

AFTERSCHOOL *news*



Standards-Based Afterschool Activities

We often talk about having high standards for students. If you are working to boost student achievement, make sure you include state academic standards. A recent study of high-quality afterschool programs found that all of the programs studied incorporated state or national standards into their curriculum.*

Does your afterschool or extended learning program align activities with academic standards? If not, or if your staff has varied classroom teaching experience, there are ways to ensure that all instructors lead activities that are aligned with standards.

Get help developing standards-based activities. If instructors in your afterschool program have limited backgrounds in formal learning techniques, have staff with classroom experience develop standards-based activities for your program.

Show instructors what standards-based activities look like. If you have certified teachers at your afterschool program, have them model quality instructional practices connecting activities to standards for other staff to observe. You might also consider hiring a teacher to demonstrate lessons for your staff.

Help staff learn standards. Although the study of high-quality afterschool programs found that sites aligned activities with standards, a number of program staff reported they had little direct knowledge of state standards. This was more common in programs where instructors had little or no formal educational training. When asked questions that included a standard, however, virtually all staff members described in detail how they tied activities to that standard.

You can help instructors become more familiar with standards and find ways to align lessons with them. Talk to a curriculum specialist at the district office or a school you serve to learn more about appropriate standards, or visit a standards clearing-house like edstandards.org.

* Jordan, C., Parker, J., Donnelly, D., Rudo, Z. (Eds.). (in press). *A practitioner's guide: Building and managing quality afterschool programs*. Austin, TX: SEDL.



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The SEDL National Center for Quality Afterschool helps state education agencies and local practitioners develop high-quality programs for academic enrichment as well as youth development activities.

www.sedl.org/afterschool



RECOMMENDED *resource*

AFTERSCHOOL LESSON PLAN DATABASE

This resource contains more than 100 lessons that engage students and enrich learning—and they were created by afterschool practitioners like you. Browse the lessons or submit one of your own.

www.sedl.org/afterschool/lessonplans/

Planning Lessons



If you want to make sure you present engaging, standards-based activities, try using a lesson plan template when developing an activity. A lesson plan will not only help ensure that the activity is aligned with state standards but also provide a framework for outlining necessary materials and preparation—key components of a successful activity. The Afterschool Training Toolkit [www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits]

includes a lesson planning template that you can use to create an activity. In the toolkit, select one of the following content areas: literacy, math, science, arts, or technology. Then click on the “Planning Your Lesson” tab. Below are some of the key components of a lesson plan.

Grade level. What grade level(s) is the lesson geared to?

Duration. How long will it take to complete the lesson?

Learning goals. What do you want students to learn? (These goals should be aligned to standards.)

Materials needed. Include materials that each student will need as well as materials that students may need to share (such as books or a computer).

Preparation. What do you need to do to get ready for this activity? Consider whether you need a refresher in a content area before teaching the lesson. Do you need to enlist another adult to help run the activity? Think about the standard or standards on which your lesson is based. Reread them and see if you need to amend your lesson plan to better address them.



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What to do. Think about the progression of the activity from start to finish. Basic steps should include a “hook” to get students’ attention, presentation of the content, modeling the activity for students, and checking for understanding.

Outcomes to look for. How will you know that students learned what you intended them to learn through this activity? What, if any product will they produce?

Self-evaluation. After you’ve conducted the activity, reflect on how the lesson went. Were there things that you wished you had done differently? Would you do this activity again?

IN YOUR *words*

Does your afterschool program align activities with state standards? (Select one.)

- As often as possible
- Only for some content area
- Never

To participate in this survey and view the results, submit your vote at www.sedl.org/afterschool/afterwords/survey200912.html.

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Newsletter available online at www.sedl.org/afterschool/afterwords

EVENTS *calendar*

Apr. 19–21, 2010 National Afterschool Association & Afterschool Alliance National Convention
www.naaconvention.org
WASHINGTON, DC

April 28–May 1, 2010 Boost Conference
www.boostconference.org
PALM SPRINGS, CA

For more events, visit our calendar at www.sedl.org/afterschool/training/calendar.html.