bain’s continuing advice, the restructuring proceeded. Sanger is pleased with the result:

Riordan gave me a hotshot Republican chair for my governing board who is just great to work with and a great fundraiser. I now have a terrific, businesslike board and this absolutely wonderful staff. The governing board gets us connections and resources, while the advisory board is the steward of our quality.

Bain and the new governing board also advised Sanger on how to set up for expansion. They pointed out that the public and nonprofit worlds are very different management-wise; business, they said, would never expand without creating the infrastructure to support expansion.

sion. Sanger's experience in the nonprofit world was the opposite:

You scramble and overwork your present staff to expand the program, then hope to get enough overhead money somehow to grow your staff to support the expansion. You know what? They were right; they taught me a lot. It works much better their way.

LA'S BEST had grown slowly into the mid-1990s; and with the management structure for expansion in place, Sanger knew that she had to draw the state into funding after-school at some scale and that she had to have allies to do that.

We had to have our own funding stream. So, we got together with San Diego and Sacramento and other cities with after-school programs and formed a coalition and got legislation introduced that I helped write, to provide state funding for after-school programs separate and distinct from school-age child care. Riordan fought for us, and we succeeded in getting the legislation passed and an initial \$5 million appropriated. We've been back and forth on legislation several times to shape things the way we needed and to grow the appropriations, which are now \$100 million per year, statewide, of which we

in LA's BEST get over \$7.5 million in about 9 different grants.

LA's BEST's budget slowly grew from \$2 million in 1990-91 to just over \$3 million in 1996-97 and 1997-98, then exploded as state and federal after-school funding came on-stream in the later 1990s. In the last six years, the LA's BEST budget has grown from \$4.4 million in 1998-99 to more than \$23 million in the 2003-04 school year, with the program now serving more than 19,000 students in 114 elementary schools. (See bar graph on page 43.)

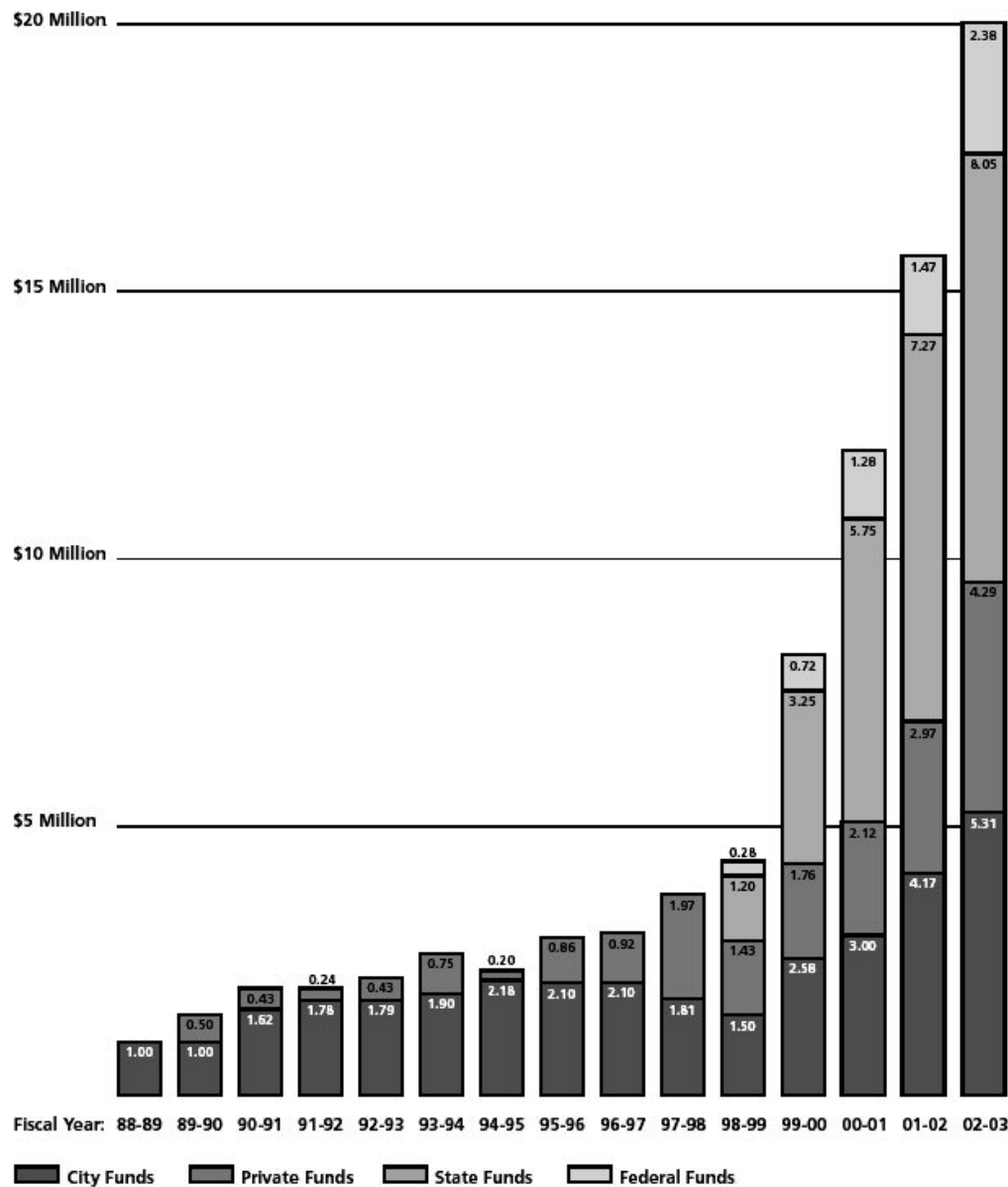
Several years ago, Sanger was called by movie star and later governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, who was trying to set up programs for older kids, especially a middle-school after-school program he was calling "Arnold's All Stars." They had lunch, and Schwarzenegger questioned her closely on all aspects of LA's BEST and asked for her help. She agreed and has worked with him on various initiatives for after-school since then. Arnold's All Stars program is now in several Los Angeles middle schools and is now the second, and only other, after-school program working out of the Mayor's Office. Schwarzenegger subsequently led the battle for California Proposition 49 to establish a much larger, permanent, constitutionally authorized state funding

stream for after-school services. To the surprise of veteran political observers, the voters overwhelmingly approved it. When (and, some say, if) California returns to fiscal health and certain budgetary trigger points in the proposition are surpassed, as much as \$500 million in state funding will flow to after-school programs throughout the state. For now, as the state struggles through a severe budget crisis, Sanger and other after-school supporters take comfort in the fact that the new governor is an after-school champion and, if cuts come, they will not be made callously.

More Than LA's BEST

AS LA'S BEST GREW in the mid-1990s, Sanger concluded that it needed top-level support and top-level access within the bureaucracy of LAUSD. Roy Romer, the former governor of Colorado, was about to come on board as superintendent of schools, and Sanger went to outgoing Superintendent Ramon Cortines, whom she had worked with closely and successfully in building LA's BEST, and pressed him to create, before he left, a position reporting directly to the superintendent on after-school matters. Cortines agreed, but the day before he left he called Sanger and said, "Carla, I'm sorry; I just couldn't get to it."

History of Program Funding



So Sanger approached a new, unknown, and decidedly unusual superintendent. She says,

I met with Romer and had all kinds of people call him and I didn't think it was going well. But, you know, he'd heard me and checked this all out and he created an assistant superintendent position — since elevated to associate superintendent — and put into it John Liechty, who was an old inside hand who knew everybody in the system but who had lost out in the musical chairs of reorganization. John probably thought this was some kind of consolation prize bordering on Siberia and hesitated, but finally took it. And he has just become an incredible champion for us, and we're so glad he's there.

John Liechty heads what is called the Beyond the Bell Branch of the LAUSD, reporting directly to the superintendent. ("Beyond the Bell" means anything before and after school as well as other special programs.) Because LA's BEST is so old and so well known, outsiders often consider it to be "the" after-school program of Los Angeles. But from Liechty's perspective, LA's BEST is now but one (albeit a special one) of many programs in his branch. Loxton and the LA's BEST Operations Office formally report to him. Liechty says,

“We’ve built a model here, a Los Angeles model that is the best kept secret in the after-school world. We are the only school district in the country that I know of that has a superintendent-level position in charge of after-school programs.”

We’ve built a model here, a Los Angeles model that is the best kept secret in the after-school world. We are the only school district in the country that I know of that has a superintendent-level position in charge of after-school programs. Having an executive position in charge has helped establish a broad array of programs and brought credibility to after-school programs.

The Branch provides all the LAUSD’s elementary and middle schools with some combination of three levels of programming:

The first level is Youth Services, which the Branch runs. The longstanding program, which predates LA’s BEST, is fairly universal. It remains a permissive recreation program in which two trained adults supervise playground activity and some organized sports. It’s a drop-in program serving 50,000 kids daily and a kind of “safety net” that they can always go to.

The second level comprises sign-in programs that have set curricula for three kinds of activities: homework help, academic enrichment, and other enrichment like arts and crafts and recreation, plus a snack or breakfast. These generally have an adult/child ratio of 1 to 20 and fall into before- and after-school categories.

- **Before School:** LAUSD runs a state-funded Before-School Education Safety Program called “Ready, Set, Go!” which operates in 55 elementary schools, providing a safe place for an hour and a half before school, with academic help, light recreation, and breakfast.
- **After School:** LAUSD’s second-level after-school programs mostly run from 2 to 6 p.m., five days a week, for all 180 school days (or in some cases more, if the school operates year-round). Providers that Beyond the Bell contracts with for such after-school programs include LA’s BEST and these additional organizations: A World Fit for Kids!, Arnold’s All Stars, Boys and Girls Club of San Pedro, Bresee Foundation, Building Up Los Angeles, Los Angeles Center for Educational Research, Martin Luther King Legacy, Para Los Niños, STAR, Woodcraft Rangers, and the YWCA.

Adding to the system’s complexity, there are now 240 LA’s BEST and other such after-school programs that receive some degree of public funding from School District sources. But there are numerous other after-school programs operating in district schools that are not funded by district funds and thus not counted among the 240 cited. LA’s BEST’s 114 sites fit in both categories: Seventy receive funding that flows from LAUSD sources to LA’s BEST’s Operations Office and thus are in the 240 cited. The funding of the other 44 LA’s BEST sites is raised by LA’s BEST’s Corporate Office from non-LAUSD sources (though it, too, is eventually provided to the LA’s BEST Operations

Office to support in-school operations).

It is important to note that at least 70 schools have two or more such after-school programs in addition to their youth services playground program and, perhaps, a before-school program as well.

Of these after-school programs, LA’s BEST is unique. First, it is the largest, oldest, and some say best provider. (Liechty says, “It is just outstanding, and I’d put them into every school if I could.”) Second, it is the only after-school program staffed directly by the Beyond the Bell Branch through the LA’s BEST Operations Office, whose personnel work “for” LAUSD and only on LA’s BEST, though paid from a variety of funding sources. And third, it and Arnold’s All Stars are the only two after-school programs headquartered in the Mayor’s Office.

The third level of Beyond the Bell programming comprises a range of auxiliary services, supplemental educational services, and extended learning opportunities.

The budget of the Beyond the Bell Branch has grown from \$50 million when it started to about \$225 million at the end of 2003, reflecting the increase in federal, state, local, and private funding flowing to such programs. This includes about \$85 million from federal, state, county, and LAUSD sources (including \$25 million from LAUSD). The Branch also receives about \$75 million from No

Child Left Behind and another \$65 million for summer schools. The Branch's expenditures include \$17.3 million from a variety of sources for the LA's BEST Operations Office.

Structure and Staffing

AS NOTED EARLIER, LA's BEST's unusual, complex, somewhat overlapping organizational structure was set early in its existence. It is a partnership between a Corporate Office in the Mayor's Office charged with raising funds for the program, promoting it, and linking it with community constituents; and an Operations Office in the LAUSD charged with hiring and supervising the staff operating the after-school program within school settings. The accompanying organizational chart on page 46, simplified from one in LA's BEST's publications, displays these relationships. The mayor and the School District each have strong voices in the selection of all the key people involved in this structure and in its operation. In practice, this devolves to Sanger and Loxton.

On the left side of the chart is the Corporate Office, housed in the Mayor's Office, led by Sanger as president and CEO. It consists of about 13 people and centers on the functions of fundraising and accounting, public information, and



developing community resources to support LA's BEST. The Corporate Office is formally responsible to the board of directors and advised by an advisory board, as described earlier. It and the board of directors are overseen by the mayor and City Council, who have an informal but powerful voice in their selection. The board is critically important in raising funds and generating community support for LA's BEST, while the advisory board is composed of educational and after-school experts and relates both to the Corporate Office and to the Board of Education and its superintendent of schools.

On the right side of the chart, the LA's BEST Operations Office, housed in the School District and headed by Chief

Operating Officer Loxton, is formally responsible to the associate superintendent for the Beyond the Bell Branch (John Liechty), who in turn reports to Superintendent Roy Romer. In practice, Loxton interacts closely and regularly with Sanger, too. Loxton's operations staff numbers more than 1,600 people, all of whom are employees of the LAUSD on an either full- or part-time basis — and who, as noted earlier, work solely on LA's BEST. The relationships between the LAUSD and the Mayor's Office are such that no COO would be appointed without agreement by both.

- About 38 people work in the Operations Office headquarters, of whom 19 are full time, including Loxton as COO and the directors of education, staff development, operations, and technology, plus a citywide events coordinator and a volunteer coordinator, and much of their immediate supporting staffs.
- Below the directors of education, staff development, and operations is another unusual dual structure at the middle manager level. The 114 after-school sites are organized into 23 clusters of four or five schools in close geographic proximity, with each school's program led by a "site coordinator." Each of these clusters is supported by a mid-management team composed of a "traveling supervisor" and an "activities director." The 23 traveling supervisors report to the director of operations and exercise formal supervisory authority with respect to administrative, budgetary, safety, and other regulatory-compliance matters. Their teammates, the 23 activities consultants, are advised by the director of education and assist the on-site site coordinators and

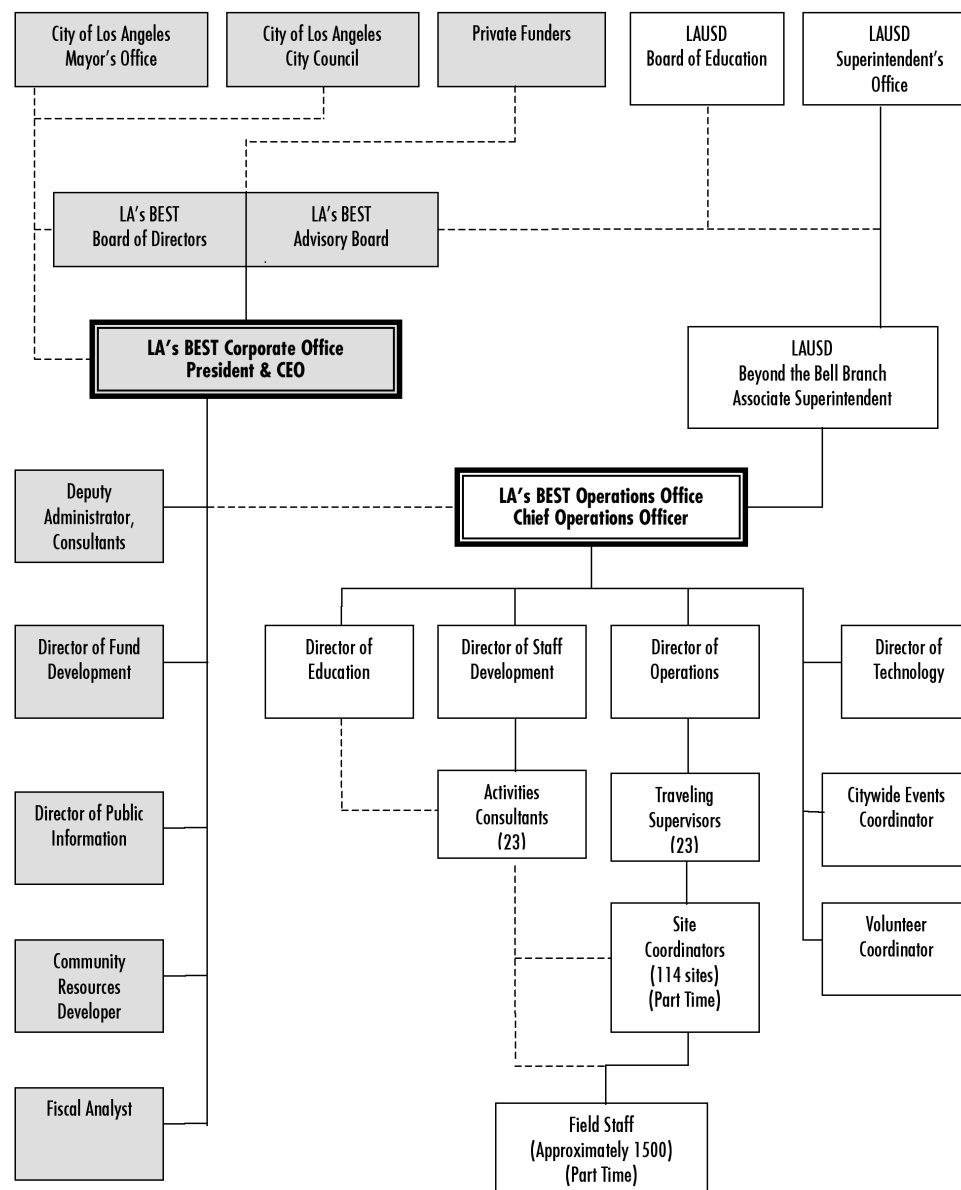
their in-school staff on program design, content, and materials. Loxton says the activities consultants are “the keepers of the flame,” of program content and quality. Many of the traveling supervisors and activities consultants are certified teachers. Both the activities consultants and the traveling supervisors work part-time for L.A.’s BEST, making \$19.42 an hour.

- The 114 after-school program coordinators at each school make \$17.50 an hour and direct LA’s BEST operations at each school. Depending on the size of their program, they may supervise program specialists (often one or two of the school’s certified teachers, who make \$15.77 an hour; a playground supervisor, who is deputy site coordinator and makes \$13.86 an hour; several program workers who work directly with the kids and who make \$11.92 an hour; and one or more program helpers, who are generally high school students and receive a stipend of \$6.75 an hour. All of these school-level personnel work for LA’s BEST’s Operations Office part-time, generally from 2 to 6 p.m. Their efforts may be supplemented by volunteers. (These wages meet the living wage ordinance of the city of Los Angeles.)

Part-time employees of LA’s BEST who are certified teachers and also work full-time “regular” teaching jobs thus hold two jobs with the same employer, LAUSD, with different duties and different rates of pay. They receive two W-2 forms, but, as part-timers, are not eligible for additional benefits for their LA’s BEST work. Sanger says:

This has never been a problem for us. There are plenty of teachers who love this program and are happy to work some extra hours at this pay with the

LA’s BEST Organizational Structure



“We’re never finished, in the sense there is always more to do to improve and cover more kids better... We need to constantly work at keeping the bureaucratic culture of fear of mistakes at bay.”

freedom to do what they want to do — which may be very different from what they teach during the regular day. True, every year someone with union connections puts a bill in the mill in Sacramento to require the full, negotiated teacher salaries for teachers working in after-school programs. But there hasn’t been a very big push for it, and we’ve always been able to hold that off.

LA’s BEST’s field staff are more reflective of the ethnicities of the children they work with than is the teaching staff of the regular school day. According to a recent survey, three-quarters of LA’s BEST’s field staff are Latino and 13 percent are African-American. In addition, 76 percent are currently enrolled in college, 16 percent are college graduates, 49 percent are paraprofessionals who also work in the regular LAUSD school day, 9 percent are credentialed teachers, 61 percent are local community residents, 4 percent are parents of an LA’s BEST child, and nearly three-quarters are under the age of 25. Roughly one out of every three LA’s BEST field employees is a man, compared with a national after-school average of one to seven.

A final observation on structure: LA’s BEST’s double-dualities (parallel, interacting structures in the Mayor’s Office and LAUSD, and middle-management

teams of traveling supervisors and activities consultants) look unwieldy and a potential source of miscommunication, unclear responsibility and accountability, and finger-pointing. But according to all observers, it has not worked out that way. One reason is that many of the key people in LA’s BEST have been in place for a reasonably long time; the average tenure of field staff ranges from 3.34 to 5.29 years, and over 12 percent are LA’s BEST parents or former LA’s BEST students. Further, some key personnel — importantly including both Sanger and Loxton — have been in place since the program’s inception 15 years ago.

Roles and responsibilities have thus been worked out and tested over time. Partnership is celebrated. Sanger says, “All this rests on partnerships and relationships; we have great partnerships with the LAUSD and our various civic supporters, and they have to be maintained. It’s all about relationships and relationship tending.” Loxton says, “All of this works because we have such great partnerships. One is the partnership between the Mayor’s Office and the LAUSD. We wouldn’t have what we’ve got if either of us tried to do this alone. The other is between myself and Carla; she is an incredible partner.”

Other reasons are that both sides of the organization have an almost palpable

commitment to after-school programming as an important innovation in education; both have cultures that stress creativity and actively combat tendencies toward bureaucracy; and both see themselves as forces of change within the larger LAUSD system. Sanger says:

We’re never finished, in the sense there is always more to do to improve and cover more kids better. We’re now trying to assemble a whole new support system of young professionals who would bring their energy to after-school programs. We need to constantly work at keeping the bureaucratic culture of fear of mistakes at bay. We need to keep our culture of crusading for good ideas and values, and following up with efficiency.

Loxton again echoes her:

This is not an organizational culture for everyone. It feels chaotic, but everyone takes ownership of what they do and of what we all do. It requires that we all have a lot of trust in each other so that we are “free.” In fact, my biggest challenge is, as we grow, not to lose our intimacy, our philosophy, and our culture. I have to fight every day to keep from being bureaucratized by LAUSD. My goal is to slowly change the culture of the district. We work hard to push

...LA's BEST reflects an unusual organizational structure and set of relationships between independent government forces in Los Angeles — the mayoralty and the superintendent of schools — that has endured and functioned well over 15 years...

things out, not down, to support personal authority and foster creativity. We want our staff not to think they work “for” this organization but that they “contribute” to it. I hope that I challenge how they think. I like disequilibrium and think you can change systems by changing how people look at the system. You just have to keep infusing new energy and ideas and adapting to the kids as they and their interests change — and they change all the time.

Importantly, Loxton's boss, Associate Superintendent of the Beyond the Bell Branch John Liechty, feels the same way:

Regular school systems can be highly bureaucratic and regimented, and I see us as a kind of beachhead within the system, a force for organizational and cultural change. I see myself as a champion of Beyond the Bell programs within the system. At the same time I'm a buffer for these programs against the jealousies of the larger traditional system, where there still are a lot of people who say, “this is not our job,” or who would try to control it and make these programs more like regular school. After-school programs are more than just an extension of the school day.

At bottom, LA's BEST reflects an unusual organizational structure and set of relationships between independent government forces in Los Angeles — the mayoralty and the superintendent of schools — that has endured and functioned well over 15 years and through several changes in the personalities holding those positions. No one could say where “ultimate power” lies in this structure, what would happen if “push came to shove” on some policy or personnel matter. Instead, the fact that “push” hasn't come to “shove” in the 15 years of LA's BEST's existence may be a testament to both the emerging political constituency for after-school programming and the fact that this admittedly odd relationship serves everyone well.

Program Content and Quality

NOT SURPRISINGLY, Sanger and Loxton each stated similar philosophies for LA's BEST programming. Sanger:

We really believe that kids are “hard-wired” to engage with their surroundings and to make relationships with other people. It's in our nature as human beings. The purpose, then, of our after-school program was and is to surround kids for at least that time frame from 3 to 6 p.m. with positive things and peo-

ple to engage with instead of the negative or non-productive things they might find on the streets or watching TV.

Early on, in the first year, we established what we call our “three and a half beats”: First, homework help, which the kids, and especially the parents, wanted. Second, something that was cognitively developmental or enriching, but not just more of the school curriculum — no, we used projects and games and lively activity. And third, something that was the kids' choice — with a lot of those choices being a club or recreational activity. Oh, and of course a snack, which is the “half beat.” We still use the “three and a half beats” today, with a lot of looseness and flexibility and local creativity on what actually gets done each day.

Balance was the watchword then, and it is now. Everyone wants homework help, but you also have to help kids to get better academically and give them some broader exposures and activities, including recreation.

Loxton:

We grow our programs out of the kids' interests. What does a kid want or need? What are they interested in? We try to draw out what kids are interested in when we design activities. So, we use very much a facilitative style, trying to

“We grow our programs out of the kids’ interests. What does a kid want or need? What are they interested in?”

engage the kids and make them part of their own activities, rather than supervising them and directing them. We try to motivate the staff and motivate the kids. Carla says we often try something, then download a protocol, rather than the other way around. This style is why the adult/student ratio of 1 to 20 works: We are facilitators and leaders, not supervisors or directors.

In practice, these principles are reflected in a set of “core activities” that includes but is not limited to homework help, drill team and dance, reading and literacy activities, performing and visual arts, seasonal sports, music, science club, math activities, computer activities, arts and crafts, recreational games, conflict resolution, nutrition, and excursions. Each local site staff assembles agendas of such activities to meet the needs and interests of its students. These activities may be supplemented by bringing in local resources like businesspeople or artists.

In addition, there is a roster of citywide events provided by LA’s BEST such as Halloween Kidfest, citywide athletic competitions, a “community jam against violence,” drill and dance team showcases, and family days at “Raging Waters” (a local water park that donates two days each year to 14,000 student and parent attendees from LA’s BEST). Finally, there

are dozens of special activities and excursions arranged by the LA’s BEST citywide events coordinator, such as visits to museums, parks, performing arts performances, professional ballgames, amusement parks, college campuses, fire stations, parades, and so on. LA’s BEST provides buses to transport children and staff to these events and strives to ensure that these opportunities are fairly shared, with each school’s after-school programming having at least one such activity each year. (In addition, local site coordinators can arrange such events on their own and request busing as needed.)

School-level LA’s BEST programs are normally funded to accommodate 10 to 15 percent of the school’s population, with some schools having waiting lists. Students are recruited on a first-come, first-served basis, with the exception of some slots held by LA’s BEST staff for students deemed by teachers, counselors, or principals to be in particular need of LA’s BEST’s services, because of poor academic performance, limited exposure to enriching activities, or family problems that LA’s BEST’s content and staff attention might alleviate. School-site staff generally over-enroll so that absences do not reduce average daily attendance below the requirements of funding sources (hence, LA’s BEST enrolls 19,000 students for 17,000 funded slots). In schools with

full-year, multi-track operations, a traveling program supervisor said, “We strive to have 20 kids for each track (A, B, C, D) and group them by age, with Group 1 being K-1, Group 2 for grades 1-2, Group 3 for grades 3-4, and Group 4 for grades 4-5.”

How this works out on one site is described by Juaquin Martinez, himself a former high school helper for LA’s BEST and now site coordinator at Sylvan Park Elementary School in the San Fernando Valley. This school is an exemplary site and has been designated by LA’S BEST as one of its six “regional learning centers” — part of a statewide network of 15 schools that offer training programs for personnel of other after-school programs.

Our schedule begins at 2:40 p.m., when our twelve program workers — all college students — arrive. We staff at a 1-to-20 adult/child ratio for our enrollment of 180 students and have six volunteers to help out, including fourth and fifth graders who are in a track that is off for this quarter and who come to help out.

At 2:49 p.m. the closing school bell rings and kids check in and have their snack until 3:20, when they start their homework. That runs until 4:20. At 4:20 we start Activity I which could be math, science, computers, literature, motor skills (really physical education),

arts and crafts; and that runs till 5:05. Activity II runs from 5:10 to 6-ish. We have lots of things they want to do, including various clubs, reading, cooking, weaving, Karaoke. On Fridays we have a special kids' choice day, and they do things they've planned.

We have 60 languages in this school district, mostly Spanish though. We find that LA's BEST helps them learn English. My activities coordinator provides curricula and materials for all these activities, and we can use them as we please. We have lots of flexibility and freedom. Usually I plan each week around a theme, and we run the activities within that theme.

Working relationships between LA's BEST staff and regular school personnel are generally congenial. Some site coordinators report tensions over access to space (teachers can bristle at others' using "their" rooms, especially if materials are missing or the room is messy the next morning). These concerns are more common in new school buildings or in the early months of a new program's operation. They usually shake out over time, according to Sylvan Park's principal, who invites close cooperation and consultation between his and Martinez's staffs, trading notes regularly on student progress and needs.² He says, "The teachers like LA's



BEST in part because it gets the homework done, and the teachers feel they can refer kids to it with special needs who will get something positive out of it. And Juakin does a fine job. I'd just like more of it so we wouldn't have waiting lists."

Maintaining and enhancing program quality with a rapidly growing staff composed largely of college students and community people requires an aggressive staff-development effort. LA's BEST, mainly through its director of staff development, conducted more than 1,000 staff-training workshops over the course of the last school year, covering such subjects as art, classroom management, emergency procedures, evaluation, academic support and homework assistance, computers, drama, dance and drill team, literacy, sports, science, and character education. These enrich the day-to-day

interaction of activities consultants and on-site personnel.

Income and Expenditures

THE TABLE ON PAGE 51 shows a detailed budget for Fiscal Year 2003-04, which is still in progress as this is written. Cash expenditures are projected to total \$19.2 million from nine state after-school grants, the City of Los Angeles' Community Development Block Grant, the general purpose city budget (mayor's discretionary funds), two federal Department of Justice grants, the federal 21st Century Community Learning Center program, and private contributions. Some of these funds are raised by and flow to the Corporate Office of LA's BEST, with some flowing on to the Operations Office. Others are obtained by LAUSD, or LAUSD and LA's BEST working in tandem, and flow from the School District to LA's BEST corporate or operations offices. However obtained and however they flow, of the total of \$19.2 million required, \$1.9 million is for the LA's BEST Corporate Office and \$17.3 million for the LAUSD Operations Office. Beyond this regular budget, an additional \$1.6 million is for "restricted program enhancements" (funds committed and directed by their donors to specific enhancement purposes like literacy

2 This principal, Larry Kraft-Orozco, has also arranged a *before*-school program, Beyond the Bell's "Ready, Set, Go." Kraft-Orozco says, "It runs from 6:30 to 7:30 a.m., when breakfast is served. It is a structured, well-supervised program. We needed that because in this working class and poor neighborhood a lot of parents go to work early. I'd come in early and find kids on the sidewalk and hanging on the chain-link fence, waiting for the schoolyard and school building to open at 7:30 for breakfast. You really can't have that. You've got to provide these kids with a safe, supervised place."

LA's BEST Budget: Fiscal Year 2003-04

Funding Source	# Students (Funded Slots)	# Schools (Sites Supported)	Projected LAUSD Operations Expenditures	Projected LA's BEST Corporate Expenditures	Total Projected Expenditures	Revenues Confirmed	Variance
9 State After-school Grants	8,127	65	\$ 7,372,093	\$ 917,855	\$ 8,473,818	\$ 7,687,680	-786,138
City of Los Angeles Community Development Block Grant	4,400	23	3,838,646	432,000	4,270,646	4,000,000	-270,646
City of Los Angeles General Purposes (Mayor's Discretionary Funds)	500	0	574,110	0	574,110	574,110	0
2 U.S. Department of Justice Grants	2,800	16	2,629,334	136,279	2,765,613	2,765,613	0
Federal 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant	1,135	9	1,143,630	125,217	1,268,847	1,260,545	-8,302
Private Donations (individuals, corporations, foundations)	371	1	1,579,114	279,150	1,858,264	1,301,000	-557,264
Sub-Total	17,333	114	\$ 17,320,797	\$ 1,890,501	\$ 19,211,298	\$ 17,588,948	-\$ 1,622,350
Restricted Enhancements (for donor- designated purposes, e.g., arts, literacy, etc.)					1,638,795	1,638,795	0
In-Kind Supports (Chiefly lunches, bussing.)					2,673,000	2,673,000	0
Total					\$ 23,523,093	\$ 21,900,743	-\$ 1,622,350
Contingency/Reserve for 2004-05 — Corporate							-200,00
Contingency/Reserve for 2004-05 — LAUSD Opns Off							-1,716,025
Carry-Forward from 2002-03							1,627,527
To Be Raised							-\$ 1,910,848

Note: This budget does not include LAUSD contributions of school buildings, utilities, parking, and security.

programs or performing arts) and \$2.7 million reflects the value of in-kind contributions, mainly food and busing. Total resources needed for the year thus add up to \$23.5 million.

The anticipated revenues from the range of indicated sources leave a gap of \$1.6 million due to grant receipts, mostly from government programs, that were lower than the amounts requested.

LA's BEST then adds certain contingency reserves for its Corporate and LAUSD offices and an offset of \$1.6 million carried forward from the previous year, netting a total of \$1.9 million still to be raised. Sanger was optimistic that these gaps could be filled by fundraising in the 2003-04 fiscal year. (In the 2004-05 fiscal year, LA's BEST will also have to absorb a cut of \$1.7 million in its U.S.

Justice Department funds.)

This budget covers LA's BEST operations in 114 schools for 17,333 funded slots. By that reckoning, the total annual cost per funded slot is \$1,357 per year. (Actually, as noted earlier, more than 19,000 young people are served by the program, in part because of over-enrolling to keep average daily attendance at required levels in the funded slots.) That

amount provides service for program hours of 2:30 to 6 p.m. for each of the weighted average³ of 217 days school is in session. (LA's BEST also covers an extra hour on Tuesdays, when most schools close early for teacher meetings; it does not, however, offer its programs on days when schools are not in session but most parents are working. Sanger acknowledges that this is an unmet need that is not within the scope of LA's BEST.)

The \$1,357 per student slot includes transportation, snacks, and other budgeted in-kind costs, but not the use of the school buildings, parking lots, security, etc., which are provided by LAUSD and estimated at \$23 million per year. Total administrative costs of both LA's BEST Corporate Office and LAUSD are 11.63 percent of the full budget.

Evaluating the Impact on Students

FROM ITS INCEPTION IN 1988, LA's BEST knew that accountability would be demanded of it, not only in terms of providing a safe place for children to spend after-school hours or of the satisfaction of students and parents with the program, but also in terms of academic motivation and achievement. Accordingly, LA's BEST con-

tracted with the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation (UCLA/CSE) early on to study the effects of the program.

Since 1990, UCLA/CSE has conducted six formal evaluations of the LA's BEST program. In June 2000, the center released the results of its most complete and technical evaluation of the LA's BEST program to date.⁴ This report summarized the results of the five previous evaluations as well as new achievement data for 20,000 elementary-school students in 24 schools over a seven-year period — one of the nation's most comprehensive studies of the academic and other impacts of an after-school program in the nation. In sum, the report cited six general findings comparing LA's BEST enrollees with comparable students who were not enrolled:

- Children felt safer after school. Parents felt their children were safer after school.
- Children in LA's BEST liked school more, were more engaged in school, and have higher expectations of themselves and greater motivation and enthusiasm for school.
- Positive relations between adults and children were well established in LA's BEST programs.
- Children in LA's BEST reported higher aspirations regarding finishing school and going to college.
- Students improve academically while involved in LA's BEST programs, and the higher their degree of participation, the greater their improvement.

- The enrichment activities of LA's BEST engender support from the children, teachers, and parents.

The report emphasized that “higher participation was significantly related to positive achievement on standardized tests of mathematics, reading, and language arts, when the influence of gender, ethnicity, income, and language status was controlled.” Higher levels of attendance in LA's BEST was also related to better subsequent school attendance. In addition, LA's BEST students showed higher “redesignation rates” from English language deficiency to competency and lower absenteeism. The evaluators stressed:

The fact that we can detect *any* change on standardized achievement measures in itself is notable, for most educational interventions are unable to show impact on measures not tightly tied to the curriculum, or on follow-up achievement after a particular program is over.

3 Because of crowding, about 200 L.A. schools run year-round with students attending three out of four sessions, A, B, C, and D, with one session “off” at any one time. Thus, the “217 school days” cited above is a weighted average; some schools are open 183 days while others with four tracks may be open as many as 246 days. Students who are “off” for a particular term can nonetheless attend the after-school program.

4 Huang, *et al*, *op. cit.* Full report available in pdf format from <http://www.lasbest.org/learn/eval.html>.

“...If the economic environments where these children live do not change, what can be done to continue making a difference in their lives?...LA's BEST program is one answer.”

Challenges and the Future

BEYOND THE CONTINUING CHALLENGE of “keeping the bureaucratic culture at bay” and maintaining creativity and energy, those involved with LA's BEST cite several challenges and future goals. Sanger says,

We have good relationships with the school unions at present, and that requires constant massaging. That relationship could change. After-school programming has been on a wave of public attention and support in recent years, but waves peak and decline, and that could happen to us as new ‘good things’ emerge and claim public attention and support.

My goal for LA's BEST five years from now? I'd like to be running in 150 schools out of the 200 or so that are eligible by our eligibility criteria, [which are] mainly that 70 percent of the student body is on subsidized lunches.

Loxton agrees, but notches the numbers up:

We'd eventually like to be in all 200-plus elementary schools that meet our eligibility criteria, and also to deepen our coverage in each school so that we don't have waiting lists.

A politically experienced local business leader who chairs a city commission on children and families identifies the major challenge to and strength of LA's BEST:

It's very well run and Carla does a great job. The only real potential Achilles' heel is money. It needs to expand, both school-wise and coverage within each school; but you know from the news that California is strapped, and that ripples down to the localities. If we ever get to the trigger-points in Proposition 49 — substantial surpluses — that'll help. But we have a lot of financial problems to get over before then, and LA's BEST could always be hurt.

But while LA's BEST is good, it's not so much that it's led a charmed life as it has had and generated the right kind of political support over several different mayors, who gave it cover and support and assumed its goals as their own. There's a big constituency out there for after-school programming, and LA's BEST has become something of a sacred cow that no one wants to touch. Everybody ‘gets it’ about LA's BEST. All major forces agree on supporting it.

The evaluators from UCLA conclude with a broader and more somber theme:

[E]conomically poor families are exactly the families whose children participate in LA's BEST. That the conditions of poverty described in the early evaluation reports have worsened, rather than improved, suggests that the rationale for LA's BEST and its programs are even more important and necessary today than they were...when LA's BEST was founded.

And that leaves us then with the following questions: If the economic environments where these children live do not change, what can be done to continue making a difference in their lives? What can be done to keep these children safe, to keep them engaged in school, to keep them in contact with positive adult role models, to keep parents connected to schools and their children, to keep these children developing and growing in positive ways, to keep their academic achievement moving upward? According to these past evaluations, continuing to expand and develop [the] LA's BEST program is one answer.



Photographs courtesy of After School Matters.

Chicago

After School Matters (ASM)

BY TONY PROSCIO

IF THERE WERE A TEXTBOOK for launching a new public-private initiative in after-school services (or in any other young and comparatively unorganized field), it would no doubt offer prudent advice like: Take time to plan all the early moves before you start. Tackle the easier tasks and manageable problems first. Build on activity already under way. And start forming partnerships with organizations that already have some history of working together. In short, to borrow some management clichés of the moment: Map your strategy and harvest the “low-hanging fruit” first. If there were such a textbook for after-school programs, it probably wouldn’t have sold well in Chicago.

Instead, Chicago’s newest and most ambitious after-school program, called After School Matters (ASM), seemed to start by going deliberately after the highest and rarest fruit first, guided by only the sketchiest of maps. Instead of starting with young children, who are generally considered easier to recruit and retain in after-school programs, the Chicagoans focused on teenagers. Instead of starting with a year or so of planning and team-building, which some potential funders encouraged, ASM’s founding chair, Maggie Daley, says “we went straight into

action. A drawn-out planning process just isn’t our style.” Instead of organizing a leadership team among already-friendly agencies with collaborative backgrounds, it enlisted three city departments with histories of mutual rivalry and fiercely guarded independence (two of them even have their own, separate governing boards and funding authorities). Instead of setting up relatively simple, low-cost activity like homework help or pick-up ball games, After School Matters created paid apprenticeships, in which students learn from master practitioners, draw a small weekly stipend, and develop marketable skills that can lead directly to summer or part-time jobs.

One piece of conventional advice did apply in Chicago: After School Matters started with something that was already working, and built from there. The precedent, by then roughly a decade old, was a summer and after-school arts program called Gallery 37 (named for an undeveloped downtown lot, designated Block 37, where the program held its early programs under a tent). The success of Gallery 37 had grown from a single day camp for teenage artists to a large, nationally acclaimed network of master classes and academies in up to 40 schools around the city. Maggie Daley, the wife of Mayor Richard M. Daley, was a founder of Gallery 37, and was fairly sure that the

same idea would be useful for high schoolers of all sorts, including those whose interests and talents lay in fields other than the arts. With strong support from her husband, the mayor, Mrs. Daley set out to complete the Gallery 37 vision with additional programs like Tech 37, for budding programmers and Web designers; Sports 37 for aspiring day-camp counselors, lifeguards, and coaches’ aides; and later Words 37, for budding storytellers, broadcasters, journalists, and communicators of all sorts.¹

Taken together, in Mrs. Daley’s vision, these programs or some variation on them should be available to as many as half the city’s high school students by 2007. After School Matters would achieve that goal first by marshalling the forces of — at a minimum — the city’s three most relevant bureaucracies: the Park District, the Chicago Public Schools, and the library system. It would meanwhile enlist help from nonprofit organizations around Chicago to implement, expand, and adapt the basic model.

But apart from building on the strength of Gallery 37, and growing from a few initial high schools to a wide cross-section of the city, the creation of After School Matters has seemed less like a case of cautious incrementalism than something more like a Big Bang. For example, to carry out such an ambitious and

¹ The After School Matters programs and their history are described in much greater detail in a related publication, “No Idle Hours: Making After-School Time Productive and Fun for Chicago Teenagers,” 2002, available from The After School Project, 180 West 80th Street, Second Floor, New York, NY, 10024, or at www.theafterschoolproject.org.

diverse program, Mayor and Mrs. Daley set up After School Matters as a whole new nonprofit organization that is not just a funding intermediary or source of technical assistance, but the direct provider of most of the initial programs. At the time this is written, in its fourth year of operation, After School Matters runs programs — either directly or with nonprofit groups — in 24 of the city's 95 high schools, each of which offers the whole menu of apprenticeships plus a more loosely structured recreation program, called Club 37. Unlike the apprenticeships, the clubs let students drop in anytime for activities with adult supervision and coaching, but with no stipends and no requirements.

From a pilot launch in six schools, beginning in the 2000-01 school year, After School Matters had spread to 18 schools by the end of 2002-03. (Given its ten-year head start, Gallery 37 was then operating on its own in roughly a dozen other places.) As this report is written, in the fall semester of 2003-04, the full roster of clubs and apprenticeships is running three days a week in 24 schools, with a projected expansion to 48 — just under half of all Chicago public high schools — by the end of the 2006-07 academic year, three years from the date of this publication.

It is not necessarily a goal for After

School Matters to reach every high school in the city, even in the long run. "There are many high schools in Chicago that have great programs for teens after school," says Executive Director Nancy Neir Wachs. "We're not the only ones doing anything for teens. There are some excellent programs in some places. But we are the only ones with regular after-school activities for teens in the most underserved schools. And those are the first schools where we made it a point to be involved."

Apprenticeships at most locations are limited to not many more than 100 students — 20 each in the arts, technology, communications, lifeguarding, and general sports — plus another 30, on average, in any given day's club session. The total amounts to just over 10 percent of the total enrollment of the average participating high school. Overall, the apprenticeships serve about 3,300 students a semester, plus another 3,600 or so in clubs.

Structure and Start-up

AT ITS HEART, After School Matters is built on a three-way collaboration among the schools, parks, and libraries. This seemed at first, to many insiders, like an improbable alliance. The three bureaucracies share, as an executive of one of them put it, "a

historical animosity dating back many years....'Your school kids disrupt my parks and libraries,' 'your libraries don't serve my students,' 'your programs aren't run well enough to use my facilities,' all the Balkanization and rivalry you'd expect from longstanding bureaucracies with separate professional credentials, separate unions, separate missions, separate ways of doing business." Although Mayor Daley gained effective control of the Chicago Public Schools in 1995, the school board and the Park District board retain many hallmarks of legal autonomy, including separate revenue streams, labor contracts, and internal management structures. On paper, only the library system answers directly to the mayor, though in reality none of them can do much without his approval.

To unite these traditional rivals into a single coherent program, Mayor and Mrs. Daley turned to one of the city's top-ranking public officials, B.J. Walker. With the official title "chief of human infrastructure," Ms. Walker is the mayor's coordinator of city programs dealing with youth, poverty, housing, and human services. The head of one city agency described her role this way: "On human service issues, when you're dealing with B.J., you're dealing with the mayor — except that she's the part of the mayor that's always paying attention to you." To forge an alliance among the schools,

At its heart, After School Matters is built on a three-way collaboration among the schools, parks, and libraries.



parks, and libraries, Ms. Walker devoted roughly one-third of her time for more than a year, working the phones and the city e-mail networks, personally talking wary principals and park officials into cooperating with the program, navigating around liability issues and other logistical roadblocks, and occasionally arm-wrestling the more recalcitrant employees and middle managers, until the program came together in 2000.

While Ms. Walker and the mayor were lining up the city bureaucracy, Mrs. Daley and a newly recruited staff were organizing After School Matters as a new nonprofit, modeled partly on Gallery 37. For the first few years, After School Matters took shape around four program themes: arts, tech, sports, and lifeguarding. The fifth, communications, was added two years later. Within After School Matters, each of these themes had a program director coordinating the staff recruitment, curriculum development,

and job opportunities for that branch of activity — as well as school and community liaison, quality control, and all-around troubleshooting — at each of the six, then 12, then 18 pilot sites.

Not surprisingly, by the second or third year, the workload for these coordinators became nearly impossible. Not only were there too many far-flung sites for each person to cover — programs were going on in neighborhoods across all of Chicago's 227 square miles, an area more than four times the size of Boston — but increasingly the challenges had less to do with mastery of a given discipline, and more to do with managing general operational problems site-by-site, community-by-community, and bureaucracy-by-bureaucracy. Eventually, After School Matters decided that the coordination work needed to be organized by region, rather than discipline. As the program grew, it became more important for staff to build relationships in a given set

of communities and among the participating agencies, officials, and organizations in each place — to visit often, anticipate problems, and view the program in its totality — than to be masters of a given technical skill.

That will become increasingly important in ASM's next phase of growth, in which more (and often smaller) nonprofit community organizations will take responsibility for much of the expansion to new sites and new branches of activity. In the early years, After School Matters struck working partnerships mainly with nonprofits they called "teaching organizations," groups that had expertise in a given branch of activity like arts, video production, or athletics. In the next phase, which is just beginning as this is written, many more nonprofit participants will be chosen not necessarily for any given expertise, but for their connections to particular neighborhoods and their ability to marshal resources, recruit students and instructors, and plan interesting activities in those communities. Says Executive Director Nancy Wachs, "We now see our regional directors not only working with our programs in the schools, but getting very familiar with their community, knowing the CBOs that are doing interesting things and that want to partner with teens. So number one, they develop those relationships, and then

Working with more community groups will relieve ASM of some of the burden of directly replicating its program school-by-school, and may provide opportunities to expand the apprenticeship menu to new areas of activity...

we look to see whether we can provide some funding and technical assistance to some of these groups as an intermediary.”

Working with more community groups will relieve ASM of some of the burden of directly replicating its program school-by-school, and may provide opportunities to expand the apprenticeship menu to new areas of activity (horticulture, construction, and health care are being discussed, for example). But it will also mean overseeing many more contracts, building management relationships with small nonprofit contractors whose back-office capacity may be weak, and serving as a large contracting intermediary with all the complications involved in disbursing and accounting for payments of government money to multiple third parties. The advantages and pitfalls of this next phase of growth will be the subject of a later discussion.

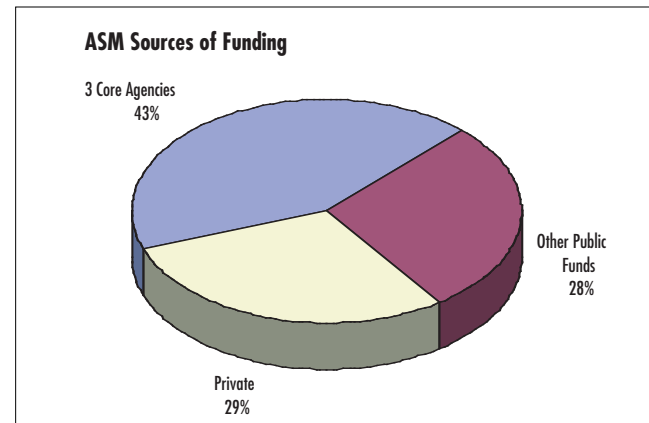
Facilities, Faculty, and Funding

THE MAIN CHALLENGES to building any large-scale after-school program include finding facilities with enough space, finding good instructors who are knowledgeable and effective with kids, and finding the money to pay for it all. With the launching of After School Matters, the city's three-way bureaucratic partnership

provided a big part of the answer to two of these challenges: facilities and a substantial amount of the funding. As for the third, the newly created nonprofit organization started out by assembling a curriculum, recruiting talented, driven instructors, training them, and working with them to design individual apprenticeships that would make the most of their talents and those of the students.

As the program took shape, virtually all its activities were in facilities controlled by one of the three city agencies — primarily schools and parks — and a majority of its funding came from those agencies as well. Virtually all activity took place in city-owned facilities until 2003, when some 30 community-based organizations began offering programs in facilities of their own. Thanks to an escalating effort in private fundraising, as well as more diverse sources of public funding, the three core agencies now provide about 43 percent of the total budget. But After School Matters remains overwhelmingly a creature of city funding, real estate, and materiel, and thus to a considerable degree an expression of the original three-agency partnership.

In the 2003-04 fiscal year, with ASM's



total budget close to \$18 million, roughly \$8 million came from the school, park, and library systems. Some \$5.5 million came from private sources, including a giant annual fundraising event at Soldier Field that in 2003 brought in more than \$3 million in one stroke. The remainder was a blend of various public sources funneled through a handful of city agencies, including the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, the Chicago Department of Human Services, and the federal Empowerment Zone. In short, the official support of the Daley Administration accounts, at the time this is written, for more than 70 percent of the After School Matters budget and nearly 100 percent of its facilities.

More than half of the contribution from the three core agencies is in-kind. The school system, for example, designates an after-school administrator

The goal is to give students an experience that contrasts sharply with the normal school day — a chance to interact with adults who are more at home in the workplace than in the classroom.

(usually an assistant principal) at each site, and provides engineers, security, custodians, and program liaisons from its regular payroll. Some transportation and supplies also come in-kind from the school system. The Park District designates a total of 13 employees, including park coordinators, lifeguards, and lifeguard instructors, to staff After School Matters programs at 24 sites. But these contributions, amounting to more than \$4 million, don't represent all of the in-kind value that After School Matters receives from the school, park, and library systems. For example, there is no allowance for the cost or depreciation of

facilities, for the time and effort of department executives and middle-managers, or for the occasional resource that a given school, park, or library might provide ad-hoc, simply because it's needed at the moment. Including these extra items would make the budgeting more speculative, but it would also show an even greater economic contribution from the three original agencies than the current numbers reflect.

If funding and facilities for After School Matters are overwhelmingly contributed by city agencies and programs, the third basic requirement of an after-school system — talented, committed adults — comes mainly from outside of government. Only a handful of ASM's instructors are public school teachers or park employees. Most are artists, coaches, tech professionals, or people otherwise working in the fields in which they lead after-school activities. (Apprenticeships are typically led by one of these professionals and a teaching assistant, though some have two co-leaders.) They may be recruited directly by After School Matters, by a nonprofit "teaching organization" or, increasingly, by other community-based organizations running programs. At \$18-\$30 an hour for instructors and \$12-\$17 for assistants, these adults are paid less than a typical teacher, but the purpose of recruiting from outside the city workforce isn't mainly fis-

cal. The goal is to give students an experience that contrasts sharply with the normal school day — a chance to interact with adults who are more at home in the workplace than in the classroom.

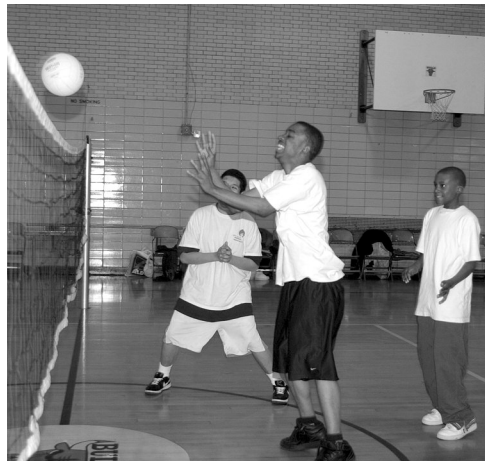
Scope and Reach

GIVEN THE COMPLEXITY of the apprenticeship model — the need to recruit students of widely varying interests and personalities, to offer a menu of programs that appeals to all of them, to sign up master practitioners from the arts, sports, and private industry to act as instructors, and most of all to smooth out the many tensions among the three participating bureaucracies — it was essential to start small and get a few working prototypes to prove this could succeed. In that light, it is perhaps not remarkable that, midway through After School Matters' fourth academic year, the clubs and apprenticeships enroll at any one time roughly 6 percent of the total high school population in the Chicago Public Schools. But over the course of the first four years, that has meant that a total of 24,000 teens have been served by the program at one time or another. Seen that way, a goal of reaching half the high school student body — around 50,000 students — seems not so remote.



The pace of expansion continues to accelerate as After School Matters extends to more schools, more contracts, more sources of public funds, and more variations on the current menu of apprenticeships. A series of high-level meetings in mid-2003, launched by Mayor and Mrs. Daley, significantly increased the rate of expansion, not least by causing the redirection of some workforce and youth development funding toward After School Matters. One example: a portion of the city's allocation under the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) will fund three or four new apprenticeship programs, beginning in the spring semester of 2004. But WIA grants come at a price: a body of new requirements that are specific to those funds — for example, enrolling a given number of teenagers in programs that confer a work-related credential.

In another case, the city redirected some of its youth development budget to ASM — money that previously went to a network of community-based referral agencies for youth. In the mayor's plan, this \$1.2 million reallocation will still go to neighborhood groups, since After School Matters immediately began soliciting proposals from such groups to run apprenticeships and other after-school programs with the money. The result will therefore be not only an expansion of ASM's apprenticeships, but also a substantial growth in the



number and kind of nonprofit groups that participate in the program.

The size and pace of these budget shifts have had three immediate effects on After School Matters: First, they have provided a new circle of organizational alliances and funding agreements with city agencies and neighborhood nonprofits — a potentially useful set of working relationships for a new program with no statutory claim to funds or authority of its own. Second, besides providing new dollars, the changes enlist more frontline forces with which to expand the program — especially neighborhood groups, which are expected to help in recruiting students and instructors, designing curricula, and gauging parents' and students' needs.

The third effect of expanded funding and a widening mandate may be more worrisome. The sudden growth has con-

fronted After School Matters' small staff with an enormous management challenge: the prospect of a much wider program, with more partners and models, more fiscal and regulatory obligations, and more contracts in more locations than ever before. Some of the new funding will give ASM additional management and administrative staff to support these new responsibilities. But that means training and deploying perhaps a dozen new employees in a short period — a 33 percent jump in staffing in only a few months. Planning and hiring for this expansion are under way as this report is being written.

Enrollment and Costs

IN THE MEANTIME, in the second semester of the 2003-04 school year, After School Matters had apprenticeship slots available for 4,100 students, of whom 68 percent, or about 2,800, were present on an average day. It cost about \$7.1 million to run these programs for the full year — not including the cost of stipends paid to participating students (more on that in a moment). This total includes both cash expenditures — mainly salaries and contract payments to nonprofit groups, plus ASM's costs of recruitment, management, and overhead — and in-kind contributions

2 This is a rough approximation, and probably a slight underestimate. The reason is that ASM is expanding rapidly, semester by semester. The enrollment in the second semester of any given year is therefore larger than in the first semester. Yet the total expenditure of \$7.1 million covers the entire year — including the first half, when the number of participants was smaller.

...as the program approaches a point where the neediest neighborhoods are being served, or will be soon, the question of breadth vs. depth becomes more pressing...

from city agencies at the school level, like supplies, transportation, custodial staff, and so on. It does not include time spent by city managers (from principals on up) or the capital costs of school, park, and library facilities. With those assumptions, ASM estimates the annual cost of apprenticeships at around \$1,740 per available slot.²

The apprenticeship stipends, by far the most unusual feature of the After School Matters programs, add another \$3.2 million to the total. Apprentices are paid a maximum of \$45 a week (\$15 per session, three times a week) for 10 weeks a semester, meaning that each participant, by enrolling for two semesters and attending every session, could earn up to \$900 a year. In reality, though, stipends end up costing less than 90 percent of that amount because of unfilled slots, dropouts, and occasional absences. On average, the stipends bring the total per-student cost of an ASM apprenticeship to \$2,520 a year.

Club programs, which pay no stipends and have no attendance requirements, cost considerably less: just over \$4 million in the 2003-04 school year. Estimating a per-student cost for clubs is mostly guesswork, since attendance varies widely from day to day and students are free to drop in and out as they please. Still, using a rough estimate of 3,600 attendees on

an average day and 11,000 to 12,000 over the course of a year, these programs cost between \$350 and \$1,000 per student per year, depending on how one estimates the number of students.

Broad vs. Deep

IF THE GOAL is to bring after-school opportunities to half the city's high schoolers, there are several possible ways to go about it. One is to bring the program to more schools, as ASM is now doing. Another is to enroll more students in each school. As a first priority, the program has concentrated on reaching schools in the least well-served neighborhoods — places where other after-school activity is comparatively rare, and where the program's paid apprenticeships and work opportunities might supplement a weak job market. So long as there were still neighborhoods meeting that profile where ASM had not yet begun work, expanding to those new locations was the first priority. But as the program approaches a point where the neediest neighborhoods are being served, or will be soon, the question of breadth vs. depth becomes more pressing: Is it more useful to continue extending the clubs and apprenticeships into other areas, including better-served neighborhoods — which would ensure, among other things, that

After School Matters doesn't become a program solely for the needy? Or would it be best to try to reach more teens in the current schools, some of which have long waiting lists to participate?

One way of approaching those questions would be to compare the costs of the two alternatives. The comparison doesn't yield a decisive answer, but it illustrates the factors that After School Matters will have to weigh as it considers each option. It costs about \$113,000 a semester, not including stipends, to operate the full menu of After School Matters programs, including five apprenticeships and a club, at any given school (see graph below for a breakdown of the total). Of that \$113,000, roughly half goes for instructors and supplies. Those are costs that would increase in direct proportion to the number of participating students, almost regardless of whether students are added at the same school or at a new one. But other costs — say, for school custodians, engineers, security, and liaisons, or perhaps for some administration and marketing — might be more elastic. Already, the money being spent on facility-related items like custodial and engineering services is benefiting other activities beyond After School Matters, since some schools have other activities of their own going on during the same hours. Covering an additional apprenticeship

program or two in the same building would probably pose no extra cost in those budget lines. Nor might there be additional marketing costs, especially if the school already has a waiting list. By contrast, opening a program in a new school would mean raising the full \$113,000, in cash or in-kind, for a complete new operation.

That is not, by itself, an argument for aiming at larger programs instead of more schools. And in fact, reaching more students at current schools is not nearly as simple as it might seem. First, even when student demand for more apprenticeships and clubs is strong, not all sites have enough space or the right facilities for an

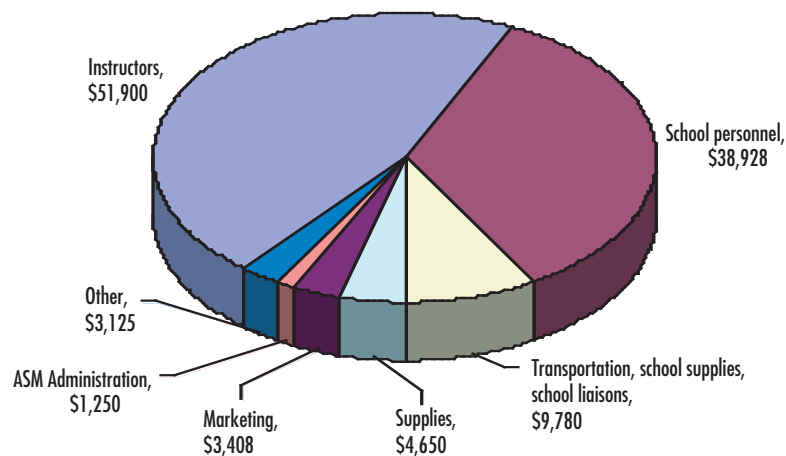
expansion. Gyms and computer labs pose particular limits, given that they are expensive or impossible to enlarge and in many cases are already being used to maximum capacity. But auditoriums, art rooms, and other specially equipped spaces can be just as limiting. Depending on the kinds of activity students want and the configuration of any given school, there may not always be enough space, or the right kind of space, to accommodate the demand. This may be solved, over time, if community nonprofit groups begin to offer additional space for some activities. But if that happens, there will still be no way of ensuring that the right kind of facilities turn up in the

neighborhoods that most need them.

A second complicating factor is that students' enthusiasm for after-school apprenticeships may not necessarily correspond to the particular activities available at their school. Expanding the menu of possible subjects — construction, horticulture, and health care are under discussion — is one obvious solution. But that will mean reaching out to adults in new fields, developing new curricula, and stocking up on new kinds of equipment and supplies. All of that is manageable, and the After School Matters staff is enthusiastic about it. In fact, the decision to organize the staff around geographic regions was intended partly to make it easier for managers to tailor programs for each school, and to adjust the mix as the students' interests change. But even so, designing and launching apprenticeships in new subject areas poses another layer of administrative cost and complexity on top of the already heavy demands on a growing organization.

A third element of the broad-vs.-deep discussion is whether significantly more students in each community will really want (or be able) to participate in a fixed, three-day-a-week regimen. "There may be a natural limit" to the possible apprenticeship enrollment in each school, says ASM Associate Director Marisa Gonzales Silverstein. "At some point, you run out

Costs Per School, Not Including Stipends



of teens who can commit to a regular schedule and show up consistently. They may really want the apprenticeship, but when it comes time to make the commitment, sometimes they find they can't. There are kids who have other things they have to do after school, including child care and work." Expanding club activities would be the easiest way of reaching more students without confronting this problem, but especially in the winter, that puts additional demand on gyms and park clubhouses, which may already be in full use.

To wrestle with these issues, and to test how much the program could expand in current schools, After School Matters plans a "saturation" pilot beginning in the spring semester of 2004. At three schools, apprenticeship options will be expanded to nine per site instead of five, creating space for up to 80 more students. Experience in those three schools will help After School Matters determine whether expansion should go deep as well as broad, and if so, how deep it could go in any given school.

Sustainability: Envisioning the Future

ALTHOUGH ITS GROWTH has been fast and ambitious, After School Matters is still a young organization. Its momentum has



been propelled largely by the power of the Daleys' vision and official sponsorship, as well as the ability of mayoral aide B.J. Walker to line up huge city agencies and their resources behind the project. At this stage, there is no reason to doubt that these advantages will continue. Yet the rate and scope at which the program plans to

expand, and the distance it still needs to travel to reach its goal of serving half the teenagers in Chicago, mean that After School Matters will need not just to maintain its current base of support, both political and financial, but enlarge it considerably.

A significantly expanded apprenticeship program means not only raising more

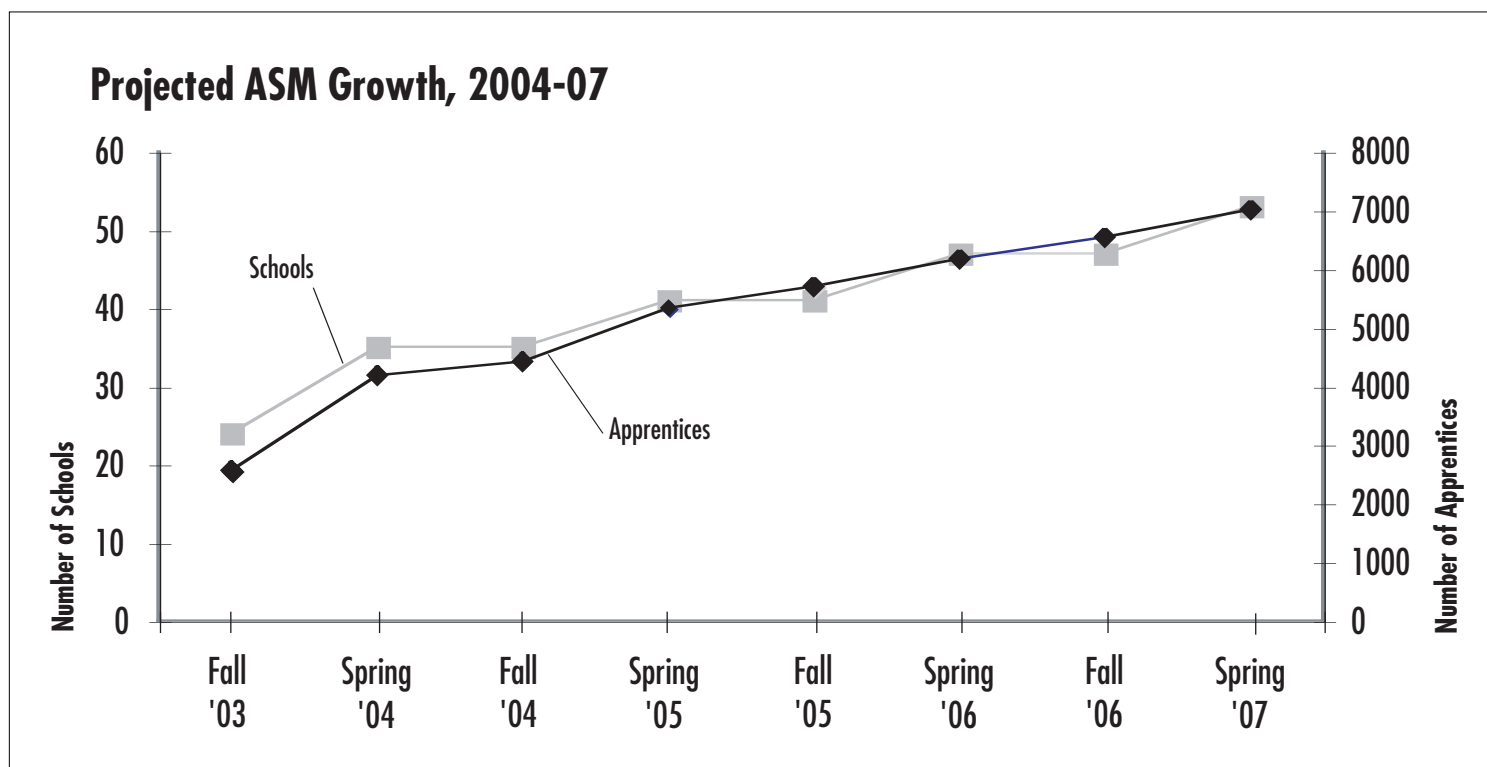
money, but also operating in more communities, with more public and private organizations, more city officials, and more marketing and outreach to more kinds of students. Each expansion to new neighborhoods means serving a slightly different profile of teenagers and families; forming a new set of working relationships with school, park, and library personnel; and navigating a new and unfamiliar terrain of neighborhood interests, leaders, opportunities, and problems. In some neighbor-

hoods, the arrival of a large, fast-growing new organization with powerful backers and a multimillion-dollar budget may provoke some anxieties, even resentments, among smaller community organizations.

After School Matters has assets to counteract some of that resistance. For one thing, parents in virtually any neighborhood react favorably to new after-school opportunities, and there is no reason to believe ASM is an exception. And the political popularity of the Daleys, which is

generally strong throughout the city, surely rubs off to some extent on an organization that they created and publicly endorse. Even so, the staff still needs to scramble, in each new neighborhood, to establish its bona fides as a reliable partner in the community, not a competing force. For that purpose, doing business directly with local organizations can't hurt.

Operating more of the program through contracts with neighborhood nonprofits therefore has a triple advantage:



...as After School Matters draws money from more and more sources, the demand for performance and outcome measurements will surely increase proportionally.

- It makes possible a major expansion of the program without a proportional increase in ASM's central organization.
- It draws leadership from organizations that have a unique knowledge of each area's teens, the available adult talent, and the usable facilities. And:
- It builds political goodwill and a supportive constituency that are essential if After School Matters is to prove itself as a truly citywide effort and not just a project of the city's downtown leadership.

Evaluation

ALONG WITH BUILDING A CRITICAL MASS of political, financial, and neighborhood support, the final element in making ASM a lasting, secure program will be evaluation. On that front, the basic work is still under way, and it may be several years before firm conclusions can be reached. Researchers at the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago have been collecting data on applicants and participants in After School Matters programs, as well as on other students in the same schools, to learn how they spend their out-of-school time, the degree to which their interest is engaged by the various activities available to them, and the perceived value of After School Matters' apprenticeships and clubs to the students who join them. Descriptive data on apprentices show that the program is reaching students who are similar in most

basic respects — gender, ethnicity, and age — to the overall student body of their schools. More substantively, Chapin Hall has found that the apprentices genuinely like the experience and feel that it meets their expectations: 90 percent say that instructors helped them learn new skills; 75 percent report that instructors held their interest; 81 percent credit instructors with encouraging them and making them feel comfortable in the activity they were practicing. Satisfaction levels seem relatively consistent across all the various kinds of apprenticeships.

This constitutes fairly basic information, as evaluations go, though it is expected to grow richer as the program matures and data begin to accumulate for more schools over more semesters. Meanwhile, though, as After School Matters draws money from more and more sources, the demand for performance and outcome measurements will surely increase proportionally. Workforce and youth-employment programs, for example, will want information not only on students' satisfaction, but also on the work-related skills and employment potential resulting from the apprenticeships — something that hadn't figured prominently in After School Matters' initial plans for data collection.

Yet problems of this kind, at least for now, are mostly a side-effect of success. After School Matters faces rising expecta-

tions largely because of its swift expansion, widening networks of operation and funding, and a growing national reputation. That can bring pressure and stress to any organization, but it can also be exhilarating. "We're going to learn a lot about how to do this," says Associate Director Marisa Gonzales Silverstein, speaking of the planned expansion in 2004. "We're dealing with just a ton of change and growth. But it's leading to something potentially really important. And knowing that gives you a little extra momentum for getting the job done."



Photographs by Christopher Ray Photography.

San Diego

San Diego’s “6 to 6” Extended School Day Program

BY BASIL J. WHITING

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO is the first major city in the United States to offer a safe, supervised before- and after-school enrichment program to every elementary and middle school within city limits.

Moreover, the City not only unabashedly accepts, but trumpets, its mission of providing such services not just to improve the educational experience of children but also to meet the needs of working parents for both before- and after-school child care. The City’s Web site for the program¹ states:

San Diego’s “6 to 6” Extended School Day Program. Providing a safe place for children during the hours most parents work.

The City of San Diego, in cooperation with area school districts, is committed to opening community schools before and after normal school hours to provide a safe place for elementary and middle school-aged children and youth.

To be sure, while San Diego’s “6 to 6” is in every elementary and middle school, it admittedly does not yet provide its services to every student in these schools who needs them. California’s respected

research and policy organization EdSource² says that perhaps two-thirds of elementary school children in San Diego who need after-school care cannot yet find it (20,000 are on “6 to 6” waiting lists). Still, while meeting the full demand is the City’s next goal, it is nonetheless proud of its progress to date. According to EdSource:

While LA’s BEST³ is known as the granddaddy of after-school programs in California, San Diego’s “6 to 6” is called “the brat” because in two years (beginning in 1998) the City put together an after-school program in every elementary and middle school — something Los Angeles has yet to achieve.⁴

San Diego’s “6 to 6” was created by an alert mayor in response to concerns about youth crime, but it evolved differently because of different community, political, and institutional pressures.

Creation and Evolution

IN THE EARLY 1990S, San Diego faced an unprecedented increase in juvenile crime, drug abuse, and gang activity, particularly south of Interstate Highway 8, the *de facto* boundary between the city’s urban, low-

income core and the more affluent neighborhoods to its north. As in other cities, police statistics indicated that juvenile crime peaked in the hours between 2 and 6 p.m. and was concentrated near schools. As elsewhere, many of the victims of these crimes were other children.

In 1995, in response to these concerns, then-Mayor Susan Golding convened a “Safe Schools Task Force” comprising herself, the superintendent of San Diego City Schools, school principals, the county juvenile court judge, juvenile probation officers, the city attorney, the city manager, and the chief of police, among others. The task force proposed a “Mayor’s Safe Schools Initiative” containing three steps to keep students safe and reduce juvenile crime:

- Close school campuses during lunch time to keep kids in a supervised area rather than getting into trouble in the neighborhoods;
- Pass and enforce a new teen curfew and a new daytime anti-loitering law, aimed at preventing minors from congregating off campus; and
- Open schools in the early mornings and late afternoons to provide before- and after-school programming in safe and supervised environments.

All three of these steps were implemented. With respect to the third, Mayor Golding faced additional pressures from

1 <http://www.sandiego.gov/6to6/index.shtml>.

2 See EdSource Online, <http://www.edsource.org/index.cfm>. EdSource researches, monitors, and provides information to the public on educational issues in the state of California.

3 Footnote added: Los Angeles’s well-known after-school program; see the separate case study in this report.

4 EdSource Online; http://www.edsource.org/edu_part_profile_SanDiego.cfm.

[Mayor Golding] became a champion of the program's providing working parents with not only a safe but also a rich learning environment for their kids during the hours most parents worked.

the San Diego Organizing Project (SDOP), a consortium of 223 churches, synagogues, and mosques serving 40,000 families in communities mainly below I-8, in the poorer and working-class sectors of the city. This consortium is 25 years old, and most of its leaders were trained at the Pacific Institute for Community Organizing. According to SDOP's co-chair, Gloria Cooper:

We believe in researching what our needs are and then demanding our fair share of attention and resources from government and large institutions. We can get a bit strident and be very persistent and make sure that institutional and government leaders are personally aware of our people's needs.

In the early and mid-1990s, our communities were concerned about crime and drugs and community policing. We had families working two or three jobs and no safe place to put their kids and keep them out of gangs. Kids were hanging out on the sidewalk before school opened and going home alone after school. But we also had a lot of poor academic performance and we didn't want just baby-sitting in before- and after-school programs; we wanted balance between recreation and real academic reinforcement and enrichment, as well as a safe place for the kids.

SDOP brought these demands to Mayor Golding. She was herself a single mother, and by all accounts she immediately "got it." She became a champion of the program's providing working parents with not only a safe but also a rich learning environment for their kids during the hours most parents worked. Golding is also credited with almost instantly naming the program "San Diego's '6 to 6'" and sticking to her guns on the name — even when her advisors argued that schools had staggered starting hours, and many might not in fact be open before 6:30 a.m. It didn't matter, she maintained; the name captured and projected the intent of the program. Local observers say subsequent events have more than proved her right. (Most schools open their before-school program an hour before the subsidized breakfast is provided, which is at various times from school to school. But if breakfast is at 7:30 a.m. and as many as 15 kids are at the gates at 6 a.m., the before-school program does open to accommodate them.)

How to design and manage such a program? Deborah Ferrin, Child Care Coordinator in the Community Services Division of the City's Department of Community and Economic Development, says that the Park and Recreation Department turned to her and said, "You know, Deb, this looks like child care to

us, so we'll put this program with you in Community Services."

Ferrin now says:

Well, of course, it's not child care and couldn't be. Licensed child care agencies had limited funding and strict staffing and other requirements and would cost far too much, even if they were to accept this mission — which they didn't. But when we gave them a chance to bid on being a provider of San Diego's "6 to 6" at schools where they operated licensed child care, all of them accepted our terms.

With that caveat, Ferrin threw herself into the assignment. "We were familiar with LA's BEST," she says, "and we got a lot of good advice from Carla [Sanger, President and CEO of LA's BEST] and her people. But here it would have to be different, because the mayor wanted it in every elementary and middle school, and fast." Faced with this mandate, Ferrin and her planners came to a conclusion that shaped the program: San Diego's "6 to 6" would have to be a partnership of the three community resources best positioned to do the job both well and quickly:

- The San Diego Unified School District would have to be involved, because it had the school facilities and the kids. But the schools should not run the programs,

because they would be far too expensive with their overtime salary levels. And it was feared that they would be too academic. San Diego’s “6 to 6” programming should complement but not be the same as what went on in the regular school day, which many thought the school people would tend to do if they ran the program. To attract kids who could “vote with their feet” and go elsewhere, “6 to 6” needed to be varied and fun and include that balance of academic reinforcement, enrichment, and recreation that SDOP demanded.

- The second major partner would be community-based organizations (CBOs), mainly those already running child care, after-school, and other youth programs either on a fee basis or with government or charitable resources. With new money, organizations like the YMCA, Harmonium, and SAY (Social Advocates for Youth) — all well-established youth and family services agencies — would be the core; they could ramp up quickly to provide extended school-day services. And their wages were much lower than those of school or city personnel.
- Finally, the City would be fiscal agent, obtain and administer the funding for the program, contract with the CBOs for services, conclude operating memoranda with the schools to host and support the program, and oversee and evaluate its implementation.

Ferrin says, “None of these parties could do this alone. Together, they could.”

By this time it was the spring of 1998. To start San Diego’s “6 to 6,” the mayor proposed using \$1 million of the City’s general funds. She also proposed reallocating \$750,000 of existing but underutilized Park and Recreation playground supervision funds. Combining the two sources of

money would allow the program to start in 31 elementary schools during the 1998-99 school year. The City Council debated the mayor’s budget, concerned about an expensive and continuing initiative in a year when the city was facing a potential budget deficit. Ferrin recalls:

The mayor really pushed for this, and there were a lot of things going for it — the crime and drug problems, the need to improve school academic results, and welfare reform putting parents to work, meaning something had to be done for their kids, who would overwhelm the licensed child care system. And so on.

In addition, SDOP bused 500 residents from the community to the School Board meeting, demanding that schools be opened before and after school. Twenty-five SDOP residents came to the council’s budget hearings to press for the mayor’s initiative.

The City Council passed its budget on June 28, 1998. The schools were to open on August 28. Ferrin:

We had eight weeks to set up a program! Now, we’d been talking with the schools and the CBOs beforehand, but we couldn’t do anything formally until we knew we had City Council approval and the money. So, I devised a quick

two-week RFP [Request for Proposals] process and got the city to ramrod through its approvals so that the CBOs and schools would have six weeks to set up. We had to get 31 schools that were willing to start that fall, and I spent a lot of time in those two weeks that summer calling principals at home or on vacation to get them interested and willing to host a San Diego “6 to 6” program on short notice. And we did it! We opened in the fall in 31 schools with the YMCA, SAY, and Harmonium running the programs.

The City’s initiative allowed it to make credible claims on emerging state and federal streams of after-school funding. Ferrin worked with Sanger from Los Angeles and allies in other cities to develop and promote the state’s \$87 million “After School Education and Safety Program” (ASES) and other state legislation to facilitate after-school programming (e.g., exempting after-school programs from the requirements of licensed child care) and to establish other funding streams for before-school programming (the Before and After School Learning and Safe Partnerships Programs). Other advocacy work included Arnold Schwarzenegger’s Proposition 49, promoted by the actor well before the 2003 recall campaign that brought him the governorship. Proposition 49,

...growing pressures for after-school programming and the emerging funding streams for it — fueled the rapid expansion of San Diego's "6 to 6" in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

approved by the voters in 2002, will earmark \$550 million in state funding for after-school programs once the state budget passes certain trigger-points of recovery (its proponents hope its funding will begin to flow in 2006). Meanwhile, the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers program has been (until federal Fiscal Year 2004) receiving growing funding appropriations.

This confluence of events — growing pressures for after-school programming and the emerging funding streams for it — fueled the rapid expansion of San Diego's "6 to 6" in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In its second year, 1999-2000, the City increased its support of San Diego's "6 to 6" to \$3.7 million (including \$2 million in the City's share of proceeds from the 1998 settlement between state governments and five major tobacco companies), and \$3.31 million in state funding was obtained. This \$7.01 million allowed "6 to 6" to increase to 48 elementary and 16 middle schools.

By the third year of "6 to 6," 2000-01, \$750,000 in federal 21st Century Community Learning Center funding arrived, with more promised in subsequent years. State funding was also increasing, to \$8.5 million, and the City topped out its contribution at \$6.1 million (including \$2 million in tobacco settlement funds). With two years of experience, and greatly



expanded funding, San Diego's "6 to 6" was poised for its greatest growth to almost full coverage of the city's schools — to 145 elementary schools, 32 middle schools, and 19 "scholarship" schools, where the City provides grants to enroll lower-income students in independent programs that charge tuition (more on this momentarily).

This expansion required two further innovations. In its first and second years, San Diego's "6 to 6" worked solely with the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD), whose boundaries are not coterminous with the city's. Indeed, SDUSD comprises only 75 percent of the K-12 students within city limits; the rest are served by eight other independent school districts, some of which overlap into the surrounding suburbs and cities. Thus, to serve all the city's students, San Diego's "6 to 6", for its third year, concluded memoranda of agreement with those eight other districts and set up

"6 to 6" programs in their schools that fell within the city limits of San Diego.

In addition, San Diego's "6 to 6" had not yet served the affluent beach-area neighborhoods of the city north of I-8, where often only 5 percent of the students were eligible for free or reduced-cost lunches. The three school districts in these neighborhoods all ran their own fee-based, high-quality before- and after-school programs. Generally, however, working and poor parents in those districts could not afford them. To fulfill Mayor Golding's mandate to serve all the city's working parents, the City determined to provide \$10,000 in "scholarship" subsidies to these districts to enable them to enroll students for whom the existing, fee-based programs were cost-prohibitive.

In subsequent years, the budget for San Diego's "6 to 6" continued to grow. As this is written, in 2003-04, the budget totals \$22.05 million and the program serves 204 schools, including 150 elementary, 33 middle, 20 scholarship elementary, and one high school, where, Ferrin says, "we're trying to learn what works for that older group." The mayor's goal of serving all of the city's elementary and middle schools has thus been attained, though there are waiting lists of 100 to 150 students at some elementary schools.

Structure and Staffing

SAN DIEGO’S “6 TO 6” is an operating program of the Community Services Division of the City’s Department of Community and Economic Development, reporting to the mayor, city manager, and City Council. Ferrin, as child care coordinator, is responsible for helping to set up more than 50 licensed child care facilities and for managing San Diego’s “6 to 6,” which for six years has consumed the bulk of her time. The division has Ferrin plus six other staff members who work on “6 to 6,” writing grant proposals; sub-contracting to the provider organizations; analyzing provider budgets, approving their monthly invoices; auditing them annually; monitoring, evaluating, training, and providing technical assistance to the providers; collecting monthly reports; and preparing semi-annual reports for state and federal funding agencies.

San Diego’s “6 to 6” Organizational Structure

FERRIN AND THE MAYOR’S STAFF also represent the City of San Diego on a broader San Diego Regional After-School Consortium comprising the City, San Diego County and its Office of Education, 21 school districts, and parents and children’s

advocacy organizations. This Regional Consortium submits the bulk of the region’s applications for state before- and after-school funding and also conducts some of the evaluations of San Diego’s “6 to 6.”

The nine regional school districts host “6 to 6” programs in 196 public schools, with the vast bulk of them in the SDUSD. In addition, the City has contracted with seven faith-based organizations to conduct the program in eight of the schools they run, for a total of 204 schools in the city of San Diego with “6 to 6” services.⁵

The actual in-school programs are run by 24 providers. Eight of the nine school districts self-provide San Diego’s “6 to 6” services to a total of 43 schools, as indicated on the organizational chart on page 72 (one, San Ysidro, contracts with CBO providers). The seven religious congregations likewise provide “6 to 6” directly to eight of their schools. The remainder are mostly served by the three large providers that San Diego’s “6 to 6” began with in 1998-99: Harmonium, with 65 sites; SAY with 34 sites; and the YMCA, with 47 sites — a total of 146 in all, mostly but not only in SDUSD. A half dozen smaller organizations serve the remaining seven sites.

The agreements with these various providers require that the schools participate in the design of the academic portion of the programs and make sufficient space

available in school facilities to house the attending children (one classroom for every 20 students, plus common areas like cafeterias, auditoriums, libraries, computer rooms, and playgrounds). Schools also agree to provide necessary utilities, snacks, custodial services, and security where appropriate. (The City pays for some of this.) The school also identifies at least two certified teachers willing to work for the contracted provider running San Diego’s “6 to 6” program in a school, and provides data on students’ school attendance, achievement, and behavior for evaluative purposes.

A typical example of how this works out in practice was provided by Lynn Leszczynski, after-school program specialist at the YMCA of San Diego County, one of the major provider agencies contracted to operate San Diego’s “6 to 6” Extended Day Program.

The YMCA of San Diego County is the largest provider of licensed child care services in the state of California. We provide licensed child care both at school sites and at YMCA branch facilities. We also provide an array of other services for the children we serve in our child development programs, including camps, swimming lessons, sports activities, youth development programs, and so on.

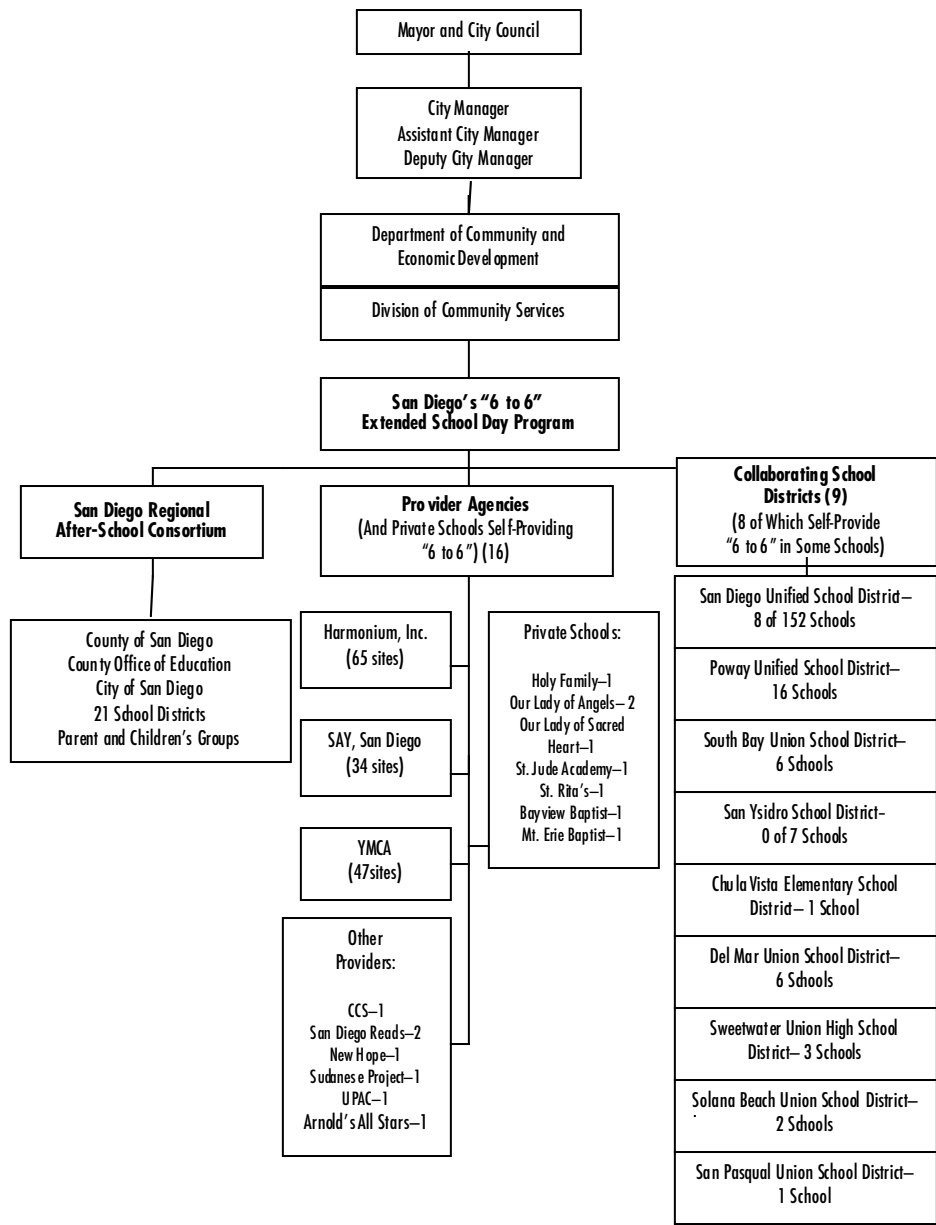
At present, we receive approximately

5 In 1971, the *Serrano v. Priest* California Supreme Court decision mandated equity of funding among all the state’s school districts. Its practical impact was to limit school funding from local property taxes and centralize the bulk of school funding at the state level, from whence funds for schools flow on a formula basis to counties and thence to local school districts.

\$6 million from the contract with the City of San Diego through which we operate San Diego’s “6 to 6” Extended School Day Program at 38 elementary school sites and 10 middle school sites. Taking on the “6 to 6” program, while still running licensed child care, was consistent with our mission to provide services to all children and families throughout San Diego County. Though there was concern initially, when the “6 to 6” program fully expanded, regarding the impact that this would have on our licensed programs, operating both programs simultaneously has proved to be advantageous to the YMCA. In addition, the opportunity for families to receive free child care services through the “6 to 6” program has, in many cases, facilitated the parents’ financial ability to take advantage of other valuable services provided for their children by the YMCA, such as summer camp, sports programs, and so on.

Operationally, there is little difference between our licensed child care programs and our “6 to 6” program. We operate “6 to 6” at an adult/child ratio of 1 to 15 and child care at a 1-to-12 ratio. Program leader qualifications vary between the two programs, and the licensed child-care programs are not required to employ credentialed teachers as part of the adult/child ratio. Both

San Diego’s “6 to 6” Organizational Structure



“The secret of the success of San Diego’s “6 to 6” Extended School Day Program is the three-way partnership between the city, the schools, and the providers.”

programs follow YMCA of USA quality standard guidelines and provide homework assistance, recreation, educational enrichment through play experiences, character development programs and activities, and so on.

Annually, each branch receives an estimated “6 to 6” budget allocation based on their estimated average daily attendance. They must then meet this ADA to be reimbursed per their entire budget. The entire contract amount is allocated to the sites in order to provide services to the maximum number of children.

Each YMCA branch sets up its “6 to 6” programs to have a full-time site supervisor, who must be at least 21, have at least 15 college units of early childhood education, and relevant experience. They are paid \$10-\$14 an hour, with benefits, for year-round work (they have the opportunity to work in summer camps and other programs when they’re not working on “6 to 6”). There is also at least one program leader for each 15 children, earning \$7.50 to \$12 per hour on a part-time basis. Program leaders must be at least 18 and high school graduates. A lot of them are college students.

The salary levels of program leaders — the front-line staff interacting with kids — are roughly the same as what a school instructional aide earns. In addition, each

“6 to 6” provider hires at least two credentialed teachers per site from the roster of the host school. For the “6 to 6” time frame, *the teachers work for the providers*, though they are paid (at least in SDUSD schools) \$26.34 per hour — the tutorial rate in the negotiated teachers contract with SDUSD. That is still nearly 30 percent lower than the district’s average hourly teacher rate of \$36.76 (reflecting annual teacher salaries ranging from \$35,000 to \$65,000 or so).

According to Leszczynski:

The secret of the success of San Diego’s “6 to 6” Extended School Day Program is the three-way partnership between the city, the schools, and the providers. The city administers the funding and assists in monitoring the programs, the schools open the doors to provide the space and program support, and the providers actually implement the operation of the program on a day-to-day basis, meeting the individual needs of the children and families served. This collaboration is real, and it is continuously growing.

Ferrin agrees but notes that maintaining such an arrangement for fruitful outcomes takes work:

All of this depends on collaboration among the three sets of partners and all

of their pieces. You recall that old saw about collaboration being an unnatural act between unconsenting adults? We all have to work together, and we’re doing pretty well. But it requires a lot of network-tending, and there are always some turf issues over money and other things that we have to manage carefully and sensitively.

Program Content and Quality

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO’S contracts with “6 to 6” providers require them to:

- Hire and train qualified staffs at the required adult/child ratios (1 to 15 in elementary schools and 1 to 20 in middle schools), including at least two credentialed teachers from the school faculty at each site;
- Offer a curriculum of before- and after-school services that meets the program’s mission of a balanced program attuned to the needs of the community’s children;
- Collaborate with the school’s principal on the academic component of the program;
- Recruit and enroll participants and maintain waiting lists;
- Purchase and provide consumable supplies; and
- Develop and maintain a parent advisory board and provide a parent newsletter.

The total school population in the nine districts served by San Diego’s “6 to 6” is about 136,000 students. At present,

6 This is an estimate of complex enrollment and attendance statistics and reflects over-enrollment to maintain average daily attendance requirements of the program’s funding streams. It includes an unknown amount of double-counting of children attending both the before- and after-school programs. See budget discussion later in this report.

“6 to 6” serves about 26,000⁶ children, generally 150 or so at each elementary school and between 250 and 450 at the larger middle schools. There are extensive waiting lists at many of the elementary schools, but few at the middle schools. San Diego’s school districts do not have so heavy a concentration of low-income, disadvantaged students as Los Angeles’; nonetheless, about 90 of the “6 to 6” schools have at least 50 percent of their children receiving free or reduced-price lunches. About 45 percent of the schools’ population is Hispanic and 11 percent African American. Schools report that their students come from families speaking 37 different languages.

The program’s major components in all sites are academic support (including homework assistance, literacy tutoring, science experiments, math games, computer skills, and academic mentoring); enrichment activities (including visual arts, crafts, performing arts, music, dance, recreation, sports, group games, and field trips); youth development (including leadership training, team-building, conflict resolution skills, health education, nutrition, alcohol, tobacco and other drug use prevention, social skills enhancement, and violence prevention); and community involvement (service projects, parent involvement and education, community volunteers,



mentoring, and CBO partnerships).

As noted earlier, typically, a “6 to 6” day begins an hour or so before an elementary or middle school’s scheduled breakfast, with a before-school program of reading, educational games, board games, and other indoor activities.

Elementary schools generally divide their afternoon participants into at least four groups that rotate through a variety of activities. Academically oriented activities are offered for a minimum of 90 minutes, four days per week, designed by principals and delivered in coordination with credentialed teachers. Typically, at 2:15 p.m., afternoon participants check in and receive announcements. From 2:30 to 3:30 is Rotation One, homework lab. This may be followed by a 15-minute snack period prior to Rotation Two, a half hour of physical education on the playground. At 4:15 a 45-minute Rotation Three puts students into literacy labs, the library, or computer labs. From 5:00 to 5:45 p.m. is Rotation Four, generally an

art activity. The last 15 minutes before check-out at 6 p.m. are a clean-up period.

This routine is qualitatively different in middle schools, where children are older and more likely not to come if the programs do not engage them. Considerable staff energy, therefore, is invested in designing activities with kid input, promoting them intensively, and getting rid of activities promptly when they no longer appeal to the shifting interests of youth this age.

An example of middle-school programming is provided by the Monroe Clark Middle School in the City Heights community. This is a relatively new campus of several attractive and well-maintained buildings around a central square with an amphitheater built into it. It is part of an “urban village” community center of school, libraries, parks and playgrounds, and other public facilities built by the city and School District in the midst of what Ferrin said had been the very poor, gang-ridden, violent “methamphetamine capital of the U.S.” several years ago. It is much better — but not all better — now.

A young former U.S. Marine is the deputy director of San Diego’s “6 to 6” program at Clark. He is a leader experienced beyond his years and a male role model for the largely minority young men and women in his care, exhibiting a “tough love” promotion of high values, self-discipline, responsibility, education,

Considerable staff energy...is invested in designing activities with kid input, promoting them intensively, and getting rid of activities promptly when they no longer appeal...

and broadening experiences. He said he loved the work he described:

This school has 1,800 students, and it opened with San Diego’s “6 to 6” in place, run by the YMCA. We have 450 to 600 students attending “6 to 6” in the afternoon, depending on the session and the program (this is a year-round school with four sessions). We also have around 200 kids for the morning session, which runs from 6 to 7:30 a.m., when we do basketball and homework and other structured things.

Our staff consists of the site coordinator, myself as site supervisor, seven YMCA youth leaders, several teachers who work in “6 to 6” for \$22 an hour, plus a dozen or so volunteers from colleges and elsewhere in the community, some funded by a local foundation. They’re called Price Scholars.

We reset our program regularly....For late October-early November, we have Academic Learning Center work from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., which is homework and tutoring. From 3:30 to 3:40, we have a quick snack. We then have a range of what we call ‘XDC’ Academic Learning Center, or extended-day classes, from 3:40 to 4:30 that were designed with kid input and which they have to sign up for. If not enough sign up, we drop it. We’re listing Hip Hop,

Art, Electronics, Pryde, Mexican Cooking, Comic Books, Auto Shop, Acting, Beauty Parlor, Tennis, Guitar Club, Model Cars, Fashion Design, Basketball, Soccer, Mirror Etching, and some specialized games kids are into. These are on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

On Wednesdays and Fridays we have other things like X-Games outdoors, Salsa Fridays, and Young Marines. I brought that in because we are right next door to Camp Pendleton, and they can support us. We have a Young Marines troop here where the kids have uniforms and drill and learn about the Marines and about life lessons and go on an off-site overnight camp. It’s very popular with both the young men and women. We also have what we call “XDC Hang Out” every day, with games and supervised hanging out in this safe place until 6 p.m.

Finally....kids can check a box for the morning program, which we call the “Morning Zoo Crew,” from 6 to 7:25 a.m. every day.

Most of the services of San Diego’s “6 to 6” are provided in the schools. There are few of the trips and other outside activities that enrich the experience of, for instance, LA’s BEST’s offerings, in part because San Diego’s “6 to 6” has not yet mobilized many such events from the private and

nonprofit sectors, as LA’s BEST has done, and in part because “6 to 6” does not yet have access to the busing resources available to Los Angeles’ after-school programs. (The Y’s Lynn Leszczynski, however, says, “We do have some trips and finagle the transportation in various ways for them.”)

One day each week, schools close two hours early to allow teachers to meet for training. San Diego’s “6 to 6” extends its services to cover this additional time, often bringing in outside specialty service providers — visiting artists and other resources in dance, drama, and sports. San Diego’s “6 to 6,” however, does not yet provide services on normal workdays when school is closed.

To encourage and support creative and high-quality programming, San Diego’s “6 to 6” central City staff in Ferrin’s office conducts monthly meetings of all provider agencies to share information and discuss common issues. In addition, the city provides an orientation training in late August for new provider staff and conducts seven in-service trainings throughout the school year for “6 to 6” on-site personnel. The City “6 to 6” staff also participates in large regional and state consortia for training of child care providers.

Finally, San Diego’s “6 to 6” city central staff includes three program monitors who visit each program site a minimum of two times per school year, checking for

compliance with formal program requirements and monitoring program quality. These monitors also provide technical assistance on issues discovered during the monitoring process or as they emerge and are brought to their attention. Ferrin says, “Basically, the providers have been fabulous — serious in what they do and concerned about high quality.”

Income and Expenditures

THE \$22.05 MILLION BUDGET for San Diego’s “6 to 6” in 2003-04 was up 44 percent from the \$15.35 million spent in 2000-01, the year the program first went to scale. State funding for “6 to 6” has continued to grow in those same years, from \$8.5 million in 2000-01 to \$15.16 million in 2003-04, despite California’s well-publicized budget woes. Federal funding similarly grew, from \$750,000 in 2000-01 to \$2.26 million in 2003-04 (though the federal money was down slightly from the previous year). The City of San Diego, however, was beset by recession and the loss of other state funding and required all city functions to contribute to deficit reduction in 2003-04, lopping almost a million dollars off the City’s contribution to “6 to 6,” reducing it to \$5.12 million. Ferrin by then had added \$89,000 in private-sector contribu-

tions, a segment she hopes to grow. The net result is that San Diego’s “6 to 6” operated in 2003-04 on a million dollars more than in the prior year (see the full 2003-2004 budget in the chart below).

The state funding stream allows 15 percent for overhead and administration. In San Diego, two of these percentage points go to the broader San Diego Regional After-School Consortium, which is the formal applicant for state after-school funds for San Diego’s “6 to 6” as well as after-school programs in other communities in the region. The Consortium also uses these funds for some of the evaluation of San Diego’s “6 to 6” (Ferrin’s office also contracts for some evaluation, as noted in the budget). The two percent retained by the Regional Consortium is taken “off the top” and is not reflected in the budget presented here.

Three percent of the overhead allowance is retained by the City of San Diego and is combined into the City’s contribution to San Diego’s “6 to 6” (the City’s contribution includes the costs of Ferrin’s office, which manages the program). The remaining 10 percent of the overhead allowance is incorporated into the program’s contracts with its providers, be they community-based organizations or private schools or school districts that “6 to 6” services on its own.

The state of California provides after-

2003-2004 Budget for San Diego’s “6 to 6”

Revenues

State of California After School Education/Safety Program	\$ 15,440,000
Federal 21st Century CLC Funds	830,000
California 21st Century CLC Funds	660,000
City of SD General Funds	5,117,000
TOTAL	\$ 22,047,000

Expenditures

Provider contracts (CBOs, self-providing public/private schools, etc.)	\$ 21,000,000
SDUSD admin, security, custodial, snack support	447,000
City fiscal admin, training, program monitoring	550,000
Consultant evaluation contract (let by the city office)	50,000
TOTAL	\$ 22,047,000

school funding on the basis of \$5 per day per student. For San Diego’s 180 school days, this amounts to \$900 per student per school year. San Diego’s “6 to 6” uses this funding level for all of its contracts to providers for after-school programming, which support 18,203 afternoon slots. To this are added 336 after-school scholarships provided for students in affluent beach-area school districts, at a total cost of \$307,000. There are thus a total of 18,539 after-school slots supported.

Before-school programs vary from one and a half to two hours, depending on when school opens, when breakfast is

served, and when kids start being left off by parents. The state funding per slot similarly varies, but it averages out at about \$600 per slot per year, with 5,980 morning slots funded.

Morning and afternoon funded slots taken together thus total 24,519, but that number comprises three different kinds of slots at different costs: before-school, regular contracted after-school, and scholarship after-school. The \$600 and \$900 amounts used in contracting with providers do not include the administrative and other costs of the program as reflected in the budget expenditures — costs normally included by other cities in a “cost per slot” figure for after-school programs. To obtain such a number for comparison purposes, we prorated all budget costs into morning and afternoon totals and divided by the respective number of slots supported. This yielded a before-school cost of \$652 per funded slot and an after-school cost of \$979 per slot, numbers that are roughly comparable with those of other cities.

Compared with the other programs examined in this report, a per-slot cost of \$979 is decidedly modest. The difference may be explained in large part by the San Diego program’s comparatively low salaries, low overhead structure, and the relatively limited number of out-of-school enrich-

ment opportunities that require busing.

The experience of San Diego’s “6 to 6” also illustrates how slippery ostensibly formal measures of the program’s size can be — and speaks volumes about how the program serves complex social needs. For instance, San Diego’s “6 to 6” has 5,980 “funded slots” for before-school programming. However, almost 17,000 children have actually been “enrolled” or “signed up” by their parents for this program, apparently to establish the right to be “let in” if parents with varying work schedules need to have a safe place to put their children early in the morning as they head to work. Average daily attendance in the before-school program in December 2003, however, was about 7,800, which is more than the number of funded slots but much less than the number enrolled. The after-school numbers are 16,391 funded slots (not counting scholarship students in affluent districts), 23,235 enrolled, and an average daily attendance in December 2003 of 14,680, somewhat less, in that holiday month, than the number of funded slots. The combined average daily attendance, however, was just about at the level of funded slots for both morning and afternoon.

Evaluation

SAN DIEGO’S “6 TO 6” has arranged with the broader Regional After-School Consortium to conduct independent evaluations of the program’s impact. The Consortium contracted with Hoffman and Clark,⁷ a local evaluation firm with experience in evaluating youth-services programs, for certain limited evaluation studies of “6 to 6.” According to EdSource⁸

[O]utside evaluators Hoffman and Clark do satisfaction surveys of parents, kids, principals, and staff. Rating the program good to outstanding were 91 percent of the principals, 99 percent of the parents, and 93 percent of the kids (including 88 percent of the middle school students). Hoffman and Clark also found that third and eighth graders in the after-school program moved up to grade level very quickly in reading and math. However, no comparison was done between kids in the program and kids on the waiting list. WestEd⁹ also conducted unannounced visits and determined the program was as safe as licensed school-age programs. In addition, 57 percent of the students sampled showed improvements in their Stanford-9 reading scores, and 44 percent showed improvements in their Stanford-9 math scores.

7 The satisfaction survey results were drawn from 10,000 surveys conducted by Hoffman and Clark in February 2003. The student achievement improvements cited were from a sample of “6 to 6” participants whose academic performance was compared to their performance prior to participation in “6 to 6.” Comparisons to students in the same grades but concurrently not participating in “6 to 6” — whether on waiting lists or not — have not been performed.

8 EdSource Online; San Diego’s “6 to 6” Extended School Day Program; *Op.Cit.*

9 WestEd is a nonprofit research, development, and service agency that is one of the nation’s network of federal Regional Educational Laboratories (see <http://www.relnetwork.org/>). WestEd serves Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah. (Footnote added.)

“We’ve attained our first goal — to be in every school... Our next goal is to expand our capacity to accommodate every student in each school who needs these services.”

Harking back to the issues that led to the creation of San Diego’s “6 to 6,” Ferrin also cites the impact of the program on local crime statistics. In 2001, the first full year that “6 to 6” operated at scale in virtually all of the city’s schools, overall crime in San Diego increased by more than eight percent. However, during that same year, juvenile arrests after school *decreased* by 13.1 percent and the number of juvenile victimizations from violent crime after school *decreased* by 11.7 percent. Former San Diego Police Chief David Bejarano credits San Diego’s “6 to 6” as one of the contributing factors to these decreases.

Challenges and the Future

TO THE YMCA’S LYNN LESZCZYNSKI, the challenges from her perspective as a provider are operational:

I don’t think we have major challenges. It’s the day-to-day pleasing of everyone involved; it’s staying within the budget and hiring good people; it’s trying to do more and better with the funding limits we have.

The young ex-Marine at Monroe Clark Middle School echoes this operational concern from his front-line level:

The challenges we face are really “finding the person” inside every kid and helping them grow to responsibility and

self-esteem. And, we have to “control the chaos” that comes with dealing with a program like this and kids like this. And, relating to and working with the teachers on the academic stuff.

Miles A. Durfee, an official with the San Diego Unified School District’s Administrative and Legislative Services unit, cites both operational and broader issues:

The problems or challenges include the constant issues that come up around access to the regular classrooms. That’s a daily concern, but the basic collaborative style of this program makes it work in the end. Then there is the continuous refinement and monitoring that is required. There is always concern for trading off quality for quantity.

Sustainability over the long run will be an issue. Finally, we’ve all put the highest priority on providing supports to troubled kids in troubled schools while at the same time working toward universal coverage and access. This raises means-testing issues, with affluent parents paying for after-school services while working-class and poor parents get them for free. So far that has not been a big issue, but it could become one.

Deborah Ferrin, too, worries about sustainability:

On money, we’ve done pretty well, but the State is strapped and the City and

County are, too. In last year’s [2003] budget discussions, we lost nearly \$1 million of the city’s contribution to this year’s program because of the city’s multimillion dollar deficits, to which they wanted everyone to contribute. That’s 1,000 students that we were not able to accommodate this year!

Ferrin outlines the goals for the future of San Diego’s “6 to 6” if funding recovers and keeps flowing and growing:

We’ve attained our first goal — to be in every school.

Our next goal is to expand our capacity to accommodate every student in each school who needs these services.

Then, we want to go year-round — to cover all those days when schools are closed during the year and in summers and breaks — to meet the original mandate to provide safe and enriching places for the kids of working parents.

Then we want to expand to cover high schools, which we know means very different kinds of programming to attract, hold, and meet the needs of older kids — for instance, including some kind of career exploration activities, internships, and so on.

And, throughout all of these, to improve program quality, to broaden the exposure and enrichment experiences of our kids.

Acknowledgments

With the After-School Corporation

New York, New York

www.tascorp.org

Lucy Friedman

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Amy Kantrowitz

Other Sources in New York City

Herb Sturz, The Open Society Institute

Ronni Fisher, University Settlement Society of New York

Tameeka N. Ford, University Settlement Society of New York

Daniel Garcia, Public School 130, the Bronx

Lewis Hartman, Sports and Arts in Schools Foundation

Stanley Kinard, Carter G. Woodson Cultural Literacy Project

James R. O'Neill, Sports and Arts in Schools Foundation

Michael Zisser, University Settlement Society of New York

With After School Matters

Chicago, Illinois

www.afterschoolmatters.org

Maggie Daley

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Other Sources in Chicago

B.J. Walker, City of Chicago

Mary A. Dempsey, Chicago Public Library

David J. Doig, Chicago Park District

Arne Duncan, Chicago Public Schools

With LA's BEST

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www.lasbest.org

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Other Sources in Los Angeles

Alan Arkatov, City of Los Angeles Commission on Children,
Youth, and Their Families

With San Diego's "6 to 6"

San Diego, California

www.sandiego.gov/6to6

Deborah K. Ferrin

DeeDee Alari

Other Sources in San Diego

Gloria Cooper, San Diego Organizing Project

Miles A. Durfee, San Diego City Schools

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About the After School Project

THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION created the After School Project in 1998 as a five-year, three-city demonstration aimed at connecting significant numbers of young people in low-income neighborhoods with responsible adults during out-of-school time. To that end, the Project focuses on developing: (1) consistent, dedicated revenues to support after school programs in low-income communities; (2) an array of developmental opportunities for youth, including physical activity and sports, educational, social, and recreational programs; and (3) strong local organizations with the necessary resources, credibility, and political clout to bring focus and visibility to the youth development field.

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