

# Out of School Time Opportunities in Rochester

**Executive Summary**  
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Greater Rochester After-School Alliance

**TheChildren'sAgenda**

Smart Choices. Bold Voices.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In partnership with the Greater Rochester After-School Alliance (GRASA), The Children’s Agenda has completed an inventory of out-of-school time (OST) opportunities in Rochester. This report is an update and expansion on previous inventories of after-school programs in Rochester. Several very recent initiatives in the Rochester area target resources toward common goals of 3rd grade reading competency and overall school success for Rochester students. A growing body of research has shown that time spent outside the classroom – in after-school programs and in summer learning and expanded learning opportunities - can impact efforts to improve the academic and social/emotional competencies of PreK - 12 students.

### **After-school capacity and enrollment**

**Based on this inventory, we estimate that our community’s providers of full-time after-school care<sup>1</sup> have the capacity to serve 31% of children and youth in need of after-school care in the city of Rochester. Enrollment numbers, though, show that some after-school slots are not filled.**

- *There are 20,411 Rochester children potentially in need of after-school care<sup>2</sup> but there are only approximately 6,335 slots in programs operating at least 3 days per week during the school year.*
- *This leaves a gap of 14,076 children who could benefit from high-quality after-school care in Rochester but are not currently accessing it.*

The gap between capacity (6,335) and estimated enrollment in after-school care (5,932) indicates that families face barriers to accessing care. Local and national studies have found that barriers to accessing after-school care include cost, transportation, and the safety of children traveling to and from the program.

The local average fee is \$166 for a week of full-time after-school care. This is likely **too expensive for many working families with a low or moderate income.**

To help with this cost, financial assistance is available for some families. Low-income working families can apply for a child care subsidy to help cover the cost of after-school care for children under age 13. Subsidies are distributed through the Monroe County Department of Human Services and are funded with federal, state and local dollars and require a parent co-pay. Approximately \$40 M is invested in subsidies in Monroe County, and approximately one-third are used to pay for school-age care. While this is a valuable investment, the number of child care subsidies available in Monroe County has dropped 54% since 2001.

Other public funding sources (e.g., NYS Advantage After School Program and federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers) are available directly to providers to support the delivery of services, but the funds available are insufficient, and providers must enter a highly competitive process to be awarded them. Locally, philanthropic dollars from the United Way and local foundations are a vital

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this report, “full-time after-school care” is defined as a program or provider who operates 3 or more days per week during the school year, providing care to children in grades PreK through 12.

<sup>2</sup> Children ages 6 – 17 with all available parents in the labor force. U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2009-2013 5-year estimates

source of support for after school programming, but additional public funding is needed to reach every child in need.

In addition to cost being a barrier for families, **there are areas of the city with a substantial population of school-age children but few after-school programs.** Our analysis of program locations reveals a notable lack of providers in the northern parts of Rochester and, to a lesser extent, the westernmost areas of the city.

### **After-school program quality**

**48% of Rochester after-school providers are engaged in some kind of evaluative process,** such as accreditation (by organizations such as the Council on Accreditation, National Association for the Education of Young Children or After School Works NY) or using the Weikart Center's Program Quality Assessment (PQA) tools to guide quality improvement. **To learn more about the history of quality programming in Rochester and several efforts underway to measure and improve program quality and outcomes, please see the full report.**

### **Expanding the definition of "Out-of-school time" (OST) programs**

In addition to an analysis of the need for and availability of Rochester after-school programs and a review of after-school program quality efforts, we provide an overview of the recent growth of summer learning and expanded learning time (ELT) opportunities in Rochester. The Rochester City School District has emerged as a national leader in increasing access to learning experiences that extend beyond the traditional K-12 classroom setting.

## **Major Findings and Recommendations**

### **Finding 1: PARTICIPATION IN QUALITY OST PROGRAMS LEADS TO INCREASED STUDENT SUCCESS.**

Increasing the quality and accessibility of out-of-school-time (OST) programs is an essential strategy that can improve youth outcomes in Rochester.

A review of the national research of after-school programs indicates that quality after-school programs provide children and youth with:

- safe and supportive environments;
- positive relationships and interactions with peers and well-trained program staff;
- a mix of activities that engage participants and promote exploration and skill development;
- opportunities for youth autonomy and leadership;
- use of effective instructional strategies; and
- a continuous quality improvement process that requires goal-setting, planning, and evaluation.

### **Finding 2: MOST ROCHESTER STUDENTS IN NEED ARE NOT SERVED BY AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS.**

There continues to be a significant unmet need for out-of-school-time (OST) programming in Rochester. **Based on this inventory, we estimate that in 2015, our community's providers of full-time after-school care have capacity to serve 31% of the estimated number of children and youth in need of care.**

**Finding 3: THE ROCHESTER AFTER-SCHOOL COMMUNITY IS TAKING STEPS TO IMPROVE PROGRAM QUALITY.**

The greater Rochester community is pursuing implementation of a quality improvement process for OST programs as well as a tool for measuring growth in youth's social and emotional skills. We have a history of high quality programs but also inadequate capacity to meet the needs of all children and youth.

**Finding 4: THE ROCHESTER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT IS A NATIONAL LEADER IN PILOTING EXTENDED TIME AND EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.<sup>3</sup>**

The Rochester City School District has shown a commitment to sustaining the recent addition of time to the school day and year (Expanded Learning Time or ELT) and to summer learning experiences by incorporating some of the cost of these initiatives into its annual budget. With Ford Foundation funding reaching the end of its 5-year commitment to capacity-building, ELT programs are continuing in part through RCSD budget allocations, signaling a long-term commitment to this strategy.<sup>4</sup>

**Finding 5: DOSAGE MATTERS.**

Local and national research makes it clear: the amount of time children and youth spend in quality programs can increase the benefits they will experience in terms of school success and social/emotional development. Frequency and duration of after-school participation increases positive impact.<sup>5</sup> The Harvard Family Research Project found that youth experience greater gains across a wide variety of outcomes if they participate in after-school programs with greater frequency and in a more sustained manner.<sup>6</sup> And research conducted locally with United Way-funded after-school programs found a correlation between improved math and science test scores and frequency of participation in the after-school program.<sup>7</sup>

**Finding 6: ROCHESTER'S OST PROGRAMS ARE TAKING STEPS TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S HEALTH BY INCORPORATING REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.**

National research points to the impact that OST programs can have on children's health. For example, a longitudinal study of 21st Century programs in Connecticut found that youth who participated in after-school programs were more likely than non-participants to experience reductions in obesity, results which persisted even after controlling for youth's initial Body Mass Index status at the beginning of the study, as well as demographic factors such as poverty, race, and ethnicity.<sup>8</sup>

Our surveyed providers reported that their programs plan for an average of 41 minutes per day set aside for exercise or physical activity. The Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency's Healthi Kids initiative's

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<sup>3</sup>"Assessment of Progress in Implementation of Expanded Learning Time: Rochester City Schools", American Institutes for Research, Feb. 2015

<sup>4</sup> RCSD 2015-16 Approved Budget, <http://www.rcsdk12.org/cms/lib04/NY01001156/Centricity/Domain/92/2015-16%20Approved%20Budget%20Presentation%2020150616.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> "Evaluations Backgrounder: A Summary of Formal Evaluations of After-school programs' Impact on Academics, Behavior, Safety and Family Life", After-school Alliance, March 2015

<sup>6</sup> After school Programs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Their Potential and What it Takes to Achieve it", Harvard Family Research Project, February 2008

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.uwrochester.org/impactbriefing.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> "21<sup>st</sup>CCLC-funded After-school Programs", Harvard Family Research Project, Nov. 2010

implementation of the Cornell Healthy After-School Environment (CHASE) Self-Assessment Tool demonstrates that, with support, OST programs can implement and sustain healthy practices.

### **Major Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1. All school-age children and youth in Rochester (grades PreK – 12) should have access to high-quality out-of-school time experiences including before- and after-school, summer learning, expanded learning and other age-appropriate programs.** This is a key strategy to achieving community goals around improving our students' chances of growing into healthy and productive adults, and reducing disparities between low-income children and their middle- or high-income peers. These opportunities must be made available to all children and youth in Rochester.

**Recommendation 2. Coordinated advocacy for sustained and increased funding for quality OST should take on more urgency and priority.** A recent example of this is OST being chosen for the 2015 Children's Policy Council agenda. A concrete opportunity this year is the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative's focus on designing a comprehensive, integrated system of social supports. This should include clear and consistent communication with community leaders, elected officials and parents about the value of OST to achieving success for Rochester's students. The research linking quality after-school experiences with school success and positive behavior should be shared with stakeholders involved in efforts related to children, youth and families.

**Recommendation 3. There should be a more coordinated system of information-sharing among youth-serving systems and institutions to best support efforts to improve youth academic, health, and social/emotional outcomes in Rochester.** Better tracking will facilitate an accurate picture of where children and youth are spending their after-school hours, and help assess whether or not the settings they are in now have quality components.

**Recommendation 4. Add an indicator to the annual Roc the Future Report Card** related to the availability and utilization of high-quality after-school, summer learning, and expanded learning opportunities for Rochester students. Measures of program capacity and quality should be monitored and reported out regularly. A method of measurement is detailed in the report.

**Recommendation 5. Quality OST programs are best implemented in a setting with consistent, well-trained staff. As a community we must invest in more compensation, professional development and creation of a career track for youth development workers.**

The quality of staff-youth relationships is a key component of a high-quality after-school program. These relationships have been shown to lead to more youth engagement in the program and in school.<sup>9</sup> Youth workers who see a future of professional development and advancement in their field will be

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<sup>9</sup> "21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers" Harvard Family Research Project Research Update, May 2012

more likely to stay in a position and have a greater positive impact on the youth they are working with.<sup>10</sup> Nazareth College's recent addition of a B.A. in Community Youth Development is an example of what is needed to attract trained and committed staff to OST programs. Along with improved preparation, compensation is another critical factor to retaining OST staff.

**Recommendation 6. All of Rochester's children should have access to high-quality summer learning experiences that could potentially boost their chances of grade-level reading proficiency and school success.** In a 2011 review of the literature regarding summer learning loss and the effectiveness of summer learning programs conducted by the RAND Corp. for the Wallace Foundation<sup>11</sup>, two major findings were:

a) Summer learning loss, which is disproportionate and cumulative, contributes substantially to the achievement gap between low-income students and their higher-income peers. This is particularly true with reading skills, which high income children often gain over the summer while their lower income peers lose. Researchers believe this difference, compounded year after year, contributes substantially to the reading competency gap between high and low income students; and

b) students who attend summer programs of any kind have better outcomes than similar peers who do not, and the effects of summer learning programs endure for at least two years after the student has engaged in the program.

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<sup>10</sup> "Making Afterschool Programs Better", Policy Brief #11; 2011; National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing

<sup>11</sup> "Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning", produced within RAND Corp., commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, <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>

## RESEARCH REVIEW: PARTICIPATION IN QUALITY OST PROGRAMS LEADS TO INCREASED STUDENT SUCCESS.

- 1. School success linked to quality after-school programs locally:** After 2 years of tracking indicators, the United Way of Greater Rochester reported in 2013 that children participating in quality after-school programs funded by the United Way:
  - Attended school an average of 4 more days per year than their peers;
  - Earned GPAs .9 points higher than their peers; and
  - Scored higher on standardized math and science tests the more frequent their participation in after-school programs.<sup>a</sup>
- 2. Academic success linked to quality after-school programs across the nation:**
  - An analysis of 68 after-school studies from across the U.S. concluded that high quality programs can lead to improved attendance, behavior and coursework. Students participating in a high quality after-school program went to school more, behaved better, received better grades and did better on tests compared to non-participating students.<sup>b</sup>
  - Test scores and grades go up when youth participate in high quality OST programs. The Harvard Family Research Project reported that youth who participated in a California after-school program funded with federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) dollars passed both the English and math portions of the California High School Exit Exam at a significantly higher rate than their non-participating peers.<sup>c</sup> Summer learning is also proven to support academic success (<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>)
- 3. Behavioral outcomes improve with participation in quality after-school programs:**
  - The 2007 “Study of Promising After-school Programs” found that elementary students who participated in a quality after-school program reported a reduction in problem behaviors such as skipping school and getting into fights compared to peers who were unsupervised after school.<sup>d</sup>
  - Children’s self-concept and decision-making improves. A compilation of evaluations of after-school programs completed in Chicago in 2007 showed that compared to a control group, youth who participated in a program improved significantly in their self-confidence and self-esteem, and had significant declines in drug use and problem behaviors.<sup>e</sup>
  - Fewer school absences and improved behavior during the school day are associated with after-school program participation. During the 2011-2012 school year, 70 percent of participants in a Los Angeles after-school program had a 96% or higher school day attendance, compared to 56 percent of nonparticipants. Students with higher participation in the after-school program had higher school attendance rates when compared to students who attended less frequently.<sup>f</sup>
- 4. Participation in OST can lead to reduction in negative behaviors:**
  - Violent juvenile crime triples during the hours from 3:00 to 8:00 PM, and it is during these same hours that children face the most serious danger of committing or becoming victims of crime.<sup>g</sup>
  - A survey of New York teenagers conducted by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids found that teens unsupervised after-school were four times as likely to have smoked cigarettes, three times as likely to have had sex, and four times as likely to have used drugs as teens who were supervised.<sup>h</sup>
  - The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reported the frequency of violent crimes committed by youth peaks in traditional after-school hours. Nearly 20% of juvenile violent crimes occur between 3 and 7 p.m.<sup>i</sup>
  - The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reports that the risk of violent juvenile victimization in the four hours after school is double the rate in the 8 p.m.-to-midnight period on school days. Juveniles are more likely to be victims of assault, robbery and serious violent crime during afterschool hours than during other time periods.<sup>j</sup>
- 5. Quality programs support child health:** A 2005 study found that after controlling for baseline obesity, poverty, race and ethnicity, the prevalence of obesity was significantly lower for children participating in an after-school program when compared to nonparticipants.<sup>k</sup>

a) <http://www.uwrochester.org/impactbriefing.aspx>

b) “Afterschool Programs Keep Kids Safe, Engage Kids in Learning, and Help Working Families”, Afterschool Alliance, 2014, [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/National\\_fact\\_sheet\\_10.07.14.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/National_fact_sheet_10.07.14.pdf)

c) “Evaluations Background: A Summary of Formal Evaluations of Afterschool programs’ Impact on Academics, Behavior, Safety and Family Life”, Afterschool Alliance, 2015, [http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Evaluation\\_Backgrounder.pdf](http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Evaluation_Backgrounder.pdf)

d) “Outcomes Linked to High-Quality After-school Programs: Longitudinal Findings from the Study of Promising After-school Programs”, 2007, Univ. of CA-Irvine & Policy Studies Assoc., <file:///C:/Users/Owner/Downloads/Final%20Report.pdf>

e) “21<sup>st</sup> CCLC-funded after-school programs” Harvard Family Research Project Research Update, Nov. 2010, [file:///C:/Users/Owner/Downloads/ResearchUpdate8-051412%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Owner/Downloads/ResearchUpdate8-051412%20(2).pdf)

f) “Taking a Deeper Dive Into Afterschool: Positive Outcomes and Promising Practices,” Afterschool Alliance, 2014, [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Deeper\\_Dive\\_into\\_Afterschool.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Deeper_Dive_into_Afterschool.pdf)

g) “The Value of Afterschool Programs,” Afterschool Alliance, 2014, <http://www.nysan.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/NYSAN-Afterschool-Fact-Sheet-20141.pdf>

h) Ibid.

i) “Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2014 National Report,” U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/nr2014/downloads/NR2014.pdf>

j) Ibid.

k) “NYSAN Policy Brief: Expanding the Role of Afterschool Programs in Promoting Health and Wellness,” 2010, [http://www.nysan.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/file\\_Health\\_and\\_Afterschool\\_Winter\\_2010-5.pdf](http://www.nysan.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/file_Health_and_Afterschool_Winter_2010-5.pdf)