

2010 National AfterSchool Association Convention

Data-Based Advocacy:
Use the Information You Already Collect to Build Program Support

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Workshop Outcomes

1. Understand the importance of utilizing data locally to show evidence of program quality.
2. Recognize locally-collected data that support programming efforts.
3. Identify appropriate stakeholder groups for advocacy efforts and the data in which these groups are interested.
4. Prepare user-friendly advocacy materials and strategies tailored to individual stakeholder interests.

What is advocacy?

ADVOCACY...

1. Aims to influence public policy and/or resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems.
2. May be motivated by moral, ethical, or faith principles or simply to protect an asset of interest.
3. Can include media campaigns, public speaking, and sharing research.

Why is advocacy important for after school programs?

1. Building/maintaining stakeholder support;
2. Establishing demand for program services;
3. Shaping policy development to support the program;
4. Ensuring stakeholders are aware of program benefits and resource needs;
5. Building local partnerships;
6. Enhancing sustainability;

Statewide/National versus Local Advocacy

Statewide/National Advocacy	Local Advocacy
Represents the after school movement as a whole	Best represents the strengths and needs of YOUR program
Can broaden awareness of the importance of after school	Makes people aware of why YOUR program is important
Is only as good as the sum of its parts	Is YOUR responsibility
Does not address local decisions and issues that may be most relevant to local programs	Best represents YOUR program

Locally, who needs to know about your program?

WORKSHEET 1, Column A

- Who has a vested interest in the *operations* of your program?
- Who has a vested interest in the *outcomes* of your program?
- Who has given money or resources?
- Who would you like to give money or resources?

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After School Program Partners/Stakeholders

- Schools – administrators, teachers, board
- Community-based organizations – provide services and/or oversight
- Parents – volunteers, “customers”
- Local businesses – provide services and/or funds
- Local government – provide services and/or funds

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What are the interests of your local stakeholders?

WORKSHEET 1, Column B

- *What* kinds of questions would local stakeholders (identified in Column A) like to have answered about your program?
- *What* do they want to know?
- *What* have they asked you about in the past?
- *What* information do they need (but perhaps not know that they need)?

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Let's Talk About Data

PROCESS DATA

What is the program and how does it work?

OUTCOME DATA

What kind of difference does the program make?

Considering these distinctions, would different stakeholders be interested in different types of data?

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What kinds of PROCESS data do you already have to inform stakeholders?

What is the program and what does it do?	
Type of Information	Data Source
Program Intent: What is the program supposed to accomplish?	• Program objectives
Program Description: How does the program work?	• Program hours, activities, staffing
Program Participants: Who is served by the program and how often?	• Total # served, how often they attend, race, gender, grade level, LEP, FRL, Sp. Ed.

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What kinds of OUTCOME data do you already have to inform stakeholders?

How does the program make a difference?	
Type of Information	Data Source
Grades: What is the program supposed to accomplish?	• Percent increased, % with particular grades (e.g. A's and B's)
Test Scores: How does the program work?	• % proficient, changes from beginning of one year to the end
Classroom Behavior and Performance: Do students exhibit behaviors predictive of academic success?	• Teacher Survey (5 main questions related most closely to academic success)

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21st CCLC Teacher Survey Questions Useful for Assessing Academic Success

To what extent has this student changed their behavior in terms of...?

- Completing homework to your satisfaction
- Participating in class
- Attending class regularly
- Being attentive in class
- Coming to school motivated to learn

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Where are these data?
Who can access these data? How are they formatted?

WORKSHEET 2

- List staff members who track and/or summarize various pieces of data.
- Give as much information as possible about where you can access these data and how.
- Identify any "unknowns" related to the various pieces of data (for follow-up later).

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What types of data address stakeholder interests?

GO BACK TO WORKSHEET 1

- Stakeholders listed in Column A.
- Information needs listed in Column B.
- In Column C, indicate the types of data that address stakeholder information needs listed in Column B.

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What types of data are local stakeholders likely to be interested in?

- Schools – outcomes (teachers: program description)
- Community-based organizations – objectives, program description, participants, outcomes
- Parents – program description, outcomes
- Local businesses – objectives, program description, outcomes
- Local government – objectives, program description, outcomes

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What is the best way to get this information out for advocacy purposes?

- Principals – face-to-face meeting with visual aids
- Teachers – brief presentation at staff meeting; fliers; poster in lounge
- School Board – brief presentation at meeting with visual aids
- Community-based organizations – brief, written information
- Parents – newsletter, presentation at family event
- Local businesses – thank you letter sharing program successes and areas for growth
- Local government – Letter sharing program successes and areas for growth

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Getting Back to Advocacy...

- Not all advocacy requires monumental effort.
- Small efforts to educate and inform can add up.
- Start small – and set goals to broaden your reach.
- Engage program staff, students, and local champions as much as possible.
- Try not to make advocacy an afterthought.
- Your students are great ambassadors – provide them with informative tools.

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So now you know...

- Who has an interest in your program – or who *should* have an interest;
- What these stakeholders want to know or *need* to know;
- The various types of data you already collect that can be shared with these stakeholders;
- Where you can find the data; and
- Some ways to share these data.

Now, a few ideas on how to present this information...

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First, consider establishing the context within which your information should be presented to your stakeholders.

Programs that demonstrate positive results tend to...

- Serve high-needs students
- Have high levels of frequent program attendance
- Have strong links to school-day curriculum
- Involve highly qualified and trained staff
- Offer a variety of activities that build both academic and social skills
- Build supportive relationships with participants
- Have adequate resources
- Build partnerships with schools, community agencies, and parents

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Serving High-Needs Students

- Program benefits are greatest among those students who are most at-risk

(At-risk is defined according to SES, previous academic performance, or race/ethnicity)

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVOCACY EFFORTS:

- Include information on who the program serves;
- How are you targeting those students who need the program the most?

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Frequent Attendance Among Participants

1. Students who participate in programs more frequently and for longer periods of time are more likely to show improvements in academic performance.
2. Minimum levels of participation to effect academic change is closer to 60 or 100 days per school year *(as opposed to 30)*.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVOCACY EFFORTS:

- Include information on how frequently students attend the program;
- How many students have attended frequently for multiple years?

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Strong Links to the School Day Curriculum

- Direct connection of academic components to the school day.
- After school curriculum aligned with school day curricula.
- Program often staffed by effective regular school-day teachers.
- Can also be include homework assistance and activities that promote basic skills learning.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVOCACY EFFORTS:

- Include information on specific ways the program is linked to the school day;
- How do program staff work to strengthen these connections?

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Highly Qualified and Trained Staff

- The most effective after school programs employ staff with previous experience and those who have pedagogy skills.
- Skilled staff work with students on their academically weak areas in small groups or one-on-one.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVOCACY EFFORTS:

- The types of staff who work in the program;
- Document and demonstrate the ways in which staff engage in ongoing professional development activities. What did they learn?

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Activities that Build Both Academic and Social Skills

- Programs offer both academic and enrichment activities, including fine arts, crafts, and physical activities.
- Programs offer participants the opportunity to choose at least some of their activities on a regular basis (to enhance recruitment and retention efforts).

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVOCACY EFFORTS:

- Include information on the breadth of activities provided on a regular basis;
- How do program staff work to ensure that these activities are balanced, with emphasis on academic enrichment?

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Supportive Atmosphere and Caring Relationships

- Offers students a welcoming, nurturing social environment
- Environment is fostered by staff and activity leaders who work closely with students to engage them in each activity
- Staff members know participants well and care about them.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVOCACY EFFORTS:

- Include data on the extent to which the program meets students social and emotional needs.
- In what ways are students growing socially as a result of participation?

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Adequate Resources

- Have a variety of physical spaces to accommodate the breadth of activities offered by after school programs
- Access to a variety of materials for program activities
- To obtain and maintain these resources, promising programs rely on multiple funding sources to sustain their program

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVOCACY EFFORTS:

- Document support received
- Inform stakeholders of the needs of the program

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Partnerships with Schools, CBOs, and Parents

- Program-school partnerships are characterized by ongoing communication between program and school staff about common resources and individual student needs
- Strong linkages with the families of program participants through frequent formal (e.g. events for parents, information sent home) and informal communication (e.g. talking with parents)

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVOCACY EFFORTS:

- Include evidence that the program includes strong links to schools, CBOs, and parents.
- Recognize what can be done to strengthen these connections.

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Which data/information best exemplify the quality and/or needs of your program?

- High-needs students - LEP, FRL, Sp. Ed., race
- Frequent program attendance- Total # served, frequency served
- Strong links to school-day curriculum - Program hours, activities, staffing
- Qualified and trained staff - Program staffing
- Academic and social activities - Program activities
- Supportive relationships - Student surveys?
- Adequate resources - Program/partner support
- Partnerships - Program activities, parent surveys?

CEEP A few notes on communication...

ADVOCACY

- Stakeholders
- Data
- Communication

➔

- Awareness
- Commitment
- Participation
- Sustainability

COMPELLING COMMUNICATION:

- Considers the needs of your audiences;
- Meets your audiences "where they are";
- Resonates with your audiences;
- Involves more than facts - tells a memorable story

CEEP Putting the Audience First

Successful communication requires that we:

- Learn as much as possible about an audience *before* creating materials and messaging;
- Develop messaging and materials that matter to *them*;
- Respect and respond to their needs, values, and beliefs;
- ~~X~~ Determine what we hope to gain from sharing information before we communicate.

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An finally, a few examples of how data/information can be shared and used for advocacy...

Power Point slides
IN-PERSON PRESENTATION

One-page poster
ON-SITE POSTING
(Marketing / Recruitment)



Our After School Program!

Our After School Program!

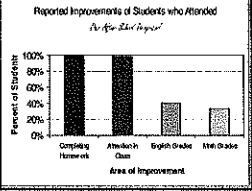
Our After School Program

- Partners with Our Middle School
- Serves an average of 178 students
- 56 attendees are African American
- 27 attendees are Latino/ Chicano
- 100% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch

Help your students improve

"Studies show that positive academic outcomes are more likely for students who participate more frequently in high-quality after school programs."

Reported Improvements of Students who Attended
Our After School Program!



Area of Improvement	Percent of Students
Completing Homework	100%
Attend/Join Class	100%
Eighth Grade	~40%
10th Grade	~35%

Recommend that your students to participate in:
Our After School Program!

It is fun, free, and everyday after school.
For more information, contact Program Director Susan Summers at ext. 1234

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To summarize, you now know...

- Who has an interest in your program – or who *should* have an interest;
- What these stakeholders want to know or *need* to know;
- The various types of data you already collect that can be shared with these stakeholders;
- Where you can find the data;
- Some ways to share these data; and
- How you might present the data.

Now, the challenge. What will you do with this information?

CEEP CENTER FOR EVALUATION & EDUCATION POLICY

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