

2017-18 Evaluation of After-School Programs

Nolan Rett Mickelson, B.S.

EA18-528-4

At-a-Glance

The Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) Department provided free after-school programming at elementary school campuses across the district in partnership with four organizations: Big Thought, St. Simon's After-School (SSAS), City of Dallas Park and Recreation (CODPR), and Boys & Girls Clubs (B&GC).¹

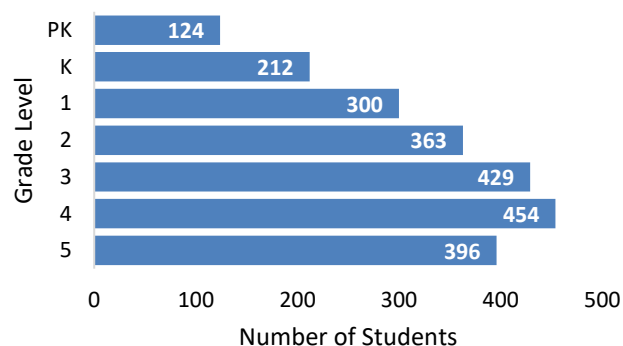
Big Thought provided the Dallas After-School Achievers (DASA) program to 568 students at ten elementary schools.² The SSAS program served 772 students at 14 elementary school campuses. The CODPR program provided 761 students after-school programming at 21 elementary school campuses. B&GC provided after-school programs for 323 students at three elementary schools.³ The programs served students four to five days per week. The goals for the programs were to provide children a safe place after school, provide a snack, assist with homework, promote academic achievement, promote social-emotional learning, and offer a variety of enrichment activities.

Demographic Characteristics and Attendance

Site managers recorded daily participation, and the ELO Department provided the evaluator with a spreadsheet of student identification numbers and records of daily participation for after-school students. The evaluator analyzed participation in two ways. First, the frequency of overall participation was compared by grade level. Second, the number of participants in each six-week period was compared by program type. Third, the evaluator compared the demographic characteristics of after-school students with the characteristics of other students at the same campuses.

Grade-level participation in after-school programs is shown in Figure 1. Most participating students were in grade four, and the fewest were in prekindergarten.

Figure 1: 2017-18 Number of After-School Program Students by Grade Level

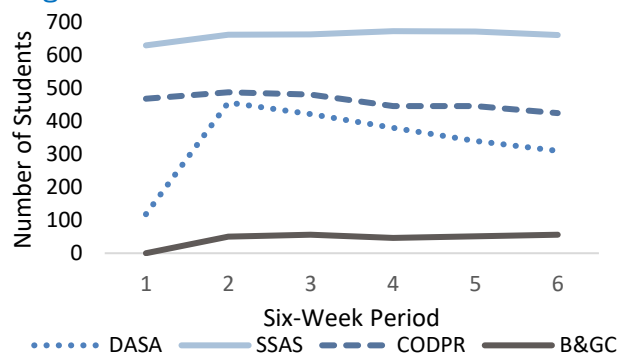


Source: District demographic file dated June 4, 2018.

Note: Demographic data was unavailable for 146 students because an invalid identification number was recorded on attendance documents.

As shown in Figure 2, participation in the DASA and B&GC programs began, for most students, during the second six-week period. The largest provider, SSAS, had over 600 students attend during each six-week period.

Figure 2: 2017-18 After-School Attendance by Program Provider



Source: ELO after-school attendance file received June 19, 2018.

Note: DASA = Dallas After-School Achievers. SSAS = St. Simon's After-School. CODPR = City of Dallas Park and Recreation. B&GC = Boys & Girls Club. 146 students attended after-school programming but were excluded because attendance documents included invalid identification numbers.

¹ Other Dallas ISD campuses offered after-school programming as part of district initiatives. Three elementary school campuses were part of the Intensive Support Network (ISN). Nine elementary school and four middle school campuses were part of the Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) program. These programs were not included in this evaluation because they were in development and/or did not provide daily attendance.

² Big Thought offered fee-based programs at six elementary school campuses. These sites were not supported by ELO and were not included in this evaluation.

³ B&GC provided after-school programming at three middle schools but did not identify participants or record attendance. B&GC also supported students in applying to colleges and resume building at two high school campuses. These programs were not included in this evaluation.

The demographic characteristics of after-school students and non-program Dallas ISD students are shown in Table 1. After-school participants were more likely than other Dallas ISD students to be African American. Participants were less likely than non-participants to be classified as an English language learner or require special education services.

Table 1. 2017-18 Demographic Characteristics of Students Participating and not Participating in After-School Programs.

Category	After-school Students (N = 2,278)		Non-Participants* (N = 23,139)	
	n	%	n	%
Race				
Asian	12	0.5	307	1.3
African American	686	30.1	4,696	20.3
Hispanic	1,488	65.3	17,574	75.9
Native American	5	0.2	54	0.2
Hawaiian/PI	1	0.0	4	0.0
Two or More Races	23	1.0	91	0.4
White	63	2.8	413	1.8
Sex				
Female	1,141	50.1	11,203	48.4
Male	1,137	49.9	11,936	51.6
Special Student Groups				
ELL	805	35.3	13,379	57.8
SPED	200	8.8	2,326	10.1
Eco Dis	2,044	89.7	21,370	92.4

Source: District demographic file dated June 4, 2018.

Note: *Non-participants were students at the same schools as program students that did not attend the after-school program. ELL = English language learners. SPED = special education. Eco Dis = economically disadvantaged. PI = Pacific Islander. 146 students attended afterschool programming but were excluded because attendance documents included invalid identification numbers. Totals may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding.

Academic Achievement

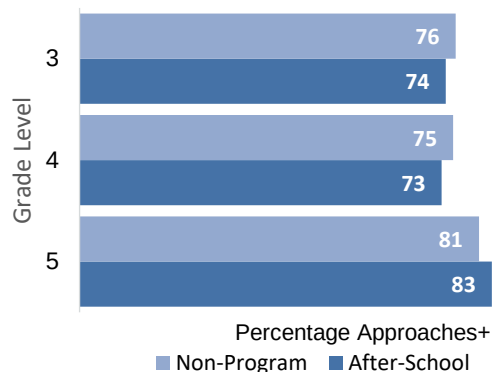
The evaluator used propensity score matching (PSM) to create matched, grade-level comparison groups of students who did not attend the after-school programs.⁴ Students' 2016-17 attendance, 2017-18 attendance, current grade, number of years identified as limited-English proficient, special education status, economically disadvantaged status, and talented and gifted participation were included as covariates during the PSM process. The evaluator used chi-square analyses (statistical significance) and calculated Cramer's V (practical significance) to compare the percentages of after-school participants and non-program students at Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+) and Meets Grade Level or Above (Meets+) on the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness* (STAAR) mathematics and reading subtests at each grade level.

To examine the impact of after-school program dosage on academic outcomes, the evaluator conducted a

linear regression analysis using the number of after-school program days attended to predict scale scores on the STAAR mathematics and reading subtests.

As shown in Figure 3, the percentage of after-school students meeting Approaches+ on the STAAR mathematics subtest ranged from 73 percent of grade four students to 83 percent of grade five students. The percentages of after-school students and non-program students meeting the standard were not significantly different at any grade level.

Figure 3: 2017-18 Percentage of Students at Approaches+ on STAAR Mathematics by After-School Program Status



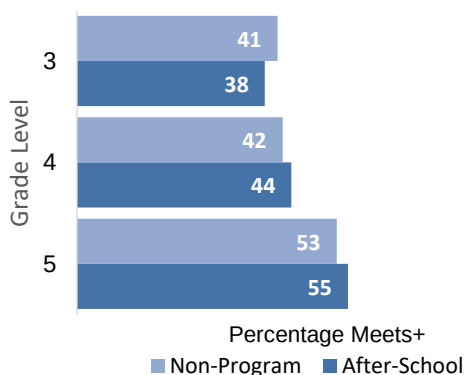
Source: District first-administration STAAR file, all versions, dated June 27, 2018.

Note: Although all scores are included, some test scores may have been adversely affected by online testing issues.

The percentage of after-school students at the Meets+ standard on the STAAR mathematics subtest ranged from 38 percent of grade three students to 55 percent of grade five students (see Figure 4). The percentages of after-school and non-program students at the Meeting+ standard were not significantly different at any grade level.

⁴ Comparison students may have attended an after-school program offered outside of the Dallas ISD. These data were not available for consideration in analyses.

Figure 4: 2017-18 Percentage of Students at Meets+ on STAAR Mathematics by After-School Program Status

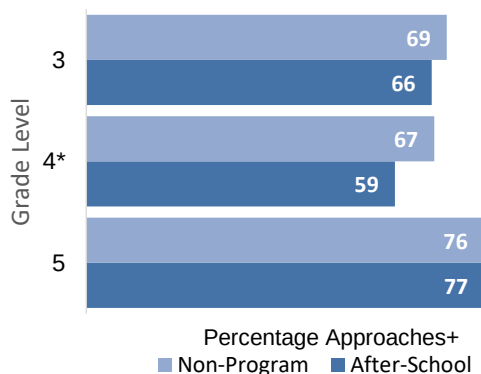


Source: District first-administration STAAR file, all versions, dated June 27, 2018.

Note: Although all scores are included, some test scores may have been adversely affected by online testing issues.

As shown in Figure 5, a higher percentage of grade four non-program students (67%) than after-school students (59%) met Approaches+ on the STAAR reading subtest. At grade four, not attending an after-school program was significantly related to meeting Approaches+ on STAAR reading, Pearson χ^2 (1, $N = 888$) = 5.45, $p = 0.02$. The practical effect of after-school program status on reading achievement was small (*Cramer's V* = 0.08). Differences were not statistically significant at other grade levels.

Figure 5: 2017-18 Percentage of Students at Approaches+ on STAAR Reading by After-School Program Status



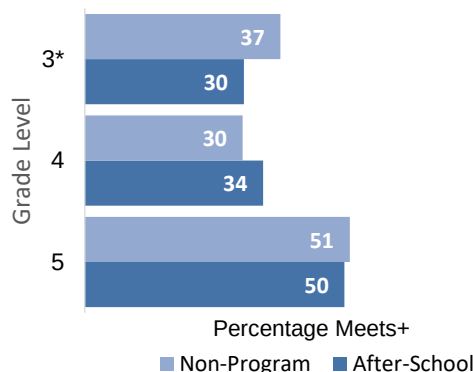
Source: District first-administration STAAR file, all versions, dated June 27, 2018

Note: Although all scores are included, some test scores may have been adversely affected by online testing issues.

A higher percentage of grade three non-program students (37%) than after-school students (30%) achieved Meets+ on the STAAR reading subtest (see Figure 6). For grade three students, not attending an after-school program was significantly related to

achieving Meets+ on STAAR reading, Pearson χ^2 (1, $N = 826$) = 4.49, $p = 0.02$. The practical effect of after-school program status on reading achievement was small (*Cramer's V* = 0.07). Other grade-level differences were not significant.

Figure 6: 2017-18 Percentage of Students at Meets+ on STAAR Reading by After-School Program Status



Source: District first-administration STAAR file, all versions, dated June 27, 2018

Note: Although all scores are included, some test scores may have been adversely affected by online testing issues.

As shown in Table 2, linear regression analyses revealed no relationship between the total number of after-school days attended and mathematics achievement on the STAAR mathematics subtest at any grade level.

Table 2: 2017-18 STAAR Mathematics Scale Scores and After-School Attendance by Grade Level

Grade	N	M Days Attended	M STAAR	r
3	294	118.1	1462.2	0.11
4	302	116.1	1554.1	0.08
5	281	110.5	1632.4	0.08

Source: ELO after-school attendance file received June 19, 2018. District STAAR file dated June 27, 2018.

As shown in Table 3, linear regression analyses revealed no relationship between the total number of after-school days attended and reading achievement on the STAAR reading subtest at any grade level.

Table 3: 2017-18 STAAR Reading Scale Scores and After-School Attendance by Grade Level

Grade	N	M Days Attended	M STAAR	r
3	293	117.9	1414.2	0.03
4	300	116.5	1473.9	0.02
5	281	110.5	1572.6	0.02

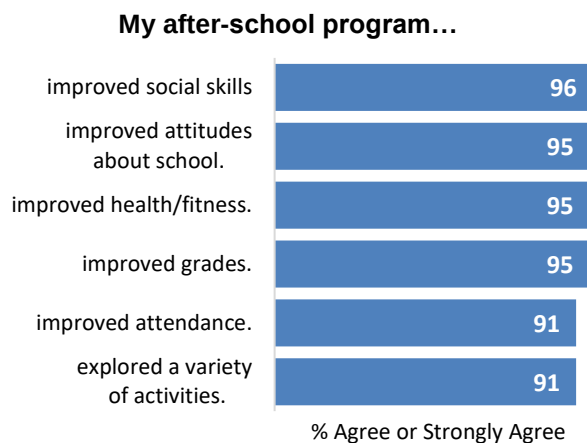
Source: ELO after-school attendance file received June 19, 2018. District STAAR file dated June 27, 2018.

Staff Perceptions

In February 2018, the evaluator emailed an invitation to staff members of each after-school program to complete a 16-item survey to assess perceptions of student experiences and program support. The evaluator calculated the frequency of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) for each item.

As shown in Figure 7, after-school staff members responded positively to each student experience item, with a minimum of 91 percent of respondents reporting that the program explored a variety of activities. Over 96 percent of respondents agreed that their after-school program helped improve student social skills.

Figure 7: 2017-18 After-School Staff Perceptions of Student Experiences

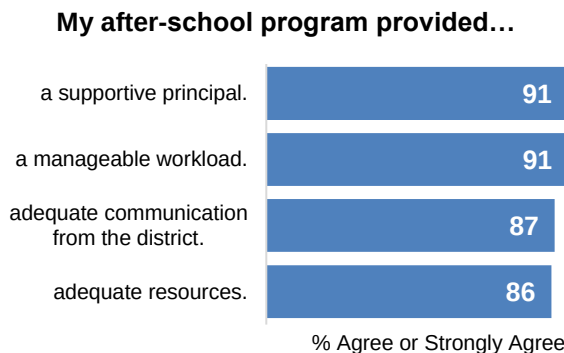


Source: After-school staff survey administered February 13 to March 26, 2018.

Note: N = 129. Does not include "I Don't Know or Not Applicable" responses.

As shown in Figure 8, staff responses to items about program support were generally positive. At least 86 percent of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with each item.

Figure 8: 2017-18 After-School Staff Perceptions of Program Support



Source: After-school staff survey administered February 13 to March 26, 2018.

Note: N = 129. Does not include "I Don't Know or Not Applicable" responses.

Recommendations

- **Expand attendance tracking to all after-school programs operating in the Dallas ISD.** After-school programs operated at middle schools and high schools in addition to other elementary campuses as part of the Dallas ISD's ISN and ACE initiatives. No student records were kept at the special-initiative campuses. To accurately assess the impact of after-school programming across the district, the Dallas ISD should maintain records of participation for students who attend any district-sponsored after-school program.
- **Emphasize accurate attendance records and monitor tracking procedures at each site.** Tracking student attendance of after-school programs was much improved during the 2017-18 school year from past years (see Mickelson & Rapini, 2017). However, some sites did not properly record student identification numbers or daily attendance. The ELO Department should continue to emphasize the importance of accurate attendance records and take steps to monitor the tracking procedures at each site.
- **Ensure quality academic instruction across all after-school programs and sites.** Despite after-school programs providing opportunities for homework completion, tutoring, and academic enrichment, higher after-school attendance was not associated with higher academic achievement. The ELO Department should monitor academic activities administered by each program to ensure students receive quality instruction.

Reference

Mickelson, N. & Rapini, S. (2017). Evaluation of After-School Programs. Dallas Independent School District.

For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.

© 2018 Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD)

Mail a written request for permission to use or reproduce any part of this document to:
Dallas ISD
Department of Evaluation and Assessment
H. B. Bell School Support Service Center
2909 N. Buckner Blvd.
Box 10
Dallas, TX 75228