



**Increasing Opportunities for Academic and  
Social Development in 2006-07:  
Evaluation of New Jersey After 3**

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## Executive Summary

Under an agreement with New Jersey After 3 (NJ After 3), Policy Studies Associates, Inc., is conducting a three-year, comprehensive evaluation of NJ After 3's statewide operations and outcomes. This report is based on an analysis of survey, interview, and attendance data collected during the 2006-07 academic year. The evaluation assessed the extent to which the initiative, among other things, expanded the availability of after-school services, enhanced the quality of these services, and provided activities and experiences to promote the intellectual, social, and personal development of participating youth.

Key findings in 2006-07, the second year of the evaluation, include the following:

- The NJ After 3 initiative succeeded in expanding the availability of after-school services and in attracting increased numbers of youth to its programs.
- On average, attendance rates increased among participants at each grade level.
- Most participants attributed important academic, social, and personal outcomes to their involvement in the program.
- Teachers reported improvements in the language-arts skills of two-year participants, relative to the grade-level expectations in their schools. This finding indicates that these participants made greater gains over two years than would be expected based on their performance level reported in the first year.
- Desired youth outcomes were most likely to be achieved in programs that had received technical assistance from NJ After 3, reported a positive program environment, and in which the site coordinator reported a high level of job satisfaction.
- Some programs needed additional support and training targeted at increasing the skills of front-line staff and promoting hands-on learning, higher-order thinking, and exposure to new experiences.

## Increased Enrollment and Attendance

A total of 14,378 students in grades K-8 participated in the NJ After 3 program during Year 2, compared to 11,108 in Year 1. Similarly, 27 percent of programs in Year 2 (compared to 26 percent of programs in Year 1) reported that they enrolled over 200 youth. The initiative continued to attract young participants. Higher percentages of program participants were enrolled in grades K-2 and grades 3-5 than in grades 6-8, and the percentage of participants in grades K-2 grew by six percentage points from Year 1 to Year 2. In addition to rising enrollment rates, the initiative also experienced an increase in average attendance rates among participants at

each grade level between Year 1 and Year 2. The overall average attendance rate increased by four percentage points, from 73 percent in Year 1 to 77 percent in Year 2.

In general, the demographic characteristics of NJ After 3 participants changed little between Year 1 and Year 2. Approximately equal numbers of boys and girls were served through the initiative, and the clear majority of participants (85 percent, or approximately 9,300 out of 10,900) were either African American or Hispanic. More than half (8,007 of 14,164, or 57 percent) were eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch. As was the case in Year 1, a minority of participants were English Language Learners (2,480 of 14,167, or 18 percent) or received special education services (279 of 14,064, or 2 percent) during the school day in Year 2.

## **Expanded Program Content**

Site coordinators recognize that youth in their programs have multiple academic, recreational, social, and cultural needs. In response, most site coordinators reported that, in Year 2, they expanded the range of activities available in their programs. Some also said that participants now have greater opportunity to select the activities in which they will participate, while others reported that they had increased the time available for each activity in order to increase participants' opportunities to learn new content or develop their skills.

Youth participated the most in activities that addressed academic development and social development. Specific activities that youth participated in most often included homework-related tasks, learning games, visual arts and crafts, math games, and physical play.

## **Program Context**

The evaluation examined evidence of program quality and the influence of quality on participants' experiences and outcomes. Based on recent research highlighting the value of after-school activities that are sequenced, active, focused, and explicit, the study collected data to determine how well programs implemented these features. On average, academic enrichment activities were most likely to involve a progression or practice of skills and to challenge youth intellectually, creatively, developmentally, or physically. However, in many activities, particularly those involving homework help and tutoring activities, higher-order interpersonal interactions (e.g., youth-to-youth collaboration and assistance, youth leadership and choice, and in-depth discussions) did not occur very often. Analysis of observation data revealed that programs scored relatively low in "active learning practices" (i.e., practices that offered opportunities to actively participate in practical, hands-on learning).

Responses from site coordinators indicated that contact with parents was typically infrequent and informal, although some parents attended special classes or program events associated with student performances or holidays. Site coordinators also reported that relationships between school staff and program staff improved in some programs. Variations were apparent in the extent and quality of interactions with school staff.

Many programs continued to confront challenges that hindered program implementation. The most common were challenges related to staffing (e.g., a lack of professionalism or experience, high turnover, difficulties with recruitment), support (including financial support), information about the needs of participants, and program space. Some staff also reported being frustrated by their inability to adequately address needs that were beyond their personal expertise and by the limited time and program resources that were available through the initiative to address deeper problems (e.g., academic, psychological, emotional) evident among some program participants.

## **Outcomes for Families and for Youth**

NJ After 3 is meeting an important need for after-school services within the communities in which it operates. Fewer than half (46 percent) of site coordinators reported that there are other after-school opportunities for youth at their school. Parents interviewed in the study confirmed that NJ After 3 was their only option because it was convenient and also either free or low-cost.

When asked about their experiences in NJ After 3, what they learned, and how they have benefited, the majority of program participants provided very positive feedback about the program's impact. For example, a majority indicated strong attachment to the program, good relationships with program staff and peers, and academic benefits such as better grades and improved attitudes. In addition, teachers' ratings of students' reading and language arts skills improved for two-year participants between Year 1 and Year 2, indicating that these students improved their relative academic ranking or status in the school over this period.

## **Recommendations for Program Improvement**

### **Identify and Share Good Practices in Essential Developmental Domains**

NJ After 3 currently solicits and showcases promising practices, and it provides many opportunities for programs to learn from one another and from content experts. NJ After 3 could productively augment these opportunities by focusing greater attention on the design and operation of youth activities that emphasize hands-on learning, engage youth in higher-order thinking, and provide opportunities for youth to collaborate, take leadership, make choices, assist each other, and contribute opinions and ideas. Program changes might entail, for example, the introduction of more long-term projects that help students to develop a desired skill (e.g., woodworking, making a movie, learning a musical instrument, sewing a garment) or that are designed to achieve a concrete goal (e.g., preparation of an art exhibit or a theatrical event).

## **Deepen and Expand Training for Staff Who Work Directly with Youth**

Site coordinators report that NJ After 3 provides useful training for staff in site-coordinator roles, focusing in areas such as classroom management, health and fitness promotion, youth development, program management, and instructional strategies. Initiative leaders report that NJ After 3 provides a robust program of training, technical assistance, and professional development that includes: a two-day orientation for site coordinators, monthly workshops and seminars for site coordinators, a full-day Principals Institute, three full-day training conferences for classroom staff, and an annual Promising Practices Competition and Showcase. However, local program staff report that more training opportunities are needed for front-line, classroom staff. Moreover, these opportunities need to be scheduled in locations that are easy for staff to access using public transportation. Based on analysis of data showing a strong association between receipt of technical assistance and positive youth outcomes, coupled with interview data on training needs, the evaluators recommend that NJ After 3 deepen and expand existing training for younger program staff (e.g., college students and those with little work experience) and all who lead classes and youth activities. In addition, NJ After 3 could increase training opportunities for site coordinators on methods for improved supervision and training of front-line staff.

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# 1. Overview of the Evaluation and Second-Year Report

Under an agreement with New Jersey After 3 (NJ After 3), Policy Studies Associates, Inc., is conducting a three-year, comprehensive evaluation of NJ After 3's statewide after-school initiative. This report, based on data collected in 2006-07, assesses the extent to which the initiative is progressing toward the following goals:

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

Throughout the report, we compare data collected in Year 1 of the evaluation (August 2005 through July 2006) with data collected during Year 2 (August 2006 through August 2007), in order to identify important program changes and developments. In addition, the report describes factors and conditions that either facilitate or impede program effectiveness, and it recommends strategies that can improve program implementation and outcomes for the future.

In its second year of operation, NJ After 3 administrators took steps to expand and improve after-school opportunities for children throughout the state. For example, to strengthen program content, NJ After 3 created a core curriculum that was designed to provide additional guidance and structure to program activities and to help ensure that student participants would experience diverse program offerings that promoted academic, social, and personal development. NJ After 3 also committed resources to monitor program implementation, improve the knowledge and skills of local program staff, and collect lessons learned, in order to permit the overall initiative to benefit from the experiences of each after-school program.

This report is organized in seven main sections. The first section describes the Year 2 evaluation design and processes. Sections 2 through 4 describe program changes or modifications in goals, student participants' characteristics and program attendance patterns, and program activities and structural features. Section 5 identifies key program and participant outcomes and offers preliminary explanations for some of these results. Section 6 describes current challenges to program effectiveness. Section 7 identifies and discusses recommendations emerging from evaluation findings. The technical appendices provide more details on specific items in the report.

## Overview of Evaluation Design

As in Year 1, we collected data through the following activities:

- **Data from NJ After 3’s management information system.** We retrieved data on the characteristics and program attendance patterns of all student participants from YouthServices.net, the vendor for the NJ After 3 management information system.
- **Surveys of site coordinators.** Site coordinators provided 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.
- **Surveys of student participants.** We surveyed participants in grades 3-8 who attended Round I programs (i.e., programs whose first year of NJ After 3 support was school year 2004-05). These surveys yielded information on participants’ behaviors, attitudes, and skills.
- From a sample of 10 Round I programs (known as the in-depth study sample), we collected the following types of data:
  - **Interview and observation data.** Site visits to the in-depth study sites permitted the collection of interview data from site coordinators, program staff, student participants, and parents, as well as information on programming. We also collected data through structured observations of program activities.
  - **Survey data from school-day teachers.** School-day teachers in nine in-depth study sites provided data on the behaviors, attitudes, and skills of NJ After 3 student participants.<sup>1</sup> We administered this survey in nine of the ten sites because only nine programs served participants in the grades targeted in 2005-06. Teachers who could address participants’ general academic and reading/language arts skills were selected for survey response. In Year 1, the survey was administered to teachers of participants in grades 3-6. In Year 2, surveys were administered to teachers of participants in grades 4-7. We expect to survey teachers of participants in grades 5-8 in Year 3.

Using these data sources, the evaluation addressed 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 youth served by NJ After 3, and what are their patterns of attendance?

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

3. What did NJ After 3 accomplish with respect to enhancing the *quality* of after-school services?
4. What did NJ After 3 accomplish with respect to expanding the *availability* of after-school services?
5. How successful was NJ After 3 in creating *sustainable systems* for funding and program quality?
6. What were the initiative's *effects* on participating children and families?

### **Efforts to Obtain Informed Parental Consent**

In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and PSA's federally approved Institutional Review Board and to protect the privacy of all student participants, we required that parental research consent be obtained prior to our surveying or interviewing any participant or our surveying a teacher about a particular participant. We prepared the parental consent form in English and Spanish, and NJ After 3 posted both versions on the NJ After 3 website for programs to download. In addition, NJ After 3 required all programs to include evaluation consent forms in their enrollment packets and to enter each participant's parent/guardian evaluation-consent status into the appropriate field in the YouthServices.net tracking system.

- From Round I programs, site coordinators obtained consent forms from parents or guardians of 82 percent of participants in grades 3-8 (1,843 of 2,249 students).
- Of the 2,249 Round I participants in grades 3-8 with data in YouthServices.net, the parents or guardians of 1,634 participants gave consent, while parents or guardians of 209 participants denied consent. No consent data were recorded for 406 Round I participants in grades 3-8.
- From the 10 in-depth study programs, the evaluation obtained consent forms from 89 percent of the participants in grades 3-8 (998 of 1,120 students). Parents or guardians of 934 participants gave consent, while parents or guardians of 64 participants denied consent. No consent data were recorded for 122 students.

### **Evaluation Data Used in This Report**

This report presents analyses of data collected from programs operating with NJ After 3 support since 2004-05 (Round I programs), programs funded since 2005-06 (Round II programs), and programs funded for the first time in 2006-07 (Round III programs). In Year 2, the evaluation collected the following from all programs in Rounds I, II, and III:

- Survey data from 83 site coordinators (92 percent of the coordinators of 90 programs), including 18 Round I site coordinators, 42 Round II site coordinators,

and 23 Round III site coordinators. In Year 1, we collected survey data from 83 percent of site coordinators of 55 programs.

- Program attendance and demographic data on 14,378 program participants in grades K-8 from the YouthServices.net management information system. In Year 1, we collected attendance and demographic data on 11,108 participants.

From Round I programs only, we collected the following:

- Survey data from 1,046 student participants in grades 3-8 (68 percent of 1,534 participants). In Year 1, the evaluation collected survey data from 671 participants (73 percent of 919 participants).

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

- Survey data from school-day teachers who assessed 375 NJ After 3 student participants in grades 4–7 with parental consent (61 percent of 614 participants). In Year 1, the evaluation collected 303 surveys (57 percent of 527 participants).
- Interview data from 10 site coordinators, 35 program staff, 46 youth, and 21 parents. In Year 1, interview data were collected from 10 site coordinators, 57 program staff, 63 youth, and 23 parents.
- Observation data from 159 different after-school classes or activities during site visits to each of 10 programs. In Year 1, the evaluation conducted 179 observations. (To increase the quality of on-site observations, the evaluation reduced the maximum number of required observations in each site, resulting in fewer observations in Year 2.)

In general, statistical differences presented in this report were statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  or the  $p < .01$  level of significance. Analyses were tested based on either a chi-square test, a Pearson's correlation ( $r$ ), or an ANOVA test with Bonferroni post-hoc tests. For each measure reported, the evaluation also computed an effect size to describe the standardized magnitude of the difference.<sup>2</sup> For continuous variables, effect size was computed as measured by Cohen's  $d$  (the difference in means divided by the pooled standard deviation); for dichotomous variables, the effect size was computed using Cramer's  $V$ . There is no single accepted standard for interpreting an effect size, and the current custom is to consider the effect size in light of previous research. Previous after-school studies generally reveal small effect sizes on student outcomes (e.g., Pearson, Russell, & Reisner, 2007). In a review of four studies of after-school programs, Kane (2004) concluded that the expected impact of an extra hour of instruction delivered in an after-school setting over a school year equals an effect size of 0.05 in reading and math. In this report, we interpret an effect size of 0.10 or higher as meaningful.

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<sup>2</sup> Statistical significance indicates how *reliable* an estimated effect is. In contrast, effect size indicates the relative *magnitude* of an estimated effect. Unlike a test of statistical significance, an effect size is not affected by the number of subjects in a sample.

Effect sizes below this threshold, even if statistically significant, are not deemed to represent meaningful effects.

Examples of effect size reported in other recent research relative to this evaluation include the following:

- A study of the impact of the reduction in class size in elementary classrooms by eight students per class found an effect size of 0.23 on math scores after one year (Finn & Achilles, 1999).
- A study of the impact of instruction by Teach for America teachers on math achievement found an effect size of 0.15 on math scores after a year of participation in a classroom led by a Teach for America teacher (Decker, Mayer, & Glazerman, 2004).
- An evaluation of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program in Louisiana found that the impact of this after-school program had an effect size of 0.13 on a combined measure of reading, math, and language test scores (Jenner & Jenner, 2007).

## 2. Goals of the NJ After 3 Initiative

*This program is...a positive place [for youth]to go after school. A lot of parents can't afford to have babysitters [or to]take their kids to ice hockey.... I work in [an after-school program because]I believe this is as important as the school day. I think [youth] should have some fun activities where they are nurtured and learn a lot [about other things] that they wouldn't get during the school day....*

—Site coordinator

As in Year 1, site coordinators identified the provision of a safe environment for participants and helping participants develop socially as major objectives, as illustrated in Exhibit 1. In Year 2, site coordinators also attached a high priority to promoting respect for diversity.

In interviews, site coordinators expressed a strong desire to increase student exposure to new experiences and to increase student awareness of activities and opportunities available outside their immediate community. Among the comments made by site coordinators during our site visits were the following:

*[Our goal is to make sure] that they are off the street and somewhere safe. It's quite crazy here with the violence.... It's sad the city doesn't have safe places for [youth] to go.*

**Exhibit 1**  
**Major Program Goals Reported by Site Coordinators, 2006-07, in Percents**

<b>Major Programming Objectives and Goals (n=83)</b>	
Promote respect for diversity among youth	99
Help youth develop socially	99
Provide a safe environment for youth	99
Provide hands-on academic enrichment activities	93
Provide youth with positive adult guidance and/or mentors	90
Help youth improve their academic performance (e.g., grades, test scores)	88
Support working families	86
Provide opportunities for cultural enrichment	84
Provide physical fitness or athletic opportunities	80
Provide recreational activities	80
Provide health/well-being/life skills development	75
Provide leadership opportunities for youth	73
Help connect parents with their child's school and/or community	68
Provide community service or civic engagement opportunities	53
Help connect youth to their community	50

Exhibit reads: Ninety-nine percent of site coordinators reported that one of their major program goals was to promote respect for diversity among youth.

*My goal for these kids is to expose them to as much as I possibly can. [I want them] to start thinking about their futures...to set goals for themselves. There is more to life than [this city]. I want them to know that there is this whole world outside....*

Several site coordinators also said in interviews that it is very important for parents, school staff, and others in the community to understand how the after-school program operates and the benefits the program provides to participating youth:

*[My goal for parents is] to let them see how important the program is and how we are impacting their kids. [I want] to change their perspectives [on] the after-school program. The [school] teachers think we just play all day. [When I first came,] I didn't expect it to be like this. I thought that [the children] would just rip and run and not get academic and cultural enrichment. [Those outside of the program] don't really get to see what we do. They know the kids come, but they think it is just a free for all.*

When asked about their goals, parents and youth echoed many of the objectives identified by the site coordinators. For example, youth frequently emphasized that the after-school program provides an enjoyable alternative to the boredom or loneliness of going home directly after school. "I like coming here," said one participant. "It's better than going home. At home you just sit and watch TV, do nothing, [and] eat. Here you have friends and...you keep active."

Parents mentioned that their children receive help with homework and other academic needs and identified this as one of the main reasons that they enroll their children in the program. "[The program] is right here and [it's] convenient," explained one parent. "It [has been] a big

help because I am going to school and I'm not available on some days. Some days I don't get home until very late. The program makes sure the kids have their homework done. That way I don't have to wake kids up to check homework.”

When asked about changes in the past year, several parents and youth observed that programs were more responsive to youth's interests. Several staff also indicated that in an effort to achieve their goal of attracting and retaining youth—particularly those in the upper grades—a concerted effort had been made to expand the range of program offerings and to allow youth greater freedom of choice in selecting activities. Staff observations regarding these changes included the following:

*Last year [we] lost older kids' interest. So this year we incorporated [more] things they learn outside [of the regular school day]. [Youth] are thinking about issues outside of school....*

*Most changes occurred in [the] upper grades to accommodate participants...their likes for [different types of] activities.*

While site coordinators shared similar goals for participants' well-rounded development, a majority of site coordinators surveyed indicated that they believe that some school staff would prefer an increased emphasis on academics in the program. As a result, a majority of site coordinators reported that balancing activities that address youth's academic needs (e.g., homework assistance, tutoring) with activities that address recreational, social, and cultural needs is a challenge. For example, in Year 1, 72 percent (40 out of 55) of site coordinators indicated that the fact that “the schools our participants attend would like our program to be more academically focused” was a challenge for them. In Year 2, significantly more (90 percent or 73 out of 81 site coordinators) identified this view among school staff as a challenge (effect size=0.25).

Feedback from program staff during the site visits also supported these findings:

*I have the older kids [in my group] and the last thing they want to do is more school. [They] are old enough to say that this is not fun.... They know that [the program] is more academic this year than last. It makes it difficult for us...*

### **3. Participants' Demographic Characteristics, Program Attendance, and Retention Rates**

*This year we had a huge enrollment. Last year it was...definitely a rebuilding time. We had the kids here just because the program is five days a week and parents needed it. But this year we had an influx of applications...we had so many more and we just couldn't service them all. [The reasons for the increase are that] there is more structure, the parents [are] more comfortable, [and] the teachers [have been] telling parents about [the program]. People [are] more comfortable with us. We got good word of mouth.*

—Site coordinator

## Demographics and Attendance

NJ After 3 expanded its reach significantly in 2006-07. A total of 14,378 student participants in grades K-8 participated in the program during Year 2, compared with 11,108 in Year 1. Twenty-seven percent of programs in Year 2 reported that they enrolled more than 200 youth, which was about the same percent as in Year 1 (26 percent). An average of 141 youth enrolled in each program in Year 2, with the smallest program serving 14 participants and the largest serving 426 participants. Although average enrollments were about the same as Year 1 (150 participants in Year 1), program size in Year 1 ranged from a minimum of 50 participants to a maximum of approximately 300 participants during that period.

As part of our analysis, student participants were categorized into one of three levels of participation, based on the number of days they attended the program and received services. Participants 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 he or she was 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 participant attended the NJ After 3 program since their date of enrollment and the number of days it was possible for the participant to attend.

In general, the demographic characteristics of NJ After 3 student participants changed little between Year 1 and Year 2. As illustrated in Exhibit 2, approximately equal numbers of boys and girls were served through the initiative. The vast majority (85 percent or approximately 9,300 out of 10,900) were either African American or Hispanic. More than half (8,007 of 14,164, or 57 percent) were eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch. As was the case in Year 1, a minority of participants were English Language Learners (2,480 of 14,167, or 18 percent) or received special education services (279 of 14,064, or 2 percent) during the school day in Year 2. We note, however, that youth characteristics in the areas of free or reduced-price lunch status, limited English proficiency status, and special education status were not specified in the initiative’s database for large percentages of participants. This problem of missing data opens up the possibility that actual percentages differ from those shown in Exhibit 2. The experience of other after-school programs, such as the Out of School Time Programs for Youth Initiative in New York City, suggests that complete reporting might have indicated higher percentages of low-income, limited English proficient, and special education students.

NJ After 3 programs continued to attract young student participants in the early grades. Higher percentages of program participants were enrolled in grades K-2 or grades 3-5 than in grades 6-8, and the percentage of all participants who were in grades K-2 grew by 6 percentage points from Year 1 to Year 2, as shown in Exhibit 3.

A total of 95 programs reported participants’ attendance data for Year 2. In addition to enrolling more youth, site coordinators also reported that more participants in grades K-2 met the criteria for highly active or active participation than did participants at other grade levels, as seen in Exhibit 4.

**Exhibit 2**  
**Demographic Characteristics of Participants, 2006-07**

Characteristic	All Participants
<b>Gender (n=14,259)</b>	
Male	51
Female	49
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	
Hispanic (n=10,940)	38
African American (n=10,924)	47
Asian or Pacific Islander (n=11,125)	1
White (n=11,028)	12
American Indian or Native American (n=11,134)	1
<b>Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (n=14,164)</b>	
Yes	57
No	18
Unspecified	25
<b>Limited English Proficiency (n=14,167)</b>	
Yes	18
No	56
Unspecified	26
<b>Special Education Status (n=14,064)</b>	
Yes	2
No	40
Unspecified	59

Exhibit reads: Fifty-one percent of student participants were male.

**Exhibit 3**  
**Distribution of Enrolled Youth, by Grade Span, 2006-07**

Grade in 2006-07	Number of Enrolled Youth	Percent of NJ After 3 Total	Percentage Point Change from Year 1
K-2	6,018	42	+6
3-5	5,154	36	-1
6-8	3,067	22	-5
Total	14,239	100	

Exhibit reads: On average, 42 percent (6,018) of the youth in the NJ After 3 initiative were in grades K-2. This reflects a 6 percentage point increase from 2005-06.

**Exhibit 4**  
**Distribution of Participants, by Participation Level and Grade Span,**  
**2006-07, in Percents**

<b>Grades in 2006-07</b>	<b>Highly Active Participants (n=6,871)</b>	<b>Active Participants (n=2,484)</b>	<b>Percentage Point Change in Highly Active and Active Participants from Year 1</b>	<b>Non-Active Participants (n=5,023)</b>
K-2	58	15	0	26
3-5	46	20	-1	34
6-8	30	17	2	53
Overall Average	48	17	2	35

Exhibit reads: Among participants in grades K-2, 58 percent were highly active, and 15 percent were active. The combined percentage of active and highly active participants in 2006-07 was the same as that in 2005-06.

On average, student participants attended the program 77 percent of the days that it was possible for them to attend, as shown in Exhibit 5. Although participants in grades 6–8 attended with less frequency (66 percent of the days that it was possible for them to attend, on average) than youth in other grade spans, the average attendance rate increased among participants at each grade span between Year 1 and Year 2. These levels are high and 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.

**Exhibit 5**  
**Distribution of Days Attended, by Grade, 2006-07**

<b>Grade in 2006-07</b>	<b>Average Number of Days Youth Attended NJ After 3 Program</b>	<b>Average Attendance Rate</b>	<b>Percentage Point Change from Year 1 Attendance Rate</b>
K-2	106	82%	+3
3-5	96	79%	+3
6-8	75	66%	+4
Overall Average	95	77%	+4

Exhibit reads: On average, youth in grades K-2 attended the program 106 days. Their average attendance rate was 82 percent, which represented a 3 percentage point increase from Year 1.

In addition to varying across grade levels, the attendance rate among student participants also varied across programs. In 74 percent of the programs (70 of 95), at least half of all participants met the evaluation’s criteria for active or highly active participation, and in 46 percent of the programs (44 of 95), three-quarters or more of participants met criteria for highly active or active participation. However, in 16 percent of the programs (15 of 95), fewer than half of the participants met active or highly active participation criteria, and in a subset of the 16 percent (10 of 95), fewer than one-quarter of participants met the criteria.

## Youth Retention Over Two Years

The evaluation also examined the overall rate at which NJ After 3 student participants from Year 1 re-enrolled in the same NJ After 3 program during Year 2. These analyses accounted for the possibility that some youth would have aged out of their 2005-06 program because they had reached the highest grade served in their NJ After 3 program.<sup>3</sup> For example, the analysis of retention in a NJ After 3 program based in an elementary school serving grades K-5 would exclude youth who were fifth-graders in 2005-06 because those youth could not have continued to participate in the same program as sixth-graders in 2006-07.

Of the 8,999 student participants who attended a NJ After 3 program during the 2005-06 school year and were eligible to return to the same program, 4,568 (51 percent) enrolled in the same NJ After 3 program in 2006-07. Average rates of retention varied considerably across programs, as shown in Exhibit 6. In 19 percent of the programs (11 out of 57), the average rate of retention was below 34 percent, while in approximately 23 percent of the programs (13 out of 57), the average rate of retention was above 65 percent. In 58 percent of programs (33 out of 57), the average retention rate was between 34 percent and 65 percent.

**Exhibit 6**  
**Number and Percent of NJ After 3 Programs at Each Level**  
**of Participant Retention from 2005-06 to 2006-07**

Retention Level	Number of Programs	Percent of Programs
Low (33% or less)	11	19
Medium (34% to 65%)	33	58
High (66% to 99%)	13	23
Total	57	100

Exhibit reads: Eleven NJ After 3 programs (19 percent) had low retention levels from 2005-06 to 2006-07.

This variation was also reflected in comments made by site coordinators during our visits to the 10 Round I programs. When asked about participant attendance and retention, site coordinators provided mixed reports:

*Attendance has been regular and consistent. Sometimes older kids may leave early because they are involved with other activities, [but] most kids come every day and we have about 70 percent attendance.*

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<sup>3</sup> For all programs, evaluators empirically determined the highest grade served by examining the grade levels of students served by the program in either 2005-06 or 2006-07. If a student was enrolled in the highest grade ever served by the program in 2005-06, we considered the student to have aged out of the program in 2006-07 and hence excluded that student from the retention analysis. Including the 2006-07 school year in the review also permitted analyses to account for students who repeated a grade.

*Enrollment has not been where we expected it to be. [Enrollment is]down from last year. We had transportation but lost it for this year.*

*The program is first come, first served. Once a kid drops out, the [student at the] top of the [waiting] list gets in. [Enrollment] goes up and down a little bit, but not a lot. There have been no problems recruiting youth.*

*[We have trouble retaining] older kids. Even if they tell you what they want and you bring programming in, they eventually will not want to come. Especially [those] who have younger siblings in the program...they think the program is for babies.*

*These kids have to come and want to come. We have no problem with attendance. Three days of absences and then they are out. We keep it tight. We have to in order to have integrity.*

Analyses revealed that retention rates were associated with three factors. First, student participants who were enrolled in programs that were initially funded by NJ After 3 in 2004-05 (Round I sites) had significantly higher rates of retention than participants enrolled in programs that were initially funded in 2005-06 (Round II). Retention rates for participants in Round I sites averaged 57 percent, compared with 41 percent for those in Round II sites (effect size=0.15). Second, across all Round I and Round II programs, participants in grades K-2 were more likely to return to the program than were older participants. Of those who returned to the same program, 47 percent were in grades K-2, 37 percent were in grade 3-5, and 17 percent were in grades 6-8 (effect size=0.16). Finally, participants who attended the program more frequently in Year 1 were also more likely to attend in Year 2, compared with those who had attended the program less frequently in Year 1. For example, 56 percent of “highly active” Year 1 participants returned to the same program in Year 2, compared with 47 percent and 34 percent of “active” and “non-active” Year 1 participants, respectively. All differences between groups were statistically significant (effect size=0.20).

#### **4. Overview of NJ After 3 Programming**

*There are more activities this year...robotics, dance, drama...we added four or five programs. We [also] formed student activity groups [based on participants'] interests. On Thursdays and Tuesdays, they choose where they want to go. Last year [participants] couldn't choose anything.*

—Site coordinator

#### **Program Content**

Site coordinators recognize that student participants in their programs have multiple academic, recreational, social, and cultural needs. In response, most site coordinators reported that, in the past year, they expanded the range of activities available in their programs. Some also said that participants now have greater autonomy to select the activities in which they will

participate, while others reported that they had increased the time available for each activity, in order to increase participants' opportunities to learn new content or develop their skills.

When asked about program content, the site coordinators whom we interviewed were eager to highlight their range of offerings:

*In the gym [we] have sports...art in the cafeteria...[and also]computers.... All youth are involved in these activities. They just rotate through with their age group. On other days we have other activities, though art is just about every day. We [also] have homework every day. Parents wanted more homework time, so now we do homework until about 4:15PM. Then [we offer]two [additional] activities. [Participants] switch at 5 o'clock or so for the second activity.*

*We have computers every day, as well as gym and art. All of the children get that all week. Lacrosse and golf fit into the gym slot.*

*My goal is to keep [our academic programming] aligned with the school day, but I don't want it to feel like more school. It's really to try to help them with their grades...reinforce what they are learning but also give them a more positive outlook on learning. Like learning can be fun.*

*Smart Moves is great. It is for the older kids. It is organized around everyday events outside of school. It addresses real issues like gangs and college prep. We did a big project a month ago. We had groups of five kids [each] create a sports team. They had to find a venue, decide what players to get, how much to pay, where to get the money, and so on. [The] project took [about one] month to a month and a half. Some even designed uniforms. Smart Moves is about real-life stuff. [It helps] to get [youth] to think outside the box. For the younger kids, Smart Moves [also includes] a lot of hygiene- and safety-[related activities].*

Site coordinators also provided detailed information regarding program content and changes via the evaluation's online survey. For each activity category, site coordinators were asked whether their after-school program offered the activity, whether all or most youth participated in it, whether the activity was always available, and how often the activity was offered. The 45 activities in the survey's list represented six broad content areas: (1) academics and cognitive development, (2) artistic development, (3) physical development (e.g., health and sports), (4) youth development (e.g., life-skills and social development), (5) civic engagement (e.g., community service), and (6) career exploration and development.

In order to summarize participants' level of participation in available program activities, we created an "intensity" index for each type of activity. The index combined information on the proportion of participants involved and the frequency of the activity and assigned it an intensity level from 6 to 0, with each numbered level representing the following values:

6—Highest intensity (the activity is offered at least four to five hours per week; all or most students participate)

5—Very high intensity (the activity is offered one or more hours per week; all or most students participate)

4—High intensity (when the activity is offered, all or most students participate for at least a few hours per month OR some students participate one or more hours per week)

3—Moderate intensity (when the activity is offered, all or most students participate less than once per month or at least once per month OR some students participate several times per month)

2—Low intensity (when the activity is offered, all or most students participate less than once per month OR some students participate at least once per month or less than once per month)

1—Very low intensity (when the activity is offered, some students participate less than once per month)

0—Activity not offered

More detail on the calculation is provided in Appendix A.

Site coordinators indicated that, of the 45 activities, participants engaged in homework-related activities at a *very high* level of intensity, as shown in Exhibit 7. Youth participated in learning games or activities, and visual arts and crafts at a *high* level of intensity. Math games and activities and free time for physical play were also among the top five activities in terms of the intensity of youth participation. More detail on activity intensity is provided in Appendix B. Our analysis also showed that, when collapsed into the six broad content area categories, youth participated in activities that addressed academic or cognitive development and youth development the most, as shown in Exhibit 8. The emphasis on academic or cognitive development was also evident during the site visits conducted at 10 Round I programs. Approximately half of the activities the evaluation team observed (77 of 159 observations) had a literacy or a mathematics focus.

Several changes in program content were evident in the survey responses provided by site coordinators in Year 2 when compared with the responses provided in Year 1. While most of these year-to-year changes were minor, a few significant differences emerged between the two years, particularly in areas that promote healthful living. For example, in Year 2, more site coordinators reported that their programs offered health and nutrition classes, compared with Year 1 of the evaluation (72 percent in Year 1, compared with 90 percent in Year 2, effect size=0.23). Similarly, more site coordinators in Year 2 indicated that youth participated in physical activities for at least one hour per week (62 percent in Year 1, compared with 88 percent in Year 2, effect size=0.30).

**Exhibit 7**  
**Activities in Which Youth Participate with High Intensity (above 4.0), 2006-07**

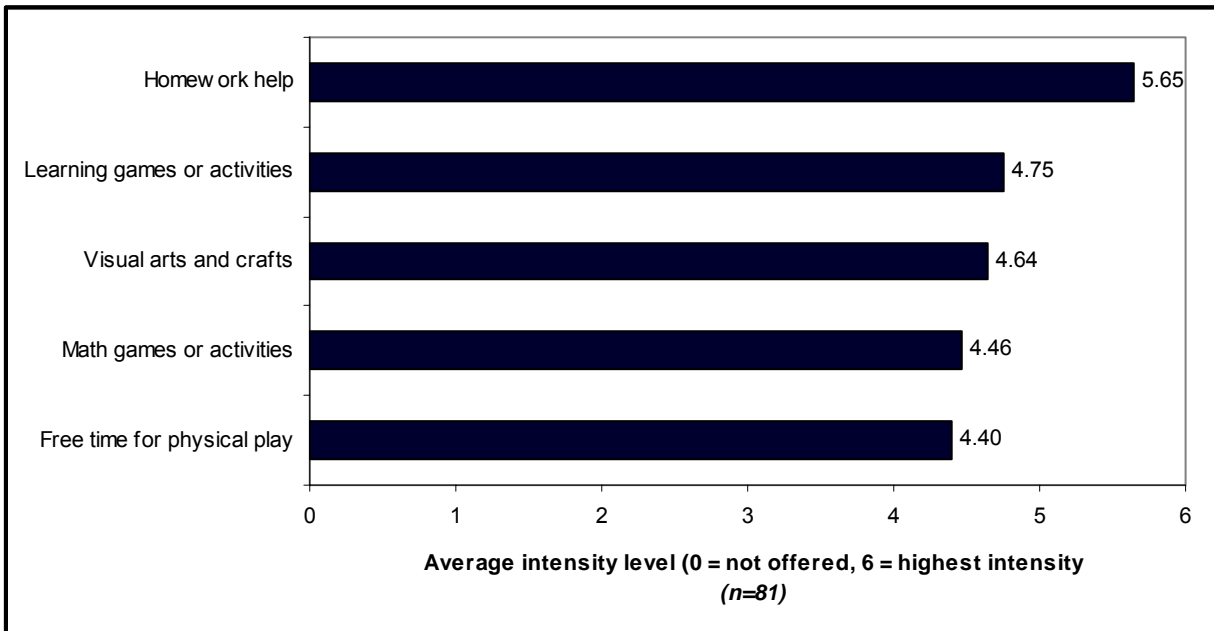


Exhibit reads: On average, site coordinators reported that youth participated in homework help at an intensity level of 5.65.

**Exhibit 8**  
**Intensity Level with Which Youth Engage in Core Content Areas, 2006-07**

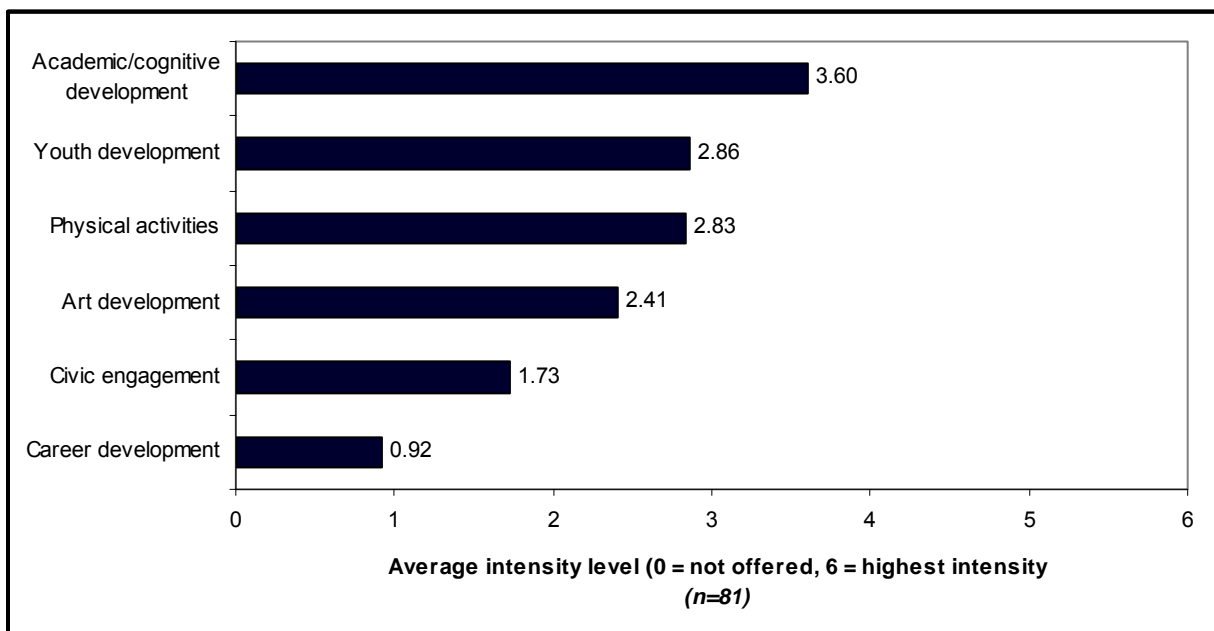


Exhibit reads: On average, site coordinators reported that youth engaged in academic and cognitive development activities at an intensity level of 3.60.

On the other hand, however, fewer site coordinators reported in Year 2 that their programs offered dance, independent reading, creative writing, drama or theater, and opportunities to meet and talk with professional artists, as shown in Exhibit 9 and in Appendix B. These changes are consistent with reports and observations of increased pressure from host schools to focus on academic enrichment and support.

**Exhibit 9**  
**Activities Not Offered, 2005-06 and 2006-07**

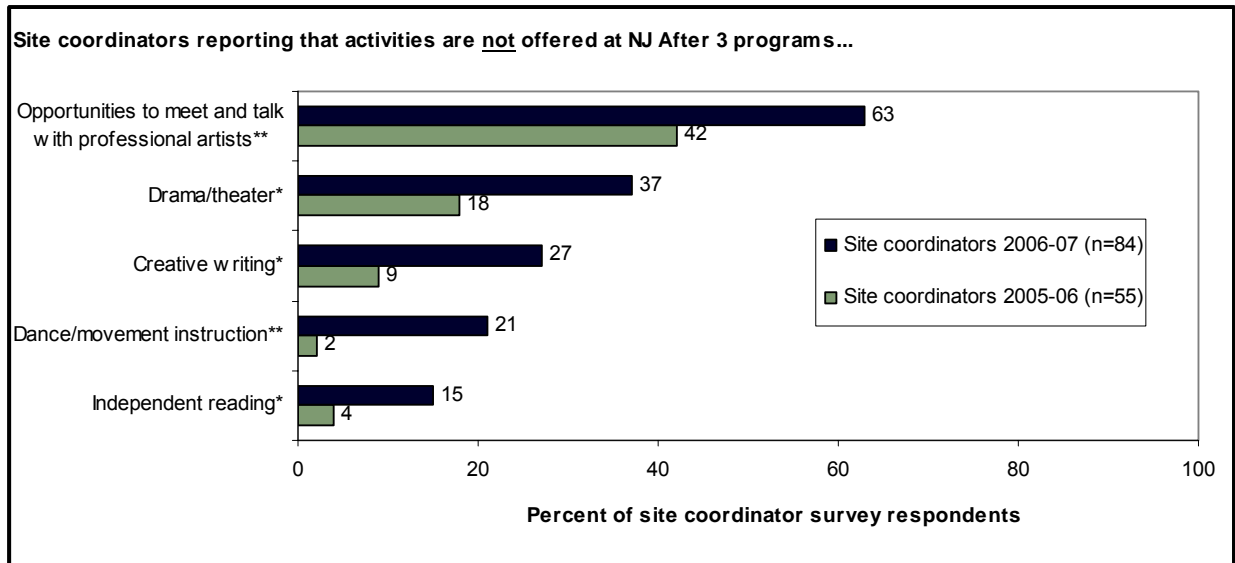


Exhibit reads: Sixty-three percent of Year 2 site coordinators reported that opportunities to meet and talk with professional artists were not offered in 2006-07, compared with 42 percent of site coordinators in Year 1 ( $p < .05$ , effect size  $\geq .1$ ).

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

In our analysis of program activities, we also examined several factors to identify possible relationships or associations with available program activities. Specifically, we analyzed program content by (1) the year in which the program was initially funded by NJ After 3, (2) whether site coordinators were veterans or new to the program, and (3) program size (i.e., small programs serving 100 or fewer participants and large programs serving 200 or more participants). In all cases the number of respondents in each category was too small for us to conclude with confidence that the differences we observed in the responses of site coordinators in these program categories were significant.

## Program Context

*[Our strength is our ability to] build relationships with the kids. A lot of our kids, they don't have a lot of positive adult relationships. If you sit down and listen to them talk, [you realize] some have crazy home lives. This [program] is their escape...a time when they get to be a kid. [They know that if they] have a problem, [they] have an adult who is*

*going to listen.... They tell me off-the-wall things. We care about them, and they know that. They realize that.*

—Program staff member

The quality or value of after-school programming cannot be adequately assessed based solely on the number or the characteristics of the activities that are available to student participants. In this section we examine other program data that reflect program quality and can thus influence participants' experiences and outcomes.

As part of the evaluation, we used a structured observation instrument to guide our assessment of the context for 159 program activities or classes observed during site visits to each of 10 programs. During each activity, we determined whether specific indicators of youth development practices were evident and assigned each indicator a rating of 1 (indicator was not evident during the observation) to 7 (indicator was highly evident and consistent throughout the observation). A rating of 5 was assigned if it was determined that the indicator was moderately evident or implicit during the observation.

Of the 159 activities observed, 29 percent (46 out of 159) were categorized as visual and performing arts; 23 percent (36 out of 159) as homework help or tutoring; 21 percent (33 out of 159) as academic enrichment; 14 percent (22 out of 159) as sports; and 9 percent (14 out of 159 observations) as open, unstructured time. Some activities were placed in more than one category, and some observations did not fit in any of the specific categories (15 out of 159 observations were classified as "other").

Most of the activities we observed (59 percent) took place in classrooms, followed by the gym and the cafeteria (each 13 percent). On average, there were 11 participants in each activity, with boys and girls evenly represented. Participants were typically grouped by age or grade, although in a few activities (16 percent of observations) youth were grouped by their personal interest. We found that the level of adult supervision in an activity was almost always appropriate to the activity and age group (97 percent of observations) and that the workspace was also almost always conducive to the activity type (99 percent of observations). In only a few activities did we determine that necessary materials were unavailable or insufficient (5 percent of observations.)

On average, the student-staff ratio across all observed activities was 6.6 youth per staff member, and the majority of the activities we observed (75 percent) involved eight or fewer youth per staff member. The youth-staff ratio in the homework help and tutoring activities we observed was higher (8:1) than in other types of activities (6:1). At least one certified teacher was present in about one-quarter of the activities observed, and specialists or other professionals were present in 19 percent of activities. Other adults who were not certified teachers or specialists were present in 44 percent of activities. In approximately half (51 percent), at least one staff member was a college student or young adult. Very few activities (11 percent) were staffed with high school students.

After collecting the observation data, we grouped the scores for each indicator of youth development practices into scales, as shown in detail in Appendix C. The scales were then

aligned with key features of effective after-school programs that were identified by Durlak and Weissberg in their meta-analysis of 73 after-school programs (2007). These features, which are collectively referred to as the SAFE model, are outlined below:

- Sequenced (i.e., built skills and content to achieve goals)
  - Involved the practice or a progression of skills
  - Required analytic thinking
  - Challenged youth intellectually, creatively, developmentally, or physically
  - Employed staff who used varied instructional strategies, provided assistance to youth without taking control, and verbally recognized youth efforts and accomplishments
  
- Active (i.e., offered opportunities to actively participate in learning)
  - Provided opportunities for youth to collaborate, take leadership responsibilities and roles, make meaningful choices, assist each other, and contribute opinions and ideas
  - Employed staff who encouraged youth to share their ideas, opinions, and concerns and who asked youth to expand upon their answers and ideas
  
- Focused (i.e., intended to develop positive relationships among youth and with staff)
  - Included youth who showed positive affect to staff and were respectful, friendly, and relaxed with one another
  - Employed staff who showed positive affect toward youth, engaged personally with youth, guided youth toward positive peer interactions, used positive behavior management techniques, and were equitable and inclusive in interactions with youth.
  
- Explicit (i.e., targeted specific learning goals and/or developmental goals)
  - Involved tasks and activities that were well organized
  - Kept youth on task and attentive to peers and staff
  - Employed staff who listened to and were attentive to youth

Our analysis of the data that were collected during our structured observations of 159 after-school activities—and that were subsequently aligned with the SAFE model—revealed that the mean scores on a scale from 1 (i.e., indicator is not evident) to 7 (i.e., indicator is highly evident and consistent) for each of the four SAFE domains were: 3.91 for “sequenced” practices that built skills and content knowledge to achieve goals; 1.83 for “active” practices that offered opportunities to actively participate in learning; 4.39 for “focused” practices that developed positive relationships among youth and with staff; and 5.15 for “explicit” practices that targeted specific learning goals and or developmental goals.

Other findings included the following:

- On average, academic enrichment activities were rated higher on the “sequenced activities” scale than were other types of activities, suggesting that they were

more likely to involve a progression or practice of skills, and to challenge youth intellectually, creatively, developmentally, or physically. Not surprisingly, open, unstructured activities rated lower on average on the “sequenced activities” scale than did other types of activities.

- Homework help and tutoring activities were rated lower on the “active programming” scale than were other types of activities. Observers found that in homework help and tutoring activities, higher-order interactions (e.g., youth-to-youth collaboration and assistance, youth leadership and choice, and in-depth discussions) occurred less frequently than in other types of activities. Lower levels of “active programming” may have been appropriate in homework help and tutoring activities that were designed to improve the academic skills of individual students.

**Communication with parents.** The nature and extent of parent involvement changed little from Year 1 to Year 2. In Year 2, 69 percent of site coordinators reported they met with one or more parents or had conversations with parents on the phone at least once per month, as shown in Exhibit 10.

**Exhibit 10**  
**Program Relationships with Parents and the Community, 2006-07**

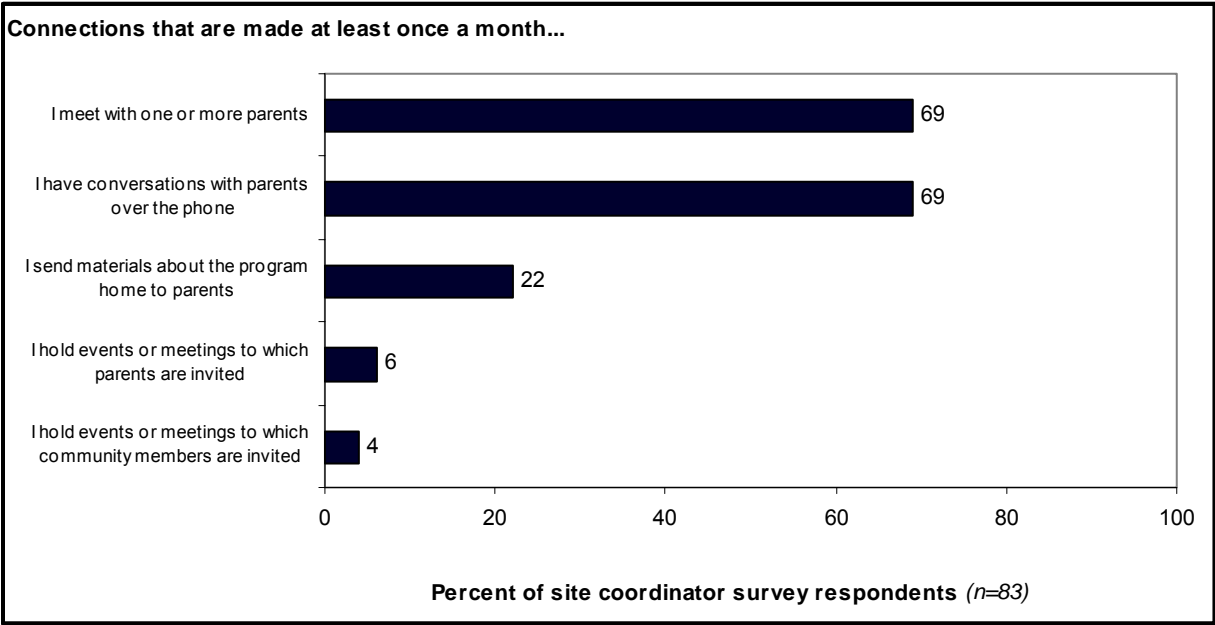


Exhibit reads: Sixty-nine percent of responding coordinators reported that they met with one or more parents at least once a month.

Responses from site coordinators indicated that contact with parents was typically infrequent and informal, even though some parents attended special classes or program events associated with student performances or holidays.

*I [used to have] a parent seminar every month that parents came to. Whether [the topic was] diabetes, helping their children with homework, [or something else] ...I would like*

to see more of that. Parents [also] go on trips with us and are invited to the Christmas and winter concert.

[Parents] get negative letters and positive letters. If kids [achieve something important], parents are given memos. If there are any special activities they are given memos. Anything we do, we send home flyers.

[This year we have] more parent meetings. We have a monthly parent luncheon. Out of 150 youth, about 20 [parents] show up to the parents' meeting. [I tell them] don't be afraid to say you don't understand the homework. Come into the classroom. Sit down during after-school and see what [your child is] doing.

Not many parents are involved in the program. Everyone is just working. We ask for donations like hand-wash and paper towels and we get them...parents do help out that way. That is...their involvement. We have bake sales and parents have brought stuff in.

**Communication with schools.** Site coordinators indicated very little change between Year 1 and Year 2 regarding communication with the schools. The issues that were the main topics of communication last year (e.g., classroom space, individual student needs, homework) were the same this year, as shown in Exhibit 11.

**Exhibit 11**  
**Program Communication with Schools, 2006-07**

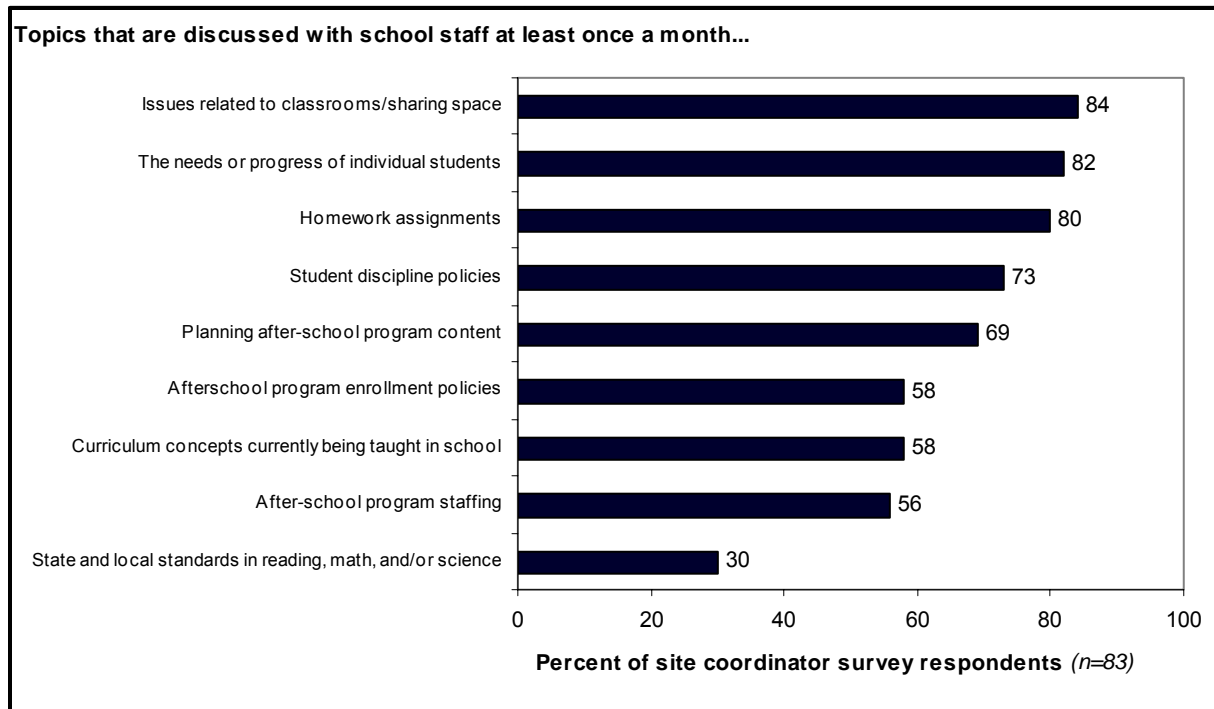


Exhibit reads: Eighty-four percent of site coordinators reported that they discussed issues related to classrooms and the sharing of space with school staff at least once a month.

Interviews with site coordinators and other program staff indicated that relationships between school staff and program staff improved at some programs. However, as the comments below indicate, there were variations in the extent and the quality of the interactions with school staff. Whereas some relationships were tense and others cursory (e.g., staff occasionally shared materials), one or two site coordinators reported that they have shared staff and have sought to align after-school program activities with the school's curriculum.

*If we do need something, I can ask for it and it will be given to me. If I need some books, teachers will give us books that they don't need anymore. It's not a lot that we do get from the school; [however], there is some overlapping staff [between the school and our program].*

*This year, the principal asked us what we could do to help out with [test preparation]. I...asked teachers [in the school] if they felt their kids needed help...not just the ones in the [after-school] program. Teachers volunteered their time [to] tutor. The children did really well on the test. [The tutoring] lasted for four weeks, three days a week. [There was] no funding for that...the teachers volunteered. The children need[ed] it. [The principal]...asked me to corral the teachers since I already have the children [in our after-school program]. It was no problem. The teachers...pulled out [the kids for tutoring] during homework time.*

*We use the computer lab and library. Sometimes the art supplies and art room. If the art teacher has stuff left over, she tells me. I can't imagine being somewhere where the principal doesn't want you. That would make it so hard.*

*We have a good rapport with teachers. If I see a student without homework for a couple days, I will talk with [his or her] teacher. I go up [to their classroom] or they come down [to the after-school program]. They know we are here to help. They talk with us about student issues.*

*What I have tried to do...is to hire teachers from the school. They know what the kids are working on. My goal is to keep [the after-school academic activities] aligned with the school day, but I don't want it to feel like more school. It is really to try to help [the youth] with their grades, reinforce what they are learning but also give them a more positive outlook on learning. Like learning can be fun. I gave the principal a list of teachers I was thinking about hiring, and she [made recommendations regarding which ones to hire]. We didn't go solely on her suggestions, but it helped a lot because she...knows them a little bit better [than I do].*

## 5. Key Outcomes

*[The principal] has talked about how [student test] scores have gone up. Maybe [it happened because] she changed the curriculum or [maybe it's because] she is on the teachers a bit more. But [the test scores did begin to increase] when the after-school program started. [I know the program is] not solely responsible, but we helped*

*with...[participants'] grades and attitudes. We have certain expectations of the kids. We have kids that...have a long way to go, but they have made a huge improvement in their behavior. [Now they are] willing to accept when they do something wrong. They are learning to be nicer to each other.*

—Site coordinator

When asked to describe how they assess the outcomes associated with their programs, most site coordinators and program staff said that their methods are often informal and their evidence is primarily anecdotal. A few described more formal efforts to quantify and measure success such as internal monitoring of daily attendance and retention rates, homework completion rates, and the pre- and post-test results that are a part of the curriculum used in some activities. Most emphasized listening and observing as the basis for their assessments.

*[The evidence that this program is working is the fact that] the same children are back. [Also] the parents tell us on a daily basis if the children enjoy themselves. I never get out at 6:00 PM [because] the kids want to keep on playing. They don't want to leave. The children show you it is working.*

*We see big gains on the [pre- and post-] tests. We also monitor homework...[and we know]...we are closing the gap. We are [also] starting to see how kids are getting along...how their attendance improves. Our biggest accolade is [the number of] kids who have come back [this year].*

Participating youth reported directly on the effect of the program on their lives through the evaluation's surveys. We highlight here those results that are both significantly different from Year 1 with effect sizes greater than 0.10. By reporting only year-to-year, grade-level, and other differences that satisfy both requirements, we meet two important goals. First, we ensure that differences that are statistically significant but that are nonetheless small in terms of their overall effect are not highlighted in a way that misrepresents their importance. Second, by highlighting only those differences that satisfy the thresholds for both significance (i.e., the reliability of the effect) and effect size (i.e., the magnitude of an effect), we can help program managers and staff identify and focus attention on policies and practices that deserve closer analysis because of their potential impact on program outcomes. See Appendix D for more detail on these findings.

For each of the analyses discussed throughout this section, we also examined whether youth who had attended the program for two years reported more positive outcomes than those who had attended for one year. Although some differences based on exposure to programming were observed, none of these differences met or exceeded our threshold for significance and effect size.

## **Participant-Reported Outcomes**

***Participant reports of program experiences.*** When asked about their experiences in NJ After 3 and about what they learned and how they have benefited, the majority of student

participants provided very positive feedback about the program’s impact on their lives. A majority of youth strongly agreed or agreed that they get to do a lot of new things in their after-school program, the activities are interesting, the activities make them think, there is a lot to chose from, and they get to do things that they don’t get to do elsewhere, as shown in Exhibit 12. Results were generally similar between Year 1 and Year 2, and where there were differences between the two periods, the effect size was small. One significant difference did emerge between older and younger youth: 77 percent of youth in grades 6-8 agreed or strongly agreed that there is a lot for them to choose to do, compared with 66 percent of youth in grades 3-5 (effect size=0.11). This difference indicates that programs were acting on an important principle from youth-development research, regarding the importance of providing activity choice to middle-grades youth.

**Exhibit 12**  
**Youth Reactions Regarding Their Program Experience, Grades 3-8, 2006-07**

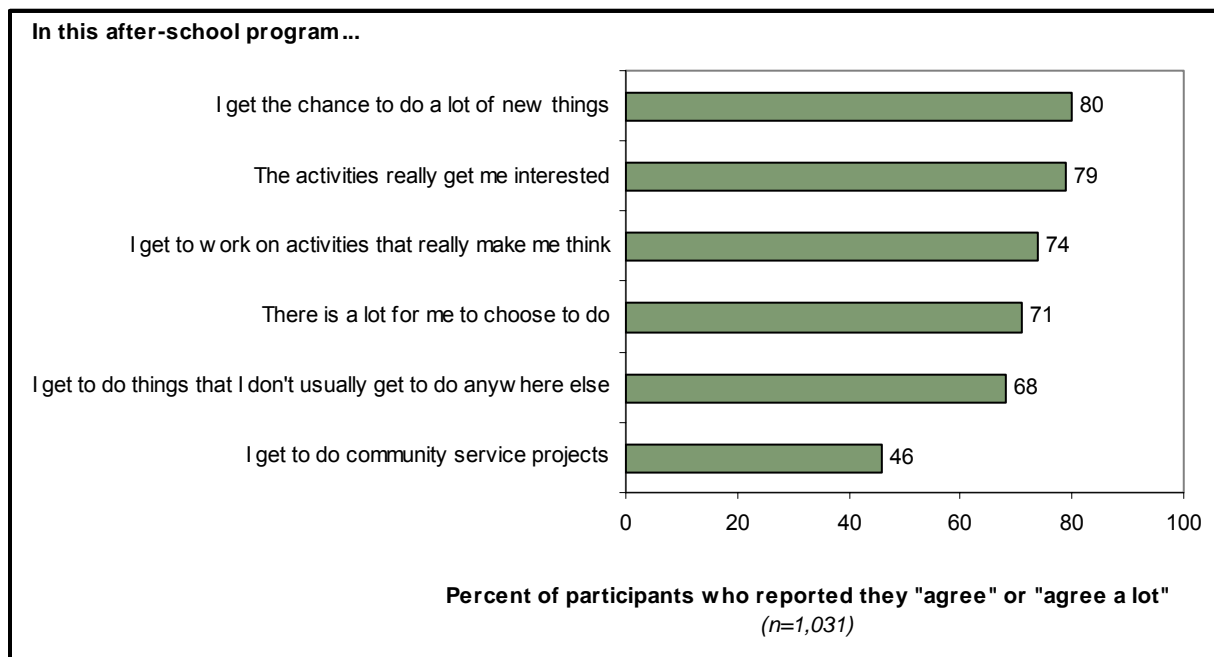


Exhibit reads: Across grades 3-8, 80 percent of responding participants agreed or agreed a lot that in the after-school program they got the chance to do a lot of new things.

The evaluation also examined participants’ attachment to the program. While no significant differences between the results for Year 1 and Year 2 emerged, and the majority of participants strongly agreed or agreed with statements indicating program attachment, several significant differences—coupled with effect sizes above our threshold—were evident between older and younger participants, as shown in Exhibit 13. For example, 91 percent of youth in grades 6-8 agreed or strongly agreed that they belonged, compared with 82 percent of youth in grades 3-5 (effect size=0.12). Similarly, youth in grades 6-8 were more likely to report than youth in grades 3-5 that the program is a good place to hang out (89 percent compared with 78 percent, effect size=0.15). Eighty-six percent of youth in grades 6-8 agreed or strongly agreed that they matter, compared with 78 percent of youth in grades 3-5 (effect size=0.10).

**Exhibit 13**  
**Participants' Level of Attachment, Grades 3-5 and 6-8, 2006-07**

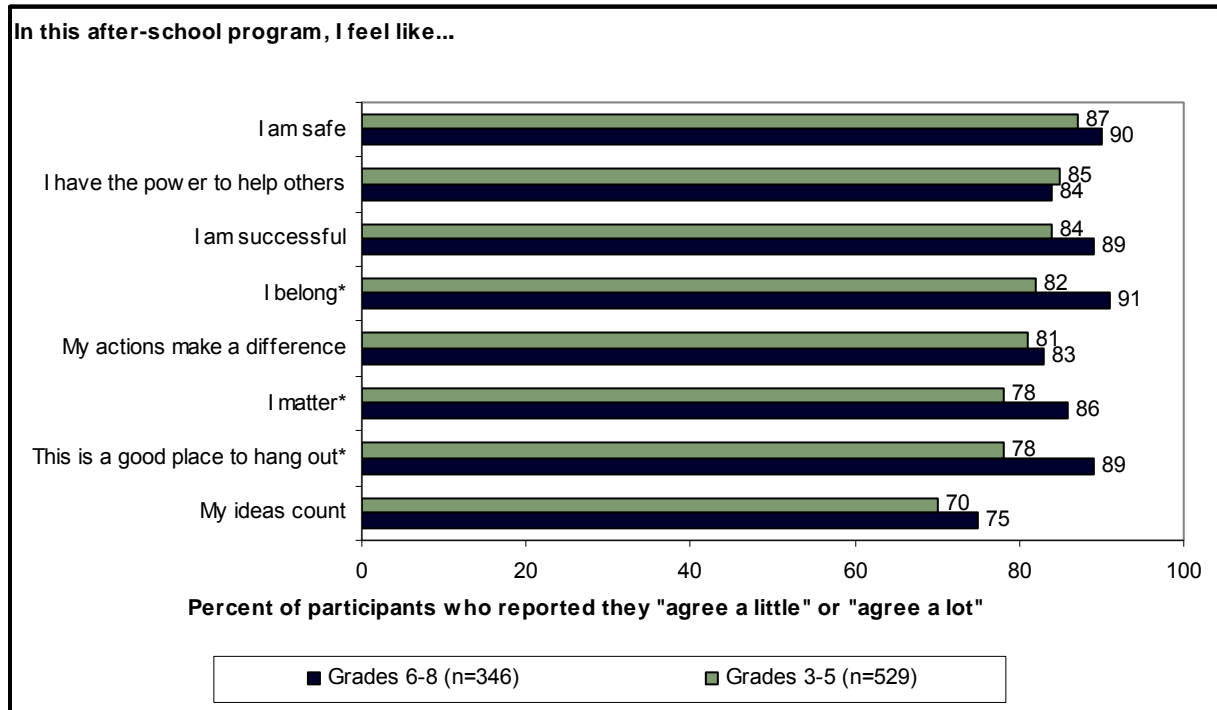


Exhibit reads: Eighty-seven percent of participants in grades 3-5 agreed or agreed a lot that they felt safe in the program, compared with 90 percent of participants in grades 6-8.

\* Grade 3-5 participants differ significantly ( $p < .05$ ) from grade 6-8 participants, and effect size  $\geq 0.10$ .

**Relationships with adults and staff.** As seen in Exhibit 14, relationships between staff and youth remained quite positive in Year 2, with 75 percent or more of participants strongly agreeing or agreeing with statements such as “Staff think I can learn new things,” “Staff treat me with respect,” and “Staff care about me.”

The following comments from parents who have observed interactions between their children and program staff support these survey findings.

*[The site coordinator] has a heart...and the [staff] are so committed. The kids love them, you can tell.*

*All of the staff here care about every kid...[there are] no “special” kids. [The staff] know each child individually. Sometimes they come up to you with the child [to tell you something good about them]. It motivates [the youth] to keep on doing [well].*

Although survey responses varied minimally between Year 1 and Year 2 in six of the staff-related items, significant differences were noted in participants’ responses in three areas. First, 87 percent of youth in Year 1 reported that staff treat them with respect, compared with 75 percent of youth in Year 2 (effect size=0.15). Eighty-five percent of youth in Year 1 reported that staff try to be fair, compared with 73 percent of youth in Year 2 (effect size=0.14). Third, 88 percent of youth in Year 1 reported that staff think they can do things well, compared with 75

### Exhibit 14 Youth Perceptions About Staff, Grades 3-8, 2006-07

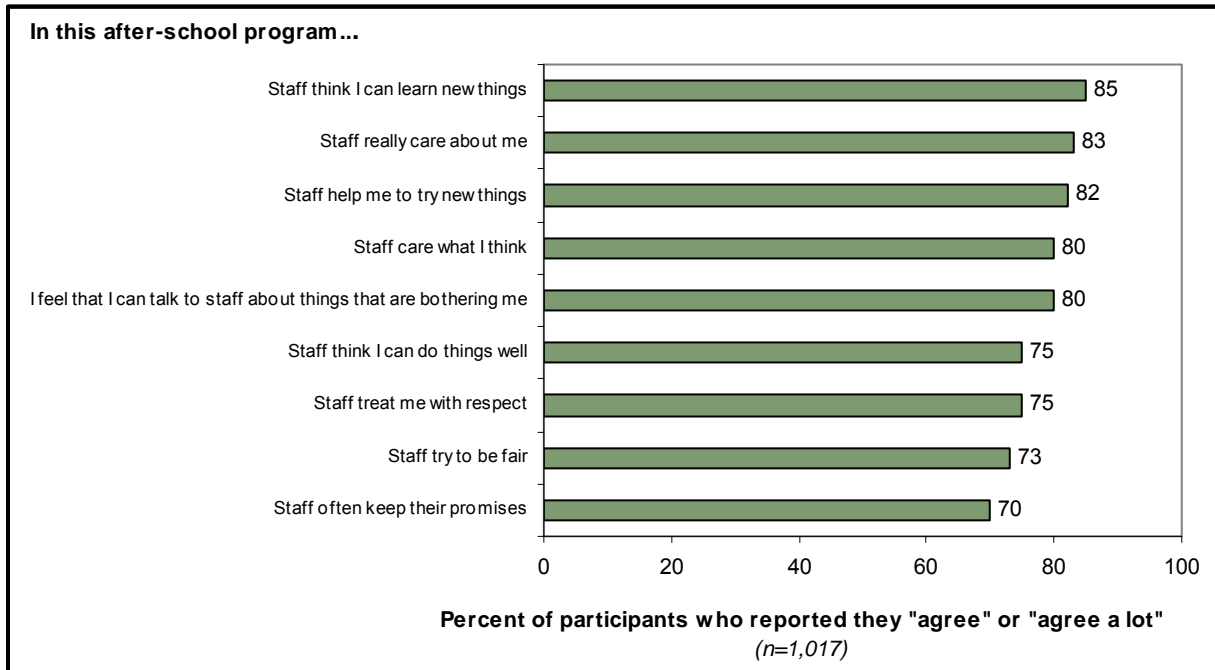


Exhibit reads: Across grades 3-8, 85 percent of responding participants agreed or agreed a lot that, in the after-school program, staff think they can learn new things.

percent of youth in Year 2 (effect size=0.17). These small shifts may reflect the greater pressures in Year 2 to deliver academic programming and the resulting decrease in arts and recreational activities.

Youth who were interviewed during our visits provided positive feedback regarding program staff, although a few did draw a distinction between “the nice ones” and a minority who they felt did not fall into that category. One participant explained that staff in the former group often “sit there and listen to you” and “ask how [your] day is going.” Another noted that “sometimes you can talk to them about your weekend [and] they might talk to you about their day.” In contrast, staff in the latter group were typically described as having used punitive measures (e.g., prohibiting access to games or other desirable activities) to control youth behavior.

**Relationships with peers.** A majority of student participants strongly agreed or agreed with key statements designed to assess their relationships with peers in the after-school program, as shown in Exhibit 15. No significant year-to-year differences were observed. Once again, the only significant difference was between older and younger participants: 87 percent of youth in grades 6-8 agreed or strongly agreed that they get along with other kids, compared with 79 percent of youth in grades 3-5 (effect size=0.11).

## Exhibit 15 Youth Perceptions About Peer Relationships, Grades 3-8, 2006-07

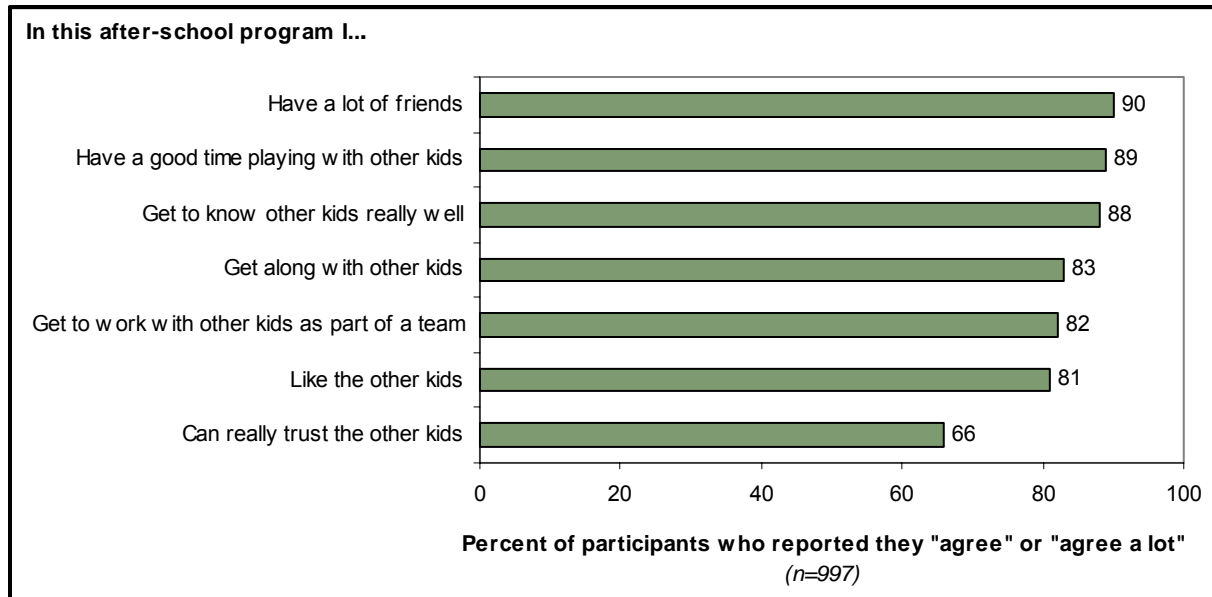


Exhibit reads: Across grades 3-8, 90 percent of responding participants agreed or agreed a lot that in the after-school program they had a lot of friends.

Many participants seemed to share the views of one child with whom we spoke:

*We learned how to work as a team...to take ideas from each other and to compromise. We helped each other [and] got to learn how everyone is. [We] learned [about] each other's attitudes.*

**Healthful living.** There was little change in our participant survey findings between Year 1 and Year 2 regarding participants' behavior in areas related to healthful living. However, there were significant differences between older and younger participants in several reported behaviors. For example, 77 percent of participants in grades 3-5 reported that in general, on a typical school night, they sleep eight hours or more, compared with 62 percent of youth in grades 6-8 (effect size=0.17). Sixty-two percent of participants in grades 3-5 reported that in general, on a typical weekend night, they sleep eight hours or more, compared with 51 percent of participants in grades 6-8 (effect size=0.12). Youth in grades 3-5 were less likely to report watching television four hours or more on a school day (33 percent, compared with 47 percent, effect size=0.13). Similarly, 67 percent of youth in grades 3-5 reported that they watch four hours or more of television on a weekend day, compared with 82 percent of youth in grades 6-8 (effect size=0.15).

**Academic benefits.** As has been noted earlier in this report, many program staff and parents believe that the after-school program has had a positive impact on student academic achievement, and survey results indicate that participants also share this view. As illustrated in Exhibit 16, the majority of youth agree a lot or agree that, among other things, the program has helped them to finish their homework, get better grades, and improve their attitudes toward their schoolwork. These results are similar to those in Year 1.

## Exhibit 16 Youth Perceptions of the Program's Help with School, Grades 3-8, 2006-07

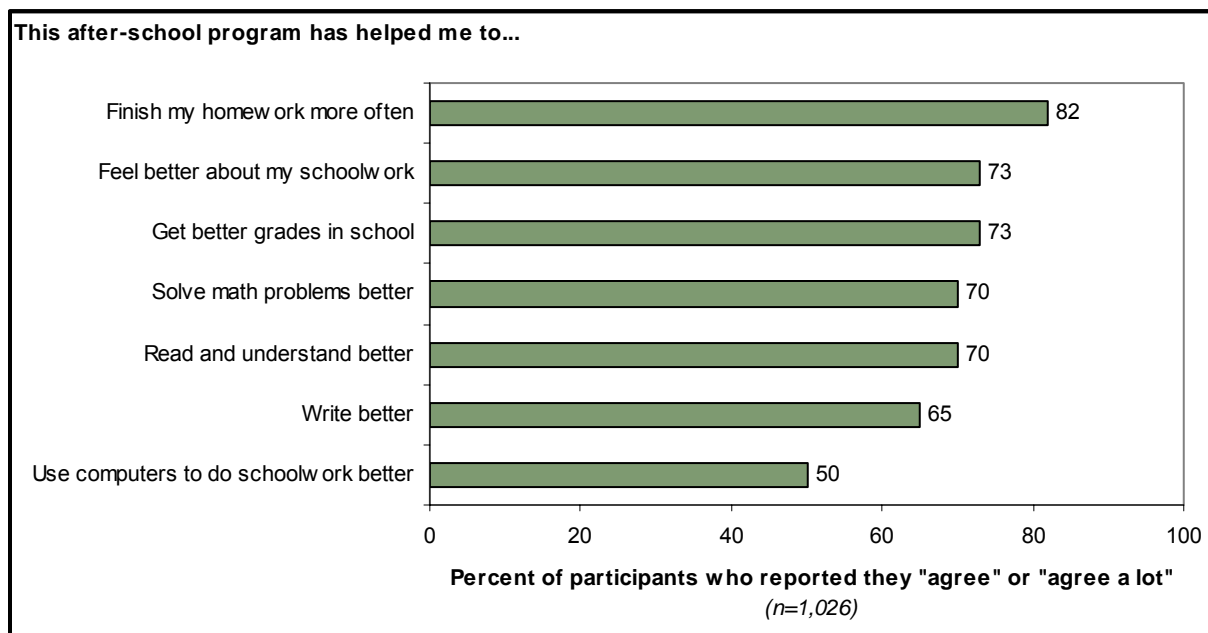


Exhibit reads: Across grades 3-8, 82 percent of responding participants agreed or agreed a lot that the after-school program had helped them to finish homework more often.

A program staff member provided perspective on these findings:

*When the mentors help them with their homework, [it] has a big impact. Some of [the children have] parents who don't help them. Some of their parents don't speak English. One particular student did not read well, [but] she has gotten much better. She showed me her grades.*

### Teacher-Reported Outcomes

**Teacher-reported academic engagement.** Reading/language arts or homeroom teachers of youth enrolled in nine NJ After 3 programs in the in-depth sample completed a brief report on each NJ After 3 participant in grades 4-7 whom they teach. The survey asked teachers to assess youth who were NJ After 3 participants on their 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 responding teachers:

- Seventy-one percent of after-school participants “almost always” or “often” demonstrated academic engagement by speaking in class when they were called on.

- Fifty-eight percent of after-school participants “almost always” or “often” were motivated to learn.
- Seventy-two percent of after-school participants “almost always” or “often” followed classroom rules.
- Sixty-nine percent of after-school participants “almost always” or “often” took care of their classroom materials.
- Seventy-one percent of after-school participants “almost always” or “often” demonstrated “excellent” or “good” technology skills when playing games.
- Seventy-nine percent of after-school participants “almost always” or “often” met grade-level expectations for oral communication skills.

***Teacher-reported academic skills.*** Teacher survey results indicate that there was little change in participants’ academic characteristics between Year 1 and Year 2, when ratings were combined for all participants rated in Year 1 and all participants rated in Year 2. Similarly, analyses found no differences in teacher ratings among youth based on their after-school attendance level.

Year 2 data do, however, indicate educational growth among youth who participated in NJ After 3 in both Year 1 and Year 2 and for whom teacher reports are available in both years (n=74). In each year, teachers rated NJ After 3 participants in light of “grade level expectations in your school.” Teachers’ ratings of participants’ reading and language arts skills improved between Year 1 and Year 2 for participants who were rated by their teachers in both years, indicating that these participants improved their relative ranking or status in the school over this period. To conduct this analysis, we created a Reading and Language Arts Skills scale to range from one to five, with five indicating that, on average, participant reading and language arts skills (e.g., reading comprehension, reading fluency, and spelling) were far above grade-level expectations. Teachers’ assessments of the reading and language arts skills of youth with both Year 1 and Year 2 data points increased from an average of 2.85 on this five-point scale in Year 1 to 3.20 in Year 2 (effect size = 0.47). This change was statistically significant, and the effect size indicated noteworthy academic growth. No significant changes were observed in any other academic outcome area.

To determine the generalizability of this finding to the larger group of NJ After 3 participants, we compared the characteristics of the 74 youth for whom we had teacher surveys over two years with the larger group (N=528) for whom we had a teacher survey in only one year. We found that the two groups had similar demographic characteristics and had similar baseline educational skills in reading and language arts. The two-year group posted higher ratings on other skills assessed in the teacher survey, however.

## Associations between Program Features and Participant Experiences

Although the design of the evaluation does not permit analyses to identify causal influence, it does permit the calculation of statistically relevant associations between program features and participant reports in important areas of youth experience. Our analysis revealed statistically significant associations between youth experiences and site coordinators' assessment of: (1) technical assistance (i.e., the extent to which staff received various types of training and professional development services through NJ After 3), (2) program environment (i.e., their judgment of the extent to which their program satisfied quality indicators related to program size, structure, processes, and content), and (3) job satisfaction (i.e., the extent to which they agreed with statements regarding their enjoyment of the work, their access to space and resources to work effectively, and the availability of supervisory support and feedback). All associations reported below were statistically significant at  $p < .05$  based on a Pearson's correlation ( $r$ ). The effect size ( $r^2$ ) of all associations ranged from .20 to over .60, which suggests that these associations are noteworthy in terms of their strength and magnitude.

Based on a statistical comparison of data from surveys of participants and site coordinators, the following program features were found to be positively associated with participants' self-reported academic and social outcomes:

- **Technical assistance.** On average, participants who attended programs that received technical assistance provided by NJ After 3 reported "to a great extent" feeling a strong connection to the program ( $r=0.65$ ,  $r^2=0.42$ ). Also, the quality of their interactions with peers ( $r=0.63$ ,  $r^2=0.39$ ) and with program staff ( $r=0.57$ ,  $r^2=0.33$ ) was positively correlated with the amount of technical assistance a program received. The extent to which youth reported more academic benefits of their NJ After 3 program ( $r=0.62$ ,  $r^2=0.39$ ) and exposure to opportunities within the program ( $r=0.59$ ,  $r^2=0.34$ ) was positively associated with the amount of technical assistance a program received.
- **Program environment.** Site coordinators' reports of a positive program environment was positively associated with participants' reports regarding their exposure to new opportunities within the program ( $r=0.59$ ,  $r^2=0.35$ ). On average, participants who attended programs with a positive program environment were more likely to feel connected to the program ( $r=0.59$ ,  $r^2=0.35$ ). The quality of participants' interactions with program staff ( $r=0.56$ ,  $r^2=0.31$ ) and with peers ( $r=0.51$ ,  $r^2=0.26$ ) and the academic benefits of program participation ( $r=0.49$ ,  $r^2=0.24$ ) were also positively correlated with a positive program environment.
- **Job satisfaction.** Analyses also found a positive association among participants' reports of the quality of their interactions with program staff ( $r=0.53$ ,  $r^2=0.28$ ), their feelings of connection to the program and sense of belonging ( $r=0.49$ ,  $r^2=0.24$ ), and site coordinators' reports of feeling satisfied with their job.

## Other Reported Outcomes

*[My children] are here [and] they're safe. I trust where they are, so I can work peacefully.*

—Parent

As part of the evaluation, we examined the extent to which the NJ After 3 initiative has increased the availability of after-school programming and attracted sustaining support from other organizations, agencies, or businesses. The growth in overall program enrollment and in the average size of programs, discussed earlier in this report, both attest to the increase in program availability that has occurred in many communities served by this initiative. Fewer than half (46 percent) of site coordinators surveyed reported that there are other after-school opportunities for youth at their school. With most NJ After 3 programs reporting that they are the only option for parents and their children at their respective schools, it was not surprising that the parents whom we interviewed spoke highly of the program. Many confirmed that NJ After 3 was their only option because it was convenient and either free or low in cost.

*[My children] are always doing activities [here]. That is good. It isn't very safe in my neighborhood, and I don't want them playing outside if I am not there. On [the days I am not at home], the kids don't get to do something fun. They get upset when they can't get their energy out. This [program] allows them to get outside time and [have some] active time. If they don't run here, they will be running around the house. They get some free time here. It's nice that it's not all educational.*

*Before, this program was just convenient, [but] now it is where I [really] want my child [to be]. They have real activities.*

Approximately 72 percent of site coordinators indicated that they secured some form of support (e.g., volunteers, materials) from one or more external organizations in Year 2, as shown in Exhibit 17. While there were no significant changes between Year 1 and Year 2 in the number of external supporters or the nature of support received, the survey did show that veteran site coordinators were more likely than new coordinators to report that they received external support in the form of materials or supplies (81 percent, compared with 37 percent, effect size=0.37).

Interview data indicated that supporters typically provided materials such as books and equipment, services such as transportation for field trips, or volunteers who coached sports or instructed youth in specialized areas (e.g., lacrosse, chess, or theater). As the following comments demonstrate, program staff recognized and appreciated what partnerships with external organizations and agencies did for their programs, even if they were not always able to take full advantage of these resources.

## Exhibit 17 Support and Resources Received from External Organizations, 2006-07

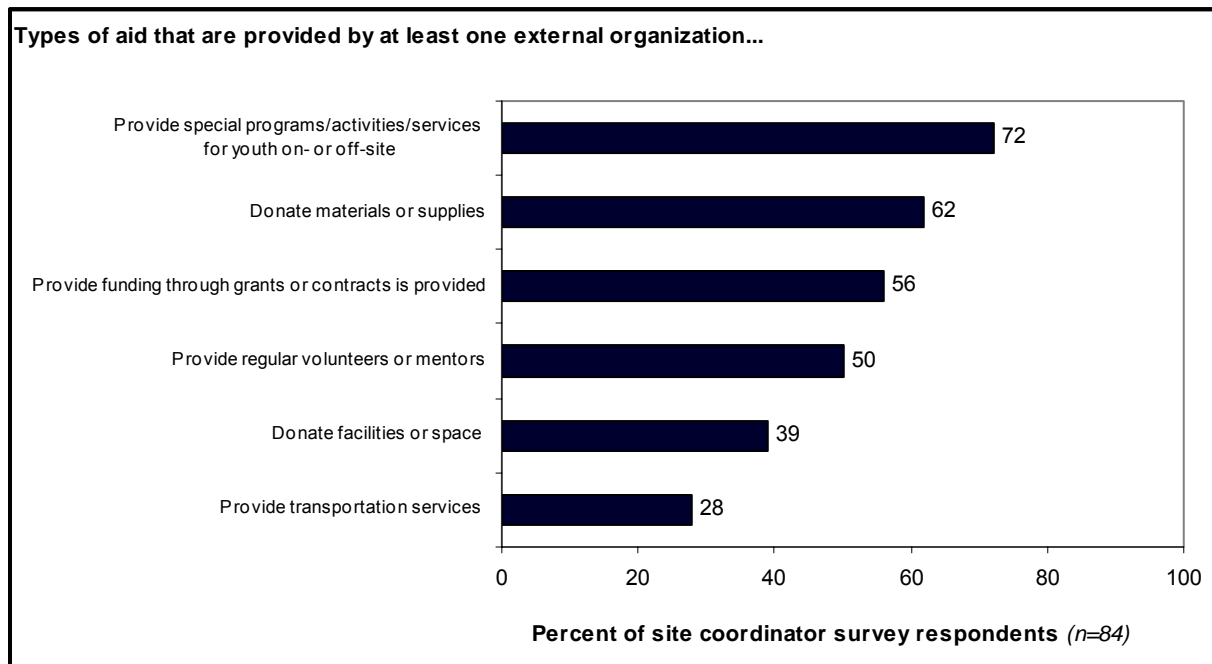


Exhibit reads: Seventy-two percent of site coordinators reported that at least one external organization provided special programs, activities, or services for youth either on- or off-site.

*Partnerships are the number one thing for success in this business. I have to sell our program and match the needs...I have to make connections for these kids. We have a relationship with a [local] high school. They have a step team, [and] two [of the high school students] come out and lead our step program. They are coming today, and they are bringing the whole high school step team. [The youth in the after-school program] really enjoy it.*

*This year we have not partnered with anyone.... I don't know why. It is just something that I didn't pursue this year. It creates more work for me...maybe next year we can look towards [establishing partnerships]. It would be more beneficial because it could free up a lot of money if other organizations could come in. [It would also build] a connection with people in the community. I know [of] a lot of resources, but it is a lot of work [to actually get them].*

## 6. Program Challenges

Site coordinators and program staff outlined several challenges that they said affected program implementation and the realization of desired program outcomes. In this section, we highlight those that were reported most often during interviews or by the largest number of

respondents surveyed. There were no significant changes in site coordinators’ survey responses in this area between Year 1 and Year 2.

When asked about staffing challenges to implementing high-quality programming, a majority of site coordinators indicated that staff inability to communicate with participants who are English-language learners, unreliable attendance by staff, and limited professional development opportunities for staff were all major challenges, as shown in Exhibit 18. Nearly half (49 percent) also reported that the fact that volunteers are not available on a reliable schedule was also a major challenge.

**Exhibit 18**  
**Major Staffing Challenges to Implementing High-Quality Programming, 2006-07**

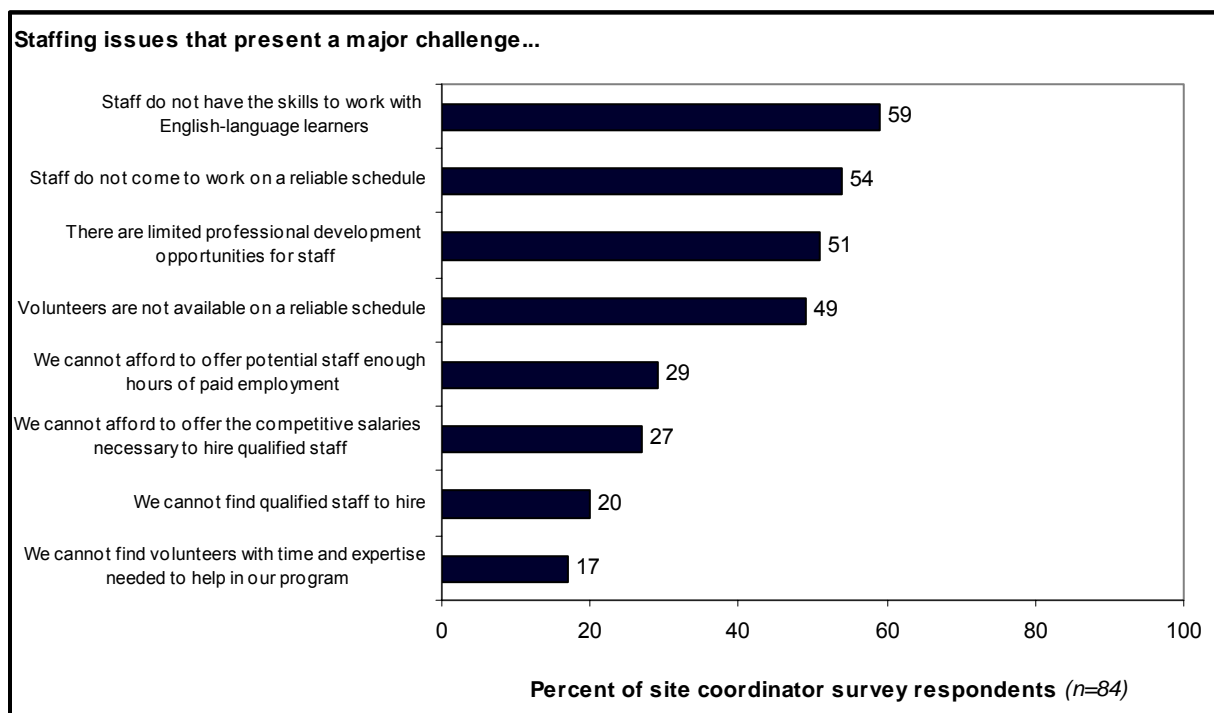


Exhibit reads: Fifty-nine percent of site coordinators reported that having staff who do not have the skills to work with English-language learners was a major challenge.

Although not a problem in every location, the inability to recruit adequate numbers of qualified staff had an adverse effect in some programs. One program staff member described her desire for “a substitute list” to be made available. She explained, “If kids are looking forward to an activity, and [the staff member] isn’t there, that brings the kids down...they are [really upset].” Another staff member asked for NJ After 3 help with staffing: “They should have something on their website for recruiting.”

When asked to identify other types of challenges, over two-thirds of site coordinators cited insufficient support or feedback from NJ After 3, insufficient information about the needs of the participants, and inadequate, inappropriate, or unsafe space as challenges to program implementation, as shown in Exhibit 19. The NJ After 3 central staff explained that “sufficient

support” for many site coordinators probably included funding support. The NJ After 3 program model requires grantees to work toward developing long-term sustainability. This objective requires the identification of funding partners and new resources, such as school districts and other municipal and private funding streams. NJ After 3 leadership also stated that NJ After 3 provides “over 80 hours of training and professional development to site coordinators each year, quadruple the state licensing requirement. Programs also receive two site visits per year with formal feedback following each visit.”

**Exhibit 19**  
**Site Coordinators’ Report Major Challenges to**  
**Implementing High-Quality Programming, 2006-07, in Percents**

<b>Issues presenting a major challenge to implementation (n=82)</b>	
We do not receive sufficient support or feedback from NJ After 3	78
We have insufficient information about the needs of the participants	70
The space available for our program is inadequate, inappropriate, or unsafe	68
We do not have sufficient administrative support to fulfill NJ After 3 grant reporting	66
The staff at the school(s) participants attend do not respond to our requests	63
We cannot recruit enough youth who want to participate	62
Youth drop out because they lose interest	60
We have inadequate instructional materials or programming ideas	60
Youth do not attend NJ After 3 program regularly enough	52
We do not have sufficient funds to provide high-quality programming	44
The school(s) our participants attend would like our program to be more academically focused	42
Families are not sufficiently involved in their children’s participation at the program	20

Exhibit reads: Seventy-eight percent of site coordinators reported insufficient support or feedback from NJ After 3 as a major challenge.

Comments from site coordinators during our site visits reflected these survey findings:

*This is the only school in [this city] that also has a large Vietnamese and Korean population.... We have people on staff who speak Spanish, but we don’t have that for the Asian populations. Next year, I definitely need to find someone who speaks Vietnamese or Korean. We have had times where we have needed to talk to a parent, and we have not been able to communicate with them. We did have a couple of Asian people on staff last year, but they didn’t speak Vietnamese or Korean. There is too much of a language barrier with the parents. The kids speak English, but if it is a discipline issue or if the kid got hurt [we cannot communicate with the parents]. [We have] to constantly pull someone from the school [to help translate for us, but [it] doesn’t help [that] the school staff [are able to do this] because they aren’t here [after school].*

*Space is still an issue. I’m supposed to be moving [offices] again. I don’t know where [the principal] will put me [this time]. I would like to change the setting...it’s not enough space. The cafeteria is chaotic. The classrooms are not a big issue because we have the*

*whole second floor, [but] both computer labs are already occupied. Also the library is occupied. The teacher doesn't want the library to be used. [She] thinks [youth in the after-school program] won't respect the books [and will] tear them up. Other after-school programs [are] already using [the computer lab]. [There is] not enough space....*

The interview data helped to highlight the ways in which some challenges are interconnected. For example, although NJ After 3 provides many workshops and other professional development activities, according to some interviewees, the staff-skills problem among frontline program staff could usefully be addressed by expanding and deepening existing training opportunities for this population.

Program staff also recognize that many of the youth whom they serve have significant academic, social, and emotional needs. However, they are frustrated both by their inability to adequately address needs that are beyond their personal expertise, and by the limited time and program resources that are available through the initiative to address the deeper problems that are evident among so many program participants.

*We hired someone who works with children with problems. She's almost finished with her degree in child psychology. Downtown...[there is] a program that works with kids who have behavioral or emotional issues.... I'm trying to get that program in the after-school program. Right now we use whatever our expertise is in that area.*

*Last year, [we hired] a lot of college students and I think they didn't realize how much of a commitment it would be. They didn't realize how challenging it was going to be and how many issues the kids have. I think a lot of people didn't expect those kinds of issues to come up. It is up to us to guide the kids...I think [new staff] thought they were just going to come in and play with kids.*

Other challenges that were raised during the interviews, and were discussed in previous sections of the report, were related to relationships between the programs and their host schools and to program efforts to establish and maintain relationships with community partners.

## **7. Recommendations for Continued Improvement**

This section outlines two ways in which NJ After 3 can enhance the experiences of program participants and facilitate important academic, social, and personal outcomes for youth. These recommendations, which include specific strategies for achieving program improvement, are based on an analysis of key program features, significant challenges, and important effects and outcomes that have been described throughout the report.

### **Identify and Share Best Practices in Essential Developmental Domains**

NJ After 3 currently solicits and showcases promising practices, and it provides many opportunities for programs to learn from one another and from content experts. NJ After 3 could

productively augment these opportunities by focusing greater attention on the design and operation of youth activities that emphasize hands-on learning, engage youth in higher-order thinking, and provide opportunities for youth to collaborate, take leadership, make choices, assist each other, and contribute opinions and ideas. Program changes might entail, for example, the introduction of more long-term projects that help students to develop a desired skill (e.g., woodworking, making a movie, learning a musical instrument, sewing a garment) or that are designed to achieve a concrete goal (e.g., preparation of an art exhibit or a theatrical event).

## **Deepen and Expand Training for Staff Who Work Directly with Youth**

Site coordinators report that NJ After 3 provides useful training for staff in site-coordinator roles, focusing in areas such as classroom management, health and fitness promotion, youth development, program management, and instructional strategies. Initiative leaders report that NJ After 3 provides a robust program of training, technical assistance, and professional development that includes: a two-day orientation for site coordinators, monthly workshops and seminars for site coordinators, a full-day Principals Institute, three full-day training conferences for classroom staff, and an annual Promising Practices Competition and Showcase. However, local program staff report that more training opportunities are needed for front-line, classroom staff. Moreover, these opportunities need to be scheduled in locations that are easy for staff to access using public transportation. Based on analysis of data showing a strong association between receipt of technical assistance and positive youth outcomes, coupled with interview data on training needs, the evaluators recommend that NJ After 3 deepen and expand existing training for younger program staff (e.g., college students and those with little work experience) and all who lead classes and youth activities. In addition, NJ After 3 could increase training opportunities for site coordinators on methods for improved supervision and training of front-line staff.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Computation of Activity Intensity Index**

The following tables show the weights applied to data on the implementation of project activities in order to develop the activity intensity index used in this report:

Intensity Level	Code
Highest	6
Very high	5
High	4
Moderate	3
Low	2
Very low	1
Not offered	0

Proportion of Participants	Frequency with which Activity Offered							
	At least 4-5 hours a week		About 1-3 hours a week		A few hours a month		Less than one hour a month	
	Always available	Not always available	Always available	Not always available	Always available	Not always available	Always available	Not always available
All or most	6	5	5	4	4	3	3	2
Not all or most	5	4	4	3	3	2	2	1

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Details of Data Used in Analyses of Program Activities**

**Exhibit B1**  
**Activities Not Offered, 2005-06 Compared with 2006-07**

Activity	Percent of site coordinators reporting that activities are <u>not</u> offered at NJ After 3 programs			
	Site Coordinators 2005-06 (n=55)	Site Coordinators 2006-07 (n=84)	Cramer's V	p
Opportunities to meet and talk with professional artists*	42	63	0.21	0.01
Drama/theater*	18	37	0.20	0.02
Creative writing*	9	27	0.22	0.02
Dance/movement instruction**	2	27	0.27	0.001
Independent reading*	4	15	0.18	0.03

Exhibit reads: In 2005-06, 42 percent of site coordinators reported that their program does not provide opportunities for youth to meet and talk with professional artists, compared with 63 percent of site coordinators in 2006-07. This difference is statistically significant.

\*p<.05 and V≥0.10

\*\*p<.001 and V≥0.10

**Exhibit B2**  
**Average Intensity Level of Activities, by Activity Type**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Average Intensity Level</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>
Homework help	5.65	81
Learning games/activities	4.75	80
Visual arts and crafts instruction/projects	4.64	81
Math games/activities	4.46	79
Free time for physical play or pick-up sports	4.40	81
Group instruction in specific academic subjects	3.98	81
Organized team sports instruction/activities	3.89	81
Unstructured time for socializing	3.79	78
Health or nutrition education	3.78	81
Organized reading	3.73	80
Independent reading	3.73	80
Service projects in the program	3.44	81
Dance/movement instruction or activities	3.38	81
Organized writing activities	3.31	80
Organized social events	3.31	81
Activities to learn about/explore different cultures/languages	3.21	81
Fitness classes or activities	2.95	81
Creative writing	2.95	80
Training in study skills	2.89	80
Peer discussion of topics that are important to youth	2.73	80
Other physical activities	2.68	81
Discussion about diversity issues	2.66	80
Conflict resolution training	2.65	81
Training in computer skills	2.61	79
Instruction in life skills	2.56	80
Drama/theater instruction or activities	2.50	80
Discussion of current events	2.41	80
Music instruction/activities	2.38	81
Activities to discuss gender issues and empowerment	2.24	79
Organized individual sports instruction/activities	2.07	81
Career exploration activities	1.98	80
Discussion of issues, events, or problems in your community	1.97	79
Mentoring	1.64	81
Service projects in the neighborhood/nearby schools	1.57	81
Field trips to performances or exhibits	1.25	81
Arts-related technology	1.19	81
Opportunities to meet and talk with professional artists and performers	1.00	80
Martial arts instruction and practice	0.98	81
Field trips to local businesses	0.75	79
Orientation to job search and basic employability skills	0.71	79
Field trips to high school/college campuses	0.66	79
Mock government or election activities or projects	0.65	81
Internships	0.55	80
Job shadowing opportunities	0.53	79
Civic simulation games	0.26	78

Exhibit reads: Homework help had an average intensity level of 5.65 on a scale of 1-6.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Details of Data Used in Program Observation Analyses**

In Year 2 of the evaluation of the NJ After 3 initiative, evaluators conducted between 10 and 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 159 independent observations and 19 co-observations with an inter-rater reliability of 0.717.

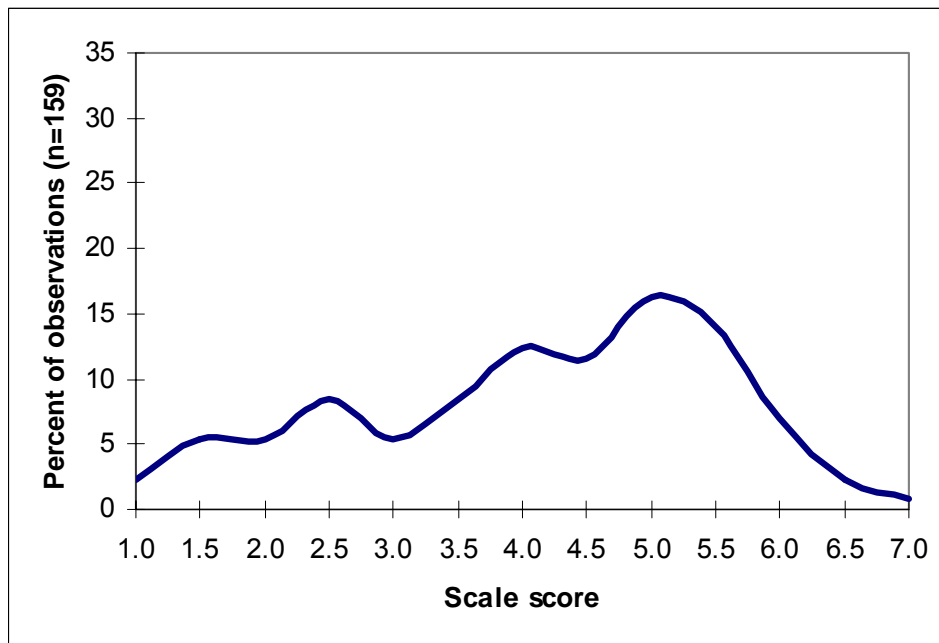
**Sequenced:** The activity builds skills and content to achieve goals

The Sequenced scale combines ratings from the following indicators:

- Activity involves the practice/a progression of skills
- Staff challenge youth to move beyond their current level of competency
- Activity requires analytic thinking
- Staff employ varied teaching strategies
- Activity challenges students intellectually, creatively, developmentally, and/or physically
- Staff assist youth without taking control
- Staff verbally recognize youth efforts and accomplishments

*Descriptive Statistics:*

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.90	3.91	1.43	1.00	3.00	5.00	6.71



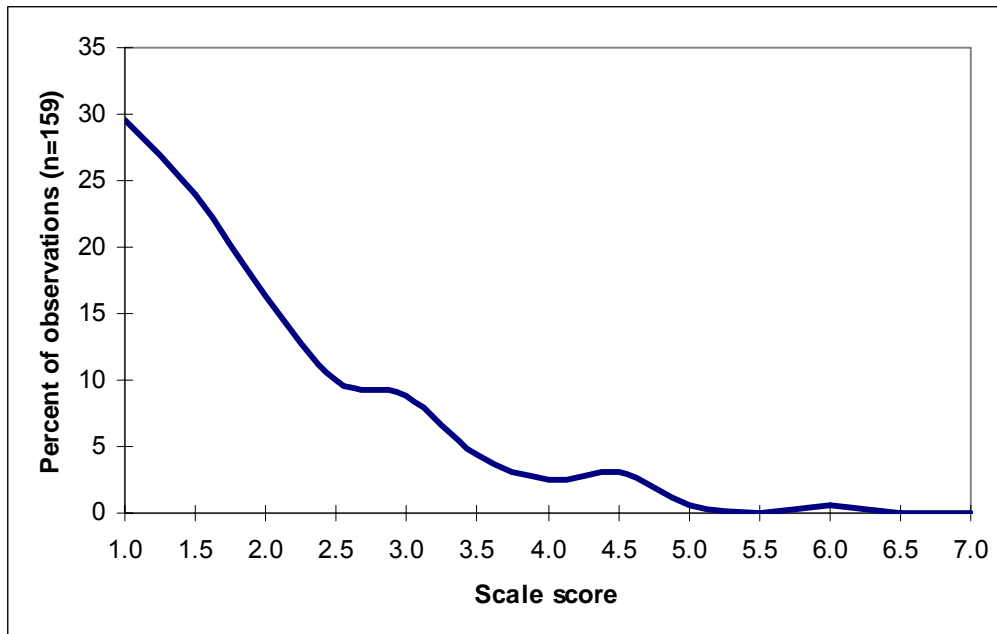
**Active:** The activity offers opportunities for youth to actively participate in learning

The Active scale combines ratings from the following indicators:

- Staff plan for/ask youth to work together
- Youth are collaborative
- Youth take leadership responsibilities/roles
- Youth have opportunities to make meaningful choices
- Youth assist one another
- Youth contribute opinions, ideas and/or concerns to discussions
- Staff encourage youth to share their ideas, opinions and concerns
- Staff ask youth to expand upon their answers and ideas

*Descriptive Statistics:*

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.77	1.83	0.97	1.00	1.00	2.25	6.00



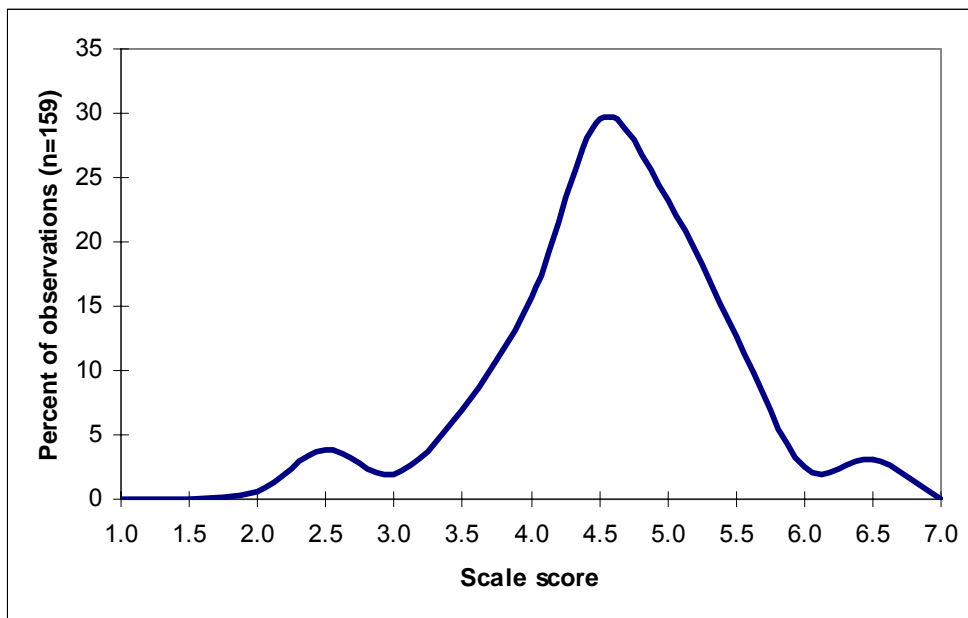
**Focused:** The activity focuses on developing positive relationships among youth and with staff

The Focused scale combines ratings from the following indicators:

- Youth show positive affect to staff
- Youth are friendly and relaxed with one another
- Youth respect one another
- Staff show positive affect toward youth
- Staff engage personally with youth
- Staff guide for positive peer interactions
- Staff use positive behavior management techniques
- Staff are equitable and inclusive

*Descriptive Statistics:*

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.79	4.39	0.81	1.88	4.00	4.88	6.38



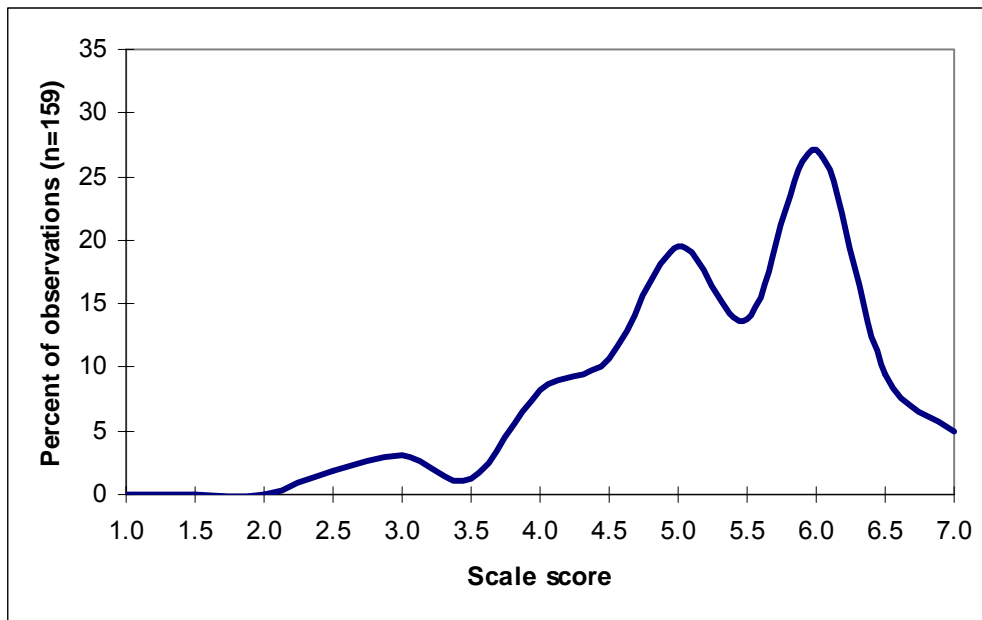
**Explicit:** The activity explicitly targets specific learning goals and/or developmental goals

The Explicit scale combines ratings from the following indicators:

- Activity is well organized
- Youth are on task
- Staff communicate goals, purposes, expectations
- Youth listen actively and attentively to peers and staff
- Staff attentively listen to and/or observe youth

*Descriptive Statistics:*

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.84	5.15	1.00	2.20	4.50	5.80	7.00



## **APPENDIX D**

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

**Exhibit D1**  
**Student Participants' Level of Attachment, by Grade Level, 2006-07**

Survey Item	Percent of Participants Who "Agreed" or "Agreed a lot"			
	Participants Grades 3-5 (n=529)	Participants Grades 6-8 (n=346)	Cramer's V	p
I am safe	87	90	0.04	0.23
I have the power to help others	85	84	0.01	0.70
I am successful	84	89	0.06	0.09
I belong*	82	91	0.12	0.00
My actions make a difference	81	83	0.02	0.49
I matter*	78	86	0.10	0.01
This is a good place to hang out*	78	89	0.15	0.00
My ideas count	70	75	0.06	0.11

Exhibit reads: In 2006-07, 87 percent of participants in grades 3-5 reported that they felt safe in the program, compared with 90 percent of participants in grades 6-8. This difference is not statistically significant.

\*p<.05 and V≥0.10

**Exhibit D2**  
**Student Participants' Report of Engagement in Leadership Activities, by Year**

Survey Item	Percent of Participants Who Reported "Yes"			
	Participants Year 1 (n=650)	Participants Year 2 (n=941)	Cramer's V	p
I have led an activity	48	39	0.09	0.00
I have helped out in the office	27	22	0.06	0.02
I have helped out on a youth council, advisory group, or leadership team for this program*	33	19	0.16	0.00
I have helped plan a program activity or event or helped set up materials or equipment for an activity*	60	45	0.15	0.00
I have helped with meetings for adults	20	13	0.09	0.00
I have been asked by staff for my ideas about the program or an activity*	57	41	0.15	0.00
I have helped plan a community service project*	31	17	0.17	0.00

Exhibit reads: Forty-eight percent of student participants in Year 1 reported that they had led an activity compared to 39 percent of participants in Year 2. This difference is statistically significant.

\*p<.05 and V≥0.10

**Exhibit D3**  
**Correlations between Technical Assistance and Participant Experiences**

Participant Survey Scale	Pearson Correlation	p	r <sup>2</sup>	n
Exposure to New Opportunities*	0.59	0.01	0.34	18
Academic Benefits**	0.62	0.006	0.39	18
Community Service Projects	0.44	0.07	0.20	18
Sense of Belonging**	0.65	0.004	0.42	18
Interactions with Staff*	0.57	0.01	0.33	18
Interactions with Peers**	0.63	0.006	0.39	18

Exhibit reads: The extent to which student participants reported exposure to new opportunities within the program was positively associated with the intensity of technical assistance in a program. The Pearson Correlation was 0.59 with a p-value of 0.01. This correlation was statistically significant and the effect size was 0.34.

\* p < .05

\*\* p < .01

**Exhibit D4**  
**Correlations between Program Environment and Participant Experiences**

Participant Survey Scale	Pearson Correlation	p	r <sup>2</sup>	n
Exposure to New Opportunities*	0.59	0.01	0.35	17
Academic Benefits*	0.49	0.05	0.24	17
Community Service Projects	0.21	0.43	0.04	17
Sense of Belonging*	0.59	0.01	0.34	17
Interactions with Staff*	0.56	0.02	0.31	17
Interactions with Peers*	0.51	0.04	0.26	17

Exhibit reads: The extent to which participants reported exposure to new opportunities within the program was positively associated with the quality of the program environment in a program. The Pearson Correlation was 0.59 with a p-value of 0.01. This correlation was statistically significant and the effect size (r<sup>2</sup>) was 0.35.

\* p < .05

**Exhibit D5**  
**Correlations between Site Coordinator's Job Satisfaction**  
**and Participant Experiences**

<b>Participant Survey Scale</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>r<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>n</b>
Exposure to New Opportunities	0.48	0.05	0.23	17
Academic Benefits	0.41	0.10	0.17	17
Community Service Projects	0.39	0.12	0.15	17
Sense of Belonging*	0.49	0.05	0.24	17
Interactions with Staff*	0.53	0.03	0.28	17
Interactions with Peers	0.35	0.17	0.12	17

Exhibit reads: The extent to which participants reported exposure to new opportunities within the program was positively associated with the site coordinator's job satisfaction in a program. The Pearson Correlation was 0.48 with a p-value of 0.05. This correlation was not statistically significant and the effect size was 0.23.

\* p < .05

## Student Participant Survey Scales

### *Exposure to New Opportunities*

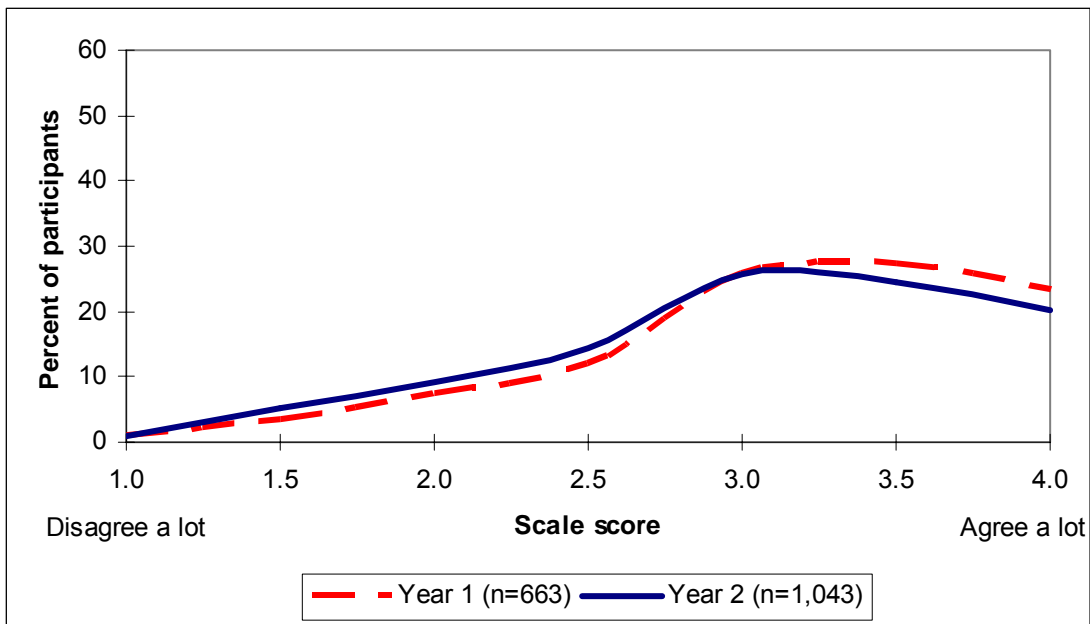
The Exposure to New Opportunities scale was computed to range from one to four, with four indicating that on average student participants strongly agreed with the following statements:

In this after-school 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

### *Year 2 Descriptive Statistics:*

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.80	2.92	0.73	1	2.50	3.50	4



**Community Service Projects**

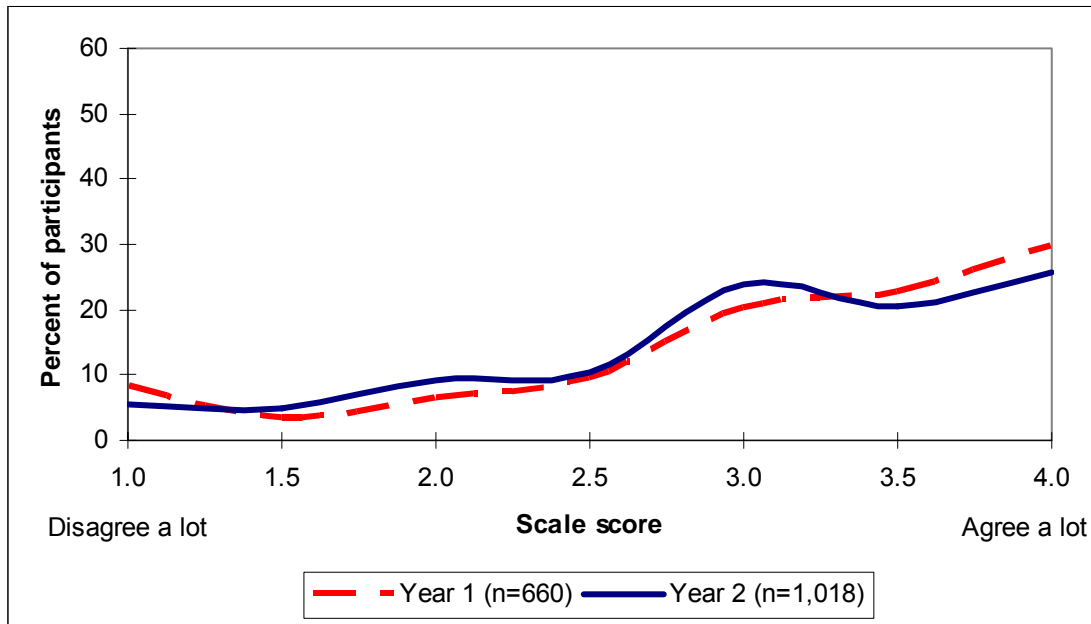
The Community Service Projects scale was computed to range from one to four, with four indicating that on average student participants strongly agreed with the following statements:

Participating in community service projects with this after-school 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

*Year 2 Descriptive Statistics:*

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.92	2.88	0.86	1	2.38	3.57	4



***Sense of Belonging***

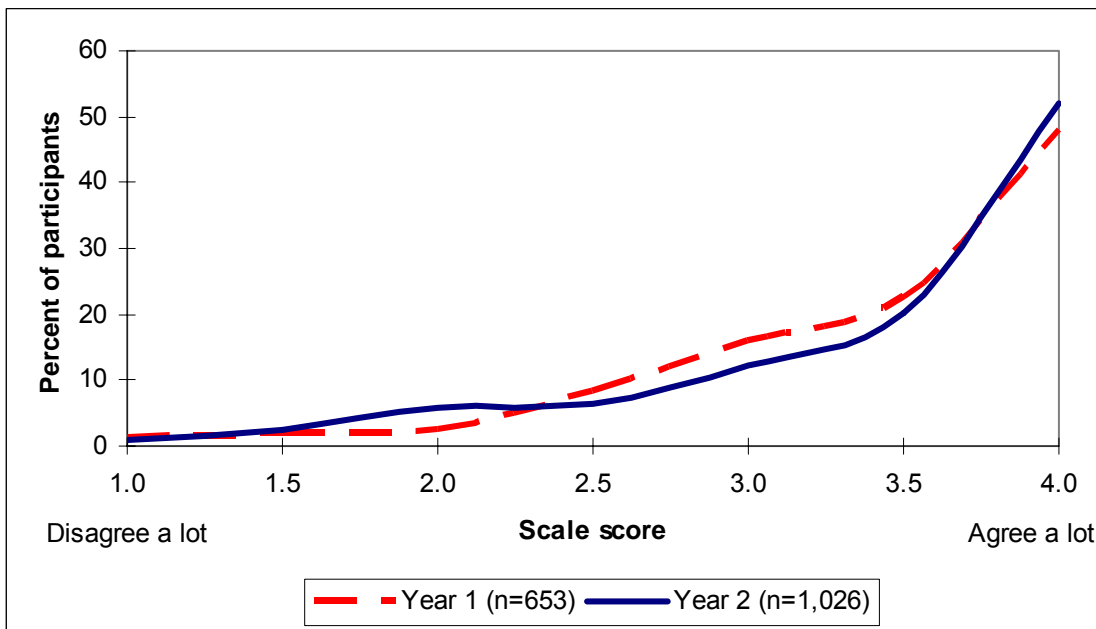
The Sense of Belonging scale was computed to range from one to four, with four indicating that on average student participants strongly agreed with the following statements:

In this after-school 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

*Year 2 Descriptive Statistics:*

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.89	3.35	0.73	1	3.00	4.00	4



***Interactions with Staff***

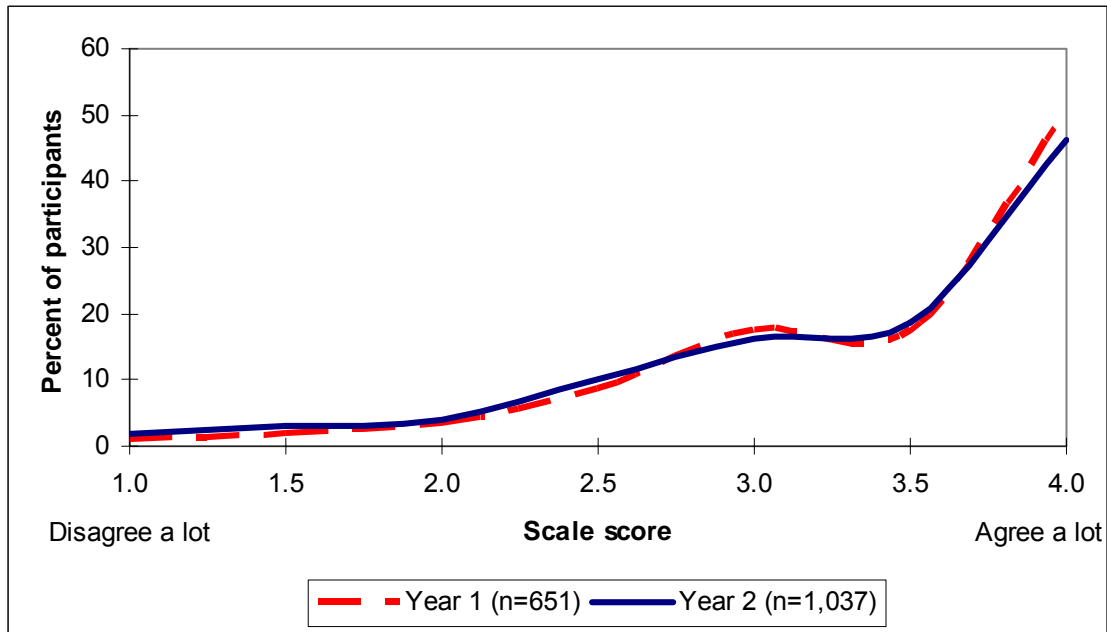
The Interactions with Staff scale was computed to range from one to four, with four indicating that on average student participants strongly agreed with the following statements:

In this after-school 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

*Year 2 Descriptive Statistics:*

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.92	3.23	0.77	1	2.78	3.89	4



***Interactions with Peers***

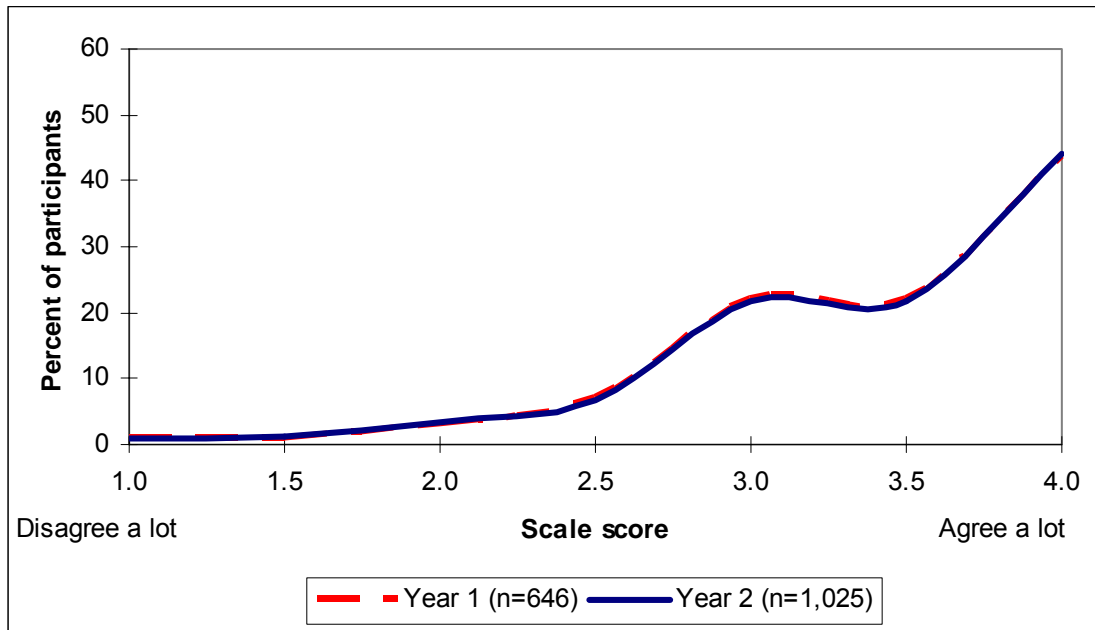
The Interactions with Peers scale was computed to range from one to four, with four indicating that on average student participants strongly agreed with the following statements:

In this after-school 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

*Year 2 Descriptive Statistics:*

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.86	3.27	0.66	1	3.00	3.86	4



## **APPENDIX E**

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

# Teacher Survey Responses

**Exhibit E1**  
**Teacher Reports of Participants' Interpersonal Skills, Grades 4-7, 2006-07**

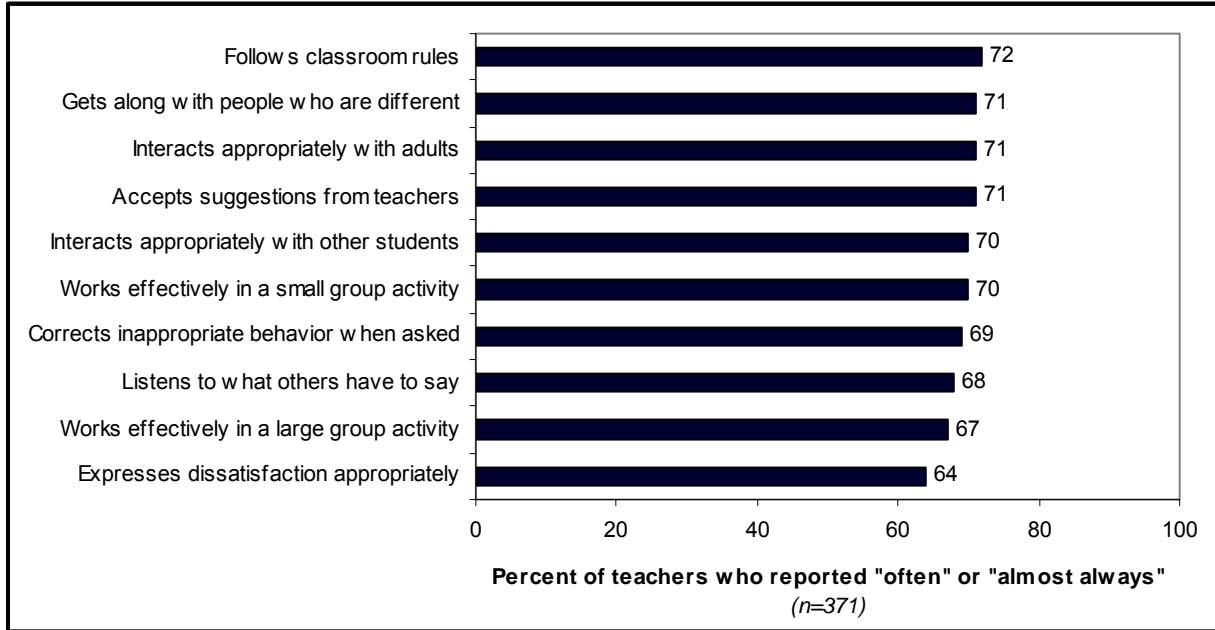


Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 72 percent of participants in grades 4-7 “almost always” or “often” followed classroom rules.

**Exhibit E2**  
**Teacher Reports of Participants' Academic Engagement, Grades 4-7, 2006-07**

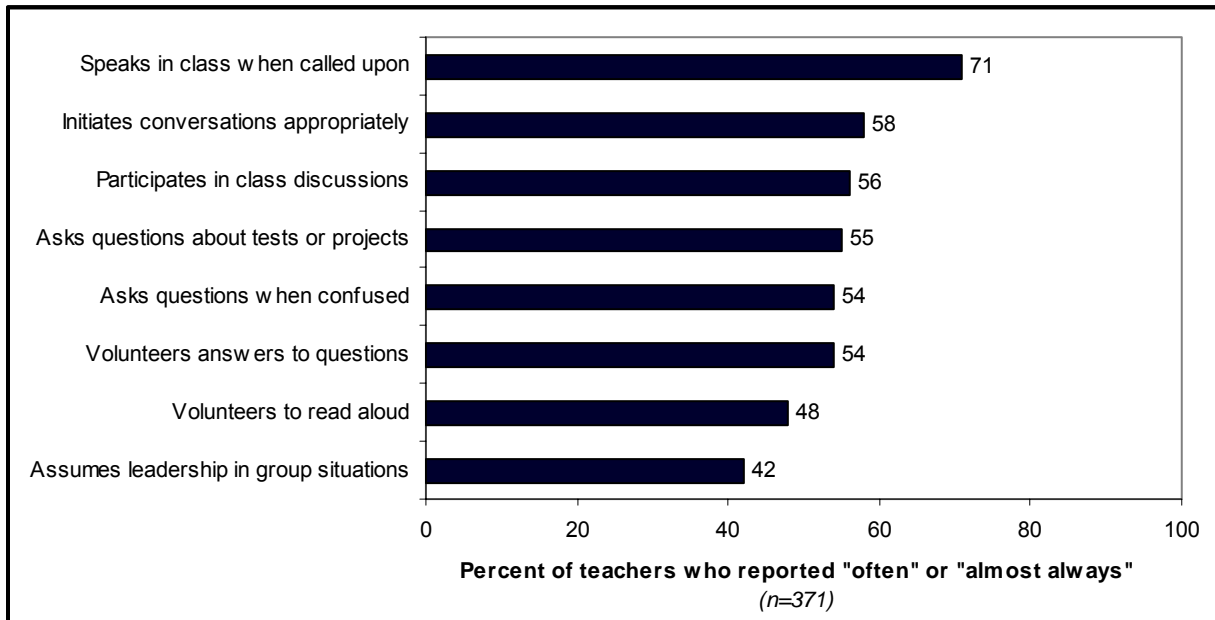


Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 71 percent of participants in grades 4-7 “almost always” or “often” spoke in class when called upon.

**Exhibit E3**  
**Teacher Reports of Participants' Academic Motivation, Grades 4-7, 2006-07**

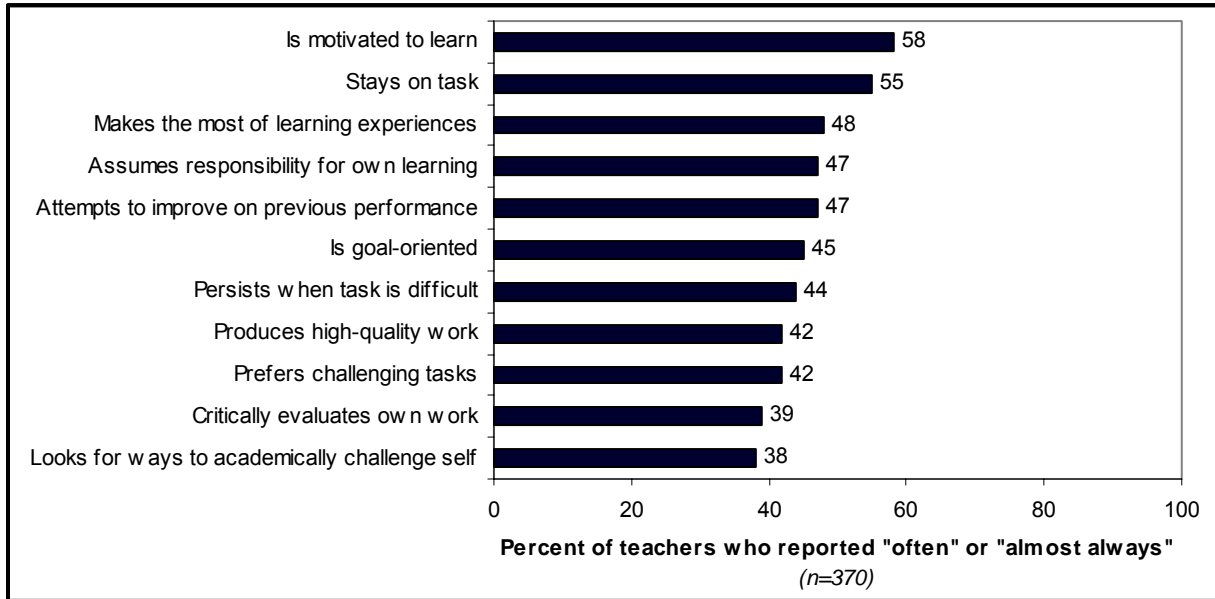


Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 58 percent of participants in grades 4-7 “almost always” or “often” were motivated to learn.

**Exhibit E4**  
**Teacher Reports of Participants' Study Skills, Grades 4-7, 2006-07**

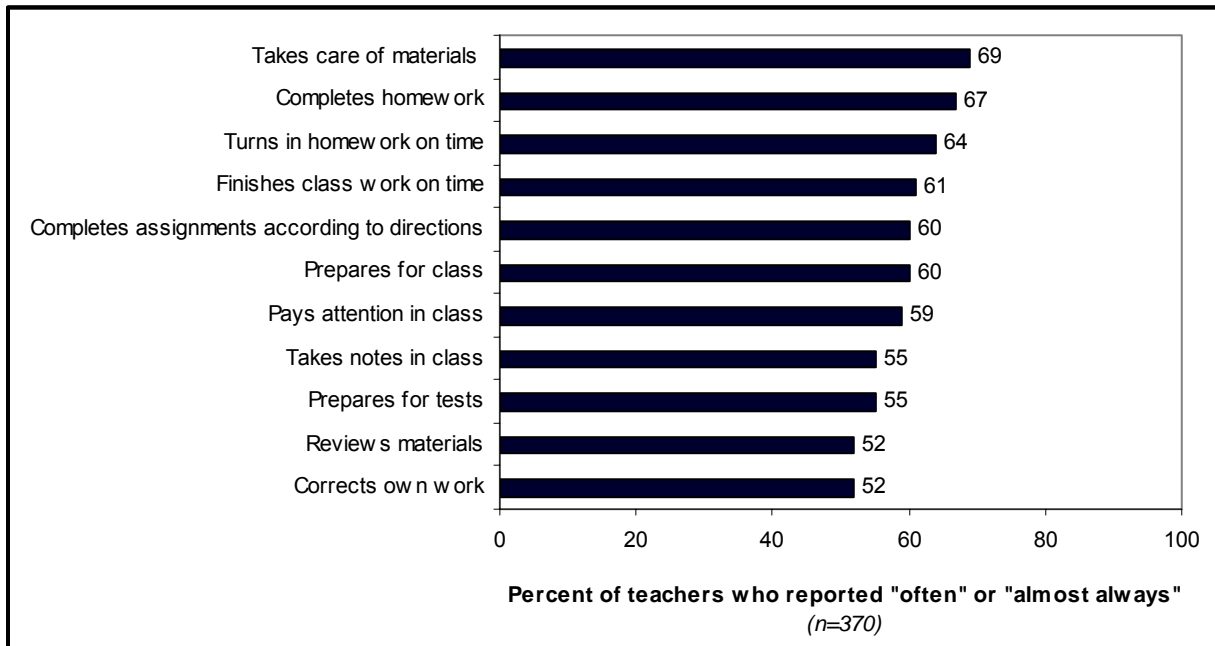


Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 69 percent of participants in grades 4-7 “almost always” or “often” took care of materials.

**Exhibit E5**  
**Teacher Reports of Participants' Reading and Language Arts Skills,**  
**Grades 4-7, 2006-07**

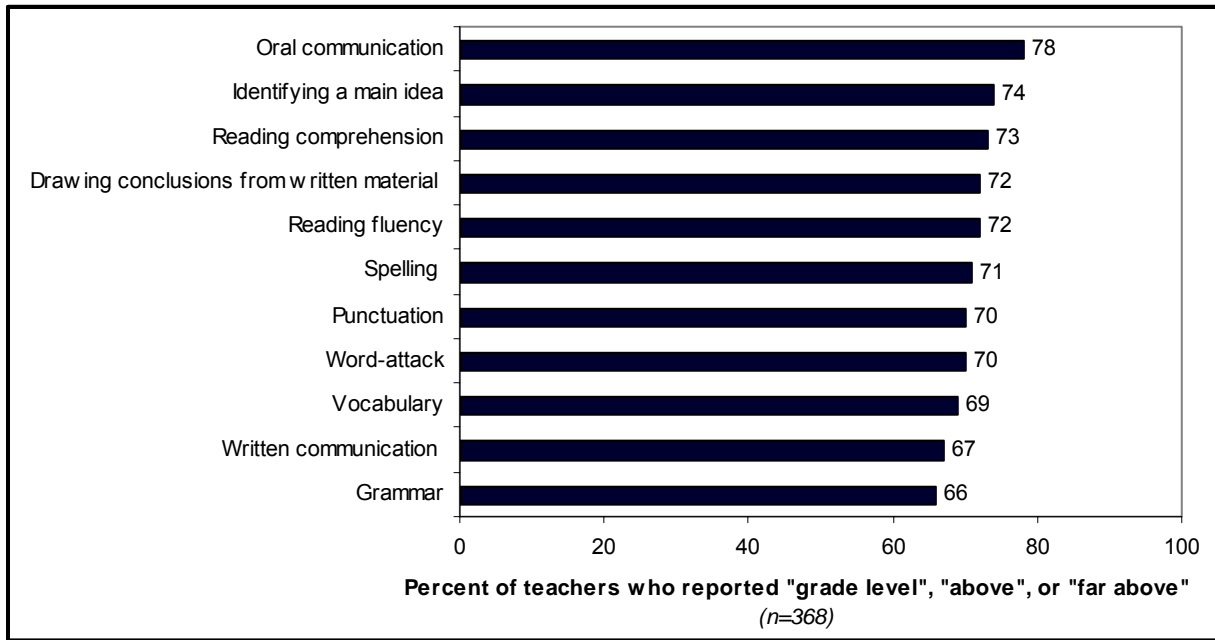


Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 78 percent of participants in grades 4-7 met at least grade-level expectations on oral communication skills.

**Exhibit E6**  
**Teachers' Reports of Participants' Technology Skills, Grades 4-7, 2006-07**

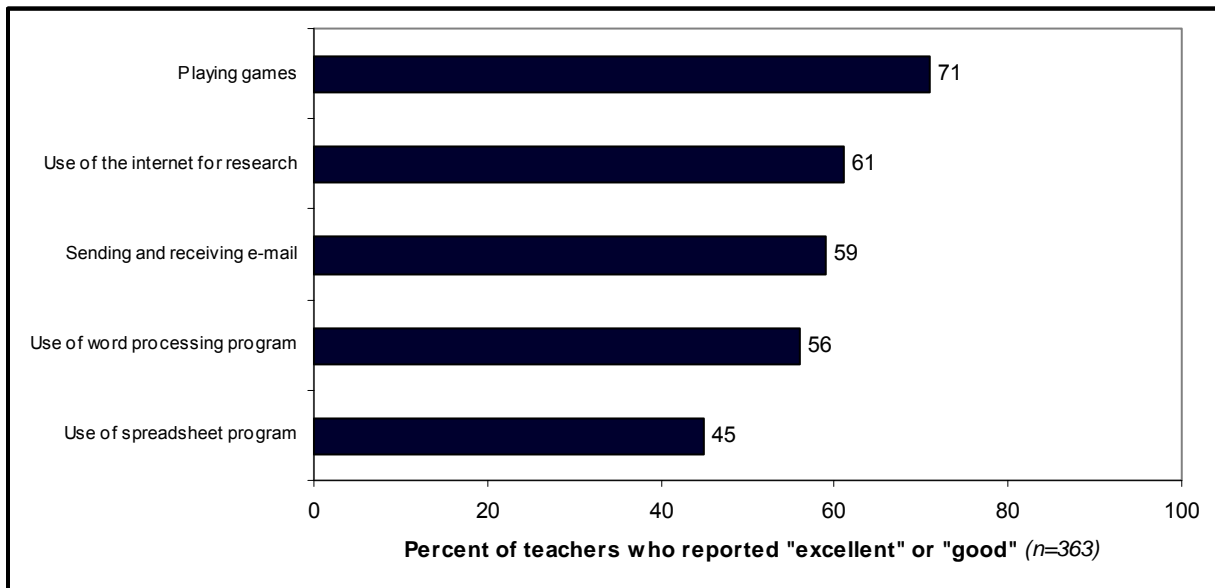


Exhibit reads: According to teachers, 71 percent of participants in grades 4-7 exhibited "excellent" or "good" technology skills in playing games.

**Exhibit E7**  
**Teachers' Reports of Frequency of Communication with Parents,**  
**Grades 4-7, 2006-07**

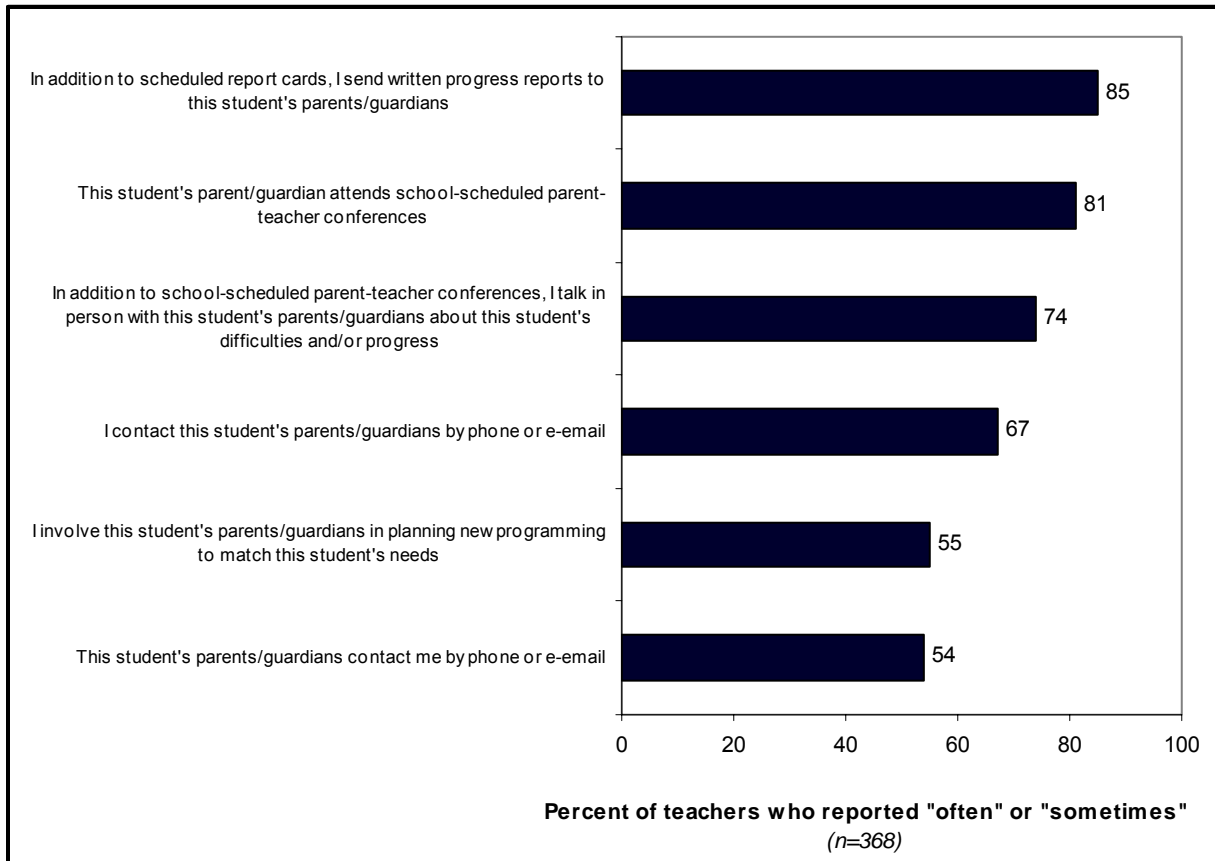


Exhibit reads: Eighty-five percent of responding teachers reported that, in addition to scheduled report cards, they sent written progress reports to the student's parents/guardians.

## Teacher Survey Scales

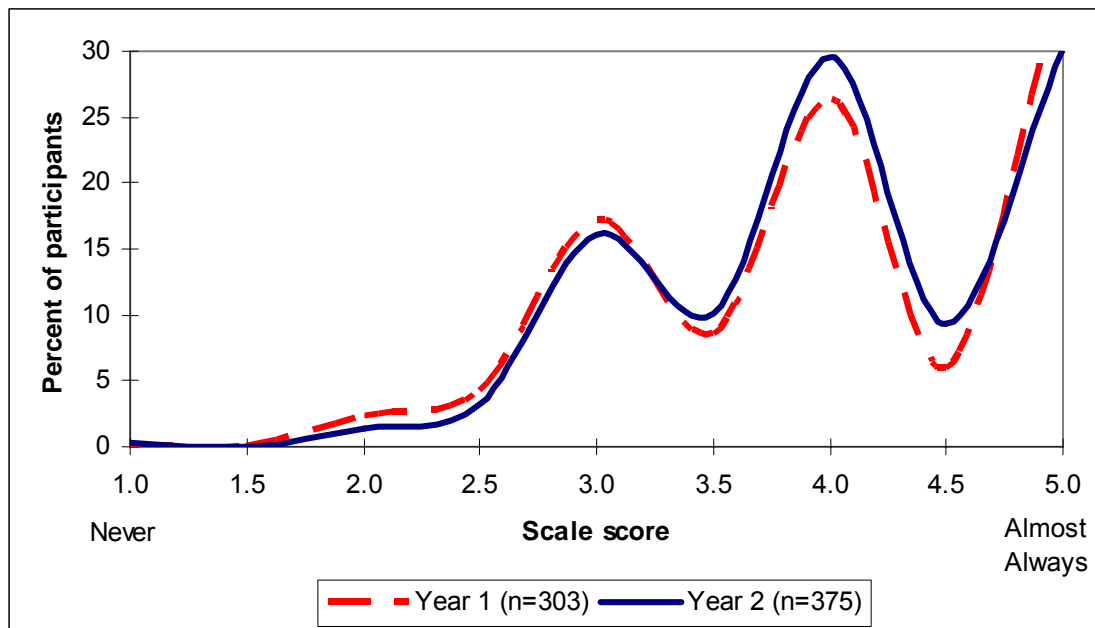
### *Interpersonal Skills*

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

### *Year 2 Descriptive Statistics:*

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.98	3.95	0.83	1	3.30	4.80	5



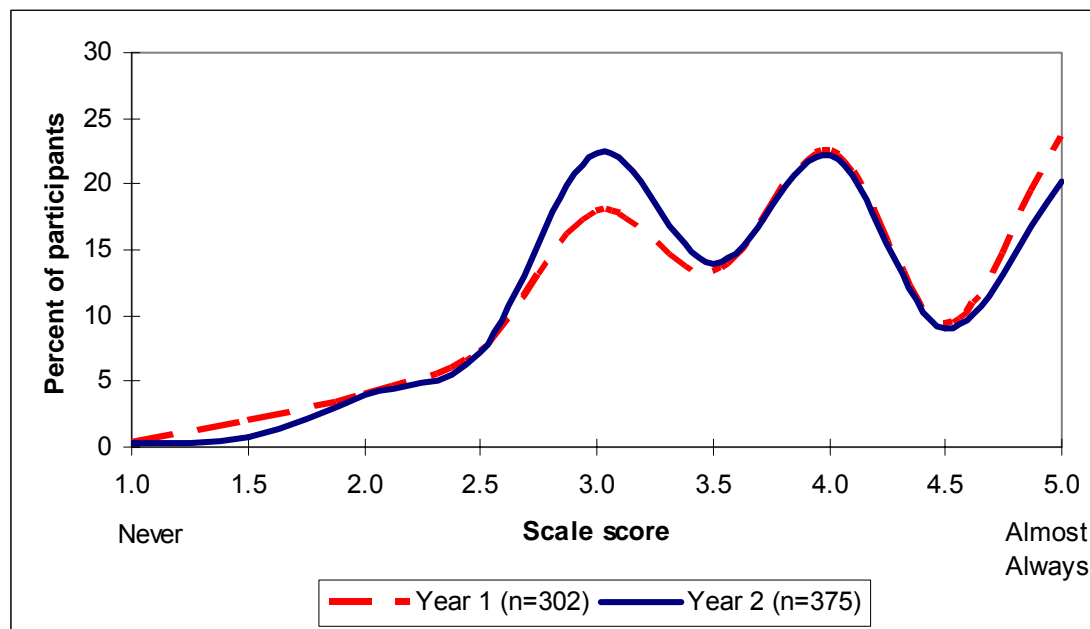
## Academic Engagement

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

### Year 2 Descriptive Statistics:

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.95	3.63	0.93	1	3.00	4.38	5



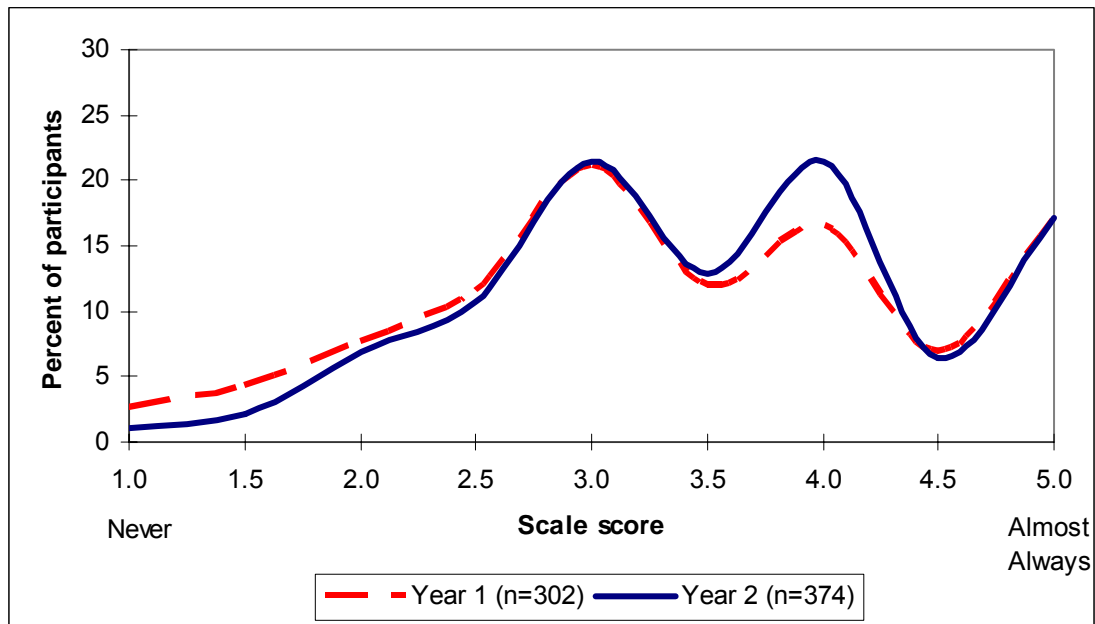
### *Academic Motivation*

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

### *Year 2 Descriptive Statistics:*

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.98	3.38	1.01	1	2.66	4.00	5



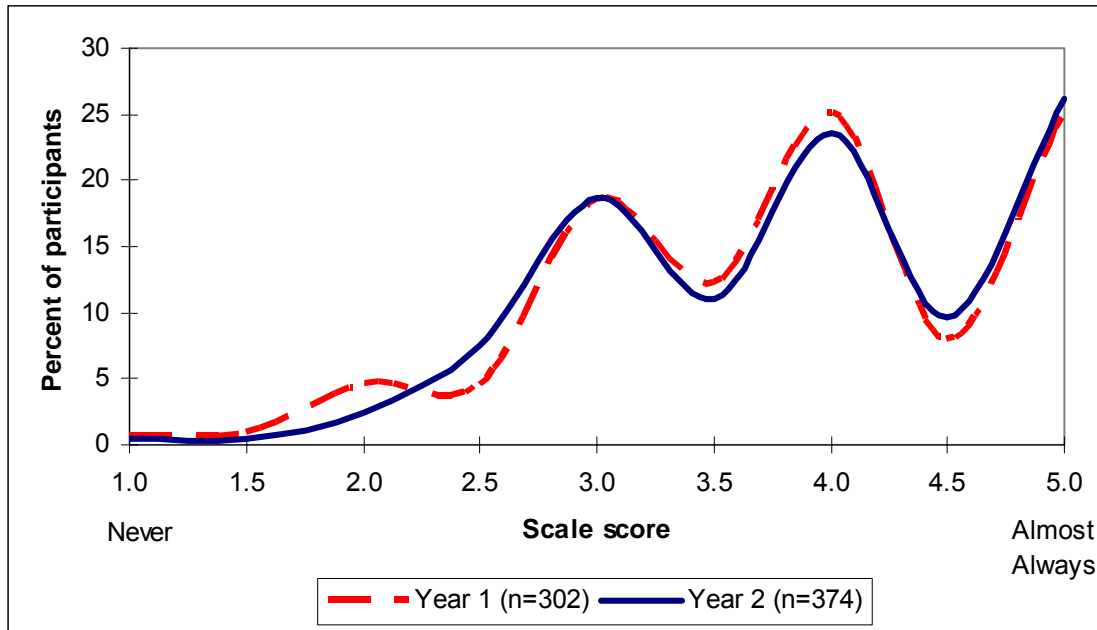
**Study Skills**

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

*Year 2 Descriptive Statistics:*

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.97	3.75	0.93	1	3.00	4.57	5



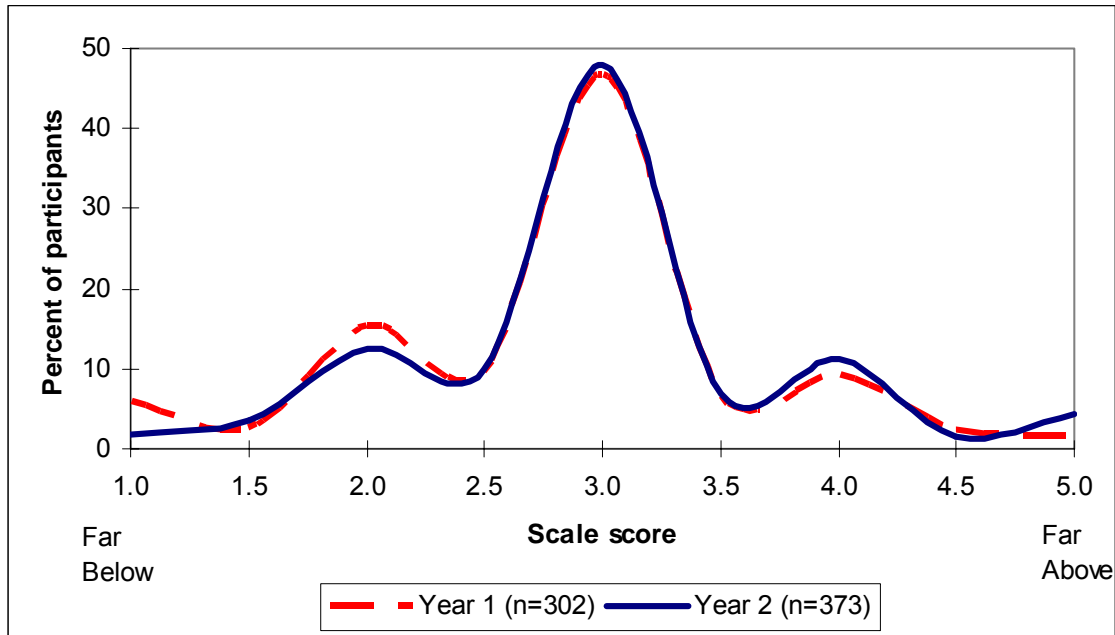
***Reading and Language Arts***

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

*Year 2 Descriptive Statistics:*

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.99	2.87	0.81	1	2.36	3.00	5



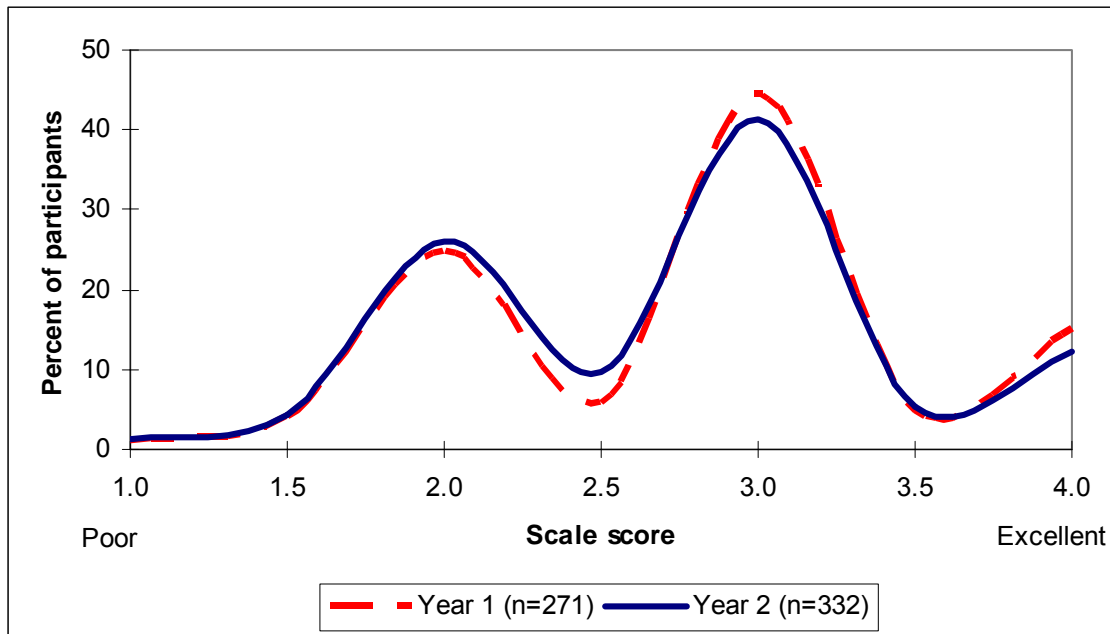
## Technology Skills

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

### Year 2 Descriptive Statistics:

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.99	2.67	0.70	1	2.00	2.80	4



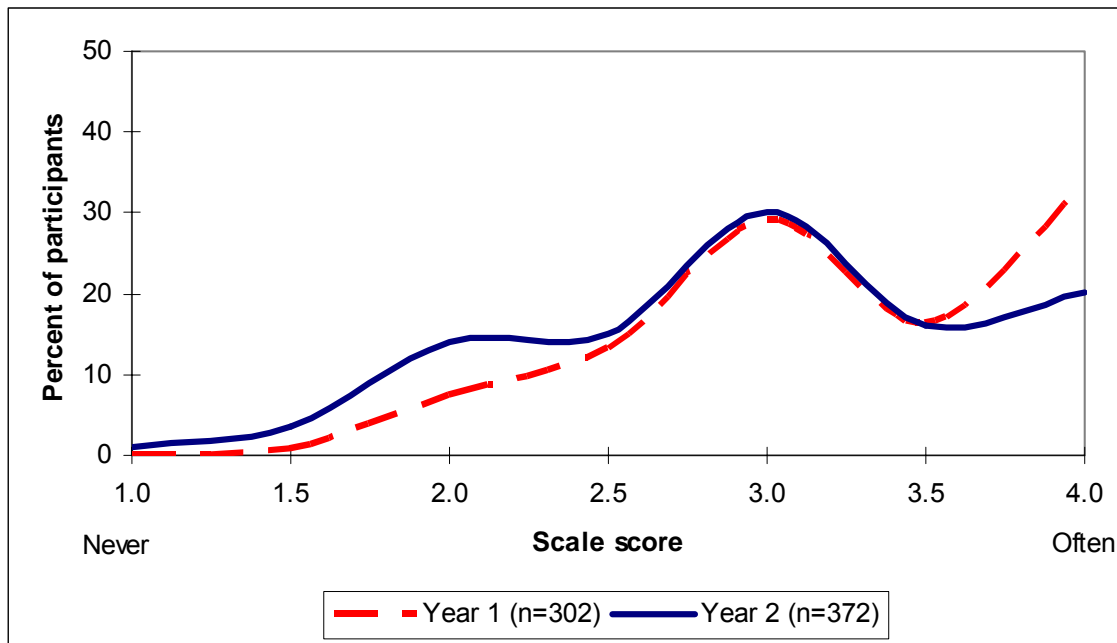
**Communication with Parents**

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-teacher 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.

*Year 2 Descriptive Statistics:*

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.87	2.87	0.75	1	2.33	3.33	4



## 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 student participants strongly agreed with the following statements:

The after-school 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

### *Year 2 Descriptive Statistics:*

Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Maximum
0.88	2.93	0.83	1	2.43	3.57	4

