

Harnessing the Power of Expanded Learning

A RESEARCH AND POLICY FORUM
ON AFTERSCHOOL IN IOWA

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS AND CONSENSUS RECOMMENDATIONS

June 13, 2012
Des Moines, Iowa



Harnessing the Power of Expanded Learning: A Research and Policy Forum was held June 13, 2012 to bring together education stakeholders from across the state of Iowa to discuss successful expanded and extended learning practices and identify critical next steps for ensuring student success. The forum engaged key national and state leaders in the field and culminated in a discussion of priorities of how to move expanded and extended learning forward in Iowa. This document provides a summary of the day's proceedings and consensus recommendations of those in attendance. All resources from the forum are available online at www.sppg.com/expanded_learning_forum/index.php.



Following introductory remarks by Des Moines Area Community College President Rob Denson and event co-hosts Dave Welter, 2012 Iowa Middle-Level Principal of the Year from Holmes Jr. High School in Cedar Falls and Iowa Afterschool Alliance Network Coordinator Michelle Rich, keynote speaker Dr. Terry K. Peterson of the College of Charleston kicked off discussion by providing an overview of the current research on expanded and extended learning as evidenced by the 21st Century Community Learning Centers model.

The Research

Any expanded and/or extended learning must:

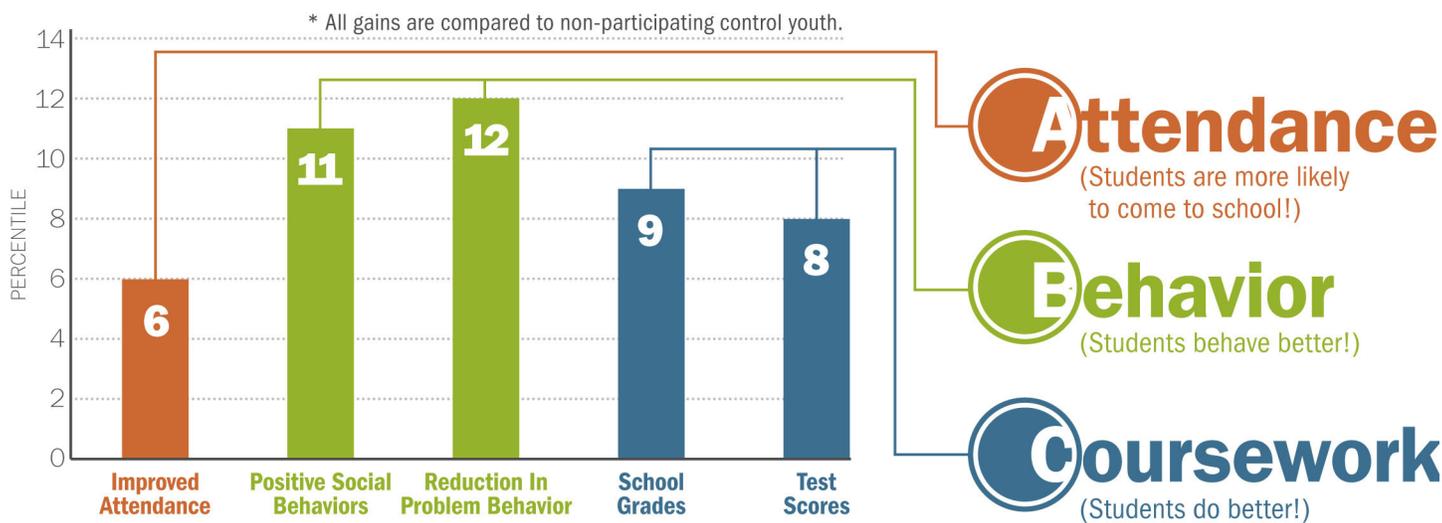
- » Expand on learning in more hands-on ways
- » Have classroom and community teachers working together
- » Help students find their own areas of interest to explore



High quality programs are proven to accelerate student achievement. The most effective programs:

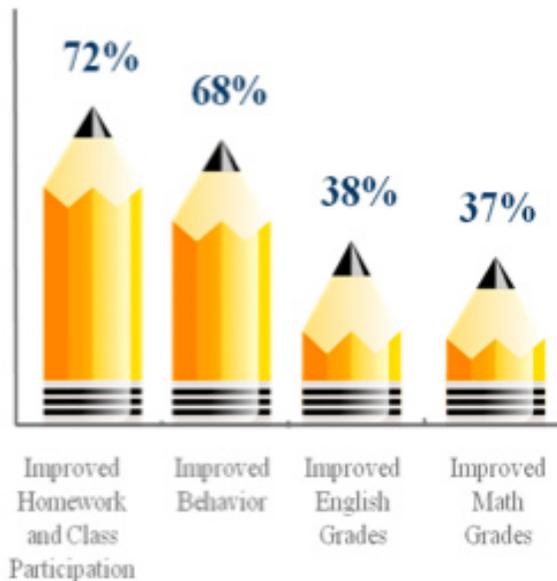
- » Recruit quality staff and reduce turnover
- » Establish a strong bond between students and staff to succeed
- » Build bridges between school and afterschool staff and program
- » Increase collaboration between the school day and afterschool but do not remove the hands-on learning and student engagement that are critical in afterschool
- » Build a network of support with the community and families

Afterschool's Impact: How Participants Compare with their Peers



Durlak & Weissberg, Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning

Teacher Reported Outcomes All Grades



State Assessments

Reading Scores

(among students scoring below proficiency in the previous year)



Math Scores

(among students scoring below proficiency in the previous year)



36%
Percentage of regular attendees whose test scores improved



35%
Percentage of regular attendees whose test scores improved



46%
Percentage of students attending 90 days or more whose test scores improved



45%
Percentage of students attending 90 days or more whose test scores improved



American Institutes of Research for the US Department of Education

What's Happening In Iowa?

Joe Davis, Chief Operating Officer of the Florida Afterschool Network, facilitated a panel of Iowa afterschool policy leaders and practitioners. The Florida Afterschool Network (FAN) has developed a partnership with Broward County Community College to create a bachelor's degree in Afterschool Programming and Administration to formalize the afterschool profession. For more information on FAN, visit their website at www.myfan.org.



Panelists:

- » Dan Bower, Holmes Jr. High School
- » Vic Jaras, Iowa Department of Education
- » Chad Kaepffel, Cedar Falls Community Credit Union
- » Representative Kevin Koester, Iowa General Assembly
- » Ann Torbert, Iowa State University Linn County Extension
- » Marcia Valbracht, State Hygienic Laboratory

- » Holmes Jr. High School partners through their afterschool program with Cedar Falls Community Credit Union on a student-run branch. This partnership has taught students financial literacy and confidence. Plus, students enjoy this learning!
- » Hands-on learning opportunities are currently offered through community-led expanded learning. At the State Hygienic Lab, students get real-world lab experience at one of the top laboratory facilities in the state. Students receive help with hands-on science fair projects and participate in daily lab activities.
- » Linn County Extension's S.T.A.R.S. Afterschool program at Johnson Elementary in Cedar Rapids is focusing on increasing literacy. The program is doing this through traditional methods and experimenting with technology to boost reading levels.
- » The Iowa Department of Education can visibly see the youths' excitement on annual site visits of 21st Century Community Learning Center programs. Students are rarely seen sitting off to the side because they do not feel welcomed or engaged in the activities.
- » Representative Kevin Koester, a member of the Iowa General Assembly, challenged programs to invite policymakers into their programs so they have a clear understanding of the great benefits of afterschool. Having local policymakers on board with the local afterschool program can make a difference when applying for funding or advocating for programming as part of education reform discussions.

Practice Example: KWAKERS Service Learning

Community! Youth Concepts is a Des Moines-based non-profit that works with youth using the IPARD/C service learning model.



1. Investigation
2. Planning
3. Action
4. Reflection
5. Demonstration
6. Celebration!

Find out more at www.cyconcepts.org

“Pro-social involvement in one’s community [like that encouraged through service learning] is the only protective factor found to mitigate all risk factors.”

Arthur, Hawkins, et al., 1994, Hawkins, Catalano, Miller, 1992

Recommendations and Next Steps

The central purpose of the forum was to bring together stakeholders to identify critical next steps to ensure all students have access to high-quality expanded and extended learning opportunities in Iowa. Based on the discussions of participants at the event, below are three priority recommendations for building on the momentum of current practice in our state.

- » Broaden awareness of Iowa’s best programs. More people must see these programs in action! Participants encouraged programs to reach out to school board members, parents, community members, and policymakers to come visit their programs to see the great things that are happening. Likewise, these decision makers are also encouraged to find out more about what community organizations are doing to support students in their community.
- » Expand partnerships to serve students across the state. The partnerships developed in afterschool programs are a model for providing students real-world, hands-on learning opportunities that lead to greater success in school and life.
- » Advocate for 21st Century Community Learning Centers at the state and federal levels. This model engages community-wide stakeholders in the education and success of our students through cost-effective partnerships and strategies.



Inspiration to Serve



Closing remarks were given by Dave Welter, 2012 Iowa Middle-Level Principal of the Year from Holmes Junior High School in Cedar Falls. Welter’s inspirational comments were supplemented by video footage from the film “Beyond the Blackboard,” a movie about a first year teacher who is placed in a homeless shelter classroom with initially little idea of how to approach her students and their families. Through reaching out and making connections with students and community members, she gives the students the educational opportunities they deserve. Welter commented that expanded learning opportunities give a realistic guide for everyone to follow when creating a better future for students. Everyone must take ownership in their roles, making programs a place where youth thrive and see things through new eyes.