

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) department oversees after-school and summer programs across the Dallas Independent School District (ISD). In response to three main areas of concern reported by a safety focus group in 2018-19, the ELO department requested additional funding for the After-School Learning Programming and ELO Safety initiatives, two new initiatives in 2019-20.

In 2019-20, \$1,099,633 in Title IV funds supported the initiatives.¹ To support the After-School Learning initiative, Title IV funding was used to provide comprehensive after-school programs to eight elementary level campuses² in underserved geographical areas during the 2019-20 school year. Title IV funding covered the supplemental pay for eight After-School Program Coordinators (also referred to as Site Coordinators) and contracted services for the after-school programs at each campus.

As part of the ELO Safety Initiative, Title IV funds were to be used for supplemental pay for 50 After-School Safety Coordinators at designated after-school campus sites for the 2019-20 school year. The funding was also allocated to support quarterly after-school safety professional development (PD) for the After-School Safety Coordinators whom were not already trained.

The 2019-20 in-person initiatives were implemented up to spring break. However, in response to COVID-19, in-person initiatives were cancelled after spring break due to the district's move to at-home learning on March 23, 2020. After the transition to at-home learning, the ELO department staff worked with program vendors to provide virtual on-demand resources focusing on Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), theater, the visual arts, etc.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How was the ELO After-School Learning Programming initiative implemented during the 2019-20 school year?

After-school programs for students in grades prekindergarten through grade five were provided to eight campuses with the highest priority needs in the Pleasant Grove and Southern Dallas areas. The programs provided hands-on extra-curricular activities in an effort to engage, enrich, and empower students, while aiming to increase

their academic achievement. In an effort to develop the whole child, program emphases included STEM, literacy, and visual and fine arts.

The ELO department provided one Site Coordinator for each of the eight campuses to organize the after-school program at each campus and coordinate with outside vendors. Program implementation data were collected from ELO department staff members, informal interviews with the eight Site Coordinators, and observations during campus visits between February and March of 2020.

The ELO director reported that, in the first semester, programs were organized by the campus staff. Beginning in January 2020, programs were to be led by vendors; however, few campuses had begun vendor-led programming before the district was closed in March 2020 in response to COVID-19. ELO department staff members reported that this was partially because purchase orders were delayed. ELO department staff members were asked to provide student attendance data, but these data were reportedly not collected with fidelity.³

Site Coordinator Interviews

Of the eight interviewed Site Coordinators, five were teachers; and one each were an assistant principal, an instructional coach, and a teacher assistant.

When asked about the after-school program, Site Coordinators expressed disappointment because of inconsistencies due to program vendors starting their enrichment activities late (February 2020 at the earliest). Site Coordinators attributed the late start to the delayed purchase order approval process for vendor contracted programs. Before vendor-led programs began, Site Coordinators arranged for campus staff members to provide other after-school activities in an attempt to keep students motivated and to prevent program drop out. Nevertheless, some students reportedly left to attend other after-school programs. During the time prior to vendor-led programming beginning, some Site Coordinators felt that there was not sufficient communication from ELO department staff members about the start dates for the contracted vendors.

The evaluator asked Site Coordinators about successes and challenges with their role and with the program. In terms of the Site Coordinator role, successes included providing activities to motivate students while waiting for vendor

¹ As of 02/28/20.

² The eight campuses included: W.W. Bushman, Chapel Hill Preparatory School, Julius Dorsey, Barbara Jordan, Kleberg, Ronald McNair, Thomas Tolbert, and Urban Park.

³ Department staff members reported searching for a method to better track attendance in 2020-21.

programs to begin (n=7) and maintaining a positive relationship with parents (n=3). The most commonly reported challenge was providing alternative activities to engage students before vendor programs started (n=6). Regarding the After-School Learning program, successes included student enjoyment of the vendor programs (n=6) and student ability to be exposed to or learn new things (n=4). Program challenges included the previously mentioned late start of vendor programs (n=7) and inconsistent vendor instructor attendance (n=3).⁴ Finally, Site Coordinators were asked about suggestions for improving the After-School Learning program. They indicated that vendor programs should start in the beginning of the school year (n=7), program vendor instructors should report to class on time (n=2), and that there should be better communication between ELO central staff members and the Site Coordinators (n=2).

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were conducted on four of the eight campuses (Bushman, Dorsey, McNair, and Urban Park Elementary schools). Classrooms could not be observed at the other four after-school sites because of class cancellations by the vendor-led program instructors. A combined total of six one-hour classroom observations were conducted for four programs (Discover Art, Discover Theater, American Sign Language, and Step-it-Up).⁵

Overall, the evaluator observed that instructors arrived prepared for class, gave clear instructions and demonstrations for the activities, monitored students, and praised student efforts. The students appeared actively engaged in the activities and demonstrated expressions of anticipation and enjoyment.

What were the perceptions of student participants regarding the implementation of the 2019-20 after-school programs?

A student perception survey was created by the evaluator in collaboration with ELO central staff members to collect feedback from a sample of after-school program participants. All surveyed students were in grades three through five and attended one of the eight campuses served by the After-School Learning Program initiative. The surveys were conducted as part of campus visits that occurred between February and March of 2020 in conjunction with After-School Site and Safety Coordinator interviews and classroom observations. The evaluator administered surveys to a total of 113 students, using scantron forms, before conducting each classroom observation. Students rated each item about their after-school program on a three-point scale (agree, disagree, not sure).

In general, students positively rated the after-school programs (Table 1). Most participants agreed that they liked

the after-school activities (78%). Fewer agreed that they would participate in the activity again next school year (59%) or that the activity was helping them do better in school (56%).

Table 1: 2019-20 Students That “Agree” With Statements About After-School Programs

Statement	%
I like the after-school activities.	78
I learn interesting things in this after-school activity.	70
I make many friends in this after-school activity.	69
I get excited about coming to this after-school activity.	66
I want to participate in this program again next school year.	59
I feel that this after-school activity is helping me to do better in school.	56

Source: 2019-20 ELO: After-School Student Survey administered March 2020.
Note: N = 113.

How was the ELO Safety Initiative implemented during the 2019-20 school year?

After-School Safety Coordinators served campuses with the highest safety needs. They provided safety support to campus staff, students, and visitors during after-school hours (Monday through Friday from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.) for the 2019-20 school year. The main responsibilities of the After-School Safety Coordinator included:

- developing an after-school safety plan and procedures,
- ensuring all campus programs/activities were centrally located,
- providing access to facilities within the building,
- ensuring the code of conduct was carried out in accordance with Dallas ISD policy,
- monitoring external guests and visitors,
- administering first-aid and CPR if needed,
- conducting monthly emergency drills, and
- serving as the point of contact for crisis events in the community.

The ELO department expected to fill 50 After-School Safety Coordinator positions with staff members who served as day-time Safety Coordinators on campuses and were already trained for the role. However, finding campus staff members to fill the positions was a problem because of the extended work hours. ELO central staff members indicated that 12 of the 50 (24%) After-School Safety Coordinator positions were filled, meaning 76 percent of the positions were not filled. Coordinators included five teachers, five assistant teachers, one assistant principal, and one instructional coach. Three of the 12 After-School Safety Coordinators also worked as day-time Safety Coordinators.

⁴ Reportedly, not all vendor instructors contacted the Site Coordinator to say that they would not be providing programing that day.

⁵ Step it Up is a dance class offering a variety of dance styles (modern, hip hop, ballet, etc.).

What professional development training was provided to After-School Safety Coordinators in 2019-20?

The ELO Safety Initiative supported specialized PD for After-School Safety Coordinators provided by staff members in the Dallas ISD Risk Management, Police and Security, Emergency Operations, and Health Services departments. All After-School Safety Coordinators were required to be knowledgeable of emergency protocols for their designated campuses. PD funding was used for After-School Safety Coordinators not previously trained for the role. Initial plans included safety PD in August 2019 (Fall) and January 2020 (Spring). However, Spring PD was not scheduled and the fall training only took place online. Outside of other training, all After-School Safety Coordinators were required to be trained and certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in 2019-20.

After receiving training themselves, After-School Safety Coordinators were responsible for providing safety training to their campus after-school staff members. Attendance data for trainings were unavailable for 2019-20. A tracking system is reportedly being developed for 2020-21.

What were the results of the ELO Safety Initiative interviews and end-of-year activity code report?

Safety Coordinator Interviews

Seven interviews with After-School Safety Coordinators were conducted between February and March of 2020.⁶ Data were collected from interviews with the After-School Safety Coordinator from each of seven campuses using a sample of items taken from the Program Functionality and Safety Checklist and a list of safety coordinator responsibilities provided by ELO central staff members.

In general, all interviewed After-School Safety Coordinators felt that their role was beneficial and said they felt supported by after-school staff members at their campuses. They also reported complying with some of the required responsibilities from the safety checklist. After-School Safety Coordinators agreed that:

- first aid kits were available and accessible to all after-school staff;
- after-school campus staff were aware of and had access to the guide for first aid and emergency care;
- after-school campus staff were familiar with the campus fire, tornado, and lockdown crisis plans;
- external guests were logged in and out, and monitored;
- access to facilities within the building was provided; and
- all programs/facilities were centrally located.

However, After-School Safety Coordinators did not report complying with all required responsibilities. Of the seven After-School Safety Coordinators interviewed:

- four received safety training in the 2019-20 school year,
- four were CPR certified,
- three posted district code of conduct⁷ charts in each classroom/area where program activities took place as instructed (one After-School Safety Coordinator was unfamiliar with the code of conduct requirement and others placed the code of conduct charts in common areas including the hallway or cafeteria), and
- three did not know when the last campus fire drill was conducted during after-school hours (a monthly requirement).⁸

After-School Safety Coordinators were asked about additional supports needed for their role and about the Site Coordinator role. Most respondents stated the need for safety training (n=5). Over half (n=4) indicated they did not see any challenges in their role of Safety Coordinator. However, individual respondents expressed the need to update parent contact information, get additional help to conduct after-school drills, and obtain a list of the After-School Safety Coordinator responsibilities. Safety Coordinator recommendations regarding the Site Coordinator role included increased communication with the program vendors and with After-School Safety Coordinators.

When asked about recommendations for the ELO department, After-School Safety Coordinators recommended ensuring all vendor-led programs started on time (n=3), providing timely PD to all After-School Safety Coordinators not trained in emergency protocols (n=2), providing better communication with all parties involved in the after-school program to coordinate trainings and needs to campus staff (n=2), and offering a greater variety of vendor-led programs (i.e., sports, Saturday activities, and field trips; n=2).

End-of-Year Activity Code Report

The After-School Safety Coordinators were hired to provide 465 hours of safety support during the 2019-20 school year at their designated campuses. ELO central staff members were unable to provide accurate records of time worked for the 12 After-School Safety Coordinators.

⁶ Because of time constraints, the eight After-School Learning program sites and the related observations also served as sites for safety observations. Thus, the safety observation and interview data presented here is only representative of schools also being supported with the After-School Learning program sites and generalizations to other sites should be made with caution.

⁷ The code of conduct details the student rules/expectations and a discipline action plan for after-school participants that should be posted in the program space.

⁸ One campus conducted a fire drill during observations after the interview with the Safety Coordinator was completed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure better communication with After-School Site and Safety Coordinators. Site Coordinators and Safety Coordinators reported a need for better communication between ELO department staff members, vendors, and other campus after-school staff members.

Improve recruitment efforts to fill vacant After-School Safety Coordinator positions. The majority of After-School Safety Coordinator positions (38 of 50; 76%) were not filled in 2019-20. To ensure the safety of students attending after-school programs at high-risk campuses, it will be important to rethink the recruitment of quality candidates for the positions.

Use participant feedback to improve the training of After-School Safety Coordinators. Five of the seven After-School Safety Coordinators interviewed expressed a need for safety training to fulfill their duties and responsibilities adequately. Four of the seven interviewed indicated they did not meet all required responsibilities.

Ensure more accurate tracking of data. No valid data were available for student attendance, safety training attendance, or work hours for the Safety Coordinators. Tracking of these data in the future will provide a more complete picture of program implementation.

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