# EVALUATION OF NEW JERSEY AFTER 3
## First-Year Report on Programs and Participants

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# Executive Summary

To expand and improve after-school opportunities for children, New Jersey After 3 (NJ After 3) has sought to develop and implement a comprehensive system of high-quality after-school programs throughout the state. Specifically, NJ After 3 seeks to increase the number of after-school programs in New Jersey that provide a safe environment for children during after-school hours, offer enriching academic activities and homework assistance, and expose children to nurturing individuals and meaningful experiences that promote intellectual, physical, social, and artistic development. Under an agreement with NJ After 3, Policy Studies Associates, Inc., is conducting a three-year, longitudinal evaluation of the statewide initiative.

## Goals of the NJ After 3 Initiative

In surveys and interviews, NJ After 3 site coordinators said that they served student populations characterized by diverse needs. Accordingly, local program goals reflected staff members' desire to respond to as many of these needs as possible. Most site coordinators indicated in survey responses that their main goals were to provide positive adult guidance, a safe environment, and opportunities for social development. Other goals included: improving academic, health, and other life skills; providing opportunities for recreation and cultural enrichment; stimulating students' interests in learning; and helping students learn in non-traditional ways through exposure to positive new experiences. Several site directors also reported a desire to raise awareness among parents of the need for them to support their children's social, physical, and cognitive development.

## Participant Characteristics and Attendance Levels

A total of 11,108 students in grades K-8 participated in NJ After 3-supported programs during the 2005–06 academic year. Boys and girls were evenly represented among participants, and most participants were African American or Latino. About half of all participants were eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch.[1] Very few were English Language Learners or received special education services. Participants were distributed across grade levels, with 36 percent of participants in grades K-2, 37 percent in grades 3-5, and 27 percent in grades 6-8.

[1] The initiative's youth database did not specify the free or reduced price lunch status of 30 percent of NJA3 participants, so the reported percent of youth who received free or reduced price lunch may be an under-estimate. This is quite likely given the reluctance of many to report in the affirmative on this data element.

As part of our analysis, students were categorized into one of three levels of participation, based on the number of days they attended the program. Students were identified as "highly active" if they attended a NJ After 3 program for at least 80 days and attended at least 80 percent of the days that they were enrolled in the program during the school year. An "active" participant was one who attended at least 60 days and at least 60 percent of the days during which they were enrolled. "Non-active" participants were those who attended fewer than 60 days or less than 60 percent of the days during which they were enrolled. Attendance rates were calculated based on the number of days each student attended their NJ After 3 program from their date of enrollment (numerator) and the number of days it was possible for the student to attend (denominator). In 2005-06, 43 percent of K-8 participants met the evaluation's criteria for highly active participation, and another 20 percent met the criteria for active participation. On average, participants attended 73 percent of the program sessions available to them. These averages are considered high among after-school programs nationally. Attendance was generally higher among younger students than among older students, which is consistent with national patterns.

## Overview of NJ After 3 Programming

In 2005-06, NJ After 3 programs offered an array of academic, artistic, social, health, civic, and athletic activities intended to build student skills and maximize students' exposure to new activities. Site coordinators reported a fairly consistent set of academic program offerings across the sites. All or nearly all of the programs offered opportunities for students to do their homework, participate in math and other learning games, and practice reading and writing. Similarly, almost every program offered arts-related and athletic activities such as visual arts, dance, free time for recreation, and organized team sports. More than half of the site coordinators said that students participated in service projects, discussed current events, and learned about different careers during the after-school program. A few sites reported that they provided opportunities for civic engagement, community service, and career exploration.

The evaluation assessed the context within which program activities took place. Using a detailed observation guide, we observed activities and classes during site visits in order to assess student engagement, instruction, activity content, and staff and student relationships. We found significant variation in these measurements across activities. While opportunities for thinking analytically, developing relationships with staff, contributing to discussions, making meaningful decisions, assuming leadership roles, and collaborating with peers may be available within a program, these experiences were not all available within a single class or activity. This suggests that exposure to a variety of instructors and activities, each with a different focus or goal, maximizes students' opportunities to learn and promotes well-rounded development.

The staff employed by NJ After 3 were generally well qualified for their jobs, even though most worked for the program part-time. Almost half of all NJ After 3 program staff had bachelors degrees or higher, and one-quarter were certified teachers. Among site coordinators, nearly all had a four-year college degree and at least one year's experience as an after-school program director or staff member. Most program employees worked fewer than 19 hours per week at the program, and most staff worked directly with students.

The student-staff ratios observed during site visits indicated that the programs were operating within the parameters established by NJ After 3. In fact, at an average of six participants to every staff member, student-staff ratios were lower than required by NJ After 3. Most site coordinators said that student groups were small enough to allow staff to meet participants' individual needs.

Almost all of the executive directors of provider organizations reported that their organization delivered some type of training to site coordinators or other staff members. Other data suggest, however, that there was uneven access to professional development and training opportunities and that some individuals received many more hours of training than did others. When asked to identify the professional development that had been most valuable to their after-school staff, the majority of site coordinators cited classroom management, youth development training, and training in academic enrichment and literacy.

In interviews, parents expressed satisfaction with program staff, often describing them as trustworthy, committed, capable, caring, and fair. Many attributed their child's social development and improvements in confidence and self-esteem to the family-like atmosphere they said was fostered by program staff. Students also expressed satisfaction with program staff. For example, large majorities of participating children reported positive interactions with NJ After 3 staff members, agreed that staff cared about them, and reported that they could talk to staff about things that were bothering them. Most students also reported that they had close friends in the program and that relationships among participants were good.

Almost all of the site coordinators said that they reached out to parents and the community at least once a month by calling home, arranging opportunities for communication between parents and representatives from local agencies, and meeting with one or more parents. Nevertheless, parent involvement in program activities was limited, because work and family responsibilities made it difficult for parents to attend the program during after-school hours. Those who said they were involved often chaperoned occasional field trips or prepared and served food at special program events and celebrations in the evenings or on weekends.

Community agencies typically got involved in program activities through the provision of resources that supported program goals. For example, they offered special programs and services to youth, either on- or off-site, provided

funding through grants or contracts, and referred students in need of after-school service to NJ After 3 programs.

The quality of the relationships between individual programs and schools varied considerably. For example, at over half of the programs that we visited, staff informed us that they did not have very good relationships with school-day teachers. Tension focused on the use of shared space and materials. Relationships between school-day staff and after-school staff were not poor in all locations. Some after-school staff told us that they frequently spoke with school-day staff to understand what students were doing in the classroom, so that they could provide targeted assistance or ensure that homework was completed. Several site coordinators also described efforts to align their program content with the school-day program.

## Baseline Information on Intended Program Outcomes

The evaluation tracked early program outcome indicators in two areas, after-school availability and program sustainability. Parents at each of the locations we visited reported that the program offered through NJ After 3 was their only after-school option because it was free, conveniently located, and safe. In fact, all of the parents with whom we spoke said that there were no other suitable after-school options in their community that satisfied their dual needs for safety and affordability. Students also indicated that the NJ After 3 programming filled a vacuum that would not otherwise be filled with safe, positive, meaningful activities.

The majority of site coordinators reported that they had been providing after-school services at their current location prior to receiving the grant award from NJ After 3, and several indicated that they had provided after-school programming at the site for more than five years. All said that earlier program services had been less extensive and served fewer students, compared to current programs.

In 2005-06, NJ After 3 provided a significant proportion of the financial support for the programs. On average, almost three-quarters of each site's budget was provided by NJ After 3. The remaining budget resources came from general organizational funds, funds from other state sources, fees charged to families, allocations from other municipal sources, federal funding sources, and other organizations. The evaluation found that support from NJ After 3 had enabled programs to expand and improve classes and activities, train staff, and increase capacity so that more students were served. A few sites also reported that the additional resources had facilitated the establishment of new partnerships with public schools and cultural organizations. A smaller number of sites reported that

the NJ After 3 resources increased their ability to leverage corporate, private, or municipal funds.

## Baseline Information on Intended Participant Outcomes

A significant majority of student participants indicated that the NJ After 3 program had given them a chance to do new things, work on tasks that made them think, and participate in activities that held their interest. At least half agreed that the program allowed them to do things that they usually did not get to do elsewhere, gave them many activities to choose from, and provided an opportunity for them to become involved in community service. Students in grades 3-5 expressed higher levels of approval than did students in grades 6-8.

Most students also agreed with several statements designed to assess their perception of whether the program had helped them with their schoolwork, promoted academic achievement, and fostered a sense of attachment and belonging to the program and staff. Significant variations were evident among groups of students, however. For example, students who attended the program at the "highly active" level scored significantly higher on the academic benefits scale than their peers who did not attend as often. Similarly, on average, low-income students (those who were eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches) were significantly more likely than other students to agree with statements about the academic benefits of the program.

To provide baseline data that the evaluation will track over time, reading/language arts and homeroom teachers completed a brief report on each NJ After 3 participant in grades 3-6 who attended one of the 10 programs in the evaluation's in-depth sample. Teachers assessed the skills and behaviors that after-school participants exhibited during the regular school day. According to responding teachers, most of the students who participated in NJ After 3 programs "always" or "often" demonstrated behaviors that indicated they were academically engaged and possessed important interpersonal, technological, and study skills. Most also met or exceeded the school's grade-level expectations in reading and language arts skills. However, teachers indicated that fewer than half "always" or "often" demonstrated academic motivation (eagerness to learn, willingness to take on challenges, ability to stay on target, and responsibility for their own learning).

In many skill and knowledge areas, few low-income student participants were rated as possessing the capacities that teachers deemed desirable for academic success, when compared to other students enrolled in the after-school program. The same pattern held true for younger versus older students, with fewer younger students rated as possessing needed skills. This suggests that after-school participants from poor families and young participants have the greatest

need for the skill-building and academic activities that are offered by NJ After 3 programs.

Many parents expressed strong feelings of relief and gratitude that the NJ After 3 program was available to their children. In addition to experiencing peace of mind, parents reported practical economic and personal benefits, such as the ability to focus on their jobs and the freedom and flexibility to attend to necessary personal responsibilities.

To achieve positive life outcomes, students also require opportunities and supports in the development of healthful behaviors. Fewer than half of the students who responded to the student survey indicated that they engage in sustained physical activity for three or more hours each week. The need for physically and intellectually stimulating experiences among NJ After 3 participants was also indicated by student self-reports regarding high levels of television viewing and of time playing video games. Student self-reports on eating habits also confirmed the need for activities that educate participants on nutrition.

## Findings about Important Program Features

***Availability of rich content-based activities.*** Students and their parents want after-school programs to provide information and learning opportunities that are not available through their schools and that family resources cannot provide. Programs recognize this need and have tried to offer diverse opportunities for learning and personal development and to hire appropriate staff for the clubs and activities that students and parents have requested. The need is great, however, and programs have confronted obstacles such as limited space, unqualified staff, or inadequate financial resources as they tried to introduce new classes and activities.

The need to keep students challenged and engaged through the provision of rich content-based activities is particularly important in retaining older students. In general, fewer students in grades 6-8 experienced the same high level of satisfaction with program offerings as did their younger peers, and older students attended the after-school programs with less regularity than did younger students. Activities that could be developed and expanded to retain older students include community service, field trips, conflict resolution programs, health and nutrition activities, hands-on science activities, technology, dance, and drama.

***Delivery of learning- and mastery-oriented content.*** Observation-based data indicated that students were particularly engaged by activities that were structured and focused on the achievement of clear goals. Long-term projects in dance and drama, for example, typically satisfied these criteria and were immensely popular among students. Sufficient time should be allotted to

minimize disruptions that interrupt the learning experience, and after-school program schedules should be developed with this objective in mind. In addition, staff should be encouraged to develop programs that allow students to experience growth and progress over time and to demonstrate their progress to others. As new activities are introduced, those that offer the most potential for learning and mastery should be given highest priority.

***Practices to support positive relationships.*** NJ After 3 programs have facilitated the development of positive relationships between staff and students and among students. The significant presence of youthful staff members with whom students feel they can relate and the programs' low student-staff ratios support these positive relationships. Positive relationships flourish within activities that encourage communication between staff and students and that interest and engage students physically and mentally. NJ After 3 should continue to keep student-staff ratios low and encourage staff to reach out to students to initiate new relationships and build trust. Similarly, staff should be intentional in their organization and planning of games and activities that require students to communicate with and assist each other.

***Strong partnerships.*** Staff at the NJ After 3 programs have expertise, experience, and personal contacts in the fields of both social services and education, so they are well positioned to identify resources and information for program participants and their families. The result is that many after-school programs serve as conduits between families and community resources, helping to identify needs, raise awareness, and provide necessary services.

Much of the interaction between staff and parents occurs informally, such as during pick-up at the end of the program day or on the telephone during evenings and weekends, when a specific issue arises. However, survey data revealed that the amount of communication varies significantly among parents. Specifically, regular school-day teachers reported that they communicate with African American and white parents more often than they do with Latino and Asian parents. As the number of students from Latino and Asian ethnic groups, especially recent immigrants, grows in many communities, after-school programs need to become more responsive to these populations. While it is not clear from our research that language differences explain this finding, such differences may be a contributing factor. Most site coordinators reported that a major challenge for them was finding sufficient staff with skills to work with English Language Learners.

Students benefit from the efforts of school staff and after-school staff to share ideas and materials and to reinforce what each is doing to promote academic achievement. However, some programs are still trying to develop procedures and establish boundaries and expectations with their host schools. After-school staff must continue their efforts to build bridges with school staff.

***Looking toward Year 2.*** This report describes what we have learned about the program goals, participants, staff, activities, operations, and short-term outcomes of this initiative based on data collected from Year 1 of the evaluation. This year's descriptions of the programs and students will serve as baseline data for the longitudinal analyses that will be conducted in Years 2 and 3 of the evaluation. The future phases of the evaluation will be able to provide more information on the extent to which programs and participants were able to meet the initiative's goals.

# Contents

# Overview of the Evaluation and First-Year Report

To expand and improve after-school opportunities for children, New Jersey After 3 (NJ After 3) has sought to develop and implement a comprehensive system of high-quality after-school programs throughout the state. Specifically, NJ After 3 seeks to increase the number of after-school programs in the state that provide a safe environment for children during after-school hours, offer enriching academic activities and homework assistance, and expose children to nurturing individuals and meaningful experiences that promote intellectual, physical, social, and artistic development. Under an agreement with NJ After 3, Policy Studies Associates, Inc., is conducting a three-year, comprehensive evaluation of the statewide initiative.

This report describes what the evaluation has learned about the program goals, participants, staff, activities, operations, and short-term outcomes of this initiative based on data collected from August 2005 through July 2006. Findings are based on an analysis of data obtained from programs initially funded by NJ After 3 in 2004-05 (Round I programs) and from programs funded for the first time in 2005-06 (Round II programs).

This first-year report is organized into seven main sections. The first section describes the evaluation design and processes in more detail. The second section discusses the program-level goals of the initiative and of individual programs. The third section describes student participants' characteristics and their program attendance patterns. Section four provides details about programs' activities, structural features, and resources. Sections five and six present baseline data on key program and participant outcomes emerging during the first phase of this three-year evaluation. Where possible, we offer preliminary answers to the study's research questions and assess the extent to which the initiative is progressing toward its goals of:

- Expanding the availability of after-school services
- Enhancing the quality of after-school services
- Creating sustainable programs that are financially secure and of high quality
- Promoting the health and the emotional, social, and intellectual development of New Jersey's children

The final section summarizes preliminary findings regarding structures and practices that are likely to affect the achievement of program goals. This discussion points out program challenges and weaknesses identified by staff, students, and parents.

# 1. Evaluation Design and Operations in 2005-06

This section describes the evaluation design, efforts to obtain informed parental consent in the evaluation's first year, and the data sources used in this report.

## Overview of Evaluation Design

The core task in designing the NJ After 3 evaluation was to devise a framework to capture information at baseline and over time that responded to the initiative's goals while accounting for the diversity of NJ After 3 programs and participants. The sampling design that we selected allows us to collect certain types of overview data from all program sites, with progressively more detailed information available from smaller samples. This arrangement helps keep survey and data-handling costs in check while permitting the collection of comprehensive data on the initiative as a whole. Moreover, the nested sampling strategy permits us to make informed estimates of overall program and outcome patterns based on information obtained from subsets of programs and participants. Key features of the design are as follows:

- From all programs in Rounds I and II, the evaluation is collecting the following types of data annually for three years.

  **Data from NJ After 3's management information system.** YouthServices.net, the vendor for the NJ After 3 management information system, provides data to us on the characteristics and program attendance patterns of all participants.

  **Survey data from site coordinators**. Site coordinators provide data on program goals and activities, program schedules, staff recruitment and qualifications, participant outreach and recruitment, participant needs and preferences, and efforts to make connections among participants' schools, communities, and families.

- **From all programs in Rounds I and II, the evaluation is collecting survey data from executive directors in the first and third years of the evaluation.** Executive directors of provider organizations provide data on NJ After 3 program influences on the organizations themselves in fulfilling their core missions, NJ After 3 programs' links to other services delivered by provider organizations, and the cost and funding of specified elements of NJ After 3 programs.

- **From Round I programs, the evaluation is collecting annual survey data from student participants for three years.** Students

in grades 3–8 who are also in a Round I program provide information on their behavior, attitudes, and skills.

- From a sample of 10 Round I programs, the evaluation is collecting the following types of data annually for three years.

  **Interview and observation data.** Site visits to 10 Round I programs identified for in-depth study provide interview data from site coordinators, program staff, student participants, and parents, as well as information on programming.

  **Survey data from school-day teachers.** School-day teachers in the 10 in-depth study sites provide data on the behavior, attitudes, and skills of NJ After 3 student participants.[2] We administer teacher surveys to school-day teachers of NJ After 3 program participants in three grade cohorts. Teachers who can address students' academic and reading/language arts skills are targeted for survey response. In Year 1, the survey was administered to teachers of participants in grades 3-6. In Years 2 and 3, the survey will be administered to teachers of the same sample of participants who have remained enrolled in one of the programs in the in-depth sample. Because most of these students will have been promoted to the next grade, we expect to survey teachers of participants in grades 4-7 in Year 2 and then grades 5-8 in Year 3. To help ensure an acceptable response rate, each teacher receives $5 from the evaluation budget for each survey completed on a single child.

Using these data sources, the evaluation is addressing these primary research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the programs supported by the NJ After 3 initiative?

2. What are the characteristics of the students served by NJ After 3, and what are their patterns of attendance?

3. What did NJ After 3 accomplish with respect to enhancing the *quality* of after-school services in the first three years?

4. What did NJ After 3 accomplish with respect to expanding the *availability* of after-school services in the first three years?

5. How successful was NJ After 3 in creating *sustainable systems* for funding and program quality?

[2] The teacher survey adapted and used certain items from the Academic Competence Evaluation Scales (ACES), which were developed by James DiPerna and Stephen Elliott for Harcourt Brace.

6. What were the initiative's *effects* on participating children and families?

## Efforts to Obtain Informed Parental Consent

Evaluators worked with NJ After 3 site coordinators and program staff in Round I programs to obtain parental consent to collect data from students in these programs. Evaluators prepared the consent form in English and Spanish, and NJ After 3 posted both versions on the NJ After 3 website.

- From the Round I programs, we obtained consent forms from 42 percent of the students in grades 3-8 (1,184 of 2,787 students).

  Of the 2,787 Round I participants in grades 3-8 with data in YouthServices.net, the parents or guardians of 909 participants gave consent, while parents or guardians of 102 participants denied consent. No consent data were recorded for 1,776 Round I participants in grades 3-8.[3]

- From the 10 in-depth programs, the evaluation obtained consent forms from 62 percent of the students in grades 3-8 (639 of 1,031 students).

The consent response rates presented in this report are approximations because of challenges faced by evaluators in determining the total number of enrolled participants in grades 3-8 at the time of consent administration. In particular, programs did not consistently update the YouthServices.net management information system to indicate participants' grade level or school assignment. Therefore, it is possible that the reported percent of students for whom consent was received is somewhat inflated. This is because we may not have counted some eligible students with missing information in the total number of enrolled participants (the denominator for the calculation of consent rates).

## Evaluation Data Used in This Report

This report presents analyses of data collected from programs funded since 2004-05 (Round I programs) and programs funded for the first time in 2005-06 (Round II programs).

From all programs in Rounds I and II, we collected the following:

- Survey data from 27 executive directors (69 percent of the directors of 39 provider organizations)

[3] Because over half of the enrollees received free or reduced price lunch, it is likely that most of the parents who did not respond to the request for evaluation consent are low income.

- Survey data from 55 site coordinators (83 percent of the coordinators of 66 programs)

- Program attendance and demographic data on 11,108 program participants in grades K-8 from the YouthServices.net management information system

From Round I programs only, we collected the following:

- Survey data from 671 student participants in grades 3-8 (73 percent of 919 participants)

We collected the following from the in-depth sample of 10 Round I programs:

- Survey data from school-day teachers who assessed 303 NJ After 3 student participants in grades 3–6 with parental consent (57 percent of 527 participants)

- Interview data from 57 program staff, 63 students, and 23 parents

- Observation data obtained from 179 different after-school classes or activities during site visits to each of 10 programs

## 2. Goals of the NJ After 3 Initiative

All of the site coordinators who responded to these survey items identified the provision of positive adult guidance, a safe environment, and opportunities for social development as major program goals, as presented in Exhibit 1. Most (over 75 percent) also noted that their programs seek to help students improve academic, health, and life skills, and provide opportunities for recreation and cultural enrichment. About half (29 out of 55, or 53 percent) identified helping youth connect to their community as a major goal.

Executive directors emphasized similar programming goals, with one notable exception. Only 48 percent of executive directors (13 out of 27) reported that providing recreational activities was a major program goal, while 87 percent of site coordinators (48 out of 55) identified this as a major program goal.

Site coordinators elaborated on their program goals during individual interviews and offered additional insight into what they were trying to accomplish. For example, site coordinators described goals that included

## Exhibit 1
## Programs Goals Reported by
## Executive Directors and Site Coordinators, 2005-06

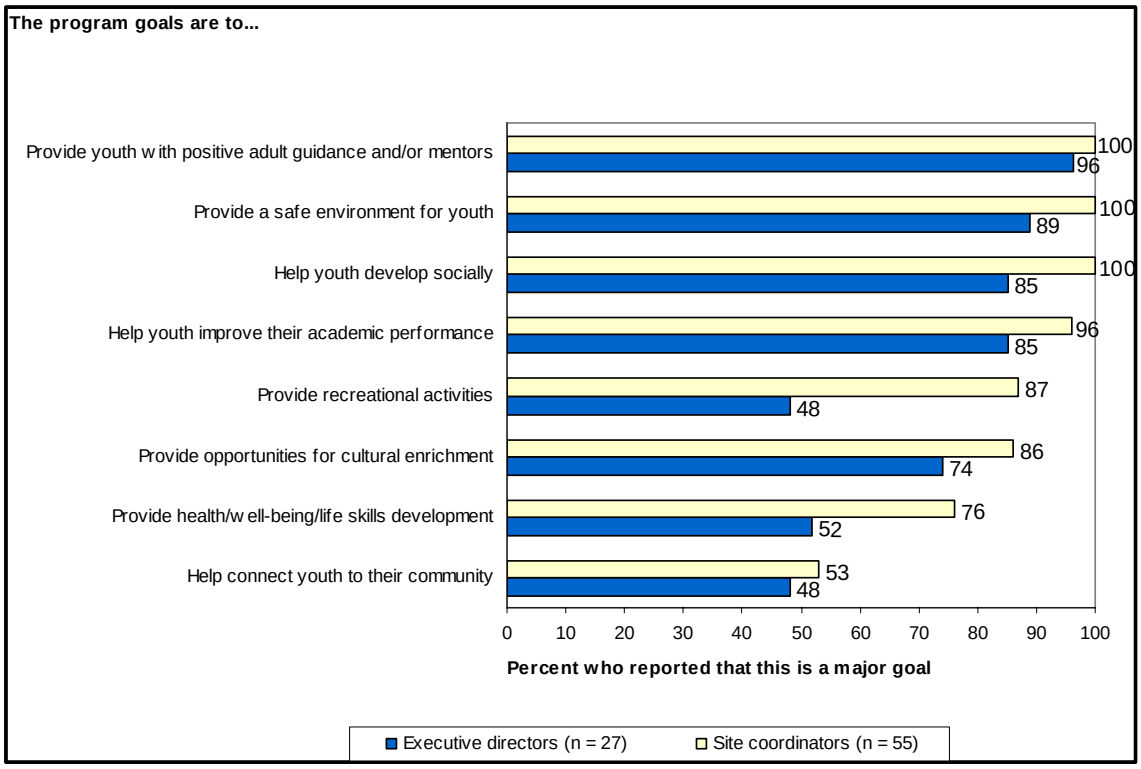



Exhibit reads: All responding site coordinators (100 percent) reported that one of the major program goals was to provide youth with positive adult guidance and/or mentors, compared to 96 percent of responding executive directors.

increasing parent involvement and increasing exposure to different types of learning and experiences as important goals. Site coordinators' comments included the following:

> *"We provide childcare and enrichment for kids, and we help empower parents. We help parents focus on their child's development, socially, physically, and cognitively."*

> *"What the kids learn they bring home and it affects family structures…When they learn chess or dance and [bring it home] and teach their brother [while mother watches]…it has a real effect on the whole family."*

> *"Providing students with different forms of learning. Children are burned out academically, and many times the recreation components are down [in school]. Children can learn in different ways [through] music, dance, and different things in non-traditional ways."*

*"They can do it and you need to push them and see what they can do because they need the challenge. Instead of 1 plus 1, they are doing 12 plus 12."*

Other frequently articulated program goals included reaching students who are in unsafe or at-risk environments, increasing homework completion rates, and improving academic and social skills.

*"I could have a little Malcolm X in front of me…I get tired of [seeing wasted] potential everywhere. I drive by the drug dealers on my way home. I want to prepare students [to succeed in life]."*

*"I am told that 30 percent of the kids in this building do not do their homework, so that is what we focus on. We get students who are in the bottom third of the school…the child that is in need of the service."*

The diversity of goals and variation in emphases among site directors and executive directors reflect the fact that after-school programs serve student populations with multiple competing needs. While there has apparently been an increased emphasis on academic goals in recent years (e.g., 59 percent of executive directors who have been operating after-school programs for several years said their focus is "somewhat" or "much more" on academic programming than before), many site coordinators and staff members were concerned about this trend, fearing it places undue pressure on children. In response, many said they were becoming much more intentional in their efforts to balance traditional academic activities with other types of intellectually stimulating programming and physical play.

## 3. Participants' Demographic Characteristics and Program Attendance

The majority (51 out of 55, or 93 percent) of site coordinators reported that they sought to serve all interested students, as shown in Exhibit 2. However, many also reported that they targeted students who had been recommended by school teachers and counselors (62 percent) or youth who had been recommended and identified by their school as being in need of special assistance in reading or mathematics (56 percent).

A total of 11,108 students in grades K-8 participated in NJ After 3-supported programs during the 2005–06 academic year. While each program served an average of 150 students, that number varied widely, from a minimum of about 50 students to a maximum of over 300 students in a single program.

## Exhibit 2
## Types of Participants Targeted by NJ After 3 Programs, 2005-06

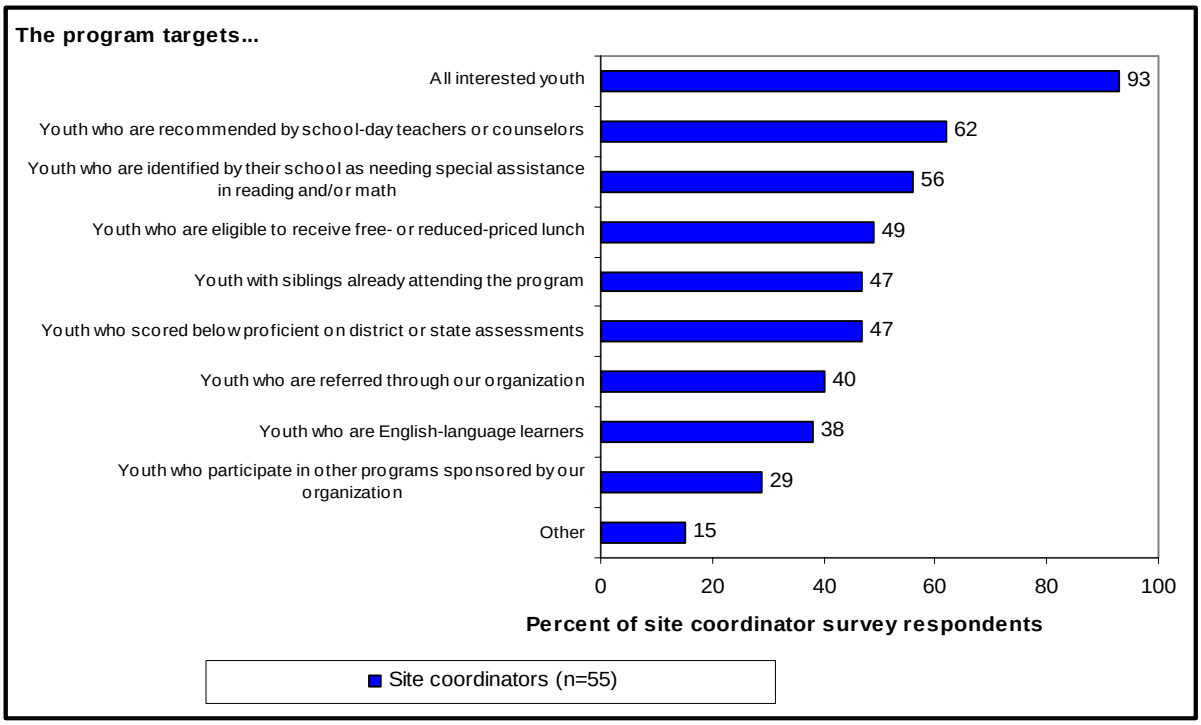



Exhibit reads: Ninety-three percent of responding site coordinators reported that the program sought to serve all interested youth.

Almost identical numbers of boys (5,568 of 11,101, or 50 percent) and girls (5,533 of 11,101, or 50 percent) were served through the initiative, as shown in Exhibit 3. Eighty-three percent (8,107 of 9,734) were either African American (4,772 of 9,734, or 49 percent) or Latino (3,335 of 9,734, or 34 percent). Approximately half (5,791 of 10, 975, or 53 percent) were eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch. Far fewer student participants were English Language Learners (1,333 of 10,963, or 12 percent) or received special education services (231 of 10,703, or 2 percent) during the school day. In general, New Jersey After 3 participants were more likely to be enrolled in grades K-2 or grades 3-5 than in grades 6-8, as shown in Exhibit 4.

As part of our analysis, students were categorized into one of three levels of participation, based on the number of days they attended the program and received services. Students in grades K-8 were identified as "highly active" if they attended a NJ After 3 program for at least 80 days and attended at least 80 percent of the days that they were enrolled in the program during the school year. An "active" participant was identified as one who attended at least 60 days and attended at least 60 percent of the days during which they were enrolled. "Non-active" participants were those who attended fewer than 60 days or less than 60 percent of the days during which they were enrolled. Attendance rates were calculated based on the number of days each student attended their NJ After 3

program since their date of enrollment and the number of days it was possible for the student to attend.

## Exhibit 3
## Comparison of Demographic Characteristics by Participation Level, 2005-06

| Measure | | Percent of Students in Grades K-8 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Highly Active Participants** (n=4,755) | **Active Participants** (n=2,252) | **Non-Active Participants** (n=4,101) | **All Participants** (n=11,108) |
| **Gender** (n=11,101) | | | | | |
| | Male | 49 | 49 | 52 | 50 |
| | Female | 51 | 51 | 48 | 50 |
| **Race/ethnicity** (n=9,734) | | | | | |
| | Hispanic | 29 | 35 | 40 | 34 |
| | African American | 52 | 51 | 44 | 49 |
| | Asian or Pacific Islander | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | White | 17 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| | American Indian or Native American | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| **Free or Reduced Priced Lunch** (n=10,975) | | | | | |
| | Yes | 54 | 52 | 52 | 53 |
| | No | 20 | 16 | 15 | 17 |
| | Unspecified | 26 | 32 | 34 | 30 |
| **Limited English Proficiency** (n=10,963) | | | | | |
| | Yes | 11 | 12 | 14 | 12 |
| | No | 67 | 58 | 53 | 60 |
| | Unspecified | 22 | 30 | 32 | 28 |
| **Special Education Status** (n=10,703) | | | | | |
| | Yes | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| | No | 49 | 37 | 38 | 42 |
| | Unspecified | 50 | 61 | 60 | 56 |

Exhibit reads: Overall, 50 percent of participants were male. Among male participants, 49 percent were highly active, 49 percent were active, and 52 percent were non-active. The 11,108 students on whom we have demographic characteristics comprise the full NJ After 3 population.

## Exhibit 4
## Distribution of Enrolled Students, by Grade, 2005-06

| Grade in 2005-06 | Number of enrolled students | Percent of NJ After 3 Total |
|---|---|---|
| K-2 | 3,958 | 36 |
| 3-5 | 4,124 | 37 |
| 6-8 | 3,026 | 27 |
| Total | 11,108 | 100 |

Exhibit reads: On average, 36 percent (3,958) of the students in the NJ After 3 initiative were in grades K-2. The 11,108 students on whom we have enrollment data comprise the full NJ After 3 population.

Students who attended NJ After 3 programs did so with a high degree of frequency. On average, students across all grade levels attended the program almost three-quarters (73 percent) of the days that it was possible for them to attend, as shown in Exhibit 5. These levels are consistent with the attendance rates of similar high-quality after-school programs, such as those of the After-School Corporation (TASC) in New York City. Attendance in NJ After 3 programs was higher among younger students (e.g., for students in first grade, attendance was 80 percent of possible days) than among older students (e.g., for students in eighth grade, attendance was 58 percent of possible days).

## Exhibit 5
## Distribution of Days Attended, by Grade, 2005-06

| Grade in 2005-06 | Average Number of Days Students Attended NJA3 Program | Average Attendance Rate |
|---|---|---|
| K | 106 | 77% |
| 1 | 108 | 80% |
| 2 | 105 | 78% |
| 3 | 101 | 77% |
| 4 | 102 | 76% |
| 5 | 96 | 73% |
| 6 | 83 | 69% |
| 7 | 63 | 59% |
| 8 | 62 | 58% |
| **Overall Average** | 94 | 73% |

Exhibit reads: On average, participants in kindergarten attended the program 106 days. Their average attendance rate was 77 percent. The attendance data are based on the full NJ After 3 population (n=11,108).

While there were significant variations in the attendance rates of students in different grades, the average attendance rates were similar for students who attended Round I and Round II programs.

From all programs in Rounds I and II, participants in a majority of programs (49 of 58, or 84 percent of programs) attended their program at a rate of 60 percent or higher. In fact, participants in 22 programs attended their program at an average rate of 80 percent or higher, and participants in 27 programs attended at an average rate of 60 to 79 percent. Six of the remaining programs had average attendance of 50 to 59 percent, and three programs had average attendance of 49 percent or less. These program-level figures represent the 58 programs that reported their participants' program attendance in YouthServices.net and exclude programs with incomplete data.

In 2005-06, 43 percent of K-8 participants met the evaluation's criteria for highly active participation, and 20 percent met the criteria for active participation, as shown in Exhibit 6.

**Exhibit 6**
**Distribution of Participants, by Participation Level and Grade, 2005-06**

| Grade in 2005-06 | Percent of Students in Grades K-8 | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Highly Active Participants** (n=4,755) | **Active Participants** (n=2,252) | **Non-Active Participants** (n=4,101) |
| K | 50 | 22 | 28 |
| 1 | 53 | 24 | 24 |
| 2 | 51 | 21 | 28 |
| 3 | 48 | 19 | 33 |
| 4 | 47 | 22 | 31 |
| 5 | 45 | 18 | 37 |
| 6 | 34 | 21 | 45 |
| 7 | 22 | 16 | 63 |
| 8 | 20 | 19 | 61 |
| **Overall Average** | 43 | 20 | 37 |

Exhibit reads: Among participants in kindergarten, 50 percent were highly active, 22 percent were active, and 28 percent were non-active. The participation data are based on the full NJ After 3 population (n=11,108).

In the majority of programs (40 of 58, or 69 percent), at least 50 percent of participants met the evaluation's criteria for active or highly active participation. In 26 of these programs, 75 percent or more of participants met criteria for highly active or active participation. In 15 programs, 25 to 49 percent of participants met

active or highly active participation criteria. In three programs, 24 percent or less met these criteria.

# 4. Overview of NJ After 3 Programming

This section describes NJ After 3 activities and programming through discussions focused on program content, program context, staff characteristics, staff training and benefits, relationships between staff and students, relationships with parents and the community, and relationships with the schools.

## Program Content

In 2005-06, NJ After 3 programs offered a wide array of academic, artistic, social, health, civic, and athletic activities that attempted to address needs identified by staff and to appeal to students and their parents. Many site coordinators said that they sought to do two things: build student skills and maximize students' exposure to new and different activities. Over half of those we interviewed acknowledged, however, that exposure was the more important goal. One site director reflected his peers' commonly held sentiment that children need exposure to the possibilities outside their immediate environment: "The world does not stop at [our town]. A lot of [our] students have not even been over the bridge to [the neighboring city]." In those instances when skill development was emphasized, it tended to employ content related to the arts (e.g., jewelry making) and technology (e.g., creating a web site).

The emphasis on exposure over skill building or mastery also reflected the staff's recognition of inherent limitations. "Why would you think that in three hours a day a kid is going to master a skill? Maybe it's possible but that is not my expectation. My expectation is to provide after-school programming where kids can learn and simultaneously have fun. I want safe exposure for these children."

Parent interviews indicated that parents were particularly pleased that NJ After 3 provided a wide and interesting range of activities for children. "I like the concept of it," said one parent. "Even though they have homework time, they have time for the kids to be themselves." Another added that her son was now able to participate in "activities that he might otherwise not have tried…he is much more active." All of the students whom we interviewed also expressed satisfaction with the program overall. Many indicated that the after-school program allowed them to learn a skill or participate in an activity that they had never before tried. Favorite activities included art, computers, gym, martial arts, and drama. Special clubs such as chess and music or clubs that encouraged students to discuss their feelings and express their thoughts about a range of personal issues were also very popular.

As a group, site coordinators reported a fairly consistent set of academic program offerings across the sites. All or nearly all of the programs offered opportunities for students to do their homework, participate in math and other learning games, and practice reading and writing, as shown in Exhibit 7.

**Exhibit 7**
**Types of Academic Activities Offered**
**by NJ After 3 Programs, 2005-06**

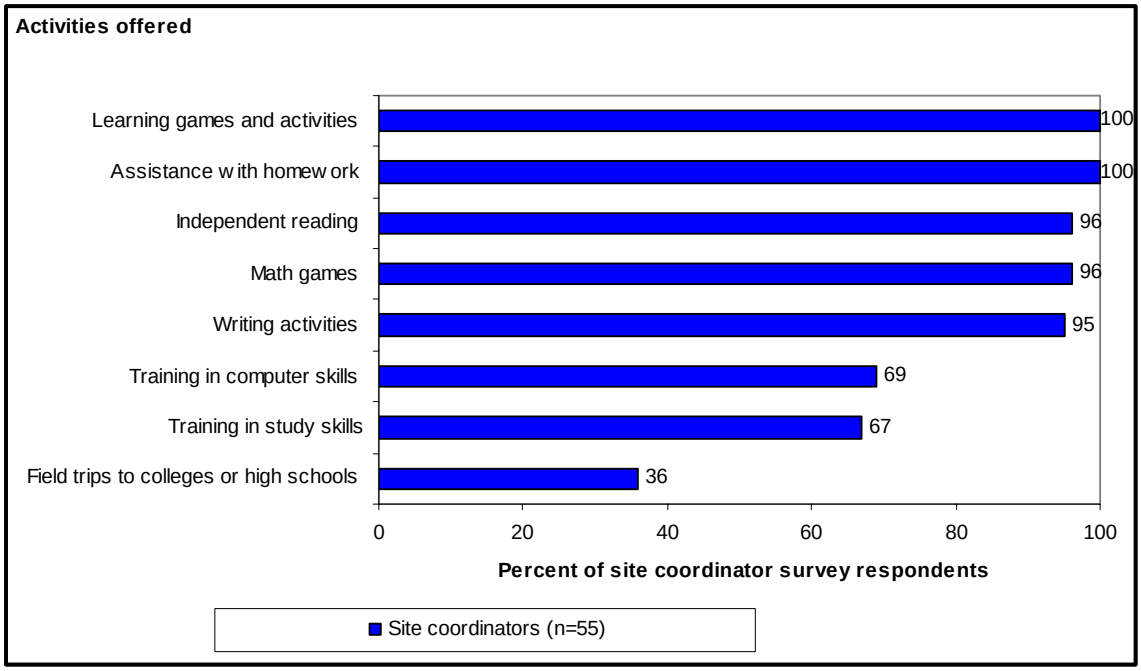



Exhibit reads: All responding site coordinators (100 percent) reported that their after-school program offered learning games and activities for youth.

During our interviews we learned that interest in computers and technology was high among many students. However, in some sites only the older students had access to technology activities. In other locations, computers were either not available to anyone or, as one student told us, "they are all broken." In sites where computers were accessible, they were used in various ways. For example, students at one site reported that they were taking a video production elective. "We do editing," explained one participant. "A couple days ago we interviewed random people coming out of classes [on camera]." Others described classes in which they played computer games or practiced typing. "When we have computers, sometimes we do mini quizzes about singers and rappers and we play tanks…and [computer games about] robots. Sometimes we …learn to type without looking."

Students also expressed a great deal of enthusiasm for arts-related activities, as shown in Exhibit 8, particularly arts activities that required rehearsing and preparing for major events that allowed them to showcase their

talents in front of their peers, parents, and other members of the community. These included fashion shows, plays, dance routines, and long-term visual art projects (e.g., kite and mask making). "We're trying to open their eyes so they can see there a lot of things out there that they can learn. There's art, yes, but there's also sculpture and painting and music…[We are trying to expose them] to a lot of things," explained one site coordinator.

**Exhibit 8**
**Artistic and Social Development Activities Offered by NJ After 3 Programs, 2005-06**

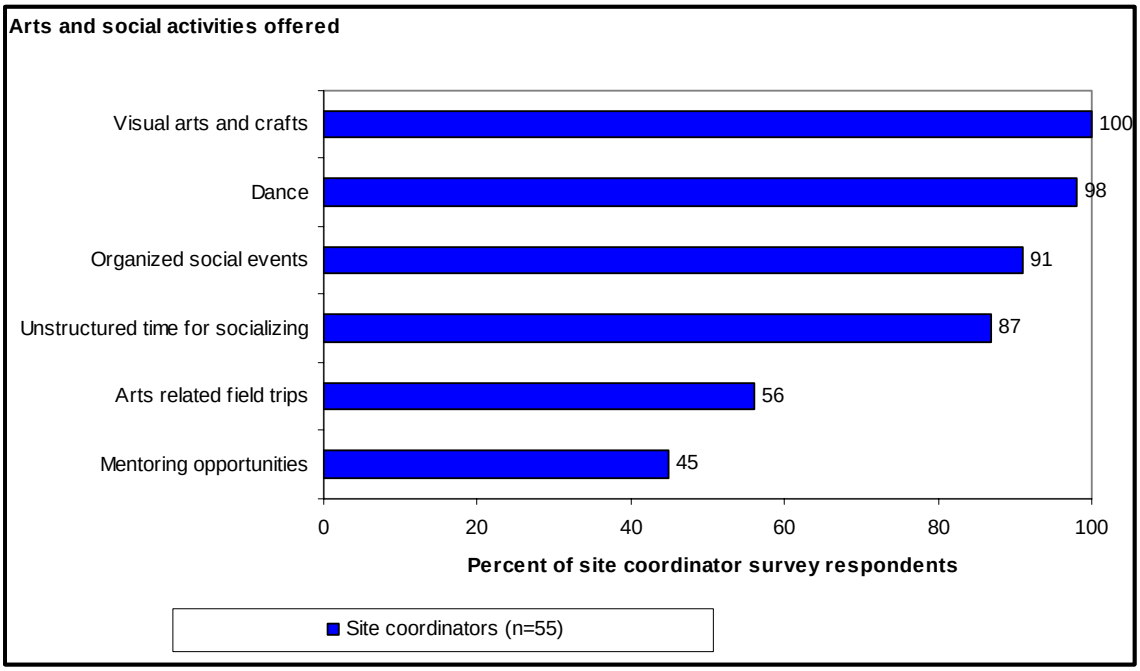



Exhibit reads: All responding site coordinators (100 percent) reported that their after-school program offered visual arts and crafts activities for youth.

Programs offered certain activities in the areas of civic engagement, community service, and career exploration, as shown in Exhibit 9. Eighty-five percent of site coordinators (47 of 55) reported that they administered service projects in the program, such as participants tutoring other students, clean-up projects, or participants helping program staff lead an activity. Fewer site coordinators (25 of 55, or 45 percent) reported that their program offered service learning projects that involved the neighborhood, such as visiting the elderly or community clean-up projects.

In some programs, students joined the 4-H Club in order to develop public speaking skills and civic awareness, while in other programs, students participated in shorter-term projects such as food- or clothing-drives for the homeless or sang at local senior citizen residences.

## Exhibit 9
## Civic Engagement, Community Service, and Career Exploration Activities Offered by NJ After 3 Programs, 2005-06

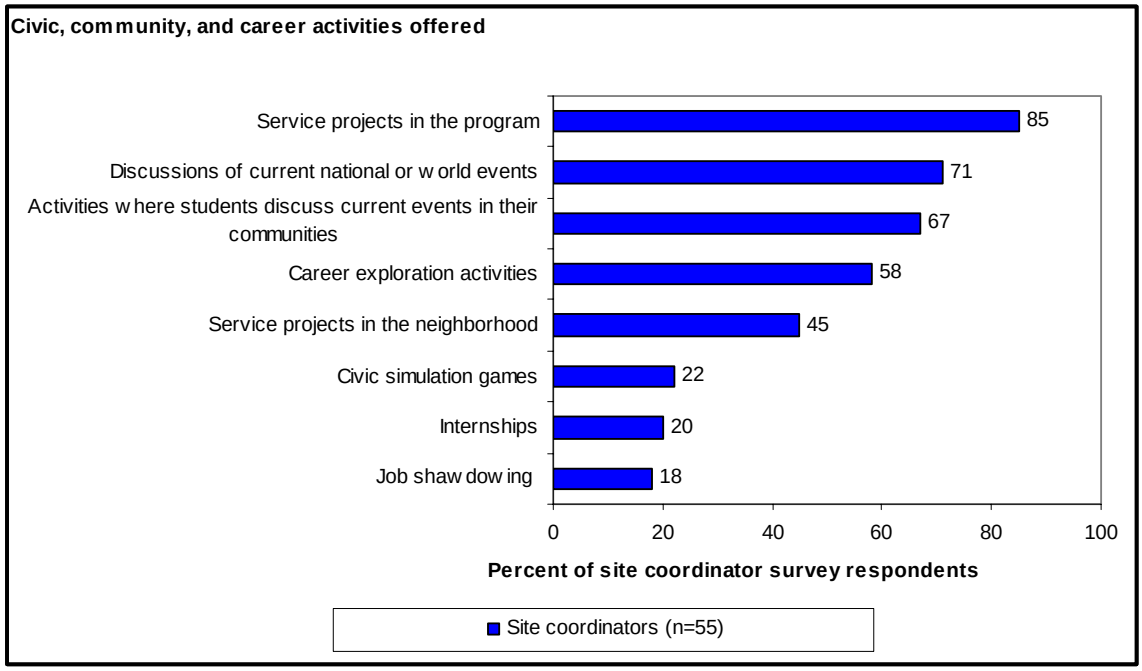



Exhibit reads: Eight-five percent of responding site coordinators reported that their after-school program offered service projects within the program (e.g., tutoring other students, clean-up projects, helping program staff lead an activity).

During interviews, students spoke quite positively about those programs that focused on athletics, health, and life skills, as shown in Exhibit 10. Older students in particular appeared to enjoy those activities that allowed them to participate in peer discussions about social and personal issues. These classes were referred to by different names (e.g., Smart Girls, Free Teen USA, I Can Problem Solve) at each location, but they generally aimed to educate students about the danger of drugs, smoking, and premarital sex. They also aimed to instill values such as integrity and discipline, and taught strategies that will enable participants to solve routine social problems and issues that pre-teens often experience. Role-play, games, writing exercises, and debate were used to engage students in these activities.

Nutrition education and opportunities for exercise were also available at most sites, as shown in Exhibit 10. Programs offered free play, organized sports and games, gymnastics, martial arts, and structured physical fitness activities through curriculum-based programs such as Spark and KidFit.

Staff and student participants noted in interviews students' need for increased recreation and physical activity, and they often alluded to the absence or minimal amount of time available for recess and play in many schools. "They

really enjoy gym," said one program staff member. "They get to run around like crazy because they don't get to run around otherwise." Another staff member lamented students' lack of recreational opportunities during the school day. "They only have gym one day [per week] for 90 minutes, and they have to get on a bus to go to the gym. There's no playground [at the school], so there's not too much outlet for them."

**Exhibit 10**
**Athletic, Health, and Life Skills Activities Offered by NJ After 3 Programs, 2005-06**

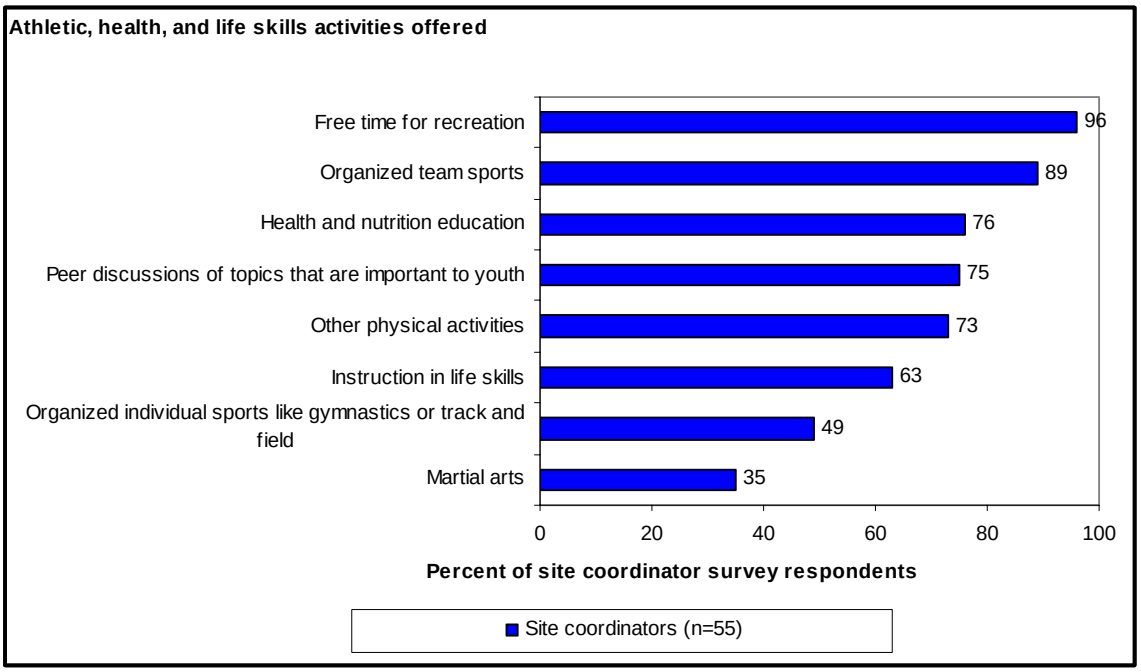



Exhibit reads: Ninety-six percent of responding site coordinators reported that their after-school program offered free time for recreation for youth.

Fewer than half of the students who responded to the student survey indicated that they engage in sustained physical activity lasting three or more hours each week, as shown in Exhibit 11. Only 42 percent of participants (264 of 628) in grades 3-8 reported that they played basketball, football, or soccer at least three hours per week. Even fewer (245 of 609, or 40 percent) reported that they ran or walked or that they danced as part of a group (155 of 605, or 26 percent) for three or more hours each week.

Students in grades 3-5 were more likely to report that they participated in sustained physical activity than were older students in grades 6-8. For example, while 21 percent of students in grades 3-5 (88 of 429) reported that they engaged in martial arts like Taekwondo or judo at least three times per week, only 6 percent of youth in grades 6-8 (10 of 176) reported that they did the same.

Similarly, 29 percent of students in grades 3-5 (124 of 426) reported that they danced as part of a group at least three times per week, compared to 17 percent of students in grades 6-8 (31 of 179).

**Exhibit 11**
**Percent of Students Engaged in Physical Activity**
**Three or More Hours Per Week, by Grade Cluster, Grades 3-8, 2005-06**

| Participating 3 or More Hours per Week in: | Percent of Students | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Grades 3-5** (n=445) | **Grade 6-8** (n=183) | **All Grades** (n=628) |
| Basketball, football, or soccer (n=628) | 45 | 37 | 42 |
| Running or walking (n=609) | 43 | 35 | 40 |
| Martial arts (n=605)* | 21 | 6 | 16 |
| Dance as part of a group (n=605)* | 29 | 17 | 26 |

* The differences were statistically significant ($p<.05$).

Exhibit reads: Across grades 3-8, 42 percent of participants participated three or more hours per week in basketball, football, or soccer. Forty-five percent of participants in grades 3-5 reported as such, compared to 37 percent of students in grades 6-8.

We found no significant relationship between the level of physical activity reported by students and their level of participation in the after-school program.

The need for physically and intellectually stimulating experiences among NJ After 3 participants was also indicated by student self-reports regarding their television and video game habits. More than one-third of the participants surveyed watched four or more hours of television per school day, as shown in Exhibit 12. One out of five students reported that they played video games for a similar amount of time. Students' level of participation in after-school programs was not significantly related to how much time they spent in these inactive behaviors.

**Exhibit 12**
**Students' Engagement in Inactive Behaviors**
**Four or More Hours Per School Day, by Grade Cluster, 2005-06**

| Participating 4 or More Hours per School-day in: | Percent of Students | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Grades 3-5** (n=435) | **Grade 6-8** (n=181) | **All Grades** (n=616) |
| Watching television (n=610) | 39 | 42 | 40 |
| Playing video games (n=616) | 23 | 17 | 21 |

Exhibit reads: Across grades 3-8, 40 percent of participants watched television four or more hours per school day. Thirty-nine percent of participants in grades 3-5 reported as such, compared to 42 percent of students in grades 6-8.

## Program Context

In addition to examining the range of program offerings, the evaluation also assessed the context within which these activities take place by observing 179 different activities or classes during site visits to each of 10 programs. Specifically, we examined student engagement, instruction, activity content, and staff and student relationships in program activities, using a detailed observation guide.

To assess student engagement in program activities, we examined the extent to which students remain on-task, listen to peers and staff, contribute to discussions, make meaningful choices, take leadership, or assume responsibility during the activity. We observed significant variation in student engagement measures across certain activities. For example, students scored low on these student engagement measures during homework activities. This may be because homework activities typically required students to work alone and in silence on a task assigned by a teacher. In most instances, communication with others during this activity was actively discouraged. Similarly, students engaged in sports activities had few opportunities to "contribute their ideas to discussions" mainly because few discussions were held during sports activities. Students scored higher on student engagement measures in other academic and enrichment activities. In arts activities in particular, students tended to communicate and listen to each other more often, and they were typically allowed to make more meaningful choices within the context of the activity (e.g., assisting with choreography during a dance class).

We developed an activity scale, based on assessments of key aspects of an activity such as content and structure of the activity, including organization, challenge level, analytic thinking, and skill involvement. Those activities that targeted decision-making or interpersonal communication skills (e.g., many of the character-building programs and peer discussion groups) received higher scores on the activity scale compared to other kinds of activities. Highly rated activities were typically well organized, challenging for students, and required analytic thinking. Academic activities (other than homework) received the highest score on the activity scale and also demonstrated strong staff-student relationships and varied instructional strategies.

Student-staff relationships were found to be stronger during those activities in which staff were focused on building students' skills—regardless of the content of the activity—when compared to activities in which staff were encouraging students to practice a skill or to do homework. Similarly, student-staff relationships were also stronger in activities that targeted decision-making or interpersonal communication, as compared to other activities. These results are not surprising given that the latter activities tend to be driven by discussion and to have a youth-development focus. Likewise, skill-building activities typically

require more sustained student-staff interactions than homework or other activities in which students work independently.

We observed few instances of collaboration among youth, which we defined as youth working together or sharing materials to accomplish tasks in which they were equal partners. When it did occur, it was usually during sports activities where students were sometimes required to strategize and work together in order to win. While there was some evidence of students assisting each other (e.g., one student explaining an assignment to another or helping a friend to spell a word), particularly during homework, across all activities, these incidents were rare.

We found that the presence of a certified teacher leading an activity had no significant relationship with the type of instructional methods that were employed during the activity or on any other components of the activity scale. Research suggests that in order to engage students with different learning styles staff should diversify instructional methods. By instructional methods, we refer to the teaching approaches that are often employed by classroom teachers, such as direct instruction, coaching, modeling, and demonstration. Direct instruction includes lecture and didactic questioning; in coaching, the teacher supports and facilitates the performance of a student in carrying out a task to achieve mastery; modeling consists of exhibiting the behavior or activity that the teacher wants the student to perform; and demonstration is similar to modeling but involves more explanation and discussion of what is going on. Nevertheless, the data suggest that, when the goal of an activity was to build or practice skills, staff were more likely to employ clear-cut and varied instructional methods than were used during homework or other activities.

These observations suggest that students' experiences during the after-school program varied widely depending on the activities in which they were engaged. For example, while opportunities for thinking analytically, developing relationships with staff, contributing to discussions, making meaningful decisions, assuming leadership roles, and collaborating with peers may exist at a single program, it is unlikely that a staff member would be able to provide all these experiences during a single activity. This suggests that exposure to a variety of activities, each with a different focus (e.g., skill-building, skill-practicing, interpersonal communication), maximized students' opportunities to learn and promoted well-rounded development.

## Staff Characteristics

The after-school staff employed by NJ After 3 programs varied in many respects. This section examines the knowledge and experiences they brought to their work, how they were assigned within the program, and other aspects of their employment.

The average number of staff employed per program was 20, ranging from a minimum of three at one site to 45 at another. Almost half (44 percent) had bachelors degrees or higher, 19 percent were enrolled in college, 25 percent had a high school diploma or less, and 13 percent were teenagers, as shown in Exhibit 13. In addition, approximately one-quarter (26 percent) of all adults employed by the programs were certified teachers.

**Exhibit 13**
**Educational Qualifications of Program Staff, According to Site Coordinators, 2005-06**

| **Educational Qualifications** | **Average Percent of Staff** (n=55 ) |
|---|---|
| Had B.A. or B.S. degrees or higher and had teaching certificates | 26 |
| Had B.A. or B.S. degrees or higher but not certified to teach | 18 |
| Were current college students | 19 |
| Were teen staff or high school students | 13 |
| Had a high school degree or less and were not currently enrolled in college | 25 |

Exhibit reads: According to site coordinators, 26 percent of program staff had bachelors degrees or higher and had teaching certificates.

Only 10 percent of the staff worked for the after-school program on a full-time basis, with an additional 15 percent employed half-time for 20 to 34 hours per week, as shown in Exhibit 14. The largest number of employees (75 percent) worked part-time, or less than 19 hours per week. Although the majority of staff members (87 percent) worked directly with students, the proportion of full-time employees who were engaged in direct service was significantly smaller (36 percent). Among half-time employees, the percentage engaged in providing direct services was 50 percent. A large majority (88 percent) of part-time employees also worked directly with students.

## Exhibit 14
## Employment Hours by Staffing Category, 2005-06

| Staff Categories | Percent of Staff by Hours of Employment (n=49) | | | Average Percent of All Staff (n=52) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Full-time** (35 hours or more per week) | **Half-time** (20-34 hours per week) | **Part-time or less** (less than 19 hours per week ) | |
| Administrative staff, such as assistant director, parent coordinator | 50 | 32 | 6 | 8 |
| Support staff, such as administrative assistants | 14 | 18 | 6 | 6 |
| Direct service staff who worked directly with participants | 36 | 50 | 88 | 87 |
| **Overall Average** | 10 | 15 | 75 | 100 |

Exhibit reads: On average, 8 percent of the program staff consisted of administrative staff. Fifty percent of the staff who worked full-time, 32 percent of the half-time staff, and 6 percent of the part-time staff were administrative duties.

The student-staff ratios observed during the site visits, as described in Exhibit 15, indicated that the programs were operating well within the parameters established by NJ After 3 (student-staff ratios of no more than 10:1 for grades K-5 and 11:1 for grades 6-8). This finding was further supported by the site coordinator survey data that showed that most site coordinators (50 of 55, or 91 percent) believed that student groups were small enough to allow staff to meet participants' individual needs.

NJ After 3 site coordinators were typically well-educated and experienced, with nearly all (51 of 55, or 95 percent) having worked at least one year or more as an after-school program director or staff member, as shown in Exhibit 16. A similar number (50 of 55, or 91 percent) had at least a four-year college degree, and more than a quarter (15 of 55, or 27 percent) were certified teachers.

## Exhibit 15
## Staff Ratios in Observed Activities, 2005-06

| Observed Activity | Student to Staff Ratio |
|---|---|
| **By content area** | |
| Arts–visual and performing | 5:1 |
| Academic enrichment | 6:1 |
| Homework help or tutoring | 8:1 |
| Sports and games | 8:1 |
| **By skill targeted** | |
| Skill-building | 6:1 |
| Skill-practice or reinforcement | 6:1 |
| Homework or tutoring | 8:1 |
| **By grade level** | |
| Grades K-2 | 5:1 |
| Grades 3-5 | 7:1 |
| Grades 6-8 | 6:1 |
| **Overall Average** | 6:1 |

Exhibit reads: The student to staff ratio in observed arts activities was, on average, 5:1, based on observation data obtained from 179 different classes or activities during site visits.

## Exhibit 16
## Qualifications of Site Coordinators, 2005-06

| Qualifications | Percent of Site Coordinators (n=55) |
|---|---|
| **More than one year of work experience as a …** | |
| Staff member in an after-school program | 57 |
| Program director at an after-school program | 38 |
| Recreation, youth, or childcare worker | 35 |
| School administrator | 6 |
| **Highest level of education** | |
| Some college | 6 |
| Completed two-year college degree | 4 |
| Completed four-year college degree | 56 |
| Some graduate work | 22 |
| Master's degree or higher | 13 |
| **Certification** | |
| Teaching certificate | 27 |

Exhibit reads: Fifty-seven percent of responding site coordinators reported that they had more than one year of work experience as a staff member in an after-school program.

## Staff Training and Benefits

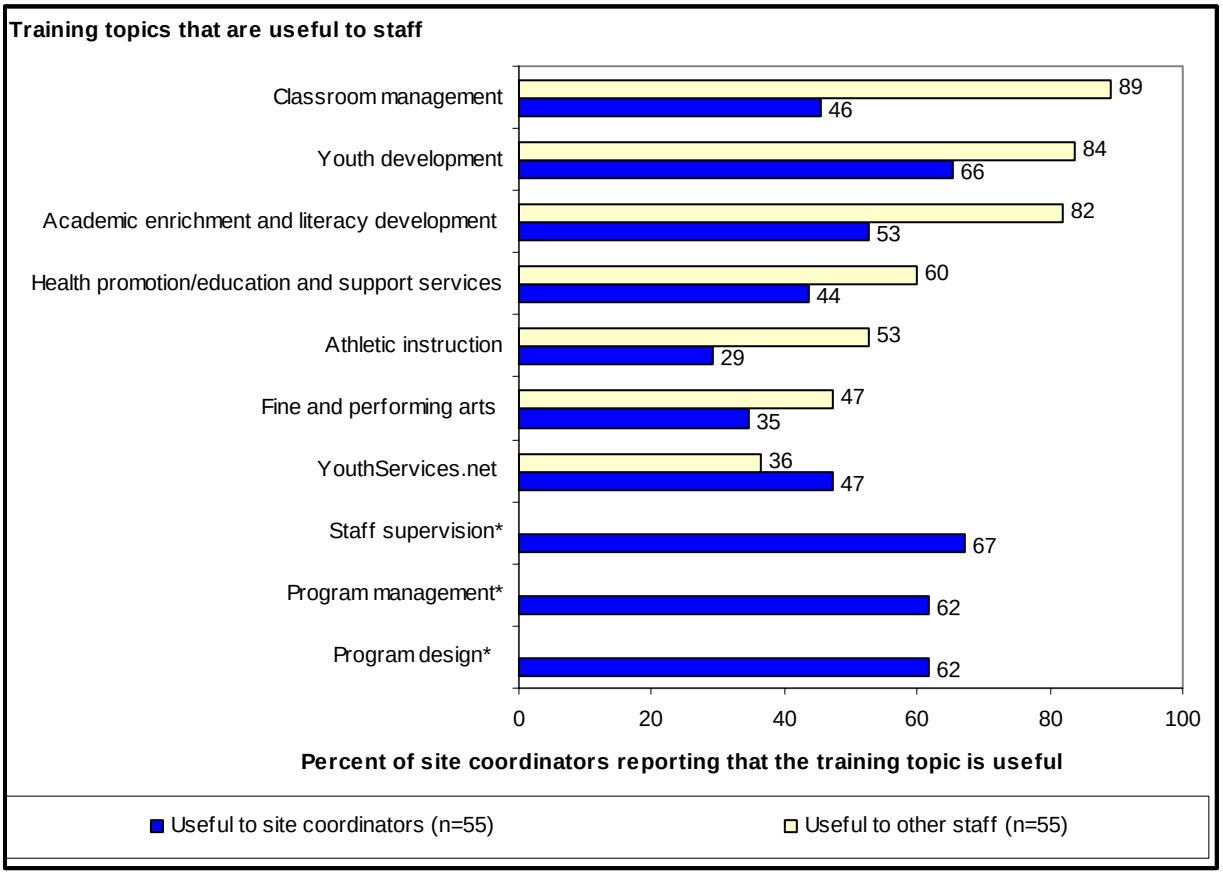
Nearly all (26 of 27, or 96 percent) of the executive directors surveyed reported that their provider organizations provided some type of training to site coordinators or other staff members. Ninety-three percent (25 of 27) specified that they provided training in youth development, and the same percentage also said they provided training in curriculum development. A similarly high proportion (24 of 27, or 89 percent) reported that they provided training in program and staff management.

Based on our interviews with program staff, it appeared that programs differed in the amount of training that they required staff to engage in and that they made available to staff. For example, staff at one program indicated that some staff were required to receive 20 hours of training per year, while those with a different job title—but who also worked directly with students—were required to receive 12 hours of training. Staff at another site told us they had received no more than about 8 hours of training during the year, and those at a third program indicated that they did not know of any training requirement.

These variations help to explain an apparent contradiction in our survey data: Although almost all of the executive directors reported that training was provided, a sizable minority of site coordinators (23 of 55, or 41 percent) identified limited professional development for staff as a major challenge to program quality. Together, these data seem to suggest that access to professional development and training was uneven among staff and programs. This may be due, in part, to the fact that state licensing changed the requirements for staff training in fall 2006, creating some confusion. The number of hours of training required differs by staff position. For example, site coordinators are required to attend 20 hours of training, while youth development workers are required to participate in nine hours.

When asked to select the training topics of most value to their after-school program staff, 89 percent of site coordinators identified classroom management, 84 percent said youth development training, and 82 percent selected training in academic enrichment and literacy, as shown in Exhibit 17. For themselves, approximately two-thirds (67 percent) of the site coordinators said training in staff supervision would be useful. A similar number (66 percent) selected training in youth development, while 62 percent identified program management and program design as useful.

## Exhibit 17
## Training Topics Reported to be Useful to Staff, 2005-06




***These were training topics that were useful to site coordinators only.**

Exhibit reads: Eighty-nine percent of site coordinators identified classroom management as among the most useful training topics for their staff. For themselves, 46 percent of site coordinators said that classroom management was a useful training topic.

In addition to formal training events, staff reported that they also received professional development and training informally during staff meetings and in individual meetings with their site coordinator. Others noted that their peers served as mentors and guides and that assistance was sought and provided on an as-needed basis.

In terms of employment benefits, a majority of full-time staff who worked in the after-school program received leave benefits and were paid to attend training events such as conferences and other meetings. In addition, most had a retirement savings plan through their employer. Most part-time staff were also paid to attend professional development events, but very few received other employment benefits.

## Relationships between Staff and Students

An overwhelming majority of the parents who were interviewed expressed satisfaction with program staff, often describing them as trustworthy, committed, capable, caring, and fair. For example, one mother described an incident in which her son was punished by a staff member. The staff member instructed him to write a brief essay on why he should not have done what he did, and she also told him to identify other more appropriate actions he could have taken. "They made him think about what he had done. It became a public speaking lesson, a responsibility lesson…I just really liked how they handled it," the parent said.

Many parents also emphasized that they liked the fact that the staff members were relatively young, because they believed this enabled staff to connect with children more easily. "They look at [the staff] as friends because they are closer in age [and] staff play more of a big sister or big brother role. [The students] look up to them." Several parents also attributed their child's social development and improvements in confidence and self-esteem to the family-like atmosphere they said was fostered by program staff.

Among the many positive sentiments expressed by parents regarding the relationship between staff and students were the following:

> *"The city needs more programs like these. There is a trust level with the people here…My daughter is happy and that makes me happy. I believe staff [are] pretty clear [about] their goals [and] they are committed to achieving them."*

> *"[My son] was a first-grader. He told his teacher 'My mommy said I don't have to go to aftercare.' [He] walked home [and the site coordinator] wound up at my doorstep to get my son. That showed me that it's not just a job for her. She did not have to do that…she could just have made some phone calls. She was so upset, like it was her child. She loves her job and these kids."*

> *"I like the balance that they have [on staff] between males and females. Especially for young men who do not have fathers around, like my son. That is very important."*

> *"Some kids don't have [a young adult] to talk to [who] is not their parent. [The staff] do not betray [the children's] trust, but they are like a gateway…[they help parents] know how the child is doing. I can't say enough about them, I just can't."*

*"I think that by having [staff ]who are just a little bit older…they can go to [them] if they don't feel comfortable saying [something ] to their own mom. They feel more comfortable talking to counselors here [at the after-school program] than the school counselor."*

The students with whom we spoke during our site visits echoed these positive sentiments. "The after-school program will welcome you with open arms. They're like family. You can talk to them," said one student. Another added: "My family is crazy, each person has a different personality. The staff [here] are like that. [The site coordinator] is like the mom [in the family.]" Yet another summed up his view of the staff this way: "They're not only here for academics; they're here to get to know us."

Student survey data also indicated that a majority of students viewed program staff in positive ways. Over three-quarters of the after-school participants reported positive interactions with NJ After 3 staff members, as shown in Exhibit 18. Across all grade levels, 85 percent of participants agreed that staff really cared about them, and 78 percent agreed that staff cared what they think. Seventy-six percent indicated a high level of trust by reporting they can talk to staff about things that were bothering them.

**Exhibit 18**
**Student Perceptions About Staff, Grades 3-8, 2005-06**

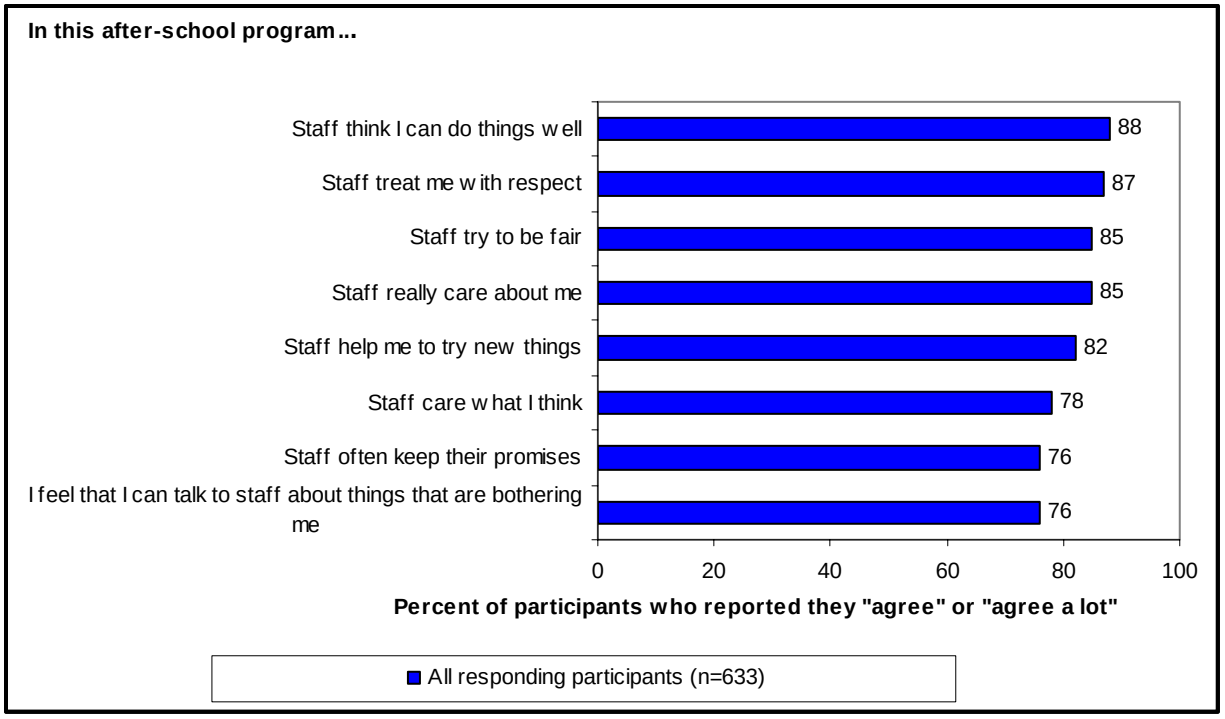



Exhibit reads: Across grades 3-8, 88 percent of responding participants agreed or agreed a lot that, in the after-school program, staff think they can do things well.

Feedback from parents and students during the site visits also indicated that most students had close friends in the program and that, in general, relationships among participants were good. Student survey data supported these findings. Over three-quarters of the after-school participants reported positive perceptions about their peers on almost all of the survey questions pertaining to peer relationships, as shown in Exhibit 19. Fewer students (60 percent) said that they could really trust their peers.

**Exhibit 19**
**Student Perceptions About Peer Relationships, Grades 3-8, 2005-06**

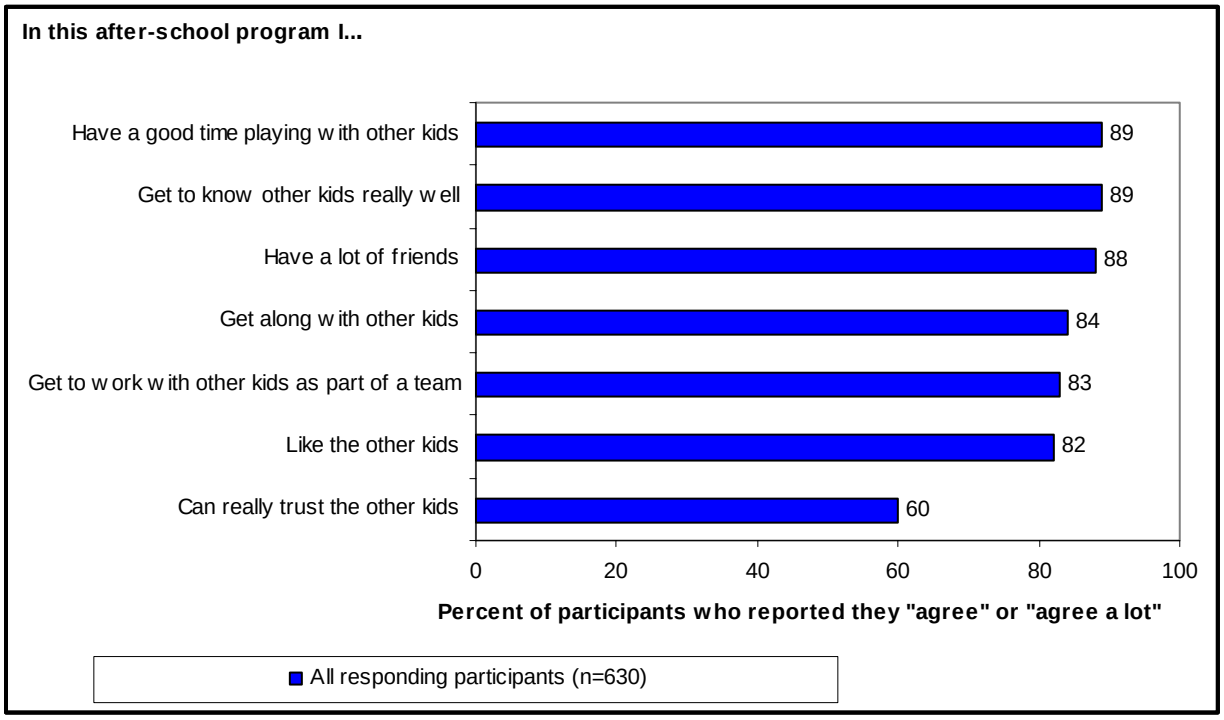



Exhibit reads: Across grades 3-8, 89 percent of responding participants agreed or agreed a lot that in the after-school program they had a good time playing with other kids.

## Relationships with Parents and the Community

Many of the parents who were interviewed for the study indicated that they had not been very involved in the program. Most cited work schedules as the primary reason for their lack of involvement. Those who had been able to volunteer their time had reportedly chaperoned trips and other events, or they had prepared and served food at various celebrations. A few parents also reported that they had intentionally arrived early for their child on occasion in order to observe activities and to gain a better understanding of the program. "I have actually been present during the program," said one parent. "I came early and I like to do

that every now and then. I sat in on [one activity]…I wanted to see how [staff and students] interacted and I was very impressed."

Programs reached out to parents and the community in various ways. Although all programs held events and reached out to parents and the community, site coordinators reported that they made some connections more frequently than others. At least once every month, almost all of the site coordinators said that they reached out to parents by calling home, arranging opportunities for communication with representatives from local agencies, and meeting with one or more parents, as shown in Exhibit 20. Nevertheless, a few parents indicated that they believe the program can do a better job of communicating with them. One parent, for example, suggested that the program mail newsletters to the home rather than sending correspondence via the students. Another parent added that staff should communicate with them when there is a need. "Don't assume that I'm so busy that you can't ask me [to participate]. Let me know that you need things…if you need something, don't be afraid to ask me."

**Exhibit 20**
**Program Relationships with Parents and the Community, 2005-06**

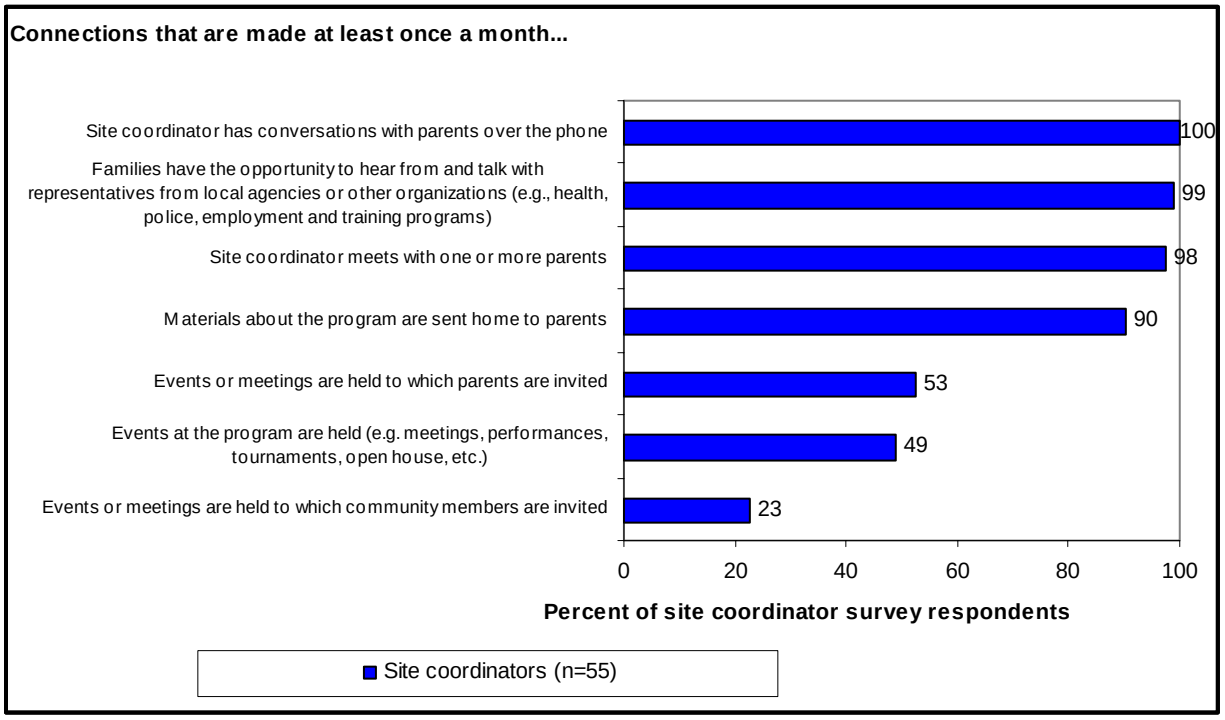



Exhibit reads: All responding site coordinators (100 percent) reported that they had conversations with parents over the phone at least once every month.

While the after-school programs did not rely heavily on parental involvement, at least half of all site coordinators identified three ways in which

local community agencies and other external organizations provided valuable resources that supported the goals of the after-school program, as shown in Exhibit 21. The resources were: special programs, activities, and services that were provided for youth on- or off-site; funding through grants or contracts; and referrals of students to the NJ After 3 program.

**Exhibit 21**
**Support and Resources Received from External Organizations, 2005-06**

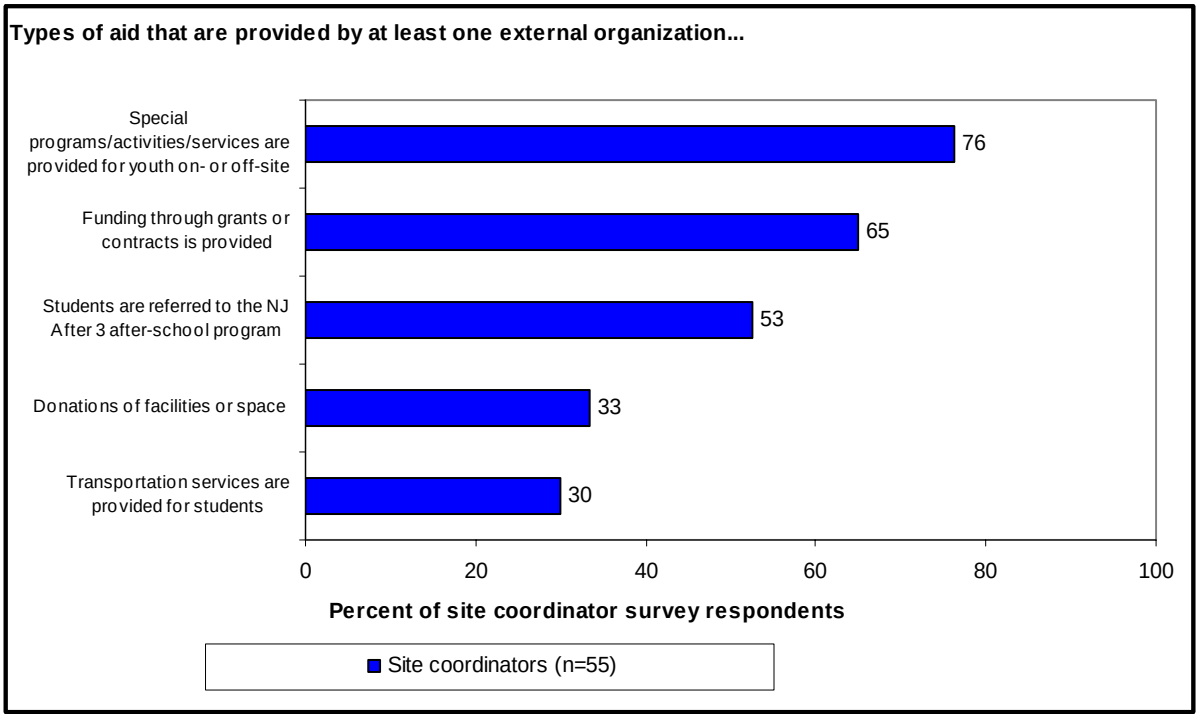



Exhibit reads: Seventy-six percent of site coordinators reported that at least one external organization provided special programs, activities, or services for youth either on- or off-site.

## Communications with the Schools

In survey responses, site coordinators identified topics and issues that they discussed with school principals or other school-day staff on at least a monthly basis, as shown in Exhibit 22. The sharing of classroom space and homework assignments were cited by coordinators as the topics most often discussed with school staff. Other discussion topics included student needs or progress, discipline policies, planning of after-school content, and after-school staffing.

## Exhibit 22
## Program Communication with the School, 2005-06

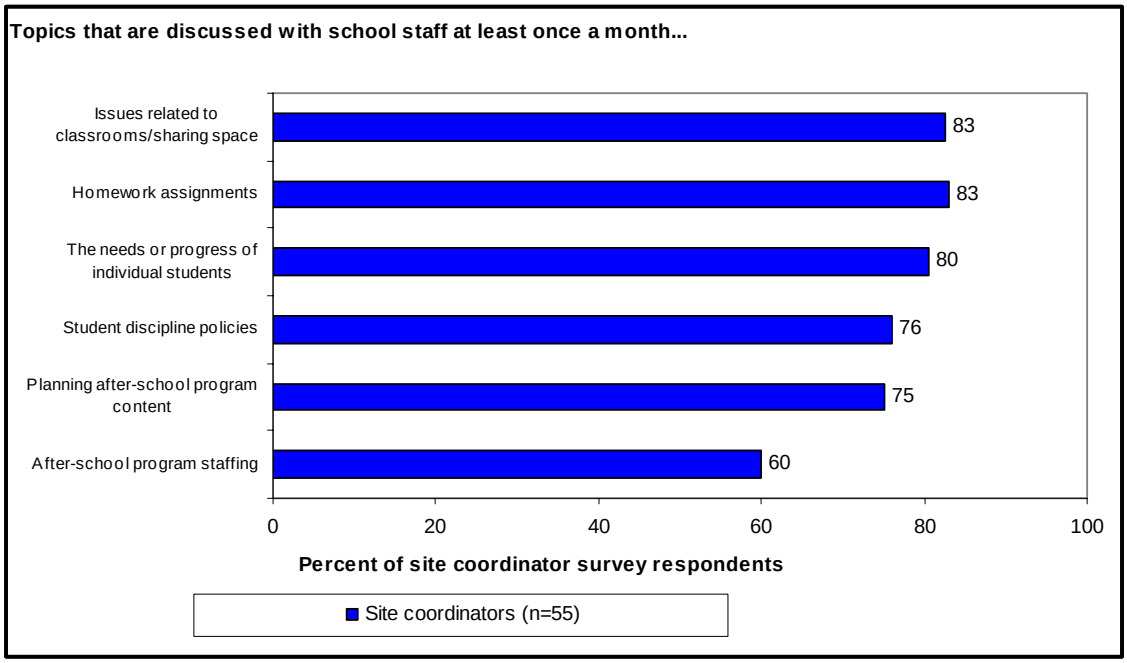



Exhibit reads: Eighty-three percent of site coordinators reported that they discussed issues related to classrooms and the sharing of space with school staff at least once a month.

The quality of the relationships between individual programs and schools varied considerably, with school facilities (as noted in survey responses) a particularly problematic issue in some sites. For example, at over half of the programs that we visited, staff described moderate to poor relationships with school-day teachers. Much of the reported tension surrounded the use of shared space and materials. "We have to beg, borrow, or steal from the [school-day] teachers if [we] want to show a video, or use a computer…we are not supposed to touch [their] stuff. Not even the pencil sharpener." Another staff member described how school-day teachers at her site "leave little notes saying, 'Don't touch this or that….'" As a result, many after-school staff members said that they had concluded that the school-day teachers lack respect for the after-school program.

However, relationships between school-day staff and after-school staff were not poor in all program locations. Some after-school staff told us that they frequently communicate with school-day staff to learn what students are doing in the classroom, so that they can provide more targeted assistance or ensure that all homework is completed. "I communicate with a lot of teachers," explained one after-school staff member. "For instance, [when] students tell me that they don't have homework or that they have been having trouble…and don't understand their work."

Several site coordinators described efforts to align their program content with the school-day program. As one site director explained it, "We wrap around [the school] as much as possible. The principal tells us areas that are weak or when there are problems. We [also] support the holidays and [provide] extra activities [for students]."

Nevertheless, efforts to align the school-day and after-school programs are, in the view of some site coordinators and staff, sometimes hampered by philosophical differences between the organizations. One site coordinator summarized the problem this way: "The education system is too geared to standardized testing, and they don't recognize that kids learn in other ways. The school staff don't see the value of what we offer because it does not directly relate to standardized tests." He emphasized his point by pointing to the fact that the school decided to extend instructional time and to reduce the time available for play during the school day.

# 5. Baseline Information on Intended Program Outcomes

This section presents baseline data in two areas in which program outcomes are being assessed, after-school availability and program sustainability.

## Availability of Services

Parents at each of the locations we visited reported that the program offered through NJ After 3 was their only after-school option because it was free, conveniently located, and safe. In fact, all of the parents with whom we spoke said that there were no other suitable after-school options in their community that satisfied their dual need for safety and affordability. For example, when asked why she chose to enroll her child in the program, one parent said: "There are no other options for aftercare. I like that this is housed in [the school my child attends]. I don't have to worry about my son getting on a bus and going elsewhere." In response to the same question, another parent had a similar answer. "This program is so convenient. It's safe, it's educational, it's fun. I can do my job without worrying." Prior to this option becoming available, parents reported that they had taken their children to grandparents' homes, hired babysitters, or, in a few cases, brought them to work. "Last year my child came to my job, and it was a drag for her," explained one parent.

Students also indicated that the NJ After 3 programming filled a vacuum that would not otherwise be filled with safe, positive, meaningful activities. When asked to describe what they might be doing if they were not in the after-school program, students frequently indicated that they would be at home sleeping, watching television or playing video games, or "getting into trouble."

While a few students did indicate that they would likely attend sports classes or practices, most emphasized that the after-school program was the best option of those available to them. One student reflected this common sentiment when he told us: "[The program] helps us and makes us have fun. When we are not here, I [am] bored…flipping channels on my TV."

Site coordinators' survey responses to questions on program availability supported these claims. Thirty-eight percent of the site coordinators surveyed confirmed that, prior to the NJ After 3 grant, there had been no after-school program offered by their organization at the current location.

Several parents also indicated that the need for care extends beyond the school year to the summer months. One mother summed up the situation this way:

> *"Last summer my daughter had to sit in front of the TV. Parents would really like to have this program during the summer. We lose our children to the street, it's really infested with the gangs and that starts at this age. They really have nothing to do except go out on the streets.…While you are at work, you wonder where they are, what they are doing, who they are with."*

Survey results suggest, however, that very few (8 percent) executive directors of provider organizations are focused on developing summer programming. The majority of them have sought to take advantage of additional opportunities to expand and improve their existing after-school programs during the school year. For example, since receiving the NJ After 3 grant, 24 percent (7 of 27) of executive directors reported increased opportunities to partner with a public school. A smaller number (4 of 27, or 16 percent) reported that the grant has increased opportunities to partner with cultural organizations.

Although the NJ After grants resulted in some increase in opportunities for provider organizations, one anticipated benefit, which is the leveraging of corporate, private, or municipal funds, has not been realized at significant levels. In fact, between 41 and 70 percent of executive directors reported that the NJ After 3 grant had not affected their ability to leverage funds from each of these sources "at all." For example, 41 percent of executive directors reported that their ability to leverage funds from private sources had not been affected at all by the grant, while 70 percent said the same regarding municipal sources.

During our site visits, site coordinators provided examples that illustrated benefits that have been realized by NJ After 3 grantees. Among grantees that had operated programs before the NJ After 3 grant, coordinators noted that the NJ After 3 grant had increased availability of program resources, variety in program activities, training opportunities for staff, and capacity to serve more students. For example, staff at one program told us that, prior to receiving the grant, they

had only been able to provide students with homework assistance. Now that they have the grant, they are able to offer "tremendous [new] services" to kids in "a safe place, after hours." Additional feedback on benefits and opportunities from site coordinators included the following:

> *"Becoming a NJ After 3 site has helped us to get more space in our buildings and allowed us to expand our programs. Because of our grant, we can pay teachers to do the sports program and computers, and it has allowed us to raise the salary rate…"*
>
> *"We expanded activities. [Where] else are these kids going to learn digital film editing or web design or martial arts? All of these extracurricular classes [are available to them even though their] parents can't afford to pay…"*
>
> *"NJ After 3 has held a lot of trainings…We meet with other staff to network and exchange ideas."*
>
> *"[Before the grant] there was no K-3 program at this school. If we get more space, we will try to serve even more kids."*

## Programmatic and Financial Sustainability

The majority (34 of 55, or 62 percent) of site coordinators reported that they were in operation at their same location prior to receiving the grant award from NJ After 3, as shown in Exhibit 23. In fact, 22 percent (12 out of 55) reported that they had provided after-school programming at the site for more than five years. Among executive directors, about one-third (9 of 27) said that their organizations had been providing after-school programs for more than 25 years.

**Exhibit 23**
**Number of Years That After-school Services Were Offered Prior to NJ After 3 Grant, 2005-06**

| **Number of Years** | **Percent of Site Coordinators** (n=55 ) |
|---|---|
| After-school programming was not offered prior to the NJ After 3 grant | 38 |
| 1-2 years | 33 |
| 3-5 years | 7 |
| 6-10 years | 6 |
| More than 10 years | 16 |

Exhibit reads: Thirty-eight percent of responding site coordinators reported that after-school programming was not offered prior to the NJ After 3 grant at their program site.

According to the executive directors, on average, approximately 73 percent of each site's budget was provided by NJ After 3. The remaining 27 percent came from general organizational funds (6 percent), funds from other state sources (6 percent), fees charged to families (4 percent), fees from other municipal sources (3 percent), federal funding sources (2 percent), and other organizations (7 percent).

# 6. Baseline Information on Intended Participant Outcomes

To achieve positive life outcomes, children and youth require opportunities and supports in multiple developmental domains, including academic, social, psychological, and physical fitness and health areas. This section describes baseline evidence of program-related outcomes in these areas.

## Opportunities for Exposure to New Opportunities

More than 75 percent of student participants who were surveyed indicated that the NJ After 3 program had given them a chance to do a lot of new things, work on tasks that really made them think, and participate in activities that really held their interest, as shown in Exhibit 24. At least half (50 percent or more) agreed or strongly agreed that the program allowed them to do things that they usually did not get to do elsewhere, had a lot of activities to choose from, and had provided an opportunity for them to get involved in community service.

Younger students in grades 3-5 reported more often than older ones in grades 6-8 that they agreed or strongly agreed with each of the questions that assessed students' program experiences. Differences between younger and older students were particularly significant for some response categories. For example, whereas 86 percent of students in grades 3-5 agreed or strongly agreed that they got a chance to do a lot of new things in the program, 78 percent of students in grades 6-8 agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Similarly, 82 percent of the younger students agreed or strongly agreed that the activities really got them interested, compared to 71 percent of the older students. These differences are typical of age-related differences found in other after-school programs.

## Exhibit 24
## Youth Reactions Regarding Their Program Experience, Grades 3-8, 2005-06

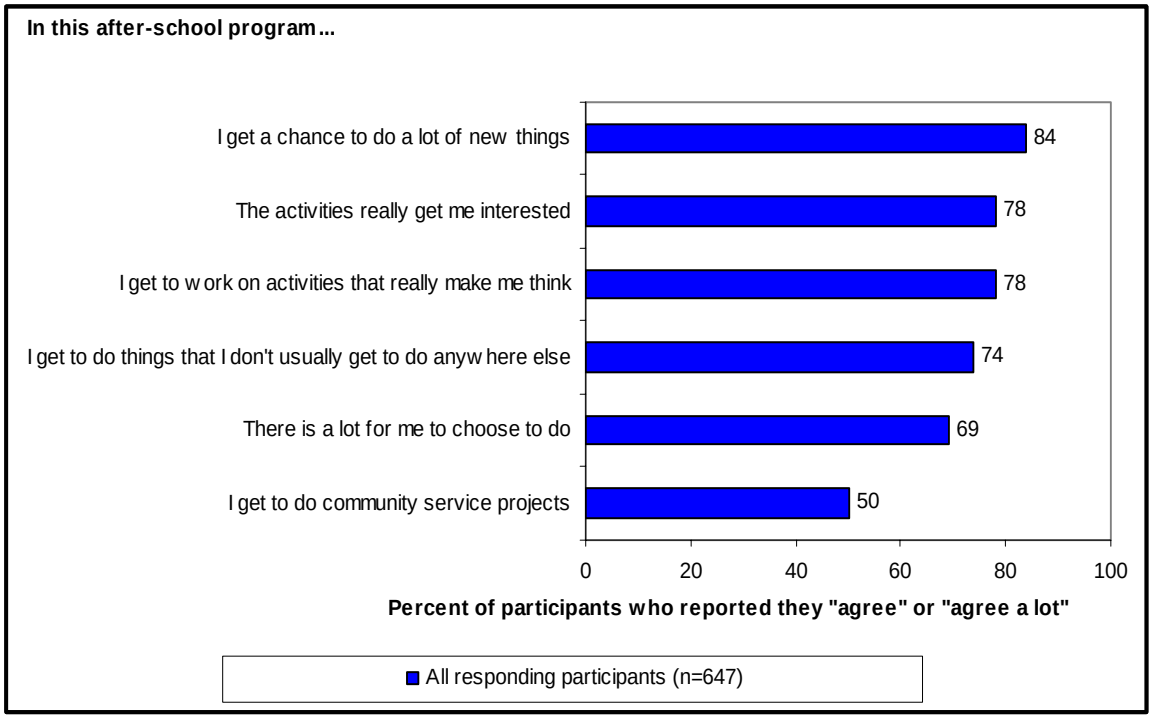



Exhibit reads: Across grades 3-8, 84 percent of responding participants agreed or agreed a lot that in the after-school program they got a chance to do a lot of new things.

### Help with School

The majority of students agreed or strongly agreed with several statements that were designed to assess their perception of whether the program had helped them with school, as shown in Exhibit 25. The largest proportion of students noted that the program had helped them to finish their homework more often (86 percent) and to feel better about their schoolwork (78 percent). A similar proportion (77 percent) also said they felt the program had helped them to improve their grades.

## Exhibit 25
## Students' Perceptions of the Program's Help with School, Grades 3-8, 2005-06

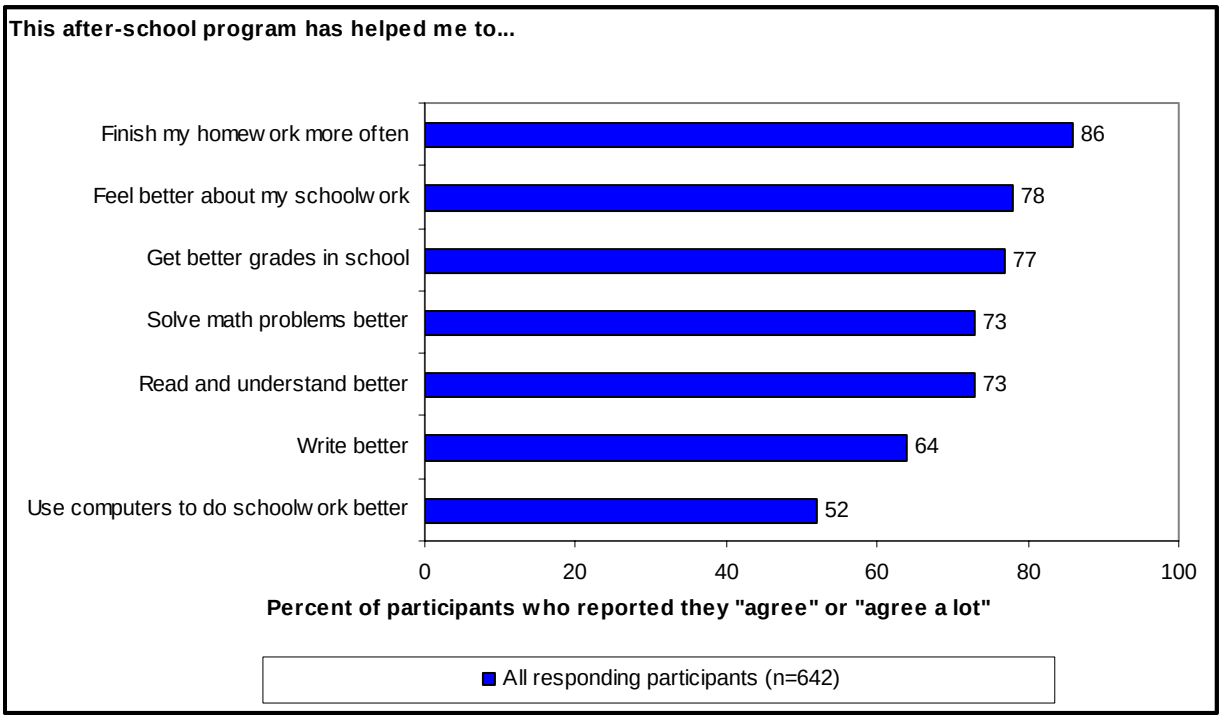



Exhibit reads: Across grades 3-8, 86 percent of responding participants agreed or agreed a lot that the after-school program had helped them to finish homework more often.

The evaluation developed an academic-benefits scale based on the items that measured students' reported academic benefits. Students who attended the program at the highly active level (80 percent of possible days and a minimum of 80 days during the academic year) scored significantly higher on the academic benefits scale than their peers who did not attend as often. That means that the highly active participants were significantly more likely to agree or agree strongly with the statements regarding academic benefits of the program than were less active participants. On average, low-income students (i.e., those who were eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches) were also significantly more likely than other students to agree or strongly agree with statements about the academic benefits of the program. This finding may reflect home and community situations in which low-income students have less access to the supports and opportunities available in the NJ After 3 program, compared to other students.

## Sense of Attachment and Belonging

Over three-quarters of all students surveyed agreed or agreed strongly with each of the statements that were designed to assess their sense of attachment and belonging to the NJ After 3 program, as shown in Exhibit 26. Ninety-one percent indicated that they felt safe, and almost as many indicated they felt like they belonged (87 percent) and that they felt successful (86 percent). Eighty-three percent felt "it's a good place to hang out."

**Exhibit 26**
**Students' Level of Attachment, Grades 3-8, 2005-06**

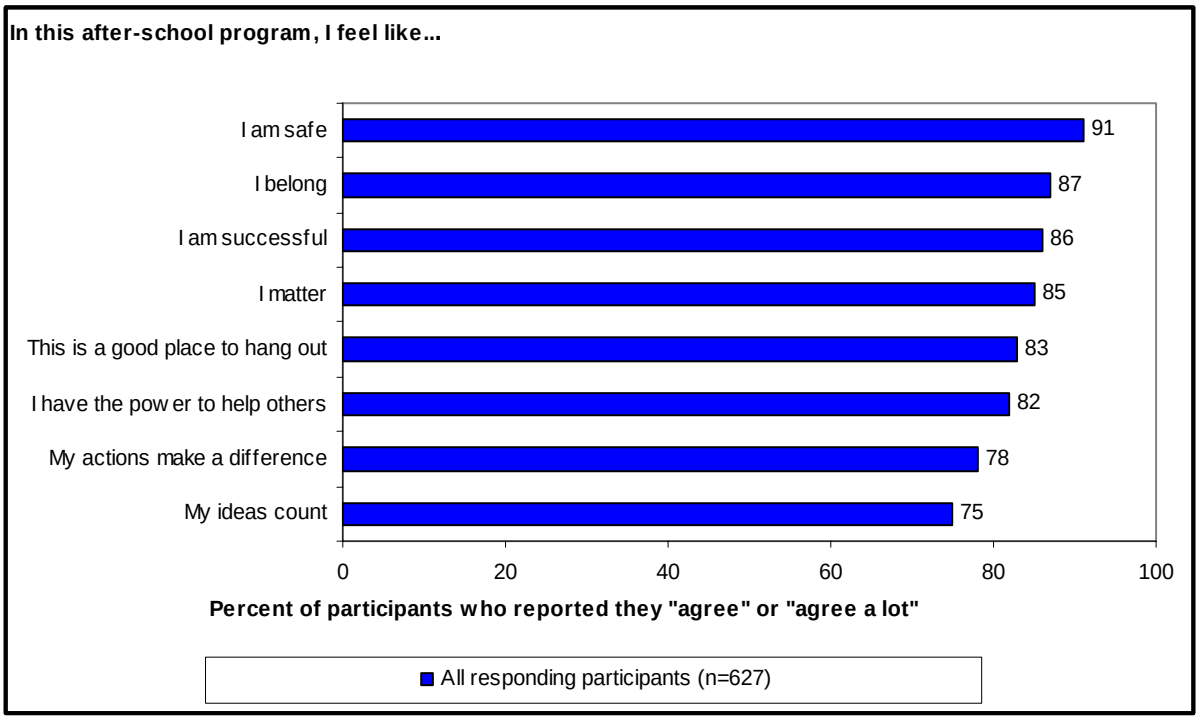



Exhibit reads: Across grades 3-8, 91 percent of responding participants agreed or agreed a lot that they felt safe in the program.

The parents with whom we spoke identified numerous ways in which they too believed their children had benefited through participation in the NJ After 3 programs. In some cases, parents were able to quantify the academic progress that their children had made in terms of specific grades their children had earned, but often parents spoke of attitudinal and behavioral improvements such as higher levels of homework completion and independent reading. Some of the answers we received in response to questions regarding student outcomes are presented below.

*"She is now an honor roll student. She was borderline before, now she is on the honor roll in language arts and mathematics. All of her grades have gone up. I also notice that she appears to seem to want to read more. She is carrying books every day [and] she orders books from all of the book clubs. She never did that before."*

*"He actually likes to read now. It is hard for him to read the words, but the difference now is that he is not pushing the book aside. He wants to try to read."*

*"The aftercare program gets the kids to focus. My child is happy to get the homework all done before he gets home."*

When pressed to identify what it is about the after-school program that accounts for academic improvement among their children, parents often pointed to the fact that time is expressly reserved for completing homework. In addition, several parents noted that the staff convey a willingness to help, and this in turn encourages their children to seek the academic assistance they need.

The students whom we interviewed also discussed some of the ways in which they believe they have benefited academically through their participation in the program. Some were very specific: "My math has gotten better," said one boy. "They showed me the right way to multiply and divide fractions." Another told us her grades had improved: "[I get] all As and Bs." Most were less specific, simply pointing out that "school is easy now" or that "tutoring helps." Another informed us that he was in the chess club because "chess is a mind game and it helps you think better in school."

## Academic Engagement and Skills

Reading/language arts or homeroom teachers in the 10 NJ After 3 programs in the in-depth sample completed a brief report on each participant in grades 3-6. The teacher survey data describe the academic characteristics of these students. The first year's data will serve as a baseline to assess change in participants' academic characteristics over the three-year longitudinal study.

The survey asked teachers to assess students who were NJ After 3 participants on the academic skills and other skills necessary for academic competence, including classroom participation, academic motivation, interpersonal skills, and study skills. Teachers based their assessments on the skills and behaviors that after-school participants exhibited during the regular school day.

According to the responding teachers:

- 75 percent of after-school participants "almost always" or "often" demonstrated academic engagement by speaking in class when they were called upon. Almost 60 percent of participants demonstrated six out of eight listed behaviors that relate to academic engagement. (Academic engagement indicates students' willingness to volunteer to answer questions and readiness to participate in class discussions.)

- Less than half (33 to 49 percent) of after-school participants almost always or often demonstrated 10 out of 11 listed behaviors of academic motivation. (Academic motivation indicates students' eagerness to learn, willingness to take on challenges, ability to stay on target, and evidence of a sense of responsibility for their own learning.)

- Well over half (59 to 69 percent) of after-school participants almost always or often demonstrated all 10 interpersonal skills. (Interpersonal skills indicate how well students follow rules, accept limits, and interact with adults and their peers.)

- Over half of after-school participants almost always or often demonstrated 10 of the 11 study skills. (Study skills illustrate how well students prepare for tests, how often they complete homework, and how often they correct their own work.)

- Well over half (64 to 75 percent) of after-school participants demonstrated good or excellent skills in using computers for four out of five tasks. (Technology skills refer to students' ability to use word processing programs, use the Internet for research, and send and receive e-mails.) Students fared the lowest (46 percent) on using spreadsheet programs, such as Excel.

- In comparison with grade-level expectations at the school, well over half (64 to 73 percent) of after-school participants across grades 3-6 met grade-level expectations on all 11 reading and language arts skills. (Reading and language arts skills denote students' ability to identify a main idea, use grammar and punctuation correctly, and draw conclusions from written material.)

Further analysis revealed significant differences in teacher assessments between low-income students and other students, and between younger students in grades 3-4 and older students in grades 5-6. In general, analysis revealed that in many skill and knowledge areas, fewer low-income student participants were

rated as possessing the skills that teachers deem desirable for academic success, when compared to their higher-income peers who were also enrolled in the after-school program. The same pattern held true for younger versus older students, with fewer younger students rated as possessing needed skills. This suggests that after-school participants from poor families may have the greatest need for the skill-building and academic activities that are offered after school by NJ After 3.

## Social Development and Enrichment

Although academic benefits were important to all concerned, many parents were equally pleased with the social benefits that their children had realized through their participation in various enrichment activities. "They provide so many different activities," said one parent. "Sewing, modeling, arts and crafts, music, [and] of course homework help is number one, first and foremost." Others expressed appreciation for the field trips. "I like that they go on trips," said one parent. "My health is not great, so this…is the only way [my child] would get to go. I like that the children are exposed to elements that are outside of [our community]…museums, educational programs, things like that."

Parents shared several examples of incidents and situations that highlight the ways in which their children have developed in social or non-academic ways. They included the following:

> *"The other day someone must have talked to [my son] about being healthy," reported one mother. "So, he comes home and says, 'Mom, we gotta get rid of some of this junk food.' That tells me he's been paying attention. He [also] loves computers. It helps him work on his fine motor skills. Cooking class…it's all about listening. [He has] improved listening skills."*

> *"I remember when [my daughter] said that she had no friends, and now she does, and she has a good rapport with the staff. They are like family—they really treat them that way. I see improvement as far as her self-esteem. Before she was more of an introvert…and did not have friends. Now she is more outgoing and has more friends…"*

## Healthful Living

Over the past three decades, the rate of obesity among children has doubled, from 15 percent to nearly 30 percent today.[4] According to research experts who convened at the Forum on Childhood Obesity in early 2006, many

[4] Anderson, P., & Butcher, K. (2006). Childhood obesity: Trends and potential causes. *The Future of Children: Childhood Obesity*, 16(1), pp. 19-46.

factors contribute to the growing problem of childhood obesity. An increasing number of studies show that childhood obesity can be improved by interventions in schools that engage children and their families in healthful activity and proper nutrition. In response, NJ After 3 has adopted the promotion of healthy development among children as one of its goals.

The participant survey data describe the indicators of healthy lifestyles exhibited by students in grades 3-8 who participate in NJ After 3. These first-year data will serve as baseline for tracking participants' health characteristics during the three-year longitudinal study.

In addition to participation in physical activities as reported in Exhibit 11 and accompanying text, participants answered questions about their nutrition and sleeping habits. Irrespective of grade or attendance level, participants were most likely to report that they ate fast food from a fast-food restaurant one to two times a week, as shown in Exhibit 27. A quarter more participants ate fast food at least three times a week or more. These data on eating habits confirm the need for activities that educate participants on nutrition.

**Exhibit 27**
**Eating Habits of Students by Grade Cluster, Grades 3-8, 2005-06**

| Number of times a week students eat fast food from a fast food restaurant (n=643) | Percent of Students | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Grades 3-5** (n=472) | **Grade 6-8** (n=188) | **All Grades** (n=643) |
| Less than once a week | 28 | 23 | 27 |
| One to two times a week | 50 | 51 | 48 |
| Three times a week or more | 23 | 26 | 24 |

Exhibit reads: Across grades 3-8, 27 percent of participants ate fast food from a fast food restaurant less than once a week. Twenty-eight percent of participants in grades 3-5 reported as such, compared to 23 percent of students in grades 6-8.

Participants in grades 3-5 were more likely to report that they slept at least eight hours on a typical night, compared to older students in grades 6-8, as shown in Exhibit 28. For example, while 77 percent of students in grades 3-5 (343 of 446) reported that they slept on a school night at least eight hours, only 62 percent of youth in grades 6-8 (114 of 184) reported that they did the same. Similarly, 64 percent of youth in grades 3-5 (266 of 415) reported that they slept on a weekend night at least eight hours, compared to 55 percent of youth in grades 6-8 (98 of 178). These data suggest that about a quarter to almost half of students in all grades were not getting the minimum amount of sleep required for optimum concentration and mental acuity in school.

**Exhibit 28**
**Amount of Sleep Students Reported by Grade Cluster, Grades 3-8, 2005-06**

| I get at least 8 hours of sleep on a typical… | Percent of Students | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Grades 3-5 (n=446) | Grade 6-8 (n=184) | All Grades (n=636) |
| School night (n=630)* | 77 | 62 | 72 |
| Weekend night (n=593) | 64 | 55 | 61 |

* These differences were statistically significant (p<.05).

Exhibit reads: Across grades 3-8, 72 percent of participants reported that they got at least eight hours of sleep on a typical school night. Seventy-seven percent of participants in grades 3-5 reported that much sleep, compared to 62 percent of students in grades 6-8.

## Other Reactions of Families

Many parents expressed strong feelings of relief and gratitude that the NJ After 3 program was available to their children. In addition, some were eager to describe how they and their families had benefited through their children's participation. "My girls are timid [but] since starting this program they are more outgoing…I like that [program staff] check homework here, too, so I don't have to be behind them about it when I get home," said one mother. Others emphasized safety. "I don't let [my children] hang outside, so [this program] is their only chance to leave the house after school. Safety is a big issue here, the streets are very bad and kids do not go out to play like they want to. They don't get to play after school…to be safe they have to stay in the house." Other parents expressed similar sentiments. "I don't want [my child] playing outside where we live, there are too many negative people and I will not let her play with them," said one mother. Another reiterated: "There is an element of danger that exists [in my neighborhood]."

In addition to experiencing peace of mind, parents also reported practical economic and personal benefits, such as the ability to focus on their jobs and the freedom and flexibility to attend to personal responsibilities. For example, one mother said she was able to take her younger child, who is chronically ill, to medical appointments without having to subject her older child to this time-consuming and boring activity. Other parental feedback included the following:

> *"I am happy to know where she is…in a structured environment from 3-6 PM. It gives me peace of mind."*

> *"There are things I have to do at work. Meetings. I know the program closes at 6 PM so I can stay longer [at work] because I know that my child is in a secure place. It's helped our family."*

*"I love it. It does help me. I was a housemother for 7 years, but now I am a nurse. I wanted to work eight hours [and] now I can do that."*

# 7. Findings About Important Program Features

This final section identifies those program structures and practices that have the potential to most strongly affect the achievement of desirable program goals. The discussion is framed by key quality indicators that researchers in the field of youth development have determined can promote positive changes among students who participate in out-of-school time programs. In addition, we examine those aspects of the NJ After 3 programs that appear to be most responsive to parent and student needs and that also enhance the quality of the experience for participants.

## Availability of Rich Content-based Activities

Students and their parents want after-school programs to provide information and learning opportunities that are not available through their schools and that family resources cannot provide. Programs recognized this need and have tried to expand offerings and hire appropriate staff for the clubs and activities that students and parents have requested. The need is great, however, and programs confront obstacles such as limited space, unqualified staff, or inadequate financial resources as they try to introduce new classes and activities.

Although students voiced frustration and criticism infrequently, when they did, they typically spoke of their inability to enroll in the clubs or activities that they considered to be most interesting. "I signed up for advanced dance, but I got placed in sewing," lamented one of many students who expressed frustration over their activity placement. Some programs have tried to address this issue by actively soliciting ideas from students about the activities that interest them most. The results have been generally positive. For example, one student explained that a staff member "took notes about what we want to do that would be more helpful or more fun. [As a result] we got math games, and science games, and we have more time to play leap tag…."

The need to keep students challenged and engaged through the provision of rich content-based activities is particularly important for retaining older students. The participant survey data indicate that, in general, fewer of those in grades 6-8 experienced the same high level of satisfaction with program offerings, compared to their younger peers. In addition, older students attended the after-school programs with less regularity than did younger students. Although very few (12 percent) site coordinators considered enrollment and attendance levels to present challenges, retention was lower among older students. This issue may be

able to be addressed through program content that meets adolescents' need for challenge, variety, and interest.

One programming area that could be further developed is community service outside the school setting. Site-visit interviews with 10 site coordinators and 63 students indicated that, within this group of 10 programs, the availability of service learning projects was limited. Fewer than half of the site coordinators (45 percent) in the program overall reported that their programs offered service projects outside the school. Students expressed great enthusiasm about such activities and wanted more. "I wish we could help out senior citizens or something, but we don't," said one student. Another student told us she planned to bring this issue to the attention of the site coordinator and request that opportunities for service be explored. We also heard requests for more field trips, conflict resolution programs, health and nutrition activities, hands-on science activities, technology, dance, and drama.

### Delivery of Learning- and Mastery-oriented Content

Students were particularly engaged by activities that were structured and focused on the achievement of clear goals. Long-term projects in dance, drama, and fashion typically satisfied these criteria and were immensely popular among students. In these classes, students honed their skills and routines over a period of weeks in preparation for a culminating event. Similarly, when students made kitchen utensils in a woodwork class, participated in a chess tournament, or sewed an outfit, the process of learning and developing mastery was evident to them and to others. However, guiding students through the learning process associated with special projects takes time and concentrated effort. Sufficient time must be allotted for these activities to minimize disruptions that interrupt the learning experience, and after-school program schedules should be developed with this goal in mind.

Requiring staff to develop projects or activities with long-term goals and objectives may not always be feasible given limitations related to staff expertise, time, and other resources. Nevertheless, staff should be encouraged to develop programs that allow students to experience growth and progress over time and to demonstrate that progress to others. As new activities are introduced, those that offer the most potential for learning and mastery could be given highest priority.

Fifty-nine percent of site coordinators reported that they used published or externally-developed curricula to guide some of the activities that were offered at their programs. In most cases, program staff designed their own lesson plans and developed the content and activities for each session. While this allowed instructors to be flexible and responsive to student interests and needs, it can also have the unintended outcome of uneven quality within and across programs. This possibility is increased by the fact that only two-thirds (67 percent) of site

coordinators required most or all of their staff to submit lesson plans for review on a regular basis. As the goal of an activity shifts from content exposure to a deeper, perhaps longer-term learning experience, staff will need to be even more intentional about planning and curriculum design.

## Practices to Support Positive Relationships

NJ After 3 programs facilitated the development of positive relationships between staff and students and among students at many sites. Through both formal activities and informal interactions, students and staff got to know each other and reported relationships of trust and caring. Site visit observations and survey data suggest that, in general, students were comfortable and relaxed in their interactions with their peers and with the adults in the program.

The significant presence of youthful staff members with whom students feel they can relate and the programs' low student staff-ratios supported these positive relationships. Almost all of the site coordinators (91 percent) indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that student groups within the program were small enough for staff to meet participants' individual needs.

Relationships also developed within activities that encouraged communication between staff and students during tasks that engaged students physically and mentally. Examples of such activities included a dance class in which students and staff choreographed dance moves together, or a character-development class during which staff required students to analyze, defend, and discuss their opinions and beliefs. "Structured" free time during which students could set the agenda but which required staff to actively engage with participants on a one-on-one basis or in small groups also promoted positive relationships.

NJ After 3 should work to keep student-staff ratios low and encourage staff to reach out to students to initiate new relationships and build trust. Similarly, staff should be intentional in their organization and planning of games and activities that require students to communicate with and assist each other.

## Strong Partnerships and Links with Families, Schools, and Other Organizations

Staff at after-school programs expressed awareness of the multiple needs that existed among program participants. These needs were academic, social, physical, and emotional. Staff acknowledged that it was unreasonable to expect a single organization to adequately address all of the needs. However, because the organizations and staff members who provide after-school services had expertise, experience, and personal contacts in the fields of both social services and education, they were uniquely positioned to identify resources and information for

program participants and their families. The result was that many after-school programs served as conduits between families and community resources, helping to identify needs, raise awareness, and provide necessary services.

Parents also received information from the after-school program regarding program-related activities and upcoming events, and about their children's behavior and achievements. However, much of the interaction between staff and parents occurred informally, such as during pick-up at the end of the program day or on the telephone during evenings and weekends, when a specific issue arises. Teacher survey data revealed that the amount of communication varied significantly among parents. Teachers reported that they communicated with African American and white parents more often than they did with Latino and Asian parents.

As the number of students from Latino and Asian ethnic groups, especially recent immigrants, grows in many communities, after-school programs need to become more responsive to these populations. While it is not entirely clear from our research that language differences explain this finding, it may indeed be a contributing factor. Sixty-two percent of site coordinators reported that too few staff with skills to work with English Language Learners was a major challenge.

Program relationships with schools also varied by location. Some sites were still trying to develop procedures and establish boundaries and expectations with their host schools. All of the site coordinators with whom we spoke said that sharing space and materials was a challenge. According to one site coordinator, "The school is not big enough; other programs are here. We can't have a whole section of the school." Others had good working relationships, and it was likely that students benefited from the efforts of school staff and after-school staff to share ideas and materials, and to reinforce what each other was doing to promote academic achievement. As one site coordinator said, she would like her program to be "somewhat consistent with the day school but different enough to keep them interested and keep them coming." As we heard in several programs, the high rates of staff turnover in many schools will challenge these efforts. "Lots of new teachers were hired at the school this year and they are not used to sharing their space. If [the after-school students or staff] leave one little thing out of place, they blow it up way out of proportion," said one site coordinator. The arrival of each new administrator, and to some extent classroom teacher, signals the need to build new bridges and begin new conversations regarding responsibilities and expectations.

## Looking Toward Year 2

This report describes what we have learned about the program goals, participants, staff, activities, operations, and short-term outcomes of this initiative based on data collected from Year 1 of the evaluation. These descriptions of programs and students in 2005-06 will serve as baseline data for the longitudinal analyses that will be conducted in Years 2 and 3 of the evaluation. Future phases of the evaluation will be able to provide more information on the extent to which programs and participants were able to meet the initiative's goals.

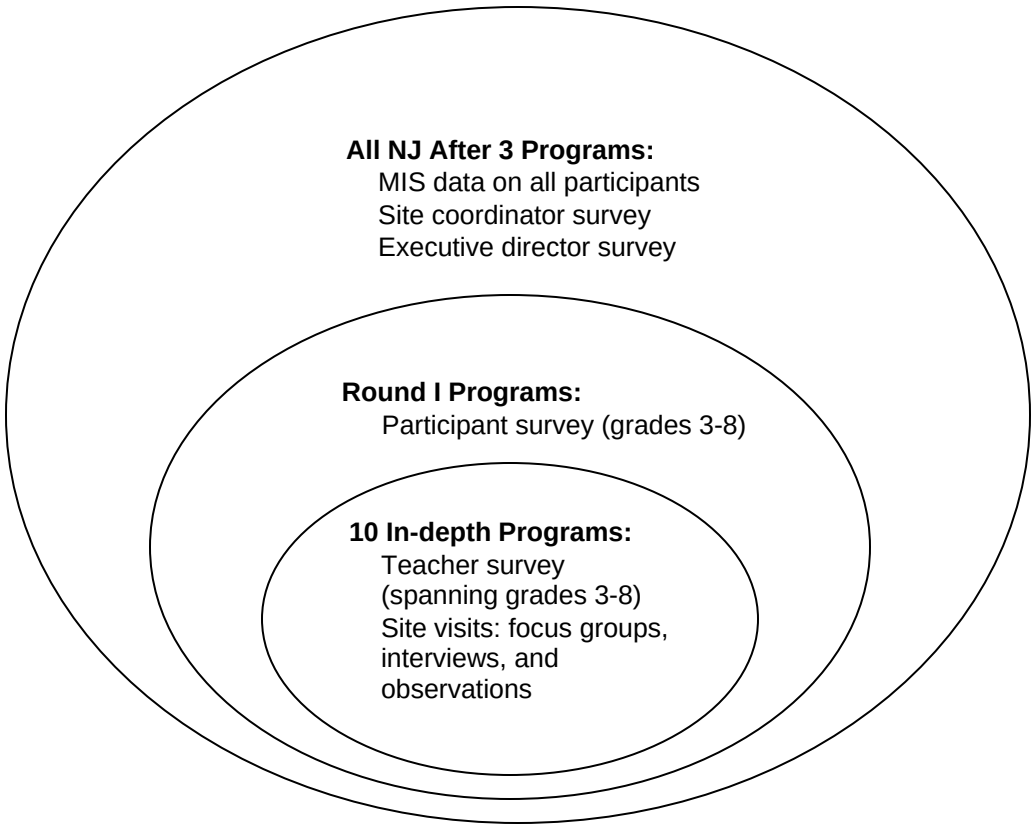
# Technical Appendix

# Method Used in Selecting the In-depth Study Sample

The evaluation employed a nested sample to collect data from all NJ After 3 projects. A graphic representation of this sampling procedure is provided in Exhibit A-1. The sampling design permits us to collect certain types of overview data from all program sites, with progressively more detailed information available from smaller samples. The nested sampling strategy also permits us to make informed estimates of overall program and outcome patterns based on information obtained from subsets of programs and participants.

To select the ten programs for the in-depth evaluation sample, we conducted a random selection from the pool of Round 1 programs. We used this selection method because the number of possible sites (21) was too small to extract a statistically significant sample based on stratification variables. The random assignment yielded a sample of elementary and middle school programs located in six out of the nine counties represented in the NJ After 3 initiative.

**Exhibit A-1**
**NJ After 3 Evaluation Nested Sample Approach**



# Details of Data Used in Analyses of Baseline Participant Characteristics, Based on Participant Survey

## Exhibit A-2
## Participant Self-Reports of Physical Activity, by Grade Level

| Percent of participants who reported engaging in the activity at least three hours a week | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **In a given week, I…** | **Grades 3-5 (n=445)** | **Grades 6-8 (n=183)** | **Chi-Square** | **p** |
| Play basketball, football, or soccer | 45 | 37 | 3.30 | 0.08 |
| Run or walk | 42 | 35 | 2.91 | 0.10 |
| Participate in physical activity that isn't listed above* | 37 | 28 | 5.06 | 0.03 |
| Dance as part of a group* | 29 | 17 | 9.19 | 0.00 |
| Jump Double Dutch* | 23 | 15 | 4.41 | 0.04 |
| Lift weights* | 21 | 12 | 7.06 | 0.01 |
| Do martial arts like Taekwondo or judo* | 21 | 6 | 20.22 | 0.00 |

* These differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Exhibit reads: Forty-five percent of students in grades 3-5 reported that in a given week they played basketball, football, or soccer at least three hours, compared to 37 percent of students in grades 6-8. This difference was not statistically significant.

## Exhibit A-3
## Participant Self-Reports of Engagement in Inactive Behaviors, by Grade Level

| Percent of participants who reported inactive behavior four or more hours per school day | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **On a given school day, I…** | **Grades 3-5 (n=435)** | **Grades 6-8 (n=181)** | **Chi-Square** | **p** |
| Watch television | 39 | 42 | 0.50 | 0.52 |
| Play video games | 23 | 17 | 2.25 | 0.16 |

Exhibit reads: Thirty-nine percent of students in grades 3-5 reported that on a given school day they watched television for four or more hours, compared to 42 percent of students in grades 6-8. This difference was not statistically significant.

# Details of Data Used in Analyses of Participant Experiences and Program Features

## Participant Survey Responses

### Exhibit A-4
### Participant Self-Reports of Exposure to New Opportunities, by Grade Level

| Percent of participants who "agreed" or "agreed a lot" to exposure to new opportunities | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **In this program…** | **Grades 3-5 (n=454)** | **Grades 6-8 (n=188)** | **Chi-Square** | **p** |
| I get a chance to do a lot of new things* | 86 | 78 | 6.72 | 0.01 |
| I get to work on activities that really make me think* | 82 | 71 | 9.19 | 0.00 |
| The activities really get me interested | 80 | 75 | 2.02 | 0.17 |
| I get to do things that I don't usually get to do anywhere else* | 76 | 67 | 5.01 | 0.03 |
| There is a lot for me to choose to do | 71 | 65 | 2.32 | 0.13 |
| I get to do community service projects* | 53 | 44 | 4.34 | 0.04 |

* These differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Exhibit reads: Eighty-six percent of students in grades 3-5 "agreed" or "agreed a lot" that they got a chance to do a lot of new things in the program, compared to 78 percent of students in grades 6-8 who replied the same. This difference was statistically significant.

## Participant Survey Scales

### *Exposure to New Opportunities*

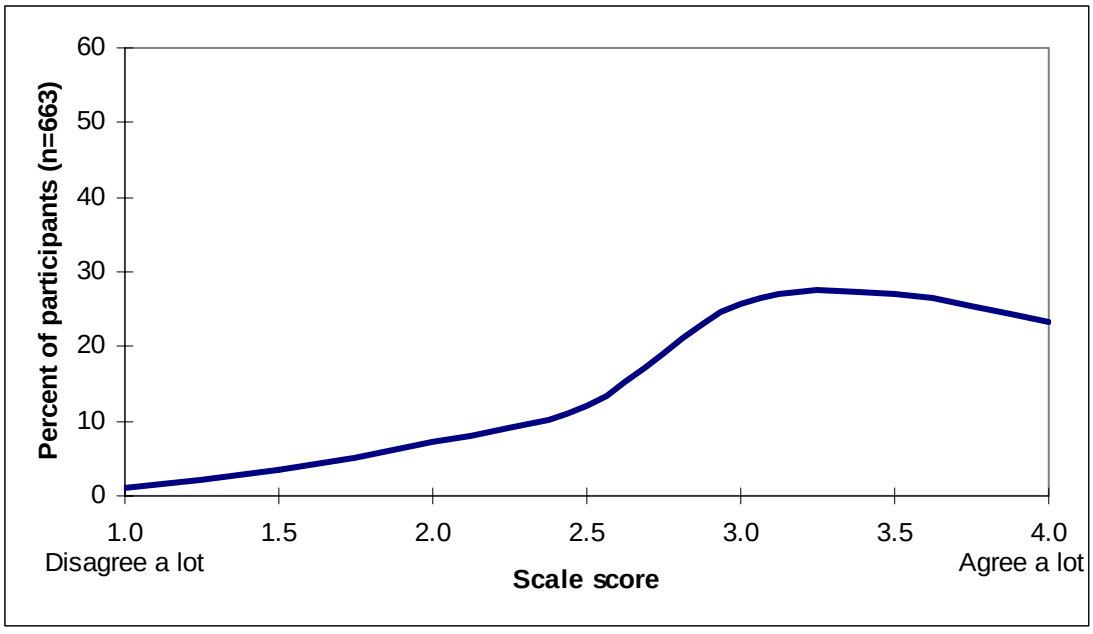
The Exposure to New Opportunities scale was computed to range from one to four, with four indicating that on average participants strongly agreed with the following statements:

In this afterschool program…

- I get a chance to do a lot of new things
- I get to do things that I don't usually get to do anywhere else
- I get to work on activities that really make me think
- There is a lot for me to choose to do
- The activities really get me interested
- I get to do community service projects

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.79 | 3.01 | .071 | 1 | 2.67 | 3.50 | 4 |



***Community Service Projects***

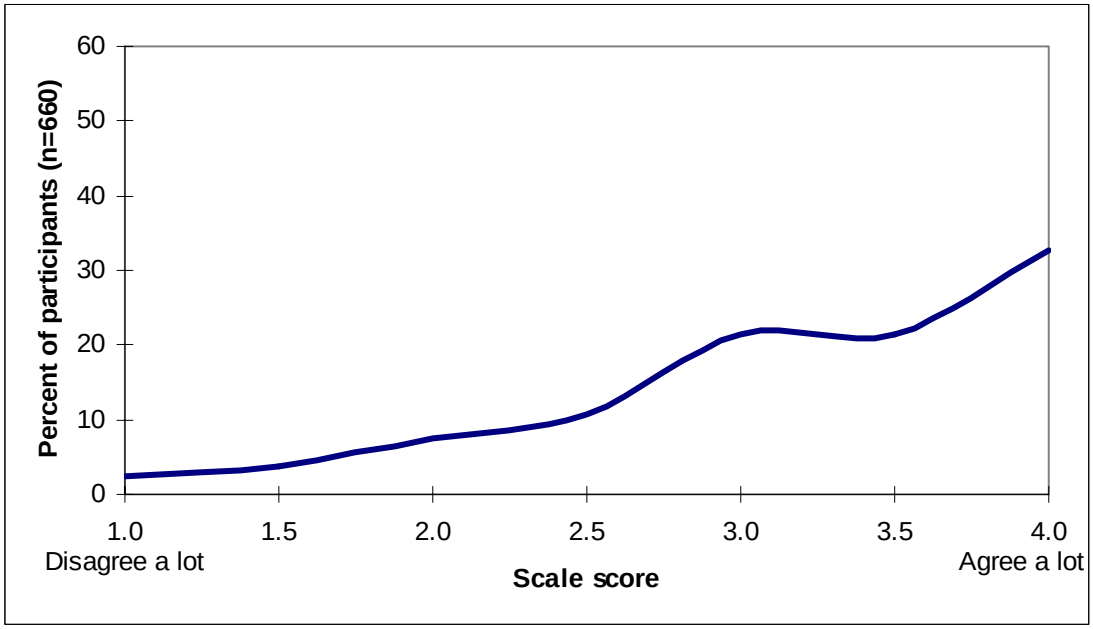
The Community Service Projects scale was computed to range from one to four, with four indicating that on average participants strongly agreed with the following statements:

Participating in community service projects with this afterschool program, I feel like…

- My actions make a difference in the community
- My actions help others
- I have learned more about my community
- I have learned more about how I can help others
- I have learned more about other organizations in my community
- It is important to volunteer and help others
- I will continue to volunteer to help others in my community
- I can call myself a volunteer

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.92 | 2.94 | 0.89 | 1 | 2.50 | 3.63 | 4 |



***Sense of Belonging***

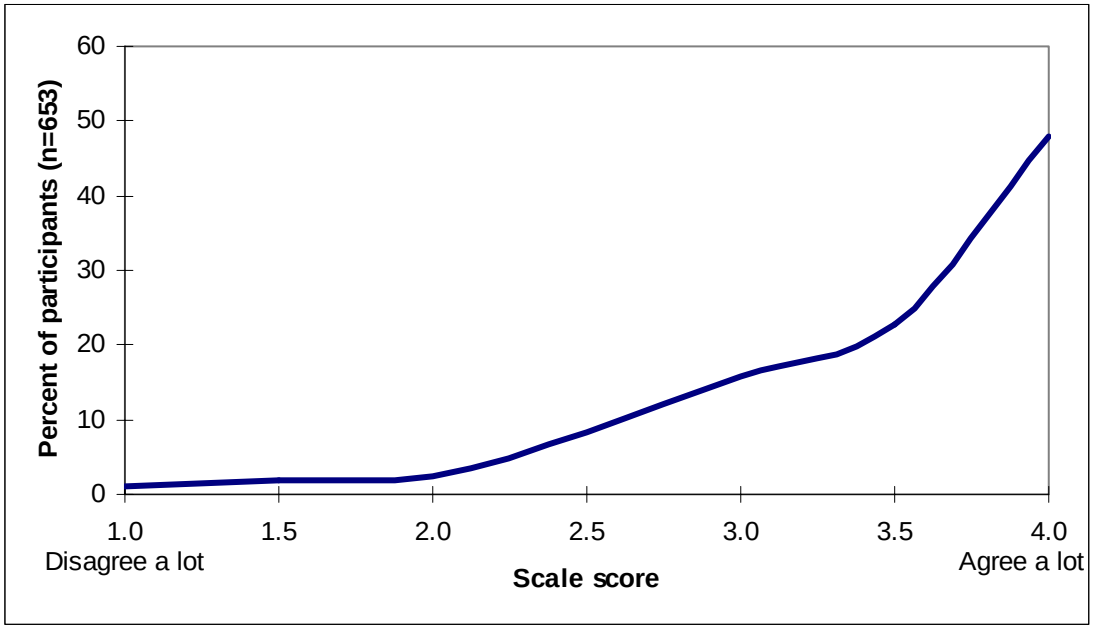
The Sense of Belonging scale was computed to range from one to four, with four indicating that on average participants strongly agreed with the following statements:

In this afterschool program, I feel like…

- I belong
- My ideas count
- I am successful
- This is a good place to hang out
- I matter
- I am safe
- My actions make a difference
- I have the power to help others

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.87 | 3.35 | 0.68 | 1 | 3.00 | 4.00 | 4 |



***Interactions with Staff***

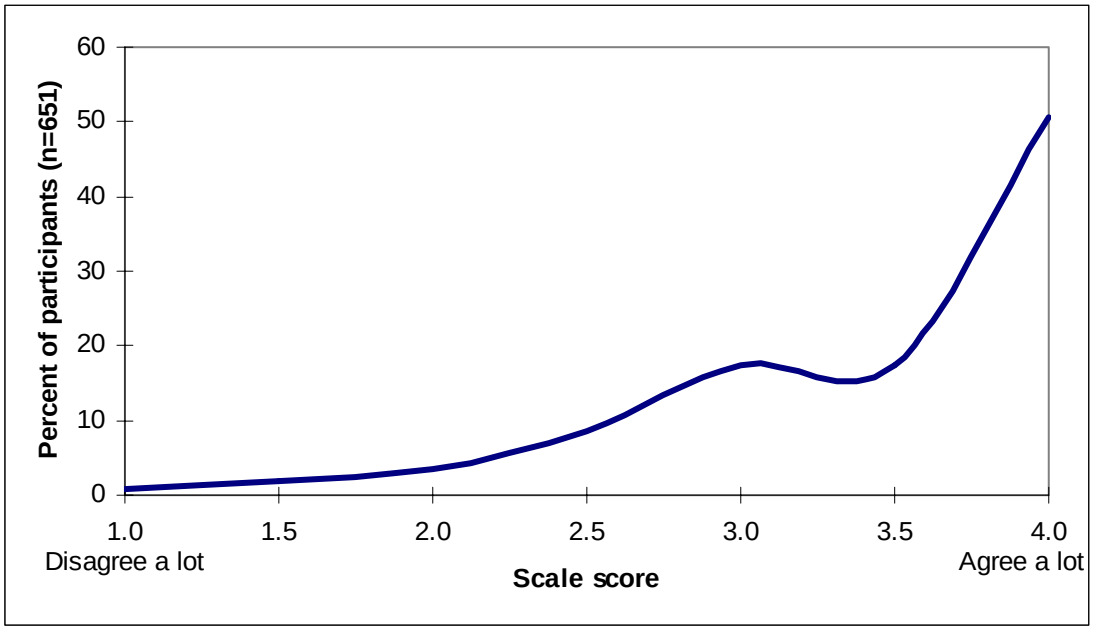
The Interactions with Staff scale was computed to range from one to four, with four indicating that on average participants strongly agreed with the following statements:

In this afterschool program…

- Staff treat me with respect
- I feel that I can talk to staff about things that are bothering me
- Staff really care about me
- Staff often keep their promises
- Staff care what I think
- Staff try to be fair
- Staff think I can do things well
- Staff help me to try new things
- Staff think I can learn new things

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.91 | 3.31 | 0.71 | 1 | 2.89 | 4.00 | 4 |



***Interactions with Peers***

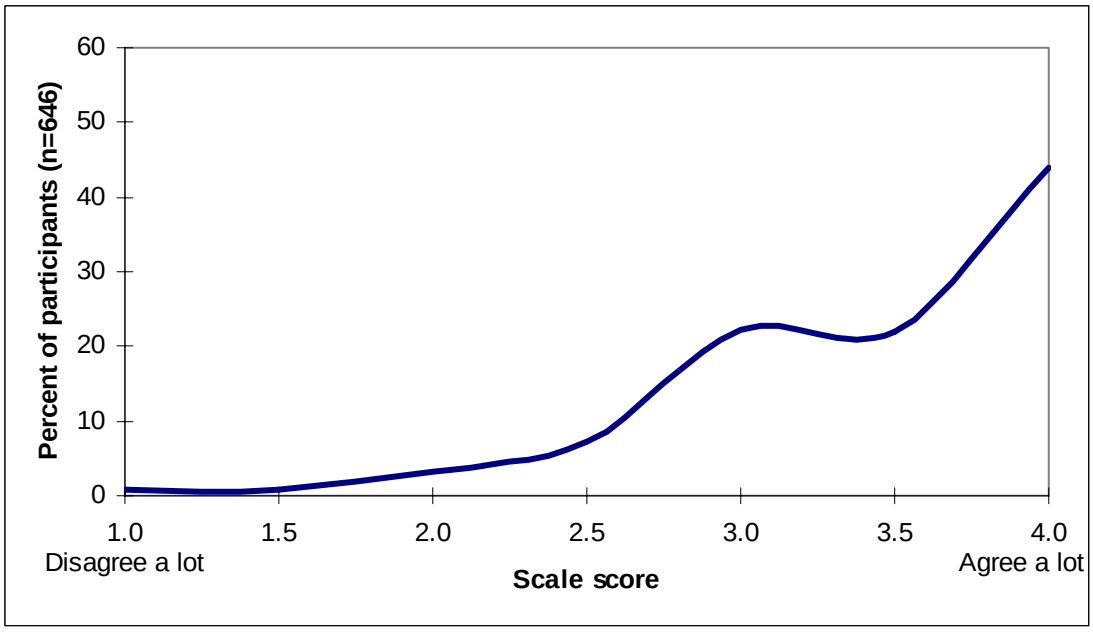
The Interactions with Peers scale was computed to range from one to four, with four indicating that on average participants strongly agreed with the following statements:

In this afterschool program, I…

- Get to know other kids really well
- Can really trust the other kids
- Have a lot of friends
- Like the other kids
- Have a good time playing with other kids
- Get along with other kids
- Get to work with other kids as part of a team

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.84 | 3.27 | 0.64 | 1 | 2.86 | 3.86 | 4 |



# Details of Data Used in Analyses of Participant Academic Engagement and Skills

## Participant Survey Scales

### *Academic Benefits of the Program*

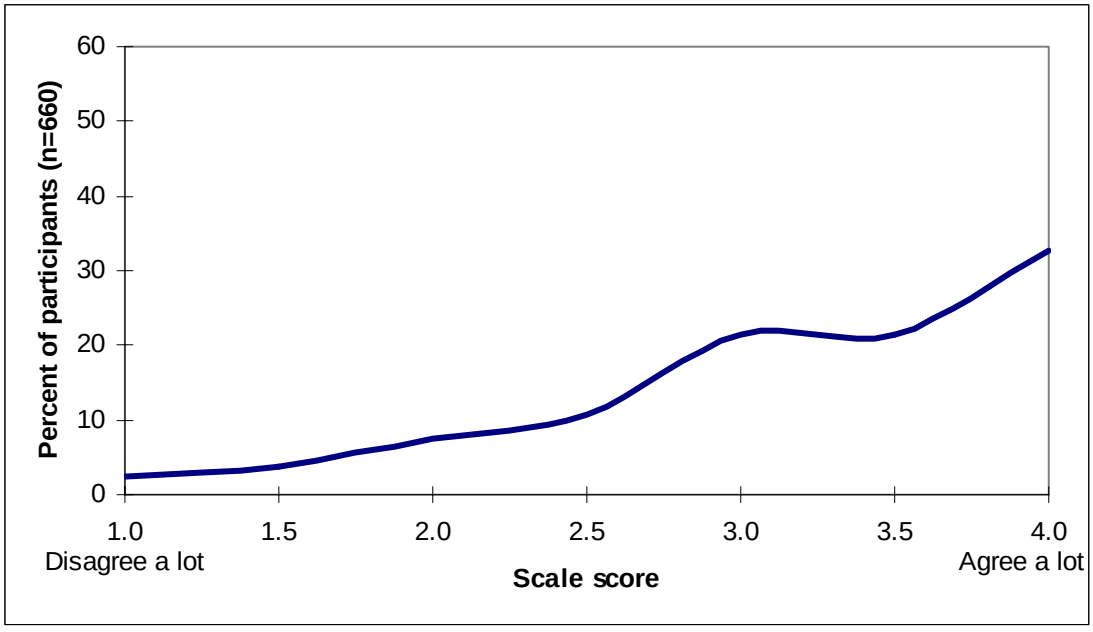
The Academic Benefits of the Program scale was computed to range from one to four, with four indicating that on average participants strongly agreed with the following statements:

The afterschool program has helped me…

- Get better grades in school
- Feel better about my schoolwork
- Read and understand better
- Solve math problems better
- Finish my homework more often
- Write better
- Use computers to do schoolwork better

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.86 | 3.03 | 0.79 | 1 | 2.58 | 3.71 | 4 |



## Teacher Survey Responses

### *By Grade Level*

**Exhibit A-5**
**Teacher Reports of Participants' Interpersonal Skills, by Grade Level**

| Percent of participants who "almost always" or "often" exhibited the following interpersonal skills | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Grades 3-4 (n=161)** | **Grades 5-6 (n=142)** | **Chi-Square** | **p** |
| Gets along with people who are different | 69 | 68 | 0.01 | 1.00 |
| Follows classroom rules | 67 | 67 | 0.01 | 1.00 |
| Corrects inappropriate behavior when asked | 67 | 67 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Interacts appropriately with adults | 67 | 66 | 0.03 | 0.90 |
| Works effectively in a small group activity | 66 | 66 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Listens to what others have to say | 66 | 61 | 0.68 | 0.47 |
| Interacts appropriately with other students | 65 | 65 | 0.01 | 1.00 |
| Accepts suggestions from teachers | 65 | 59 | 1.18 | 0.29 |
| Works effectively in a large group activity | 63 | 62 | 0.02 | 0.91 |
| Expresses dissatisfaction appropriately | 55 | 63 | 2.37 | 0.13 |

Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 69 percent of students in grades 3-4 "almost always" or "often" followed classroom rules, compared to 68 percent of students in grades 5-6. This difference was not statistically significant.

## Exhibit A-6
## Teacher Reports of Participants' Academic Engagement, by Grade Level

| Percent of participants who "almost always" or "often" exhibited the following academic engagement behaviors | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Grades 3-4 (n=161)** | **Grades 5-6 (n=142)** | **Chi-Square** | **p** |
| Speaks in class when called upon | 76 | 75 | 0.05 | 0.89 |
| Participates in class discussions | 58 | 64 | 1.26 | 0.29 |
| Volunteers answers to questions | 57 | 63 | 0.96 | 0.35 |
| Volunteers to read aloud | 55 | 63 | 1.10 | 0.16 |
| Asks questions about tests or projects | 55 | 59 | 0.62 | 0.49 |
| Asks questions when confused | 55 | 57 | 0.10 | 0.82 |
| Initiates conversations appropriately | 53 | 60 | 1.53 | 0.25 |
| Assumes leadership in group situations | 38 | 44 | 1.31 | 0.29 |

Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 76 percent of students in grades 3-4 "almost always" or "often" spoke in class when called upon, compared to 75 percent of students in grades 5-6. This difference was not statistically significant.

## Exhibit A-7
## Teacher Reports of Participants' Academic Motivation, by Grade Level

| Percent of participants who "almost always" or "often" exhibited the following academic motivation behaviors | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Grades 3-4 (n=161)** | **Grades 5-6 (n=142)** | **Chi-Square** | **p** |
| Is motivated to learn | 59 | 59 | 0.01 | 1.00 |
| Stays on task | 45 | 53 | 1.99 | 0.17 |
| Makes the most of learning experiences | 44 | 49 | 0.61 | 0.49 |
| Attempts to improve on previous performance | 41 | 49 | 2.10 | 0.17 |
| Persists when task is difficult | 40 | 44 | 0.50 | 0.49 |
| Assumes responsibility for own learning | 36 | 44 | 1.84 | 0.20 |
| Prefers challenging tasks | 36 | 43 | 1.52 | 0.24 |
| Is goal-oriented | 35 | 42 | 1.21 | 0.29 |
| Produces high-quality work* | 32 | 47 | 6.97 | 0.01 |
| Looks for ways to academically challenge self | 30 | 38 | 1.94 | 0.18 |
| Critically evaluates own work* | 28 | 39 | 4.48 | 0.04 |

*These differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 59 percent of students in grades 3-4 "almost always" or "often" were motivated to learn, compared to 59 percent of students in grades 5-6. This relationship was not statistically significant.

## Exhibit A-8
## Teacher Reports of Participants' Study Skills, by Grade Level

| Percent of participants who "almost always" or "often" exhibited the following study skills | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Grades 3-4 (n=161)** | **Grades 5-6 (n=142)** | **Chi-Square** | **p** |
| Completes homework | 72 | 63 | 3.03 | 0.09 |
| Turns in homework on time | 69 | 59 | 3.61 | 0.07 |
| Takes care of materials | 62 | 70 | 2.26 | 0.15 |
| Completes assignments according to directions | 58 | 64 | 1.26 | 0.29 |
| Pays attention in class | 58 | 59 | 0.06 | 0.82 |
| Prepares for class | 58 | 58 | 0.01 | 1.00 |
| Finishes class work on time | 56 | 67 | 3.84 | 0.06 |
| Prepares for tests | 52 | 56 | 0.70 | 0.42 |
| Corrects own work | 48 | 51 | 0.9 | 0.57 |
| Takes notes in class | 47 | 58 | 3.77 | 0.07 |
| Reviews materials | 44 | 52 | 2.26 | 0.14 |

Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 72 percent of students in grades 3-4 "almost always" or "often" completed homework, compared to 63 percent of students in grades 5-6. This difference was not statistically significant.

## Exhibit A-9
## Teacher Reports of Participants' Reading and Language Arts Skills, by Grade Level

| Percent of participants who met at least grade-level expectations for the following reading and language arts skills | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Grades 3-4 (n=161)** | **Grades 5-6 (n=141)** | **Chi-Square** | **p** |
| Oral communication | 70 | 77 | 2.29 | 0.15 |
| Spelling* | 62 | 75 | 5.26 | 0.03 |
| Reading comprehension | 62 | 72 | 3.46 | 0.07 |
| Reading fluency | 62 | 71 | 2.47 | 0.14 |
| Word-attack | 62 | 70 | 2.27 | 0.15 |
| Vocabulary | 62 | 69 | 1.47 | 0.28 |
| Punctuation | 61 | 71 | 2.97 | 0.09 |
| Drawing conclusion from written material* | 60 | 73 | 6.03 | 0.02 |
| Identifying a main idea* | 59 | 73 | 6.57 | 0.01 |
| Grammar | 59 | 70 | 4.10 | 0.05 |
| Written communication* | 58 | 70 | 4.37 | 0.04 |

*These differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 70 percent of students in grades 3-4 met at least grade-level expectations regarding reading comprehension skills, compared to 77 percent of students in grades 5-6. This difference was not statistically significant.

## Exhibit A-10
## Teacher Reports of Participants' Technology Skills, by Grade Level

| Percent of participants who exhibited "excellent" or "good" technology skills | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Grades 3-4 (n=135)** | **Grades 5-6 (n=124)** | **Chi-Square** | **p** |
| Playing games* | 68 | 82 | 6.66 | 0.01 |
| Use of Internet for research* | 54 | 73 | 8.79 | 0.00 |
| Use of word processing program* | 51 | 77 | 16.36 | 0.00 |
| Sending and receiving e-mail* | 49 | 80 | 18.09 | 0.00 |
| Use of spreadsheet program* | 26 | 72 | 29.32 | 0.00 |

*These differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 68 percent of students in grades 3-4 exhibited "excellent" or "good" technology skills, compared to 82 percent of students in grades 5-6. This difference was statistically significant.

*By Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Status*

## Exhibit A-11
## Teacher Reports of Participants' Interpersonal Skills, by Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Status

| Percent of participants who "almost always" or "often" exhibited the following interpersonal skills | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Received Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch (n=119)** | **Did Not Receive Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch (n=58)** | **Chi-Square** | **p** |
| Gets along with people who are different | 70 | 76 | 0.72 | 0.40 |
| Interacts appropriately with other students | 68 | 76 | 1.14 | 0.29 |
| Interacts appropriately with adults | 66 | 79 | 3.52 | 0.06 |
| Works effectively in a small group activity | 66 | 76 | 1.65 | 0.20 |
| Follows classroom rules* | 63 | 83 | 7.16 | 0.01 |
| Corrects inappropriate behavior when asked* | 62 | 83 | 7.71 | 0.01 |
| Listens to what others have to say* | 62 | 78 | 4.20 | 0.04 |
| Works effectively in a large group activity | 62 | 76 | 3.28 | 0.07 |
| Expresses dissatisfaction appropriately | 60 | 71 | 2.04 | 0.15 |
| Accepts suggestions from teachers* | 58 | 74 | 4.38 | 0.04 |

*These differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 70 percent of students who received free- or reduced-price lunch "almost always" or "often" followed classroom rules, compared to 76 percent of students who did not receive free- or reduced-price lunch. This difference was not statistically significant.

## Exhibit A-12
## Teacher Reports of Participants' Academic Engagement, by Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Status

| Percent of participants who "almost always" or "often" exhibited the following academic engagement behaviors | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Received Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch (n=119)** | **Did Not Receive Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch (n=58)** | **Chi-Square** | **p** |
| Speaks in class when called upon | 79 | 86 | 1.34 | 0.25 |
| Asks questions when confused | 61 | 59 | 0.12 | 0.73 |
| Participates in class discussions | 60 | 71 | 2.04 | 0.15 |
| Volunteers answers to questions | 59 | 69 | 1.71 | 0.19 |
| Volunteers to read aloud | 58 | 69 | 1.99 | 0.16 |
| Asks questions about tests or projects | 56 | 71 | 3.39 | 0.07 |
| Initiates conversations appropriately | 56 | 67 | 1.94 | 0.16 |
| Assumes leadership in group situations | 40 | 53 | 3.08 | 0.08 |

Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 79 percent of students who received free- or reduced-price lunch "almost always" or "often" spoke in class when called upon, compared to 86 percent of students who did not receive free- or reduced-price lunch. This difference was not statistically significant.

## Exhibit A-13
## Teacher Reports of Participants' Academic Motivation, by Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Status

| Percent of participants who "almost always" or "often" exhibited the following academic motivation behaviors | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Received Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch (n=119)** | **Did Not Receive Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch (n=58)** | **Chi-Square** | **p** |
| Is motivated to learn* | 53 | 76 | 8.57 | 0.00 |
| Stays on task* | 45 | 66 | 6.87 | 0.01 |
| Attempts to improve on previous performance | 45 | 55 | 1.77 | 0.18 |
| Makes the most of learning experiences* | 40 | 60 | 6.82 | 0.01 |
| Persists when task is difficult* | 38 | 57 | 5.76 | 0.02 |
| Assumes responsibility for own learning* | 35 | 59 | 8.66 | 0.00 |
| Prefers challenging tasks* | 35 | 53 | 5.83 | 0.02 |
| Is goal-oriented* | 33 | 59 | 10.75 | 0.00 |
| Produces high-quality work* | 33 | 55 | 8.14 | 0.00 |
| Looks for ways to academically challenge self* | 29 | 48 | 6.65 | 0.01 |
| Critically evaluates own work* | 29 | 45 | 4.60 | 0.03 |

*These differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 53 percent of students who received free- or reduced-price lunch "almost always" or "often" were motivated to learn, compared to 76 percent of students who did not receive free- or reduced-price lunch. This difference was statistically significant.

## Exhibit A-14
## Teacher Reports of Participants' Study Skills, by Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Status

| Percent of participants who "almost always" or "often" exhibited the following study skills | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Received Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch (n=119)** | **Did Not Receive Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch (n=58)** | **Chi-Square** | **p** |
| Completes homework | 66 | 78 | 2.67 | 0.10 |
| Takes care of materials | 64 | 76 | 2.57 | 0.11 |
| Finishes class work on time* | 62 | 79 | 5.24 | 0.02 |
| Turns in homework on time | 62 | 76 | 3.28 | 0.07 |
| Completes assignments according to directions* | 57 | 76 | 5.88 | 0.02 |
| Pays attention in class* | 54 | 74 | 6.76 | 0.01 |
| Prepares for class* | 53 | 71 | 5.07 | 0.02 |
| Prepares for tests* | 50 | 67 | 4.92 | 0.03 |
| Corrects own work | 50 | 60 | 1.82 | 0.18 |
| Takes notes in class* | 49 | 66 | 4.42 | 0.04 |
| Reviews materials* | 41 | 59 | 4.77 | 0.03 |

*These differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 66 percent of students who received free- or reduced-price lunch "almost always" or "often" completed homework, compared to 78 percent of students who did not receive free- or reduced-price lunch. This difference was not statistically significant.

## Exhibit A-15
## Teacher Reports of Participants' Reading and Language Arts Skills, by Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Status

| Percent of participants who met at least grade-level expectations for the following reading and language arts skills | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Received Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch (n=119)** | **Did Not Receive Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch (n=58)** | **Chi-Square** | **p** |
| Oral communication | 71 | 83 | 3.05 | 0.08 |
| Spelling* | 61 | 79 | 5.71 | 0.02 |
| Reading fluency | 61 | 74 | 2.59 | 0.11 |
| Punctuation* | 59 | 77 | 5.70 | 0.02 |
| Drawing conclusion from written material* | 58 | 79 | 7.79 | 0.01 |
| Grammar* | 58 | 79 | 7.64 | 0.01 |
| Identifying a main idea* | 58 | 78 | 6.54 | 0.01 |
| Written communication* | 57 | 79 | 8.36 | 0.00 |
| Vocabulary* | 56 | 79 | 9.18 | 0.00 |
| Reading comprehension* | 56 | 78 | 7.60 | 0.01 |
| Word-attack* | 54 | 78 | 8.99 | 0.00 |

*These differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 71 percent of students who received free- or reduced-price lunch met at least grade-level expectations on reading comprehension skills, compared to 83 percent of students who did not receive free- or reduced-price lunch. This difference was not statistically significant.

## Exhibit A-16
## Teacher Reports of Participants' Technology Skills, by Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Status

| Percent of participants who exhibited "excellent" or "good" technology skills | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Received Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch (n=103)** | **Did Not Receive Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch (n=49)** | **Chi-Square** | **p** |
| Playing games | 67 | 78 | 1.78 | 0.18 |
| Sending and receiving e-mail | 57 | 66 | 0.60 | 0.44 |
| Use of Internet for research | 56 | 65 | 0.98 | 0.32 |
| Use of word processing program* | 53 | 74 | 5.25 | 0.02 |
| Use of spreadsheet program | 39 | 42 | 0.06 | 0.81 |

*These differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 67 percent of students who received free- or reduced-price lunch exhibited "excellent" or "good" technology skills, compared to 78 percent of students who did not receive free- or reduced-price lunch. This difference was not statistically significant.

## Teacher Survey Scales

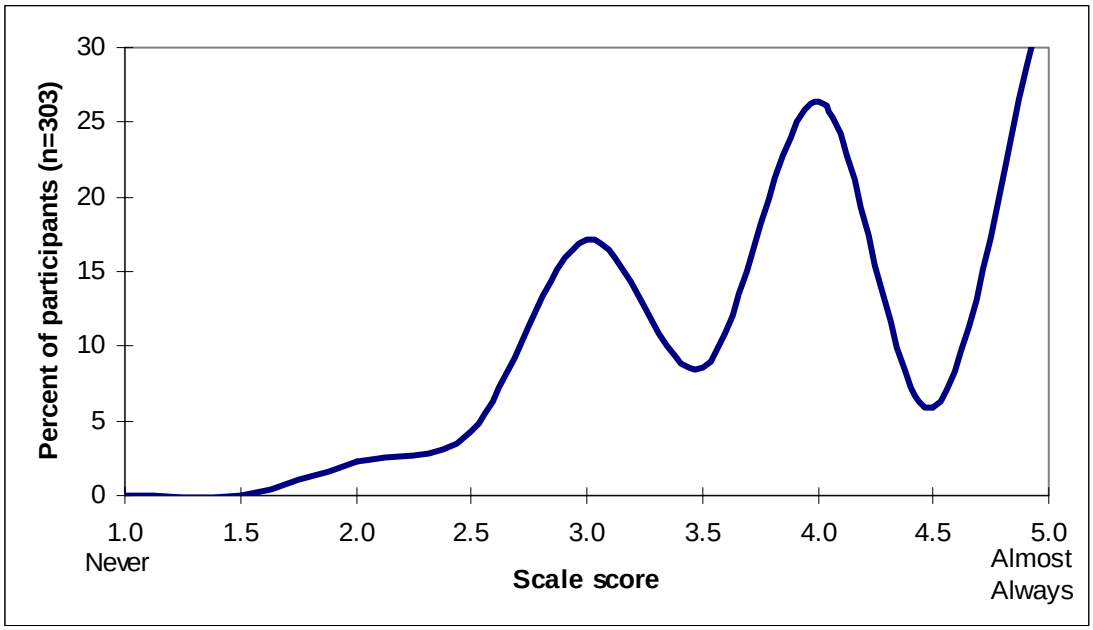
### *Interpersonal Skills*

Interpersonal skills indicate how well students follow rules, accept limits, and interact with adults and their peers. The Interpersonal Skills scale was computed to range from one to five, with five indicating that on average participants almost always exhibited the following skills:

- Follows classroom rules
- Corrects inappropriate behavior when asked
- Expresses dissatisfaction appropriately
- Accepts suggestions from teachers
- Works effectively in a large group activity
- Interacts appropriately with adults
- Listens to what others have to say
- Gets along with people who are different
- Works effectively in a small group activity
- Interacts appropriately with other students

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.98 | 3.92 | 0.90 | 1 | 3.10 | 4.90 | 5 |



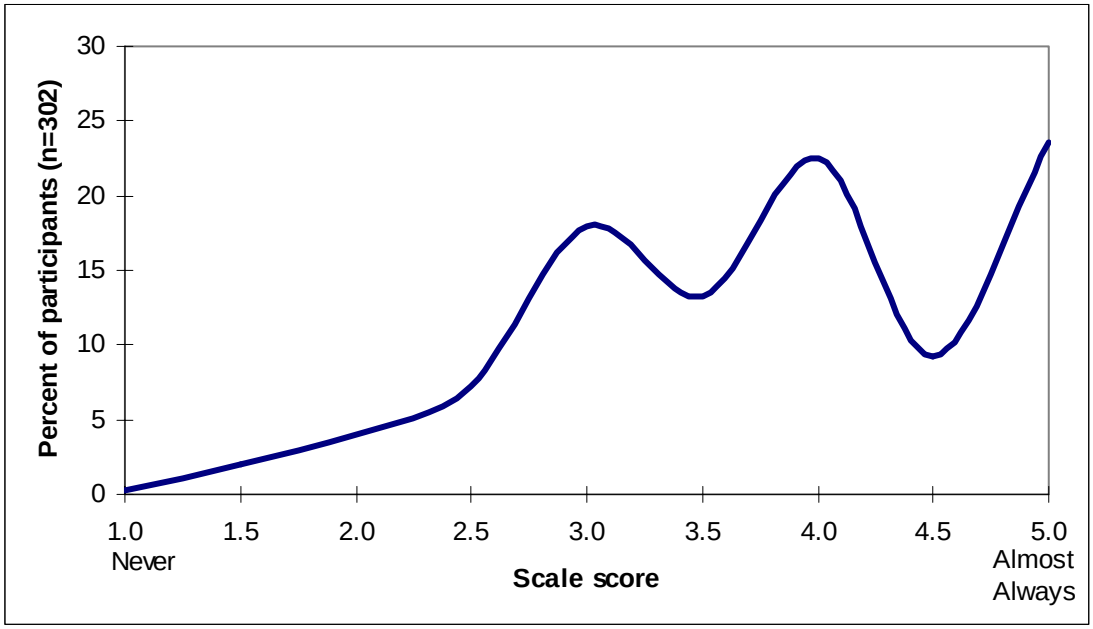
***Academic Engagement***

Academic engagement indicates students' willingness to volunteer to answer questions, ability to assume leadership, and readiness to participate in class discussions. The Academic Engagement scale was computed to range from one to five, with five indicating that on average participants almost always exhibited the following skills:

- Speaks in class when called upon
- Asks questions about tests or projects
- Participates in class discussions
- Volunteers answers to questions
- Assumes leadership in group situations
- Volunteers to read aloud
- Initiates conversations appropriately
- Asks questions when confused

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.96 | 3.66 | 0.98 | 1 | 3.00 | 4.50 | 5 |



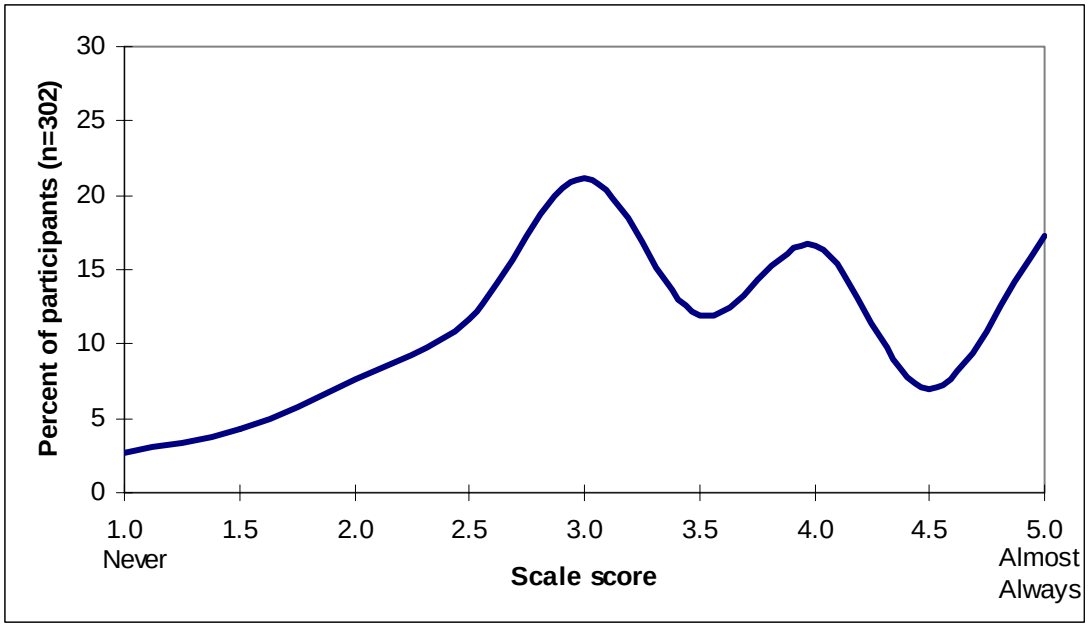
***Academic Motivation***

Academic motivation indicates students' eagerness to learn, willingness to take on challenges, ability to stay on target, and responsibility for their own learning. The Academic Motivation scale was computed to range from one to five, with five indicating that on average participants almost always exhibited the following skills:

- Is motivated to learn
- Prefers challenging tasks
- Produces high-quality work
- Critically evaluates own work
- Attempts to improve on previous performance
- Makes the most of learning experiences
- Persists when task is difficult
- Looks for ways to academically challenge self
- Assumes responsibility for own learning
- Is goal-oriented
- Stays on task

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.98 | 3.24 | 1.13 | 1 | 2.45 | 4.00 | 5 |



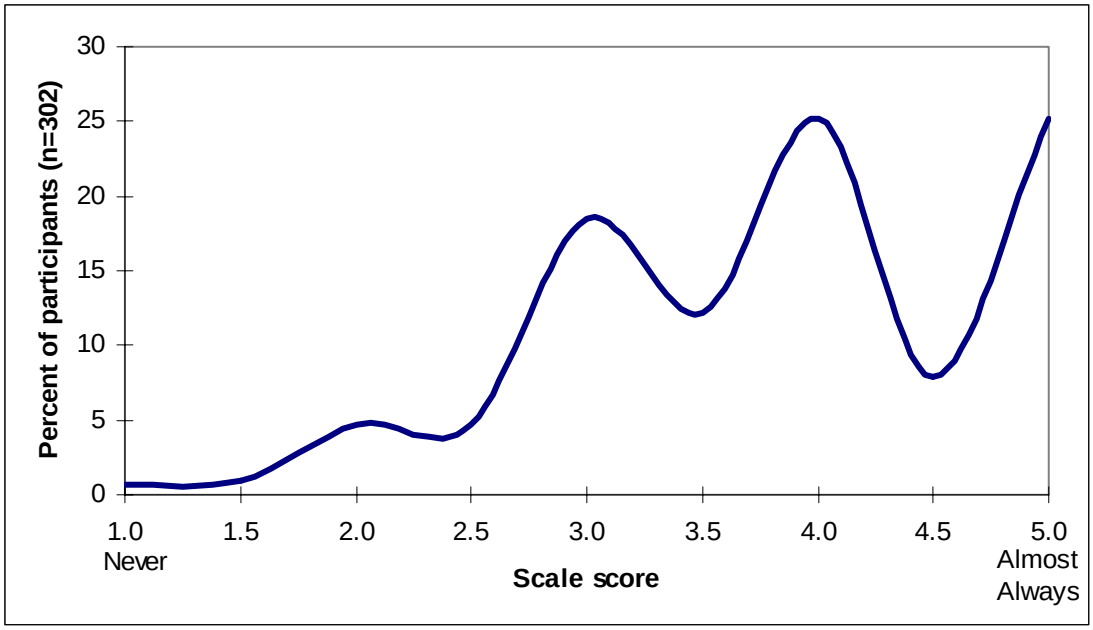
***Study Skills***

Study skills illustrate how well students prepare for tests, how often they complete homework, and how often they correct their own work. The Study Skills scale was computed to range from one to five, with five indicating that on average participants almost always exhibited the following skills:

- Completes homework
- Corrects own work
- Finishes class work on time
- Prepares for tests
- Prepares for class
- Turns in homework on time
- Takes care of materials
- Pays attention in class
- Completes assignments according to directions
- Takes notes in class
- Reviews materials

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.97 | 3.69 | 0.96 | 1 | 3.00 | 4.55 | 5 |



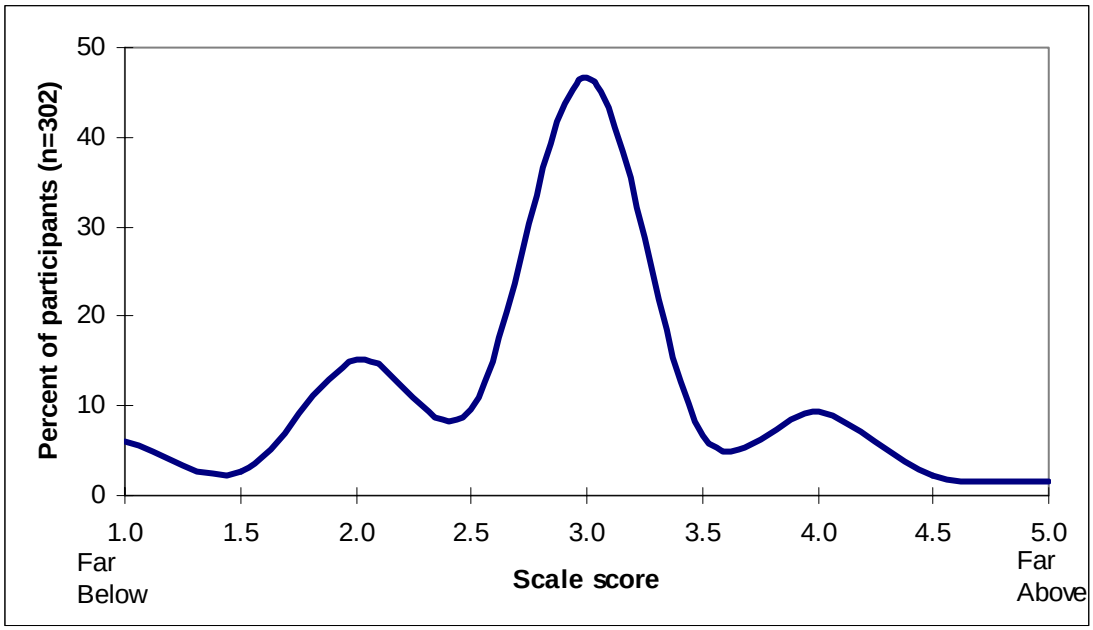
***Reading and Language Arts***

Reading and language arts skills denote students' ability to identify a main idea, use grammar and punctuation correctly, and draw conclusions from written material. The Reading and Language Arts Skills scale was computed to range from one to five, with five indicating that on average participant reading and language arts skills were far above grade-level expectations for the following skills:

- Reading comprehension
- Word-attack
- Vocabulary
- Identifying a main idea
- Reading fluency
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Grammar
- Written communication
- Oral communication
- Drawing conclusions from written material

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.99 | 2.73 | 0.81 | 1 | 2.09 | 3.00 | 5 |



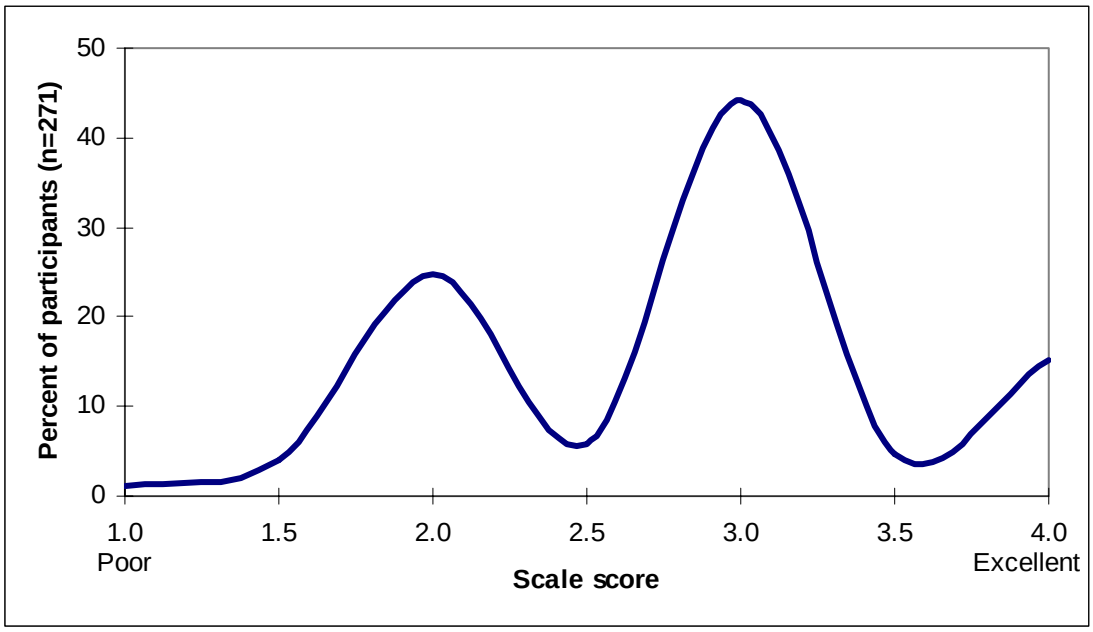
***Technology Skills***

Technology skills refer to students' ability to use word processing programs, use the Internet for research, and send and receive e-mails. The Technology Skills scale was computed to range from one to four, with four indicating that on average participants technology skills were excellent for the following indicators:

- Use of word processing program
- Use of spreadsheet program
- Use of Internet for research
- Sending and receiving e-mail
- Playing games

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.94 | 2.74 | 0.74 | 1 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 4 |



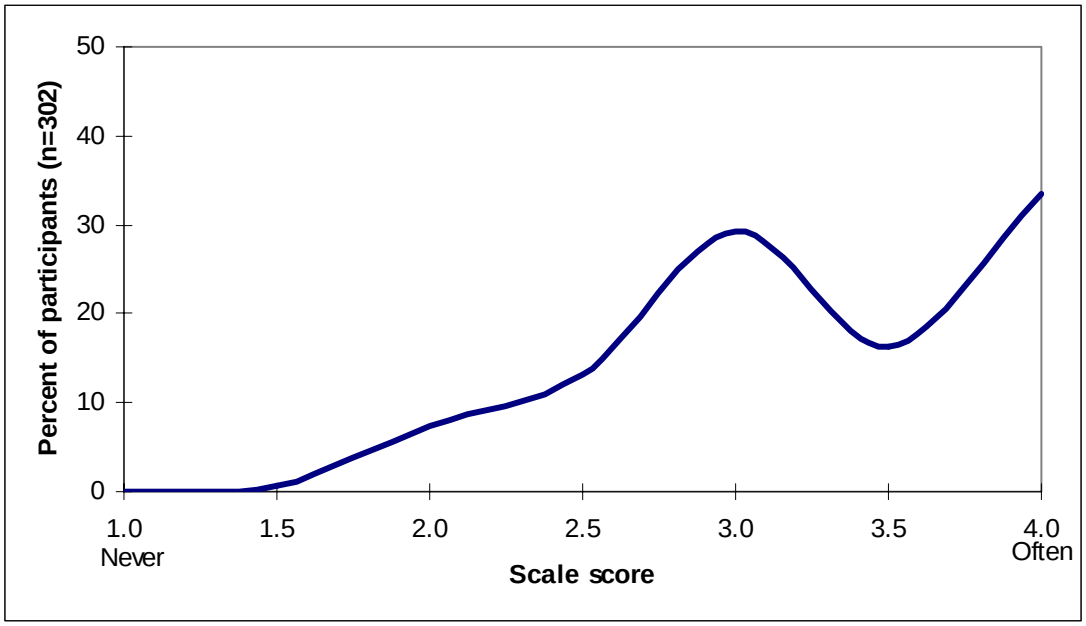
***Communication with Parents***

Research suggests that higher parental involvement will yield more positive results in children's academic skills and success. The Communication with Parents scale was computed to range from one to four, with four indicating that on average teachers often communicated with parents in the following ways:

- This student's parents/guardian attends school-scheduled parent-teachers conferences.
- In addition to school-scheduled parent-teacher conferences, I talk in person with this student's parents/guardians about this student's difficulties and/or progress.
- I contact this student's parents/guardians by phone or e-mail.
- This student's parents/guardians contact me by phone or e-mail.
- In addition to scheduled report cards, I send written progress reports to this student's parents/guardians.
- I involve this student's parents/guardians in planning new programming to match this student's needs.

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.85 | 3.16 | 0.67 | 1 | 2.67 | 3.83 | 4 |



*By Race/Ethnicity*

## Exhibit A-17
## Teacher Reports of Communication with Parents by Participants' Race/Ethnicity

| Communication with Parents | | Pair-Wise Comparison (Least Squares Difference Test) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/Ethnicity** | **Mean Scale Score** | **Comparison** | **Sig.** |
| Black (n=152) | 3.26 | Hispanic | 0.00* |
| | | Asian | 0.05* |
| | | White | 0.07 |
| | | Native American | 0.52 |
| Hispanic/Latino (n=68) | 2.98 | Black | 0.00* |
| | | Native American | 0.06 |
| | | Asian | 0.25 |
| | | White | 0.73 |
| Asian or Pacific Islander (n=4) | 2.58 | Native American | 0.04* |
| | | Black | 0.05* |
| | | White | 0.21 |
| | | Hispanic | 0.25 |
| Native American or Alaskan Native (n=10) | 3.40 | Asian | 0.04* |
| | | Hispanic | 0.06 |
| | | White | 0.12 |
| | | Black | 0.52 |
| White (n=32) | 3.03 | Black | 0.07 |
| | | Native American | 0.12 |
| | | Asian | 0.21 |
| | | Hispanic | 0.73 |

*These differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Exhibit reads: On a scale ranging from one to four, with four indicating greatest frequency, the mean scale score of teachers' communication with parents of Black participants was 3.26. The differences between teachers' communication with parents of Black participants compared to Hispanic and Asian participants were statistically significant. The differences between teachers' communication with parents of Black participants compared to White and Native-American participants were not statistically significant.

# Details of Data Used in Program Observation Analyses

In Year 1 of the evaluation of the NJ After 3 initiative, evaluators conducted 10 to 12 activity observations in each of 10 in-depth study sites. Evaluators used PSA's Out of School Time (OST) Observation Instrument to conduct these structured 15 minute observations. In total, observation data represent 179 independent observations and 30 activity co-observations with a strong inter-rater reliability coefficient of 0.88.

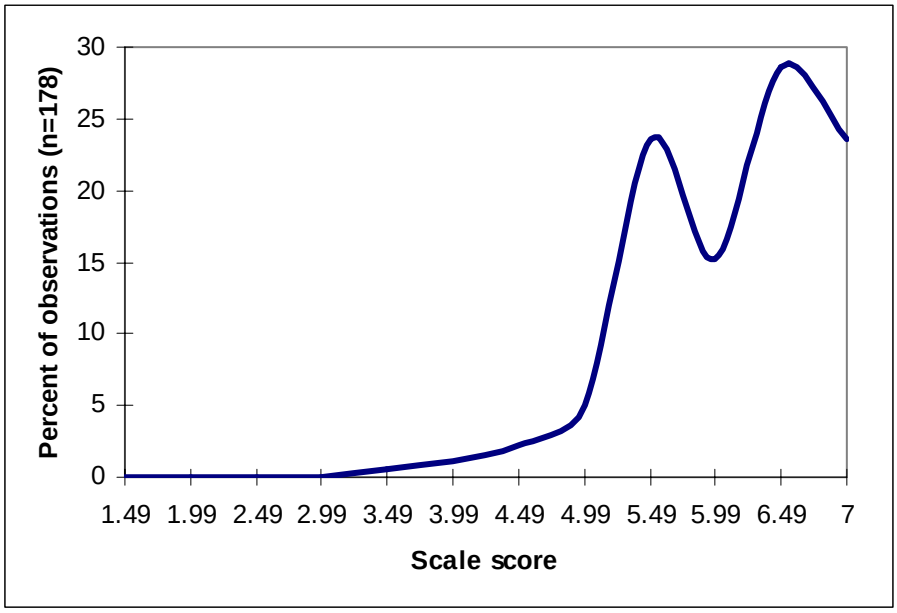
### *Youth Relationship Building*

The Youth Relationship Building scale combines ratings from the following indicators:

- Youth are friendly and relaxed with one another
- Youth respect one another
- Youth show positive affect to staff

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.803 | 5.86 | 0.81 | 3.33 | 5.33 | 6.33 | 7.00 |



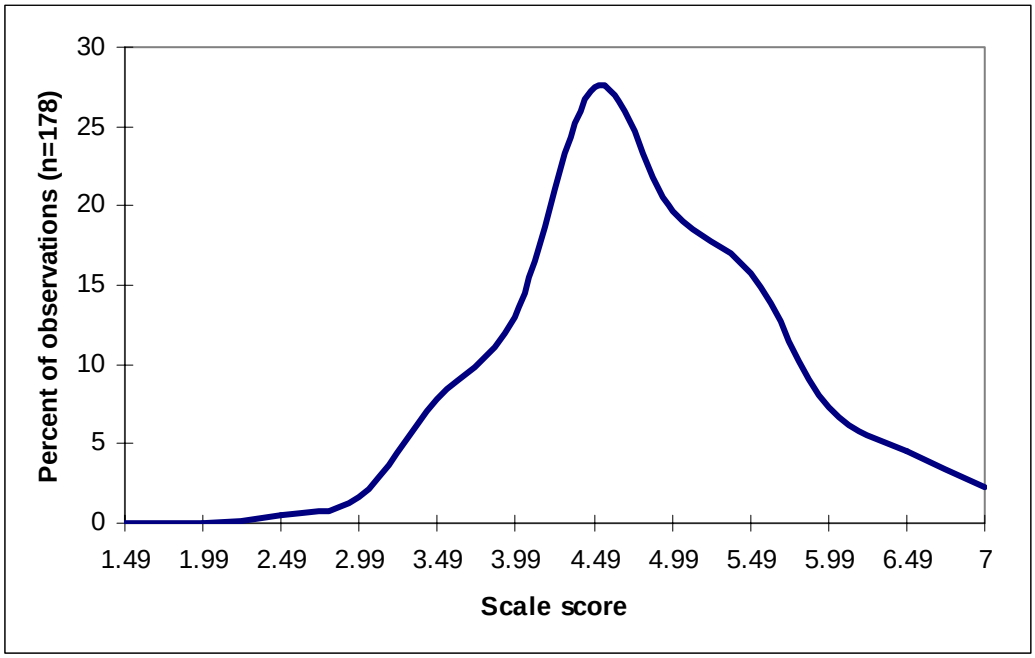
***Staff Relationship Building***

The Staff Relationship Building scale combines ratings from the following indicators:

- Staff use positive behavior management techniques
- Staff are equitable and inclusive
- Staff show positive affect to youth
- Staff attentively listen to and/or observe youth
- Staff encourage youth to share their ideas, opinions and concerns
- Staff engage personally with youth

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.714 | 4.50 | 0.87 | 2.00 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 7.00 |



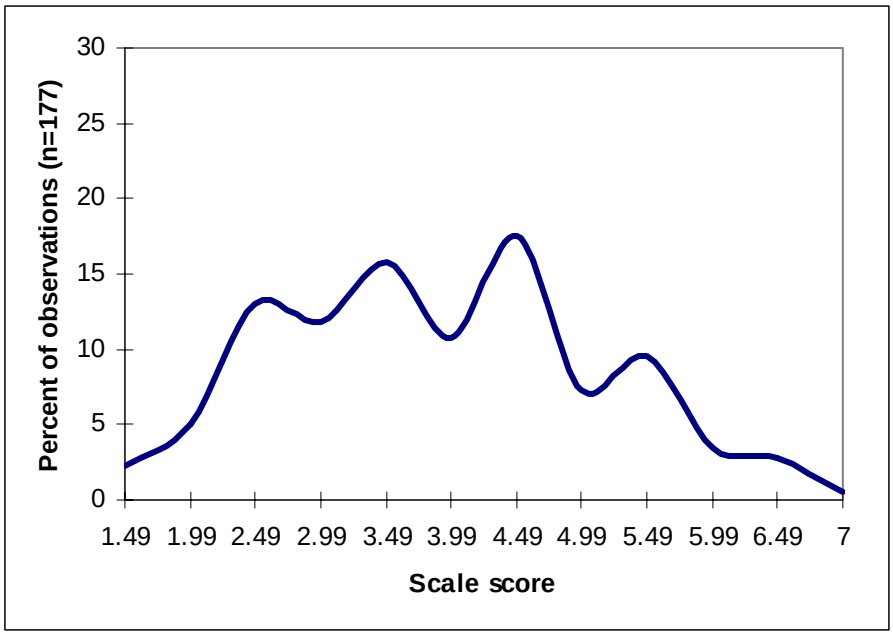
***Instructional Methods***

The Instructional Methods scale combines ratings from the following indicators:

- Staff  communicate goals, purposes, expectations
- Staff verbally recognize youth's efforts and accomplishments
- Staff assist youth without taking control
- Staff ask youth to expand upon their answers and ideas
- Staff challenge youth to move beyond their current level of competency
- Staff employ varied teaching strategies
- Staff plan for/ask youth to work together

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.807 | 3.60 | 1.23 | 1.00 | 2.57 | 4.43 | 6.71 |



***Activity Content and Structure***

The Activity Content and Structure scale combines ratings from the following indicators:

- The activity is well organized
- The activity involves the practice/a progression of skills
- The activity challenges students intellectually, creatively, and/or physically
- The activity requires analytic thinking

*Descriptive Statistics:*

| Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.829 | 4.44 | 1.52 | 1.00 | 3.25 | 5.56 | 7.00 |