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Senior Capstone Binder
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College of Education
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LS 400: Liberal Studies Senior Capstone

Benefits of After-School Programs on Elementary School Students

By

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LS 400: Liberal Studies Senior Capstone

Abstract

As a prospective educator and mother of six children, I often ask myself, what specific benefits can my child obtain through an after-school program? What is the structure of the after-school program? Would my child get help with homework if he or she needs it? Would he or she be allotted time to read, and does the after-school program follow the mandated Common Core State Standards? Organizations such as The Youth Orchestra of Salinas (YOSAL) as well as those associated within our elementary schools offer additional support to help meet the needs and interests of all students, parents, educators and interested stake holders. Even though all of the needs of our children may not be met within one specific program, the myriad of after-school programs offered within our communities do, in fact, offer sufficient positive resources to meet the needs of our children, students, and parents.

Introduction

As a prospective educator and mother of six children, I often ask myself, what specific benefits can my child obtain through an after-school program? What is the structure of the after-school program? Would my child get help with homework if he or she needs it? Would he or she be allotted time to read, and does the after-school program follow the mandated Common Core State Standards? Organizations such as The Youth Orchestra of Salinas (YOSAL), as well as those associated within our elementary schools, offer additional support to help meet the needs and interests of all students, parents, educators and interested stake holders. Even though all of the needs of our children may not be met within one specific program, the myriad of after-school programs offered within our communities do, in fact, offer sufficient positive resources to meet the needs of our children, students, and parents.

A primary purpose of after-school programs today is not only to provide day care during the after-school hours, but they are also established to provide enrichment activities for elementary school students. Many schools strive to provide these activities to their students through exposure to different art forms, response to intervention programs, and to provide assistance with homework. These after-school programs are crucial to ensure that our children are in a safe place – this is a vital component of the after-school program because violence and gang activity is, and has always, been prevalent within our community. Other schools offer musical instruction and physical education to supplement their program, while some provide arts and craft supplies to enhance exposure to creativity and self-exploration. This too serves as an added bonus to the students, for many art programs have been cancelled and/or diminished within the regular scheduled school hours. Because most of the after-school programs are associated with schools, there is no cost to the parent and/or fees associated with the programs.

Youth Orchestra Salinas, (YOSAL) is an additional program which is not affiliated with a school, and they too offer free remittance to its program by way of grants, private donations, and sponsors.

Common themes of review within the responses to the questions addressed to the principals, after school teachers, program directors and research were prevalent within this research are outlined below: exposure to arts and music, physical nourishment, homework assistance, hands on opportunity to learn, and safety for our children (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007).

When I first embarked in my research, my primary research question was, “How do after-school programs benefit elementary school students?” As I continued with my research, I found the need to adjust my primary research question. I began to ask myself, “What specific benefits can my child obtain through an after-school program? Additional secondary questions also developed as I proceeded therein. Herein are the secondary questions that developed:

- What does the research say about the benefits of after-school programs on elementary school students?
- How do after school programs benefit elementary school students educationally, recreationally, and socially?
- How are after-school programs structured within Monterey County?
- How are the after-school programs funded?
- Are there diverse after-school programs to meet the demands of parents, students and stakeholders?
- Are there resources available to meet the demands of the programs?
- Are the after-school programs affordable for all parents with Monterey County, and

- Can these after-school programs help raise the regular scheduled school attendance rates?

Literature Review

A primary purpose of after-school programs is not only to provide day care during the after-school hours, but they are also established to provide enrichment activities for elementary school students. Many schools strive to provide these activities to their students through exposure to different forms of art, response to intervention programs, homework assistance, and a safe place to dwell until they are scheduled to reunite with their parents. Hence, you will read about the history and role safety plays within the after-school program, the essential component of social interface between teacher and student, the diverse after-school programs offered within our communities, and a few opposing viewpoints of after-school programs. I have narrowed the literature review into these three components; however, each component is expounded upon and branched out towards influencing factors that are prevalent to this research.

During the latter part of the 19th century, the need and desire for American children to participate in the growing industrialized labor force decreased. Groups such as the Children's Bureau, Religious Institutions, and labor unions have worked diligently to end child labor force participation (Mahoney, Parente, Zigler, 2009). This is especially crucial to the Mexican American/Mexican Immigrant population in Monterey County. For years, many Mexican American children and Chicano children have worked the agricultural fields. Many of these children resided within the states of California and Texas. Some were allowed to leave school at lunch time so that they could, "...work side by side with their parents to earn money for their daily expenses" (Verdugo, 1995). Drop in after school centers were first called "boy's clubs" which first appeared in the latter part of the 1800's to fill the idle time of after school hours

(Mahoney, Parente, Zigler, 2009). According to Lee (1915), the turn of the century introduced the idea that more structured activities was crucial for the growth and development of children. The major factor of accelerating the growth of after-school programs has been the rise in women's participation in the labor force which created the need of child supervision that was no longer being met by traditional family roles and structure (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005).

In recent years, the voice of women within our federal, state, and local government has developed. This has provided a crucial element that has been desperately missing – a woman's perspective with an introspect that has been developed from within the walls of her home. However, with the new role of women in the labor force, it has also created a void – the traditional role of a mother in carrying, tutoring, supporting, nurturing, providing a safe haven, and meeting all of the demands of her children to ensure that “they, her children” are better equipped to meet the demands of the world. In short, an internal conflict is under attack as stated within Betty Friedan's book *A Feminine Mystique* wherein she states, “There must be something more than simply being ...barefoot and pregnant” (1963). The need, and/or the desire to have a little less financial burden has driven many women to the labor force. This, in turn, exasperates the current U.S. Department Labor's data that continues to extract from traditional family roles. Hence, children are left with the need for proper supervision, protection, guidance, and support.

The Importance of After-School Programs – Safety

After-school programs provide safe, structured, learning environments for students outside the traditional home and school day. These programs typically run for two to three hours following the end of the school day. Some may be broad and generic in focus; however, according to my research, all are governed and or managed under a director and or credentialed academic administrator. The National Governors Association (2009) states that embedding

positive intervention and support to our children is an integral part of education. These after-school programs provide an outlet for at-risk students. According to the states Department of Justice, Monterey County (2012) was the worst place in the state to be in the last year, with nearly 12 homicides per 100,000 residents.

The National Research Council (NRC, 2002) reported that youth organizations and after-school programs promote healthy development. They reported that children who participated in youth organizations and after-school programs tended to adopt higher self-esteem, increased motivation, and academic achievement. Additionally, these programs efforts were aimed at helping youth achieve their potential. Herein, youth who participated in these programs often developed the competencies and the elasticity to face today's academic, social, emotional, and gang related tendencies (Lerner, Almerigi,: National Clearinghouse on Families and youth, 2009). Ultimately, these after-school programs helped these children to develop positive characteristics such as aspirations to pursue positive academic achievement and avoidance of risk-taking behaviors - i.e. gang activity or teen pregnancy.

Advocates in support of after-school programs argue that more supervised after-school programs reduce delinquency and risk behavior. Youth engaged in safe and structured activities are less likely to engage in early sexual activity, crime and substance abuse (Fashola, 1998; Proscio & Whiting, 2004). According to U.S. Department of Education (2014), over 70% of Mexican Americans and or Mexican Immigrants dropout of high school. More importantly, after-school programs improve school performance, especially for children in low performing districts. Elementary, middle schools and high schools in Monterey County, especially those in Salinas, Soledad, Greenfield, Gonzales, Castroville, Chualar, and Seaside, tend to score

academically and historically low within their Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) scores.

President Bill Clinton (1999) further argued that he believed that the best way for our nation to meet the challenges that our children face today is to expand the number and improve the quality of our after-school programs. With quality after-school programs, parents and educators will be given additional tools and support they need to succeed; students learn their lesson in the schoolhouse, not on the street. Youth crime and victimization plummet. Quality after-school programs both enhance opportunity and bolster responsibility. In so doing, they strengthen our communities. They honor our values, and they benefit our nation (Clinton, 1999; Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 1999 35.1).

Social Development

A sense of belonging is critical in healthy development. Staff in after-school organizations contribute to the essential features of these settings by creating appropriate structure in a safe environment and by promoting a sense of belong, feeling of personal efficacy, and positive social norms (Mahoney, Eccles, & Larson, 2004). Instructors develop a sense of belonging with our children, which in turn, facilitates supportive relationships (DuBois, & Karcher, 2005; Rhodes, 2004). This rapport is crucial in building character and a strong sense of worth within the hearts and minds of our youth. Many times, adults tend to believe that tomorrow is a better day; however, character, integrity, and sense of one's personal worth is developed within our elementary development. Hence the value of our administrators, teachers, directors, and stakeholders play a vital role in complementing our children's time with learning, team bonding, sports, academic support, and wholesome recreational activities. According to Larson (2000), these positive mentorships may build psychosocial development as well as

enhance academic aspirations to pursue a post-secondary education in order to be more like those positive role models whom they have built bonds with.

Patterson (2000) argued that students from grades four to twelve showed that the growth of new deviant behavior was related to the level of deviancy in the fourth grade -peer group. In turn, arrests, substance use, and number of sexual partners tended to increase if their deviant behavior was left unchecked. Additionally, Snyder (2005) states that low-socioeconomic youth were studied and observed to measure their playground behaviors and as well as covert deviant behaviors such as lying to an adult, blaming others for one's own misbehavior, and aggressive tendencies. Their studies showed that a number of students tended to adopt like-minded behaviors, especially those surrounded by social disadvantaged demographics. Hence, the need to ensure that quality teachers, credentialed administrators, and carrying, successful role models is underscored within the after-school programs and/or organizations.

A number of authors make a clear distinction between traditional school hours and after-school program hours. More importantly, distinctions are made in regards to framework that is useful in creating environments that encourage youth by supporting positive interactions that build on internal motivations and interests (Noddings, 2005). Bingham supports Noddings arguments as he states, "Learning takes place only through the interaction between people. It is realized indirectly through active dialogue. When both the listener and speaker come to an understanding and both are edified, the learning is then transferred to engagement...learning; however, tends to be broader than learning within traditional school hours (2004).

Types of After-School Programs

Community-based programs are implemented by community organizations such as YMCA, public agencies, libraries, and youth organizations (Gootman 2000). The Youth

Orchestra of Salinas (YOSAL) program vision is to transform the lives of our youth and our communities through the inspiration, discipline and performance of classical and orchestral music. This program values are to provide a quality music education program, to provide a safe place for districts, to enrich our community with our musical performances. Its major accomplishment is keeping students safe while they learn an amazing amount of music, collaboration and responsibility (YOSAL.org, 2019). This program provides a positive alternative to the many negative influences and opportunities for students on the streets of Salinas.

The County of Monterey scores very poorly on statewide tests, with almost 75% of students in grades 3-11 not meeting grade level standards in Reading, Language Arts, and Math. YOSAL students do better in school. The impact of music and active participation of students' success is supported by research. YOSAL Board Chair, Mary Alicia McRae said there have been studies such as one put out by Northwestern University that was designed to test whether the level of engagement matters. According to the report, researchers found that children who regularly attended music classes and actively participated, showed larger improvements in how they process speech and reading scores than their less-involved peers after two years. The researchers also found that neural processing of students who played instruments in class improved more than the children who just show up to music appreciation class (YOSAL.org, 2019).

The YMCA embraces the values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility, with a mission to strengthen community through programs that develop youth, support healthy living and foster social responsibility. They have enriched the lives of thousands of families and individuals in our community. They offer youth, adult, senior citizen, and family health and

fitness programs to enhance individual needs as well as provide alternative day care programs for school-aged children (Central Coast YMCA.org, 2019). Their programs vary in length and space may be limited. To ensure enrollment they encourage members to register early. Waiting lists are established after maximum enrollment is reached. Registration may be completed in person or, for registered members, on the internet for some programs. They believe that no one should be turned away because they lack the ability to pay. That's why they provide financial assistance, so everyone has the opportunity to take advantage of the Y's valuable programs and services (YOSAL.org, 2019).

The First Tee has established Nine Core Values that represent some of the many inherently positive values connected with the game of golf. According to The First Tee, their values are: Honesty, Integrity, Sportsmanship, Respect, Confidence, Responsibility, Perseverance, Courtesy, Judgment. By participating in The First Tee, kids are introduced to these core values which are incorporated throughout the program. Parents are encouraged to reinforce these behaviors by talking about them, what they mean and what these behaviors can look like at home (<https://www.thefirstteemontereycounty.org/>, 2019).

According to The Salinas Elementary School District (2019), the district offers The Best of Education and Safety Time (B.E.S.T.) After School Program. It is funded by the After School Education & Safety program (ASES) grant which provides a safe, structured, supportive environment for students after the regular school day ends. The B.E.S.T. Program is provided at no cost to families who are working or attending school during program hours. As required by the grant, priority enrollment is given to students identified as homeless or foster youth (Salinascityesd.org 2019).

The B.E.S.T. program involves collaboration among parents, youth, representatives from schools and government agencies, and individuals from community-based organizations and the private sector. The program is offered at eleven school sites in Salinas, CA. Programs provide literacy, academic enrichment, and safe, constructive alternatives for students in first through sixth grades beginning at the time of dismissal from the regular school day and ending at 6:00 p.m. each school day. For the 2018-19 school year, the dismissal schedules for Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten do not allow for children in those grades to remain on campus continuously until the program starts and, for this reason, the program is unable to accommodate these students in the program (Salinascityesd.org, 2019).

The After-School Education and Safety (ASES) program funds the Alisal Unified School District (AUSD). These programs are created through partnerships between schools and local community resources to provide literacy, academic enrichment, and safe constructive alternatives for students in grades 1-6. The educational literacy component provides tutoring, and homework assistance designed to help students meet standards in core academic subjects such as reading/language arts, math, and science. A broad range of activities are implemented based on local student needs and interests. The enrichment component offers an array of additional activities that reinforce student learning through Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math (STEAM) methodology centered on an interdisciplinary approach that encourages problem solving, discovery, and exploratory learning that increase students ability to think critically and work as a member of a team. Our program also offers structured Physical Education opportunities and daily supper (alisal.org, 2019).

Arguments Against After School Programs

A number of arguments are made against effective after-school programs. According to Scarupa (2009), editor of *Child Trends*, a number of parents and youth have selected not to attend after-school programs because of the vicinity and or location of these programs. A number of youth state that neighborhood safety plays a key role in the decision about whether to participate in out of school programs, especially when participation requires traveling through notorious gang neighborhoods. And they go on to say that these safety concerns are compounded by drug and substance abuse problems.

Other barriers noted were simply economics and or the cost to finance participation in the after-school program. Despite the fact that references have been made in regard to free after-school programs, there are many programs that charge exorbitant fees. The cost of transportation fees, enrollment fees, fees associated with the sport, and fees associated with meals are simply an expense outside of the parent's budget (Scarupa, 2009). Other factors such as negative perception or stigma, lack of caring adults, and lack of awareness about out of school programs are other concerns that deserve to be noted.

As duly noted above, after-school programs play an essential role for parents, students, community members, and stakeholders. The new role of women in the labor force has, in-fact, created a void – the traditional role of a mother in caring for her children. It provides a safe, structured, learning environments for students outside the traditional home, and numerous community-based programs are supported and sponsored by community organizations such as YMCA, public agencies, libraries, and other youth organizations to meet the needs of our children. Despite the fact that some arguments may be made in regard to gang-infested neighborhoods, drugs, and expenses generated from after-school programs, the benefits of the programs certainly outweigh the negative for our children.

Methods and Procedures

Several methods were used to conduct the research for this project. Data was collected through the California State University Monterey Bay Library database. Peer reviewed articles and books on the topic were researched. Additional methods and procedures that were used to conduct this research were interviews with administrators (See Appendix A for interview questions for administrators), teachers (See Appendix B for interview questions for teachers), and directors (See Appendix C for interview questions for directors). Each interview was recorded via the use of my cell phone, transcribed using voice-typing tool on Google Docs, and later inserted within my appendix.

Many long hours were dedicated to compile my research, especially the task of seeking out books, articles and journals on the subject matter. Even more hours followed when I had to first schedule appointments with these professionals aforementioned. Because they were, in fact, professionals, I need to ensure that I was fully prepared, equipped with resources such as a recorder, had my questions lined up, prepare my questions accordingly to each organization, school, teacher, administrator etc. Lastly, I needed to ensure that I respected their time, was on time and ensure that left time for any additional information that they desired to share.

I visited two local elementary schools, wherein I was able to interview one administrator and two teachers per school. This included four separate teachers that I interviewed, two administrators, and two directors from Youth Orchestra Salinas (YOSAL), an external organization.

Other methods and procedures utilized in this research included online research of specific community programs and organizations. This approach was needed, in conjunction with the methods and procedures listed above, in order to become acquainted with the many programs

that were offered within our community, our districts, the local school districts and their respective management teams, if in-fact, I truly desired to expand on a holistic approach to my primary question, “How do after-school programs benefit elementary school students”?

Results and Discussion

In order to become acquainted with the many programs that were offered within our community, our districts, the local school districts and their respective management teams, it was important that I take a triangulated approach to answer my question, “How do after-school programs benefit elementary school students educationally, emotionally, and socially”? This specific question served as a base for my research on after-school programs and organizations. More importantly, It gave me direction in regards to the many resources, and or lack of resources available to me as parent, student, and community member within our social paradigm.

Completing my research was an extremely daunting task. I needed to force my self to approach others for information. I needed to reach out to individuals, professional individuals, whom I did not know, and I needed to reach out to professional individuals in the field in order to facilitate the process. Despite the fact that I am an introvert, I forced myself to network with friends, professionals, and after-school program staff and directors to receive information in regard to my research question.

Networking with friends and professionals who served as an administrator within our local school district was most beneficial. Prior to approaching him, I had little success and a sense of direction. After I made contact with him, I began to receive numerous phone calls from a myriad of schools, after-school program directors, teachers and organizations. At first, I questioned if I truly needed to interview so many individuals who were employed and/or associated in the field. I then learned about the essentials of a holistic and/or a triangulated

approach to my research. I also learned that if I researched a greater population, interviewed more directors, teachers, administrators and stakeholders, I would most likely produce the holistic approach - a true answer to my original questions that I sought. I simply wanted to know, “How do after-school programs benefit elementary school students educationally, recreationally and socially?” Secondary questions followed as I began to seek out answers to my primary question. The secondary questions are produced herein for your review.

- 1. What does the research say about the benefits of afterschool programs on elementary school students?*
- 2. How are after-school programs structured and functioned in the Monterey County area? Who provides the funding for them? How many types of afterschool programs are there in schools?*
- 3. Are after-school programs necessary for elementary schools? If they are, are there resources available for all schools to incorporate them in their curricula?*
- 4. Can these after-school programs help raise the regular scheduled school attendance rates?*

These are the questions that I cherished in thought as I proceeded forth with my interviews.

The following Appendixes (Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D) were created to organize my questions and seek out responses to my primary as well as secondary questions.

Appendix A - Principal Interview Questions

1. How is the after-school program structured at your school?

2. Is there an unmet demand/waiting list for the afterschool program?
3. How do you get your funding for the afterschool program?
4. Describe why you feel that the after-school program is necessary for elementary school students.
5. Are there resources readily available for the after-school program?
6. At what age/grade can student participate in the afterschool program?
7. Do you have enough teachers/substitute teachers to teach in the after-school program?

One principal and one vice principal from two separate schools were interviewed using Appendix A. The fact that I interviewed two administrators from two different schools provided a better understanding in regard to this research about two separate elementary school districts. I will reference each administrator as Administrator 1 and Administrator 2.

Administrator 1 oversaw three after-school programs. One program is an intervention program (Response to Intervention – RTI). The students who attend this program are specifically chosen by their teachers based on their previous years test’s scores. The second program is a homework center. They have a partnership with the Salinas Public Library. They have tutors, employed through the library, to tutor students. The third program is the B.E.S.T. Program. This program is for those students whose parents are not available to pick them up. This program is sponsored by After School Education and Safety (ASEAS) program; it is an organization that funds B.E.S.T through one of our elementary districts. This program serves 11 – 12 separate schools in Salinas.

Administrator 2 offers many of the same opportunities as Administrator 1; however, the schools that Administrator 2 oversees only offers the B.E.S.T program which is also financially

funded through ASEAS. This elementary school district within Salinas does not offer RTI nor Homework Centers whom are associated with libraries.

Interestingly, Administrator 1 is located near West Salinas, and they are the students who receive additional resources. This fact is alarming and disheartening, for one would think that more opportunities would be provided to those who are in greatest need – students who reside within East Salinas. Herein, we see a major lack of equity.

Appendix B - Teacher Interview Questions

1. How is the after-school program structured at your school/organization?
2. Who provides the funding for the after-school program?
3. How do afterschool programs benefit students in their learning, recreational, and social development?
4. What types of activities do you provide to help in each of these developments?
5. Describe why you feel that the after-school program is necessary for elementary school students?
6. Are there resources readily available for the after-school program?
7. Is the after-school program required to follow the common core curriculum?
8. Do the students have time to work on their homework?
9. Do the students get additional help in the subjects they are failing/not understanding?
10. Do the students get time to read (30 – 45 minutes)?
11. What types of programs do your students use on their technological devices?
12. If you had a wish list for the after-school program, what would that entail?

A total of four teachers were interviewed. I selected to interview to four teachers from two separate school districts. For purposes of this research, I will identify each teacher as Teacher 1, Teacher 2, Teacher 3, and Teacher 4.

Teacher 1 informed me that she is, in-fact, not a certified teacher. She is an instructional aid. As an instructional aide, she oversees the students. This information was crucial, for secondary questions were implanted in my heart as I proceeded with my research, “Are after-school teachers fully credentialed.” The answer to this question is no. After-school program teachers only have to hold an Instructional Aid’s Certificate.

Teacher 2 was a credentialed teacher. She stated that students receive a lot of assistance to complete their homework and that the students also receive an abundance of peer tutoring. Interestingly, Teacher 2 - the credentialed after-school program teacher, is employed in West Salinas.

Teacher 3 is also a credentialed teacher. She is employed in East Salinas. This school is located in North East Salinas. She made reference to the new tennis program that is scheduled to be implemented soon.

Teacher 4 is also a credentialed teacher. She too is employed in a school that is situated in North East Salinas. The fact that there are two credentialed teachers within the North East side of Salinas is impressive. The students may be able to work with an experienced teacher who can provide structure with her classroom. Teacher 4 stated that the students look out for each other. They play together, and they are like an extended family unit.

Appendix C - Organization Interview Questions (Program Directors)

1. How is the after-school program structured at your organization?

2. Is there an unmet demand/waiting list for the afterschool program? How do you get your funding for the afterschool program?
3. Describe why you feel that the after-school program is necessary for elementary school students?
4. Are there resources readily available for the after-school program?
5. At what age/grade level can a student participate in the afterschool program? Do you have enough teachers/substitute teachers to teach in the after-school program?
6. Do you offer students the opportunity to participate less than five days a week, why or why not?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add?
8. How do students find out about your program?
9. Do you advertise - how?

Two Program Directors were interviewed. Each will be identified as Program Director 1 and Program Director 2. Program Director 1 is employed with Youth Orchestra Salinas (YOSAL). This organization is equipped to teach its students orchestral instruments (the violin, trumpet, trombone etc.). Free transportation is provided for students. Snacks and homework help are also provided. This program is located in North Salinas.

Program Director 2 is also employed with (YOSAL), and she stated free concerts are provided to the community – free of charge. Concerts are held in the Sherwood Gardens, Hartnell Western Stage, and other settings within Salinas. They have established partnerships with the Monterey Jazz Festival, Carmel Bach Festival, The Chamber of Music of Monterey Bay, World Theater, which is located at CSUMB, and the Monterey Philharmonic. When these organizations have artists who are visiting, these artists take time to visit the after-school

programs, and invitations to live concerts are extended to students. The students of YOSAL are presented opportunities to play in concerts, and their self-esteem is built.

Each organization and after-school program play a vital role in our community, and I was extremely fortunate to interview with each individual. As I previously stated many of the credentialed teachers work within the schools where their families are more affluent. This provides advantages to these specific areas; however, it appears that every school that offers after-school program opportunities are simply grateful to be able to serve community parents, and students.

An additional appendix, Appendix D, is also attached within my appendixes. Ultimately however, Appendix D – Student Survey was not utilized. Naturally, this research and the methods outlined led me to ask additional questions and introduced further insight that I originally anticipated.

After carefully analyzing my research, reviewing my case notes, and visiting with numerous after-school program directors, teachers, facilities, and affiliated after-school programs, I have concluded that the after-school programs within Monterey County do, in-fact, offer a diverse array of programs to meet the needs of parents, students, stakeholders, and our community. Our children benefit immensely through the diverse programs. Each after-school program has a well-developed structure, a credentialed administrator, a credentialed teacher overseeing the after-school program teachers, sufficient resources, cost effective programs and established safe zones – both recreationally and academically – including social.

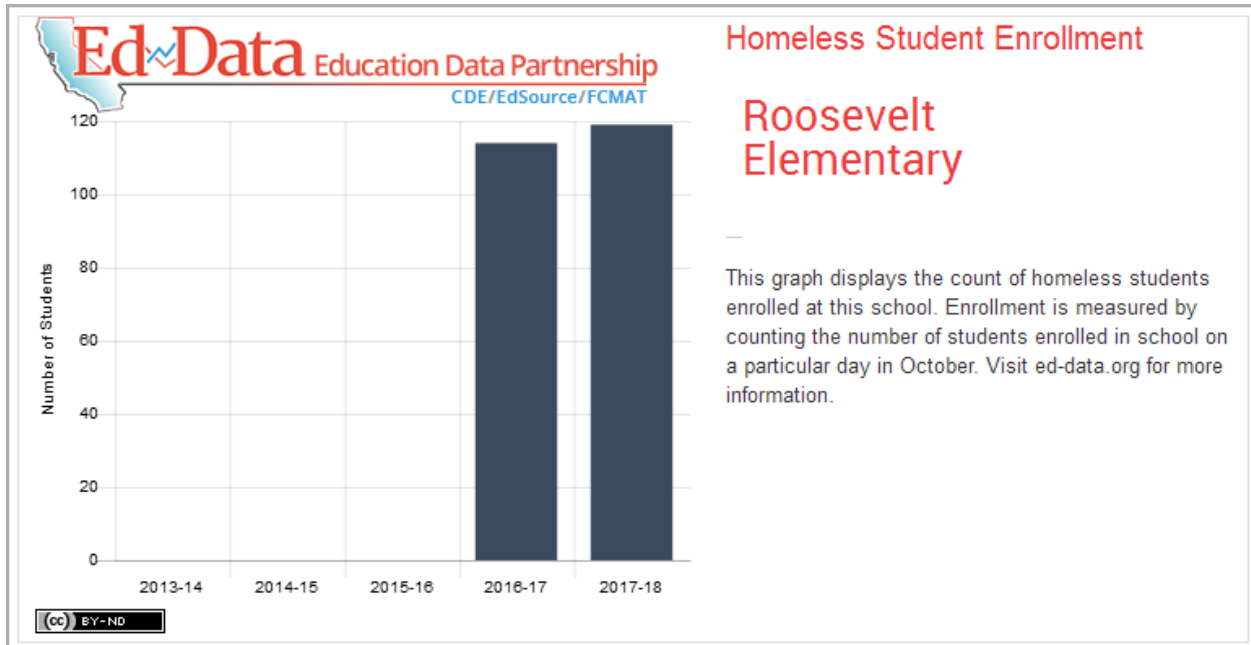
After-school programs and after school organizations do, in fact, play an integral role within our community. Our after-school programs offer a safe zone for our children who may not have his or her mom and/or dad at home for a number of hours directly after the traditional

school hour of 2:30 or 3:00 p.m. These programs offer assistance with homework, a third meal, supper for those homeless children, a safe place from drugs, gangs, teen pregnancy, and other idle options within our community. Our children can be exposed to positive recreational activities, the arts - music and other musical instruments, and positive social stimulation which is crucial to optimize our children's academic aspiration and development.

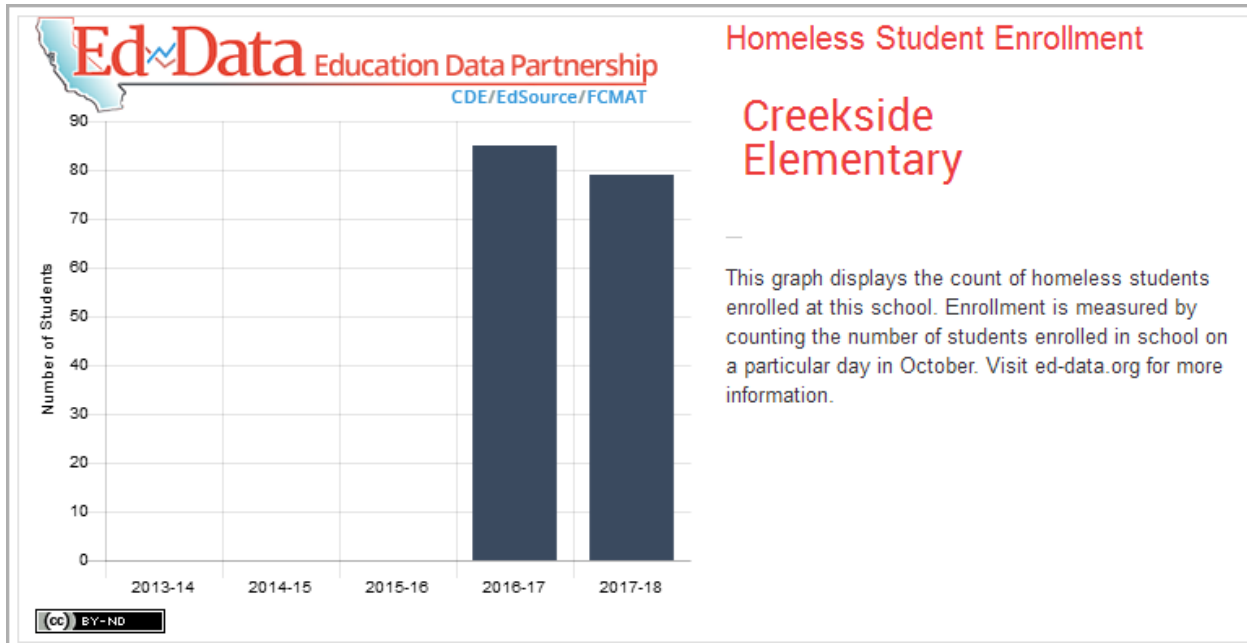
Several reasons why after-school programs are necessary is because some parents work long hours, and they need childcare for their children. Many do not have family near them to provide the childcare they need, and they may not be able to pay for day care either. They do not have many options; hence an after-school program is beneficial to them and their family.

Other reasons that came up during the interviews were that after-school programs provide supper, a full meal to the students. There are many homeless people, including children, within our community, and this meal provides them, the children a well-rounded third meal at the end of their day. After-school programs also provide enrichment activities for students. Students are exposed to activities that are no longer provided through their normal schooling.

Homeless Student Enrollment - Ed - data Education Data Partnership

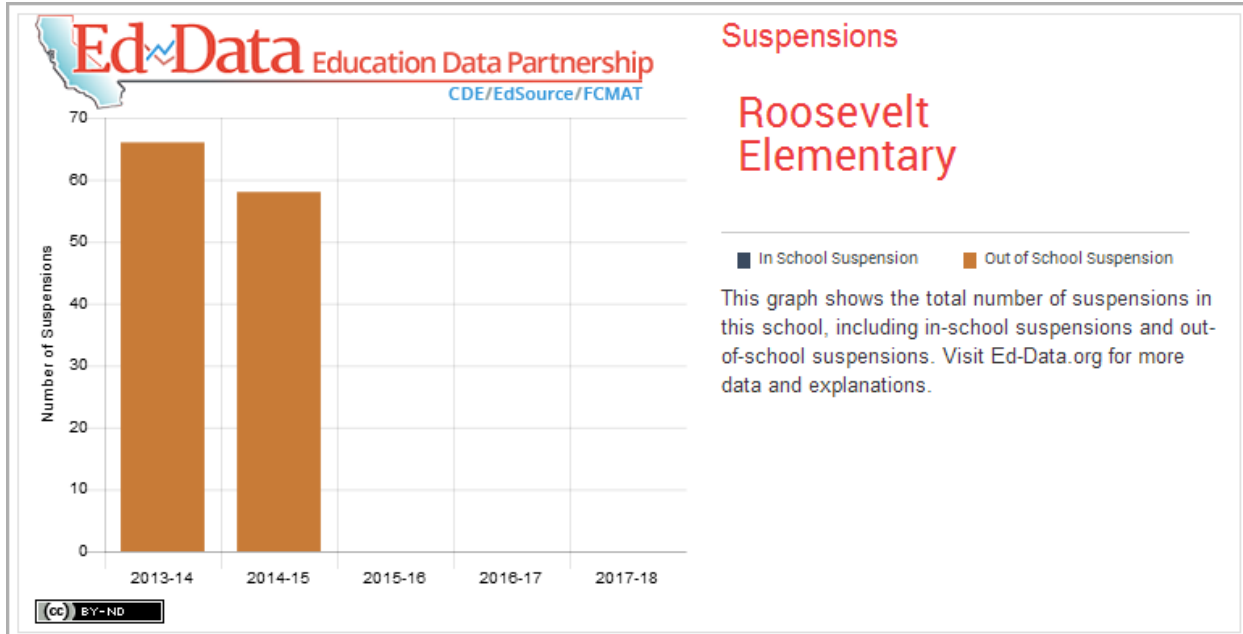


According to Ed-data, more than 100 students were homeless in both the 2016-2017 and 2017 academic calendars. This is a common number of homeless students within the schools of Monterey County. Many of our children who are enrolled within the schools of Monterey County are homeless and/or are below the poverty level.



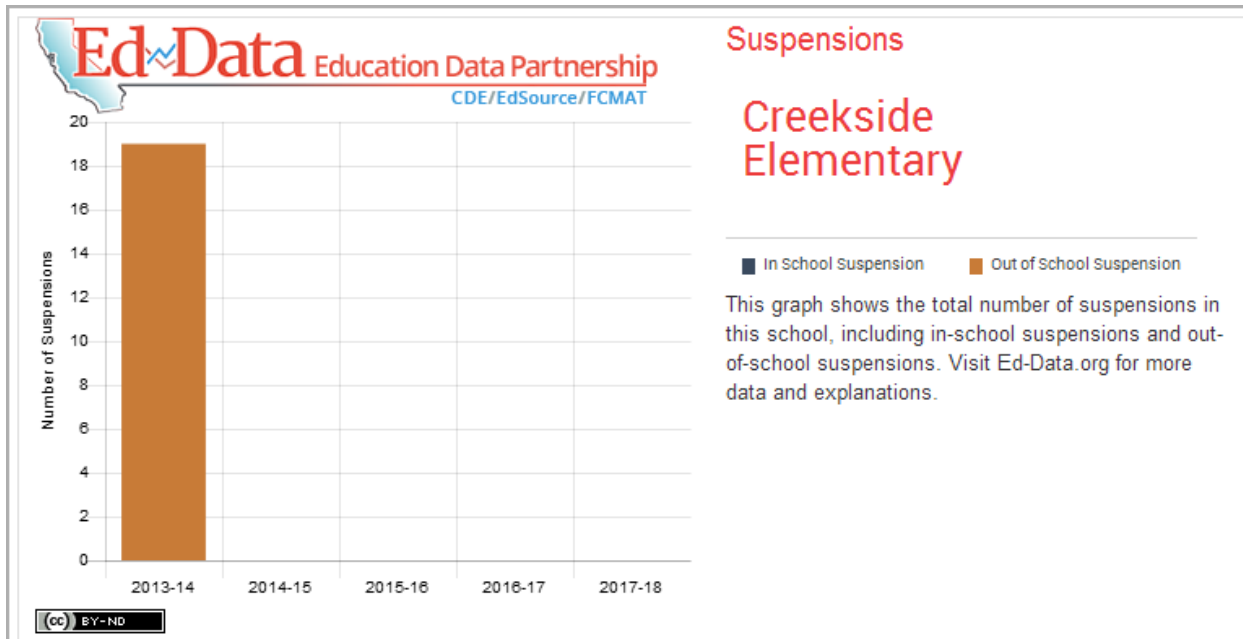
This graph clearly shows a pattern of large number of homeless students enrolled within the schools of Monterey County, more specifically, schools within the City of Salinas, CA.

Other children who attend our local schools within Monterey County are suspended in an alarming rate. I was shocked to learn that students within elementary school age are actually suspended. Staff in after-school organizations contribute to the essential features of these settings by creating appropriate structure in a safe environment and by promoting a sense of belong, feeling of personal efficacy, and positive social norms (Mahoney, Eccles, & Larson, 2004). Instructors develop a sense of belonging with our children, which in turn, facilitates supportive relationships (DuBois, & Karcher, 2005; Rhodes, 2004). This rapport is crucial in building character and a strong sense of worth within the hearts and minds of our youth. See number of students suspended within a local school in Monterey County.



Clearly, we can observe that a large number of at-risk students are being suspended in large numbers. Over 65 students were suspended within one elementary school in the 2013-2014 academic year and close to 60 were suspended the following academic year.

Suspension of Students 2013-2014 Academic Calendar - Ed-Data



This graph shows that almost 20 students were suspended from this specific elementary school. Although this represents a lower number of students who were suspended from the school, 20 students still represent a large number of at-risk students who are in need of support - more specifically, after school support.

Additional results within my research included some major surprises. Youth Orchestra of Salinas (YOSAL) which offers orchestral instruction offers free enrollment. This opportunity is made feasible through private donations, grants, sponsors, and public foundations. YOSAL also provides transportation to and from the student's school to their facility. A number of schools are associated with this program, and this an enormous financial as well as social, and mental support to the parents, students, administrators, and stakeholders.

YOSAL also has established partnerships with other creditable organizations within the community such as the Monterey Jazz Festival, Carmel Block Festival, The World Theater from California State University of Monterey Bay (CSUMB), The Monterey Philharmonic and other distinguished organizations. Imagine networking with these organizations simply because of your enrollment in this after-school organization.

This specific program stood out to me the most, for I was able to learn that there are a diverse array of after-school programs and organizations to meet the needs of all of our children. Some meet the needs of supper. This is a crucial element for some parents, because they are homeless, and at the very least, their children have a place to receive some stimuli and a hot meal from Monday through Friday.

Other children receive social stimuli which is also beneficial for the students, parents, stakeholders, and administrators. This stimuli, and/or social support, serves as a beacon for our children to aspire to pursue. They, in turn, adopt the desire to pursue a post-secondary education,

to graduate from middle school, to graduate from high school, or to simply stay away from drugs in order to adopt a new way of life - a better life for themselves, their parents, and their family.

Lastly, any positive setting that provides our children an outlet from the streets of Salinas is deemed beneficial. My heart goes out to those children and parents who suffer with depression because of gangs, drugs, teen pregnancy simply because of a little lack of support when it is needed. An after-school program and/or after-school organization may be the venue they need to help them over that small and/or large obstacle that vexes them.

Recommendation

It is my recommendation that our local school districts, our local after-school organizations, our local news broadcasters, and our local outreach programs including social media properly inform our community to the many resources and opportunities that are afforded to us. We can make a difference. We must make a difference.

If I may add one last vignette, when I was out conducting my research, numerous school administrators approached me while I was conducting my research interview questions with them and asked me, "Have you passed the CBEST? Are you currently enrolled in the Post-Baccalaureate Program?" Hence, my recommendations is work hard when you undertake your research. Network with those you hope to be employed with in the future. You may land employment sooner than you thought and perhaps be a part of the solution.

Problems and Limitations

There were several problems I ran into throughout my research. The first was getting into any school was difficult. I contacted several schools through email as well as phone calls, and I left numerous messages. Unfortunately, I did not get too many return calls. Additionally, the first principal I interviewed almost seemed reluctant to allow me to interview her after-school

teachers. One thing I learned from this interview was that the teachers that teach the after-school students are not certified teachers. They do not have their teaching credentials. They have completed the minimal 60 college units to serve under this capacity. They then proceed to a local adult school where they take a test to serve as instructional aids. They are, however overseen by a credentialed teacher. A few teachers, however, do hold teaching credentials, and these teachers tend to serve in the more affluent settings in Salinas.

Lastly, I wanted to conduct an anonymous student survey, but I was not given an opportunity to complete. According to the administrators, there is a lot of red tape. The schools have to ask for parent's permission to conduct any type of survey. This means that permission slips have to be drawn up and handed out to students, and the students must return these permission slips in before taking the survey. Interestingly, the first principal I interviewed added that the school runs a health and wellness survey of their students each year, and after that survey is conducted, they receive many phone calls from concerned parents. The parents question the motive of the survey and question who conducted the survey and for what purpose.

Recommendation

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research. Network with those you hope to be employed with in the future. You may land employment sooner than you thought and perhaps be a part of the solution.

Conclusion

A primary purpose of after-school programs is not only to provide day care during the after-school hours. They are also established to provide enrichment activities for elementary school students. Many schools strive to provide these activities to their students through exposure to different art forms, response to intervention programs, to provide assistance with homework, to provide safe place for our children and when possible, help raise attendance within our schools. These after-school programs are crucial to ensure that our children are in a safe place, and this is a vital component of the after-school program because violence and gang activity is, and has always, been prevalent within our community.

The information I have produced provides parents, current teachers and future teachers the resources to help their students and or children find an afterschool program that fits or meets their needs and or interests. As a parent, I was not aware of all of the programs that were offered within my community, and I was eager to know what resources are being offered within our communities to develop our children academically, recreationally and socially. It is important for our children to be well rounded individuals, and it is my goal to provide additional resources, as well as knowledge, for other parents, students, teachers, administrators and stakeholders to ensure that they can optimize their after-school opportunities.

After-school programs and after school organizations do, in fact, play an integral role within our community. Our after-school programs offer a safe zone for our children who may not have his or her mom and/or dad at home for a number of hours directly after the traditional school hour of 2:30 or 3:00 p.m. These programs offer assistance with homework, a third meal,

supper for those homeless children, a safe place from drugs, gangs, teen pregnancy, and other idle options within our community. Our children can be exposed to positive recreational activities, the arts - music and other musical instruments, and positive social stimulation which is crucial to optimize our children's academic aspiration and development. For these simple reasons, I invite you to stand as a voice for our children. Help our children access these after-school programs so that they can benefit academically, socially, recreationally.

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Appendix A

Principal Interview Questions

8. How is the after-school program structured at your school?
9. Is there an unmet demand/waiting list for the afterschool program?
10. How do you get your funding for the afterschool program?
11. Describe why you feel that the after-school program is necessary for elementary school students.
12. Are there resources readily available for the after-school program?
13. At what age/grade can student participate in the afterschool program?
14. Do you have enough teachers/substitute teachers to teach in the after-school program?
15. Do you offer student the opportunity to participate less than five days a week in the after-school program - why or why not?
16. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix B
Teacher Interview Questions

1. How is the after-school program structured at your school/organization?
2. Who provides the funding for the after-school program?
3. How do afterschool programs benefit students in their learning, recreational, and social development?
4. What types of activities do you provide to help in each of these developments?
5. Describe why you feel that the after-school program is necessary for elementary school students?
6. Are there resources readily available for the after-school program?
7. Is the after-school program required to follow the common core curriculum?
8. Do the students have time to work on their homework?
9. Do the students get additional help in the subjects they are failing/not understanding?
10. Do the students get time to read (30 – 45 minutes)?
11. What types of programs do your students use on their technological devices?
12. If you had a wish list for the after-school program, what would that entail?

Appendix C

Organization Director Interview Questions

1. How is the after-school program structured at your organization?
2. Is there an unmet demand/waiting list for the afterschool program?
3. How do you get your funding for the afterschool program?
4. Describe why you feel that the after-school program is necessary for elementary school students?
5. Are there resources readily available for the after-school program?
6. At what age/grade level can a student participate in the afterschool program?
7. Do you have enough teachers/substitute teachers to teach in the after-school program?
8. Do you offer students the opportunity to participate less than five days a week, why or why not?
9. Is there anything else you would like to add?
10. How do students find out about your program? Do you advertise - how?

Appendix D
Anonymous Student Survey

The after-school program is beneficial for me.

Yes No I don't know

The after-school program helps me educationally - (reading, math, science, writing)?

Yes No I don't know

The after - school program helps me recreationally - (Physical Education)?

Yes No I don't know

The after - school program helps me socially (interreacting with other kids - sharing, helping, making friends)?

Yes No I don't know

I can talk to my after-school program teacher?

Yes No I don't know

I am enrolled in the following after school program- grade level.

1st grade, 2nd grade 3rd grade 4th grade 5th grade sixth grade

What resources do you feel are most valuable in the after-school program - number the programs from most important to least important (from 1 – 6)

P.E.	computers	homework time	group work	food	other school resources