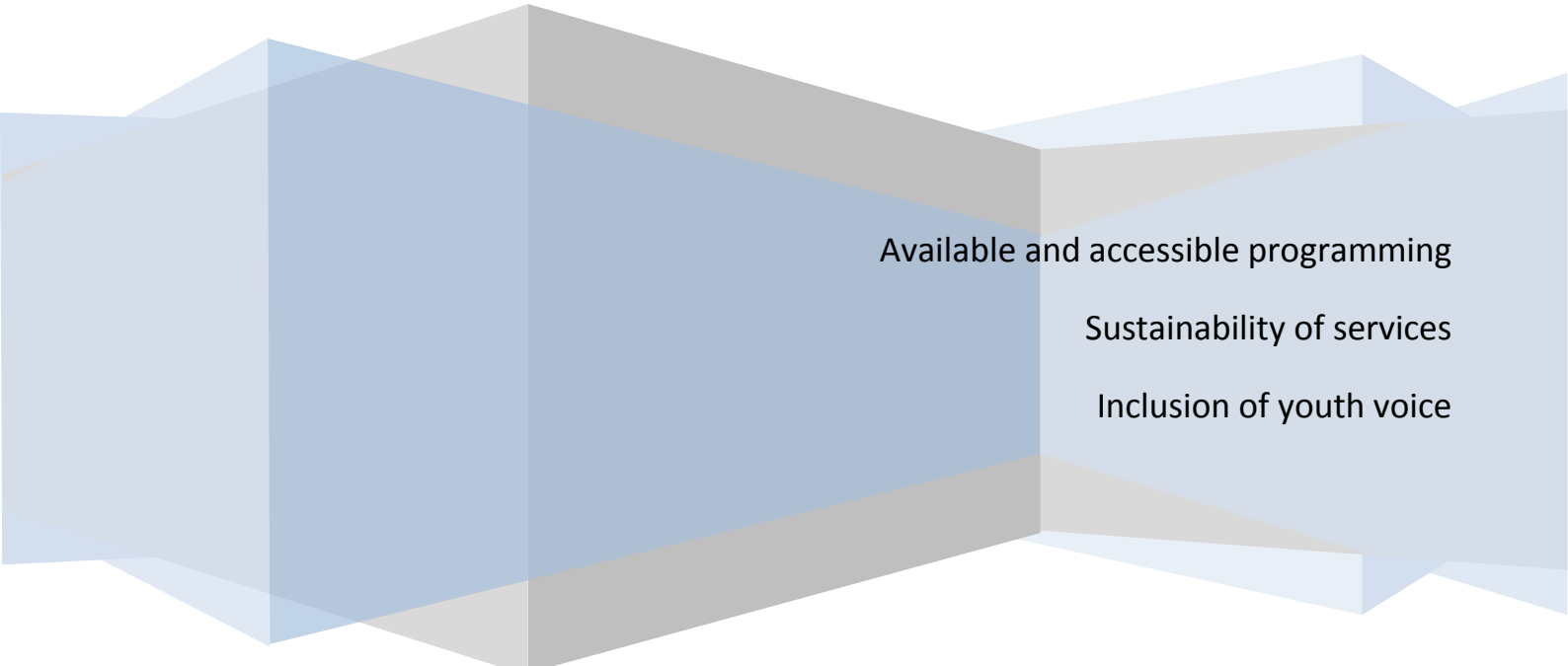


Making Afterschool a Priority, Creating a Pathway

Kansas Afterschool Forum: The Potential in
Expanded Learning



Available and accessible programming

Sustainability of services

Inclusion of youth voice

The Potential in Expanded Learning Forum Report

MAKING AFTERSCHOOL A PRIORITY, CREATING A PATHWAY



BACKGROUND AND FOUNDATION

Children and youth spend 20% of their waking hours in school while the remaining 80% spans before and after school, weekends, evenings, and summer. What happens during those times? The Afterschool Alliance's Kansas After 3PM report indicates only 13% of children and youth participate in afterschool programs. Frighteningly enough, almost three times as many are taking care of themselves, averaging of six hours of unsupervised time per day.¹ Only 23% of children and youth are in summer programs, even though summer learning loss is well documented.^{2,3}

Vital Statistics

Forbes reports that nationally, unemployment for teens has risen to 24.5%.⁴ From 1991 to 2008 teen births in Kansas tallied an alarming 82,171, costing taxpayers a total of \$2.3 billion.⁵ Juvenile crime, on school days, peaks between the hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., when more teens commit crimes, become victims of crime, or engage in other risky behaviors.⁶ The cost to incarcerate a person for a year is \$52,000.⁷

ABCs: Attendance, Behavior, Coursework

Afterschool and expanded learning can turn these risky times into productive learning and engagement. "Research shows that high quality afterschool programs can lead to increased **A**ttendance, improved **B**ehavior and improved **C**oursework. This means that students participating in a high quality afterschool program went to school more, behaved better, received better grades and did better on tests. These ABCs are critical factors to student engagement and achievement."⁸

Therefore, more than ever before, policy discussions are focusing attention on expanded learning opportunities and recognizing their importance in assisting the education field. Building on this momentum, the Kansas Enrichment Network (the Network) seeks to make afterschool a priority and develop a pathway for expanded learning opportunities to ensure children and youth are safe and prepared for college, career, and life. Seeking input from a variety of perspectives, the Network

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convened approximately 80 stakeholders to begin to consider necessary steps. Themes from this forum will guide a task force in developing a strategic plan and pathway to afterschool and expanded learning opportunities in Kansas.

PROCESS

A diverse group of participants was invited to share their insights about *The Potential in Expanded Learning*. Attendees included educators from early childhood through higher education, elected officials, business, community members, state agencies, libraries, youth, PTA, afterschool providers, trainers, and other service providers. The diversity of participants provided varying perspectives. Children and youth depend on us. The question is not whether we provide what they need, but how to do so.

*What do Kansas children and youth need to succeed?
How can expanded learning and afterschool help support this success?*

The evening began with the youth. Four Kansas youth, **Keil Eggers, Curtis Smart, Anna Stone, and Cynthia Jurado**, all successful college students, spoke about their expanded learning opportunities within the Kansas public school system. They credit their afterschool programs with life-changing and career-shaping experiences. Youth testimonials were followed by stories **Superintendent Cynthia Lane, Superintendent Bill Hagerman, Jarius Jones, Cherie Nicholson, and Ann Zimmerman**, who witness programs successes on a regular basis. Last, but certainly not least, policy panelists, **District Attorney Chad Taylor, Representative Valdenia Winn, and Nathan Eberline** shared their insights. We are grateful to all of the speakers for their time and inspiring words.

Education is the great equalizer, providing the opportunity to live out the American dream. The kids we see in court are not in your afterschool programs. We don't have a funding problem; we have a priority problem. It takes \$52,000 a year to keep someone in prison. We are paying a lot more on than back side [than an afterschool program costs]. We can invest in children today.

District Attorney Chad Taylor

Afterschool programs motivate kids and bring opportunities. For example, the Math Relays bring over 1300 students to compete in math all day on a Saturday. Communication about what is available is necessary to sustain programs and expand outreach.

*Jarius Jones
Kansas City Kansas Public Schools*

At the Saturday Academy, we have a waiting list. We had 310 apply but can only take 120. We do not have enough funding.

*Marcia Pomeroy
Univ. of Kansas School of Medicine*

Afterschool ignites the imaginations of young people and helps keeps those fires burning. Testimony of the youth touted the importance – it propelled me to make changes to better this world; it defined my time and impacted by future plans; it taught me valuable skills and gave me a chance to practice those skills; and it affected my drive for activism. Given the educational, economic and family benefits of expanded learning, the task became apparent – **making afterschool a priority in Kansas.**

The answer to how is yes.

*Dr. Bill Hagerman
USD 309, Nickerson School District*

KEY FORUM SPEAKERS INSIGHT



Shawnee County District Attorney Chad Taylor recognizes the strong value of expanded learning opportunities. The hours of 3 to 6 pm become critical times for keeping Kansas children and youth in safe places and engaged in opportunities with caring adults and mentors. *“The kids we see in court are not in your afterschool programs,”* noted District Attorney Taylor. *“We don’t have a funding problem; we have a priority problem.”*

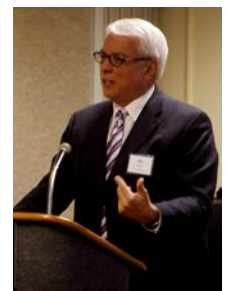
Afterschool makes
the learning real and
helps them find their
dreams.

Dr. Cynthia Lane

The need for investing in children and youth resounded. Afterschool was recognized as an education issue, an economic issue, and a family issue. **Dr. Cynthia Lane**, Superintendent of USD 500 in Kansas City, Kansas applauded the value of partnerships and suggested: *“Afterschool makes the learning real and helps them find their dreams. Our 21st Century Community Learning Center program, KidZone, comes complete with parent partnerships, children coming to school early to eat and staying late, tutoring and enrichment.”*



Dr. Bill Hagerman, Superintendent of Nickerson School District, USD 309, recognizes the impact of these programs through their district’s Leadership Enrichment and Academic Learning Academy. The program works with over 350 students in grades K-12 to improve behavior and engagement in learning through community partnerships. *“Out of school time offers youth the opportunity to work on relationships and relevance.”* Dr. Hagerman highlighted sustainability as a key element and suggested: *“The answer to how [to sustain programs] is yes.”*



On the policy level, **Representative Valdenia Winn** challenged participants. *“We need communications about programs that exist. Lobby us hard and stay in our faces. Take the politics out because that can get in the way of the child. Work with the school districts and develop life plans.”* Representative Winn supports dedicated resources for afterschool.

Ann Zimmerman touted FIRST Robotics programming noting its ability to bring hands on learning in a fun, dynamic format. Teams work collaboratively to problem-solve through gracious professionalism. **Cherie Nicholson**, Kansas State Department of Education, offered an intriguing challenge. *“Think creatively to involve charter and virtual students to expand opportunities to those youth who are at home. Offer them needed socialization experiences.”* Then, **Nathan Eberline** challenged the group to start small, consider the local level, think and act creatively, and look to the private sector for partners.

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Armed with these powerful thoughts, small groups discussed afterschool and expanded learning needs in Kansas. Highlights from these discussions clustered into three areas.

SMALL GROUP SUMMARY

Three powerful themes evolved from the small group discussions as critical issues. Critical issues are fundamental policy or program concerns that define the most important situations and choices related to afterschool programming. They are long standing problems, generally not resolved through quick fixes, but through in-depth strategic planning and shared leadership. Themes included:

Available and accessible programming
Sustainability of services
Inclusion of youth voice

Below you will find a sampling of questions which emerged and created areas for further investigation. Going forward, a task force comprised of forum participants will create a strategic plan and outline a pathway for future direction for afterschool and expanded learning opportunities. To triangulate results of this forum with other regions of the state, forums will be scheduled in strategic locations to glean further input and assure validity in diverse geographic areas.



AVAILABLE AND ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMMING

- How can quality, engaging, affordable afterschool and expanded learning opportunities exist for all interested Kansas children and youth?
- How can communication and visibility about opportunities be strengthened so caretakers, educators, and the community know they exist and can encourage participation?
- Does Kansas need additional opportunities, and if so in what area and at what level?
- Are the available programs being accessed and if not, why not?
- How can awareness of, communication about and visibility of opportunities be increased so programs are better attended?
- What partners would help provide experiences, especially targeting children and youth of highest risk (those in poverty, with disabilities/barriers, language issues)?
- Could a pipeline of opportunities be created to increase communication and visibility?
- What policy tools are needed?
- What transportation issues need to be addressed to allow for participation?
- Are transportation issues different for rural and urban and how can they be addressed?
- How do we ensure programs are of high quality?
- How can we attract children/youth who are not currently involved?
- Are we accommodating for individuals who have greater barriers?
- What creative strategies can be used to connect virtual learners?
- How do we build parental/guardian understanding of the connection between school, afterschool, and school success?
- Is connectivity and IT equally available for all students, regardless of geographic or economic conditions?

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SUSTAINING SERVICES

- How can a stream of dedicated funding be generated and sustained?
- What partners, beyond government programs, might be enlisted to assist?
- What data are needed in Kansas to adequately share the importance and impact of afterschool?
- Who is able to assist with the collection of the data?
- How can we tell if we are making progress?
- How do we find and utilize untapped resources?
- How can we help people diversify partnerships and sustain programming in different ways?
- What role do businesses, the private sector, universities, and volunteers play?
- What unfound and underused partners exist and how can we access their assistance?
- How do we ensure that youth are prepared for college, career and life?
- How can we remove silos and maximize services for children and youth in Kansas?

INCORPORATING YOUTH VOICE

- How can youth voice be better incorporated into programs?
- What is youth voice and what are best practices for incorporating youth voice?
- What research exists and what does it say?
- What training is needed for students and staff to ensure youth voices are heard?
- How can cultural competency be blended in to prepare youth for their future in a global society?
- How can we recruit and retain youth?
- What motivates youth and how can providers focus on their interests?
- How can adults build stronger relationships with youth?
- How do we create youth ownership?
- Are youth being heard?
- Do we have the resources to support mentoring for youth?



YOUTH SPEAK

We need **for youth, by youth** participation in order to allow young people to have experiences and practice in civic responsibility before we expect them engage as productive adults. Guided by that philosophy, youth serve a key role in assessing and determining need with afterschool and expanded learning opportunities. This report would not be possible without their voice. Following are powerful excerpts sharing the potential in expanded learning.

Luckily I did 21st CCLC because I would not have been able to do what I did without it. I got the highest test score in the class. My classmates could not believe it.

Travis "TJ" Derrick-Bryant
Grade 8, Holy Savior Academy

Anna Stone, Graduate from Ottawa School District, currently at Georgetown University:

"My experience with afterschool programs defined my time in high school and impacted by future plans. [Our programs] taught us how to interact with all types of adults, from elected city officials to those who angrily opposed our suggestions at public forums. My time with Youth Action Council (YAC) made me fall in love with service to others while it taught me how to lead and follow when working as a group. I discovered a love of politics and social justice. I will spend the rest of the

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summer teaching English to children in Poland. Participating in this experience and traveling alone to Poland would have seemed impossible before YAC and YIG gave me the skills and confidence I needed to jump right in. Afterschool programs completely altered the course of my life. School taught me about the world, but my afterschool program taught me how to change the world."

Keil Eggers, Graduate from Free State High School, Lawrence, currently at George Mason University: *"There is a need for youth voice in decision making, and the Kansas Consortium for Youth Voice (KCYV) allowed me to launch that voice. Guided by a vision that youth are powerful, KCYV seeks to empower youth voice to generate action and positive change in communities. KCYV youth learn not only about systems of society but also service-learning. Being competitive in today's market for higher education and the job market requires organization and communication skills that can only be honed through practice. KCYV was a chance for me to practice these skills while working towards the goal of youth empowerment. I have gained valuable perspective and skills that have propelled me to make changes to better this world."*

Curtis Smart, Graduate of Kansas City Kansas Public Schools, currently at the University of Arkansas: Curtis credits afterschool programs for contributing to his skills in: living responsibly, getting along with others from diverse backgrounds, leadership, presenting, decision-making, and experience in real life projects. His programming provided pathways to internship and military opportunities. Curtis serves as president for a website KCTeenLink.org. *"All my afterschool programs played a major role in who I am today and who I wish to become. Without these programs I would not have been prepared for college. My goals were definitely inspired by the expanded learning programs I attended."*

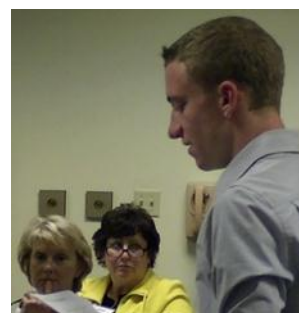
Cynthia Jurado, Graduate of Kansas City Public Schools, currently at Western Washington University: *"My afterschool experiences allowed me the ability to expand on what I learned in school, study concepts in-depth through hands-on learning with real world contacts."*

ANALYSIS AND ASSUMPTIONS: Conclusions, recommendations and next steps

In terms of public policy, identify concrete things that cannot be denied, cannot be wiggled out of, that would truly be good for kids.

Small group report
Malissa Martin, Facilitator

Afterschool needs to be a priority in Kansas, a pathway to create that pathway should be developed, and a coalition of stakeholders should monitor progress. Collaborative leadership and shared responsibility are key elements to success. Forum participants shared personal commitments to do more in their communities. The Kansas Enrichment Network commits to overseeing the process. Two action steps begin this process.



A task force, not to exceed 12 members, will be convened to address the questions proposed above with the potential goal of developing a three-year strategic plan. Nine Forum participants volunteered. Other interested stakeholders may contact the Kansas Enrichment Network staff to join the efforts.

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The task force will complete a basic framework for the strategic plan within four months of the first convening. Following the development of the strategic plan, copies will be distributed widely across the state of Kansas. Through collaborative leadership and shared responsibility, the plan to make afterschool a priority in Kansas will be launched. As appropriate, the plan will be adjusted to develop a comprehensive pathway to making afterschool a priority in Kansas.

Additional forums will be scheduled with regions not represented at this first forum. Existing partners will be solicited to assist in inviting vital community members from diverse fields to the upcoming forums. Additional convenings increase awareness of the potential in afterschool and expanded learning opportunities for all Kansas children and youth while assuring the pathway expands to the vastly different geographical regions of the state. The Kansas Enrichment Network stands ready to oversee the strategic plan implementation, create checkpoints to analyze progress, and to continue moving the needle forward. The future of our children and youth is at stake, but there exists great potential in afterschool and expanded learning.



A special thank you to

Funders: *The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center.*

Speakers: *Keil Eggers, Anna Stone, Curtis Smart, Cynthia Jurado, Dr. Cynthia Lane, Dr. Bill Hagerman, Cherie Nicholson, Jarius Jones, Ann Zimmerman, Shawnee County District Attorney Chad Taylor, Representative Valdenia Winn, and Nathan Eberline.*

Facilitator: *Melissa Ness*

Event Planner: *Sarah Fizell*



What can you do?

- ✓ Sign on as a supporter of expanded learning and lend your name to demonstrate the power of the initiative: www.expandinglearning.org.
- ✓ Access research and promising practices for expanded learning and afterschool.
- ✓ Connect to tools and supports for fostering expanded learning in your community.
- ✓ Partner with the Kansas Enrichment Network: www.kansasenrichment.net.



What do youth need today?

- ❖ Leadership
- ❖ Accountability
- ❖ Support
- ❖ Opportunities
- ❖ Positive Environments
- ❖ Many, many expanded learning programs
- ❖ Adults that care
- ❖ Adults who will continue to check on their progress and help them discover their way

With these things, possibilities will be endless for today's youth.

---Curtis Smart, Graduate of the Wyandotte County Public School System

Participants

Marilyn Alstrom, 20/20 Leadership
Maddie Backus, Kansas Consortium for Youth Voice
Lanette Bazil, Burlington School District
Barbara Benavides, Parsons Middle School
Erin Brower, Partnership for Children
Dan Brown, Garfield Elementary School, USD 435, Abilene
Sherry Brown, Garfield Elementary School, USD 435, Abilene
Junnae Campbell, Boys & Girls Club Manhattan
Francie Christopher, Institute for Educational Research and Public Service
Dante Colombo, Kansas Consortium for Youth Voice
Claudia Conner, Kansas Enrichment Network
Geraldine Counts, Community Member
Jackie Counts, U. S. Health Resources and Services
Marion Counts, Community Member
Janelle Cousino, Fowler-Hoffman
Michael Crawford, Univ. of Kansas, Psychology, Research and Evaluation
Mary Duncan, Washburn University
Marcia Dvorak, Kansas Enrichment Network
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Kevyn Gero, Kansas Enrichment Network
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Joyce Glasscock, National Boys & Girls Club
Brad Grabs, The Learning Club
Jane Groff, Kansas Parent Information Resource Center
Bill Hagerman, Nickerson School District, USD 309
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April Holman, Kansas Action for Children
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Joyce Martin, YWCA of Topeka
Mindy McCall, Humboldt School District, USD 258
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Vince Naccarrato, Nickerson School District, USD 309
Betty Jean Neil, Topeka & Shawnee County Library
Melissa Ness, Connections Unlimited
Cherie Nicholson, Kansas State Department of Education
Kris Nicholson, Child Care Aware
Marcia Pomeroy, University of Kansas Medical Center
Sharon Pruett, Burlington School District, USD 244
Kim Ribelin, United Way of Greater Topeka
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Curtis Smart, University of Arkansas
Pamela Smart, Community Member

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Deb Stone, Community Member
Anna Stone, Georgetown University
Jon Stone, The Learning Club
Germaine Taggart, Fort Hays State University
Chad Taylor, Shawnee County District Attorney
Jamie Thiessen, Communities In Schools of Northeast Kansas
Teanna Totten, Kansas Consortium for Youth Voice
Nancy Volpe, CVS Caremark
Stan Volpe, Community Member
Lisa Wilk, Child Care Aware
Representative Valdenia Winn, Kansas Legislature
Vanette Word, ACT-SO
Jessica Wothke, Communities In Schools of Northeast Kansas
Ann Zimmerman, KC STEM Alliance



*How can we do this
better together?*

¹ America After 3PM: The Most In-Depth Study of How America’s Children Spend Their Afternoons. Kansas After 3PM Report. (2009). http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM_2009/AA3_Factsheet_KS_2009.pdf

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³ McCombs, J. S., Augustine, C. H., Schwartz, H. L., Bodily, S. J., McInnis, Brian, Lichter, D. S., and Cross, A. B. Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children’s Learning. (2011). <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/summer-and-extended-learning-time/summer-learning/Documents/Making-Summer-Count-How-Summer-Programs-Can-Boost-Childrens-Learning.pdf>.

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⁶ Afterschool Alliance. (2007). Afterschool Programs: Keeping Kids – and Communities – Safe. <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/printPage.cfm?idPage=BBE5E803-1E0B-E803-CAB91DD809C16C08>.

⁷ Shawnee County District Attorney Chad Taylor, “Policy Panel,” The Potential in Expanded Learning Forum. June 6, 2012.

⁸ Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. Pachan, M. (2010) A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents.