



# The ASSETs Learning Lab Project: A Look at the First Year

## Background

*Over the past four years, the Bay Area has exploded with high school afterschool programs. This rapid growth - made possible by a new high school set-aside of federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) funding - has presented a surprising number of challenges for high schools, afterschool providers and the technical assistance (TA) community. This paper describes those challenges, the efforts of Bay Area TA providers, and the early promise of a TA model that works by building on afterschool providers' strengths.*

## Youth at a Crossroad

High school age youth (14-18) are at a crossroad in their development. They are preparing for a transition to early adulthood. At the same time, they are aging out of the school system that has provided them with structure and learning support since the age of 5 years old.

This is a time for older youth to discover and develop personal interests and pursue them in search of mastery. It is during these years that young people need to ensure that they are on track to graduate from high school, and are beginning to develop plans and the needed skills for life after high school. These may include accessing opportunities for higher education or moving directly into the workforce.

While California's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center high school initiative, ASSETs, (After School Safety and Education for Teens) offers an important resource to address these issues, many of these programs struggle to enlist the collaboration of school personnel and attract sufficient numbers of youth participants.



## Older Youth Benefit from Participation in Afterschool Programs

We know that afterschool programs can provide multiple benefits to their participants. "Older youth who regularly participate in afterschool programs report feeling more optimistic about their future and have higher expectations for themselves, including an increased interest in attending college and exploring possible career paths." <sup>1</sup>

Effective ASSETs programs also offer academic supports to increase young people's success in school. Indicators include increased school attendance and homework completion, improved socialization and problem-solving skills, study habits and motivation, as well as a lowered risk of dropping out and a higher rate of graduation. These supports are especially important for older youth, as this is "a period when they may be losing interest or feeling disengaged from school." <sup>2</sup>

## Challenges Faced by High School Afterschool Programs

Those designing afterschool programs on high school campuses face a number of challenges. The first challenge lies in the fact that attempts at serving high school age youth through comprehensive afterschool programs are relatively new. There is little afterschool literature on this area of work and few exemplar programs that can serve as models. While we have clear lessons learned by early programs, we do not have a template for how to design and implement these programs. As a result, many programs must rely on a hit or miss approach to determine what works best on their campuses.

The second challenge is enlisting the collaboration of school day personnel. Afterschool programs must find ways to gain the support and involvement of school administrators and build credibility with other school personnel, including teachers and counselors.

This is difficult for several reasons. High schools tend to be fragmented institutions. They are also under extreme pressure to improve the academic performance and graduation rate of their students. Lastly, it is not always obvious to school personnel or afterschool leaders how the program can serve the primary mission of the school.

A fourth challenge involves the nature of older youth. They make their own decisions about how and where they spend their time after school and they have new competing demands and interests. Further, the developmental needs and personal interests of high school age youth are unique.

## Challenges Faced by Technical Assistance Providers: A Bay Area Perspective

The Partnership for Children and Youth (PCY) was an early advocate for high school afterschool programs leading to state legislation that created California's high school afterschool initiative (ASSETs) - the first of its kind in the country.

From the fall of 2007 through the spring of 2009, The Partnership for Children and Youth, Region 4 Afterschool Programs, and Temescal Associates worked together to provide technical assistance to Bay Area ASSETs grantees. Assistance was in the form of an "open-door" learning community. It featured a series of training workshops, site visits to established ASSETs programs, and professional exchange among program leaders.

Even though learning community participants found this assistance useful, there were a number of challenges that limited its effectiveness. First, the field of school-based afterschool, as it relates to older youth, is not yet developed. This is described above.

Another challenge was the diversity of programs and the wide range of needs. Some programs were just beginning while others were experienced and already established; some served traditional schools while others were in alternative or continuation school settings; some programs worked within large comprehensive high schools, while others were operating in small school environments. At times, PCY felt they were unable to effectively meet everyone's needs.

Lastly, if program leaders were expected to apply their learning to the unique conditions at their school sites, they needed more support and follow up than was currently being offered.

## About the Bay Area ASSETs Learning Lab

In response to the challenges and learnings from their first two years of providing assistance to ASSETs grantees, PCY and Temescal Associates designed and implemented the new *Bay Area ASSETs Learning Lab*. The Region 4 staff within the Alameda County Office of Education offered valuable input and joined with local private foundations to fund the project.

This new approach featured criteria for participation, a selection process, explicit expectations related to a program improvement process, and a \$1000 stipend to support program improvement costs. These are summarized below.

The goals of the Learning Lab were to:

- Help a group of experienced ASSETs Site Coordinators and their selected site stakeholders strengthen their leadership skills and capacity to conduct ongoing program improvement;
- Engage a group of experienced ASSETs practitioners in moving a selected program practice area forward while exploring quality for their own programs and for the region; and

- Build a cohort of Bay Area ASSETs grantees that could represent the potential of high school afterschool programs and offer promising strategies and models to other programs.

Selection criteria included:

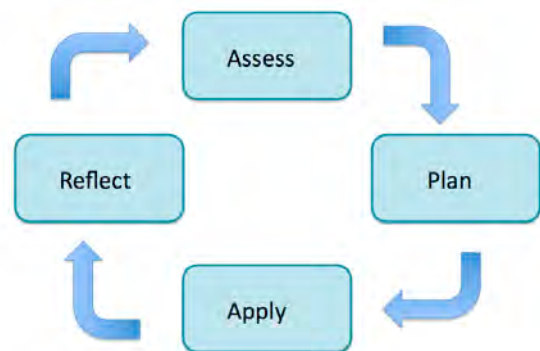
- Having completed at least one year of programming and established a stable afterschool program with robust program activities and consistent attendance;
- A close, positive working relationship between the ASSETs program, the school site administrator and other key program stakeholders, and the involvement and support of the school site community;
- A stated commitment to learning and program improvement; and
- Expressed permission for the Site Coordinator to be fully involved in this project and to enlist key stakeholders in addressing and implementing ongoing program improvements.

The expectations of Learning Lab participants were to:

- Form a team of their key stakeholders organized and led by the Site Coordinator. This team could consist of 4 to 6 key stakeholders that might include the following: A school site administrator, an assistant Site Coordinator, a core partner, the Academic Liaison, a school-day teacher and/or a department head.
- Work with their team to identify areas for program improvement and develop and implement a program improvement workplan. (See below.)
- Participate in Learning Lab meetings, including two stakeholder meetings at the beginning and end of the year; four Learning Labs that focused on the process of program inquiry and improvement; and four coaching circles to support the implementation of program improvement workplans.
- Participate in an end-of-year share out to disseminate learnings to other ASSETs grantees and interested stakeholders.

A core belief undergirding this project was that high school afterschool providers are as much the “experts” as anyone. They are best positioned to know what needs to change to make their programs more effective and what strategies will work best in their context. PCY’s role was to provide the Learning Lab structure, support, and resources to help sites develop and implement their plans.

### The Learning Lab Program Improvement Process



Program Improvement Process

Learning Lab participants included representatives from six 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC ASSETs grantees. They engaged in a program improvement process that involved four phases, which are cited below.

**Phase #1: Assess.** Afterschool leaders identified and selected a practice area for improvement. Participants used a reflection template to identify program and participant outcomes that they wanted to better address, drawing on existing data and considering their key stakeholders.

**Phase #2: Plan.** The second phase of the process was to complete an improvement plan that encompassed what needed to be accomplished. Participants articulated the long-term, intermediate, and early outcomes they were seeking, which included identifying partners, resources, and data to draw on for indication of success.

**Phase #3: Apply.** The third phase was the implementation of early strategies and activities toward achieving intermediate outcomes. Participants used their improvement plans as a guide and turned to an action plan to identify immediate next steps.

**Phase #4: Reflect.** In the final phase of the process, participants engaged in ongoing reflection to adjust plans as implementation continued forward. Participants considered which outcomes they were able to achieve or not achieve, the data they were able to draw upon to validate improved outcomes, strategies and challenges that were encountered, and learnings they would share with others who had similar interests.

### Learnings About Supporting Program Improvement

There are a number of critical variables that predict the development of a successful program. It was found that where one or more of these critical variables was lacking, a program's strength in another area could make up for it. For instance, if the Site Coordinator is strong enough, he or she could compensate for the less than ideal support from school administration.

*"I really appreciated the time that I had to plan and talk through programming issues at the school. It was also wonderful to be able to work with other sites!"*

*-Learning Lab participant*

Regarding program improvement, Site Coordinators can make significant changes to their programs if they are given sufficient attention and follow up support. Learning Lab participants reported that their success was definitely aided by the support and structured accountability of the Learning Lab Project. Participants appreciated having concrete goals and solutions and dedicated space and time to work on their improvement goals. They also valued the opportunity to share ideas and receive feedback from other sites.

### About Site-Based Program Improvement

Each program selected its own area for program improvement. These efforts included building an academic tutoring program for sports teams to raise the GPA of the school's most "at-risk" students; creating a youth cultural center on campus that promoted youth voice and ownership; and building a culinary arts pathway that included skill building, career planning, and certification.

The section that follows gives detailed descriptions of three ASSETs grantees and their program improvement efforts. The sites profiled are:

- **Encinal HS, Alameda.** Building a support system for girls to reduce the number of suspensions and/or detentions.
- **Life Academy, Oakland.** Building stronger, more targeted programming for 10th graders.
- **Ralph Bunche Academy, Oakland.** Creating an internship and vocational training program for seniors, and institutionalizing it into school expectations and culture.

## JETSETTERS AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

### ENCINAL HIGH SCHOOL



Located in Alameda, California, Encinal High School serves 1,120 students of ethnically diverse backgrounds (22%

African American; 21% Asian; 18% Caucasian; 16% Latino/Hispanic). As a Title 1 school, 60% of Encinal's students receive free or reduced lunch. Encinal High School is one of several in Alameda Unified School District that faced budget cuts and eliminated sports programs in the 2008-09 school year.

Funded by the ASSETs 21<sup>st</sup> Century CLC grant, the JetSetters Afterschool Program provides academic and enrichment services for high school students. The program serves an average of 225 students per day.

### Long-Term Outcome

The afterschool staff at Encinal High School (EHS) focused their program improvement on strategies to decrease the number of reoccurring suspensions and detentions among girls at EHS. They believed that accomplishing this long-term outcome would require a number of stepping stones cited below.

#### *Strengthen the partnership with EHS stakeholders and identify a critical need.*

The JetSetters afterschool staff attended monthly teacher meetings and student IEP meetings to build a foundation for partnership with the school day. They later met with EHS administrators and teachers to discuss what they saw as a need that could be addressed through the afterschool program's improvement plan. They also conducted separate focus groups with teachers.

The vice principal expressed concern that suspensions and detentions among female students were increasing. This was reinforced one afternoon when an afterschool staff member observed the vice principal talking with two female high school students who were about to fight. Upon further inquiry with school administrators and teachers, the afterschool staff found that this issue was a growing concern among the educators.

As a result, the afterschool staff decided to create a support group that would help the girls identify why they got in trouble, the triggers that led to their behavior, and ways to control their behavior in the future, thereby avoiding repeated detentions and suspensions.

Afterschool staff conducted a focus group for girls who were being suspended or given reoccurring detentions to assess what they thought they needed to help stay out of trouble. Under the school's current suspension policy, students were sent home for five days with no conflict management support.

#### *Obtain needed resources and support.*

In order to conduct the girls' support group, the afterschool staff needed the support of school leaders, namely referrals of female students who were receiving reoccurring detentions and suspensions. They also wanted behavioral history, information on the student referrals, and a confidential classroom space to conduct the group sessions. The afterschool staff met with school administrators to discuss their ideas and request the needed support to conduct the group. Not only did they receive all that they requested, but the school administration adjusted their suspension policy from 5 days to 4 days for those students who participated in the support group.

The afterschool program needed a creative, high-energy staff person to lead the support group. The program hired a strong female facilitator who knew the girls well.

#### *Implement a four-week support group for girls with reoccurring detentions and suspensions.*

The afterschool staff designed a four-week support group that allowed girls to reflect on their behavior and talk about it in a safe, confidential setting.

The support group included incentives such as food, a personal journal, time that allowed for open journal writing, and a decrease in the suspension duration.

*Results:* The support group proved to be very successful. The same group of girls who participated in the support group attended from February through May, longer than the original four-week agreement.

Many of the girls cited the safe, confidential space and journal writing as major draws to the group. They also valued having a consistent, caring adult who could facilitate the group by asking carefully worded questions. Because the girls didn't want the group to end after the four weeks were up, the afterschool staff offered to continue the group and train the girls to help lead a group next year.

Girls who had never been suspended or received detention started coming to this group based on word of mouth. Thus, the group transitioned into a prevention group.

The girls also reported that they were getting in less trouble. One young woman said the group "changed her life." At the time this was written, the afterschool staff did not have access to data on reoccurring suspensions and detentions. However, all agreed that the group sessions were a necessary addition to the school's response to repeated detentions and suspensions.

According to the afterschool Site Coordinator, prior to these support sessions, the girls had never received this kind of supportive experience from the school before. The afterschool staff and school administrators plan on offering similar support groups next year.



## THE SPOT AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

### *RALPH BUNCHE HIGH SCHOOL*

Ralph J. Bunche Academy is located in Oakland, California and is one of 52 high schools in Oakland Unified School District. It is an alternative education school that serves 258 students in grades 9 through 12. (Fifty-nine percent of the school's student population is African American; 35% is Hispanic; 5% is Asian/Pacific Islander; and 2% is Caucasian.)

Bay Area Community Resources (BACR) is the lead agency for the afterschool program at Ralph Bunche. The SPOT (Supporting Positive Opportunities for Teens) afterschool program gets the majority of its funding from the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC ASSETs grant. The program serves an average of 60-65 young people per day.

### Long-Term Outcome

The afterschool staff at Ralph Bunche focused their program improvement efforts on designing and institutionalizing *Project Mentor*, a program offering vocational training and internship placements for all seniors. Below is a discussion offering more context, followed by a list of the steps afterschool staff took to accomplish these efforts.

### Discussion

It should be noted that as a continuation school, there were a number of challenges faced by afterschool staff at Ralph Bunche in designing programming for youth. Unlike regular comprehensive high schools, Ralph Bunche did not have existing afterschool clubs in place, which meant afterschool staff did not have a base of students from which to recruit. Though the school's attendance goal is 250, only about 100 youth actually attend on an average day, making the pool of youth they had to reach even smaller.

Additionally, many of the students come to Ralph Bunche to get credits and move on, resulting in a large turnover of students. A number of students have other obligations to attend to immediately after the school day ends, including jobs and parental responsibilities. There are also concerns among students that staying after school would subject them to crossing through gang territory after dark.

Given the above challenges, afterschool staff knew that they needed to offer relevant services if they were to attract youth to stay afterschool. They gave students assessments to find out what their current needs were and found that acquiring job skills and earning money were top priorities among many of them. Additionally, afterschool staff found out by word of mouth from recent graduates that many of them felt unprepared for life after high school.

The afterschool staff focused their improvement efforts on creating *Project Mentor*, a four-month job readiness training and internship program for seniors. The program was designed to ensure seniors are equipped with skills that prepare them for life post-graduation. Youth conduct career research, are placed in internships and participate in community service activities, meet with mentors to develop career goals, and create career portfolios, complete with resumes, cover letters, and reference pages.

### *Enlist agreement and support of school site leaders.*

Afterschool staff worked to enlist the support of the Ralph Bunche school administration. Afterschool staff drew up a proposal of the *Project Mentor* program and presented it to the principal. The principal was asked to agree to a number of terms listed in the proposal, including: making *Project Mentor* a requirement for graduation next year; referring 15 seniors to the program every marking period (6 weeks); allowing seniors to create and present a career portfolio as their senior project; and placing all short-day seniors into the 5<sup>th</sup> period *Project Mentor* program.

Afterschool staff helped students with their school day work, which served to strengthen the relationship with the school day teachers.

Teachers also saw the value of *Project Mentor* and began working with students who were not enrolled in the program to create resumes and cover letters. Afterschool staff worked closely and met frequently with the senior teacher and collaborated on the required senior projects.

The ROP (Regional Occupation Program) coordinator at the school provided the afterschool staff with contacts at local community-based organizations that would accept student interns.

#### *Recruit and establish expectations with internship organizations, students, and mentors.*

The afterschool staff conducted outreach to community-based organizations to place students in internship positions at their sites. Through meetings and email communications, the afterschool staff partnered with Youth Radio, The Scotland Center, and elementary afterschool programs at Bay Area Community Resources (BACR) to set up student internships.

Many of these organizations saw this opportunity as a mutually beneficial one and there often was a high demand for youth interns. The afterschool staff prepared and sent the organizations a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that stated expectations of the students and the organizations.

To recruit students, the afterschool staff conducted classroom presentations and a school-wide assembly to introduce *Project Mentor*. When word spread among students that the program was offering jobs, many students signed up.

Afterschool staff set up a mentoring component to the *Project Mentor* program that gave students a chance to talk one-on-one with an adult who worked in that student's area of interest. Afterschool staff identified strong, committed adults from the community to participate as mentors, who were asked to sign a contract stating mentor/mentee expectations. Adult mentors agreed to meet with 3-4 youth four times during the course of the *Project Mentor* program. Mentors were asked to talk about the nature of their jobs, what they did on a daily basis, help the students in their career exploration search, and give feedback on their mentee's career portfolio.

#### *Implement Project Mentor program and place 25 students at internship sites.*

Afterschool staff implemented the *Project Mentor* program in January 2010. Over the course of four months, students in the program created career portfolios, conducted job research, met with their mentors to receive feedback on their portfolios, and visited local businesses relating to their area of interest. Students also were required to successfully complete 3 job applications, participate in mock interviews, and develop a 2-year plan for their future career goals.

Graduating seniors participating in *Project Mentor* were required to complete a few additional tasks. They presented a PowerPoint presentation of their career plan as their senior project and participated in college enrollment and scholarship workshops.

In the third week of the program, students were matched up with mentors who worked in a profession of interest to the student. Mentors included a music producer, a registered nurse, a case manager, and a social worker.

Those students who showed "outstanding performance" (consistent attendance and participation in the program) were awarded a hands-on, paid internship. Afterschool staff worked to match students with organizations related to their interests. Fifteen students from the first cohort interned at Defremery Park in Oakland, where they organized and staffed community events.

Other places of internship included BACR elementary afterschool sites, Oakland parks and recreation sites, and other community based organizations. Students were also given the opportunity to participate in community service activities to gain important hands-on job skills.

#### *Results*

The *Project Mentor* program was very successful, with 50 youth graduating from the program since its inception in January 2010. Youth left the program with new job skills, employment and community service experience, and an increased awareness of available choices and the benefits of long-term planning. Students also left with career portfolios complete with a resume, cover letter, and references, a 2-year action plan, a letter grade and 2.5 credits, and the successful completion of 3 job applications.

*Project Mentor* was so successful that several students who completed the program wanted to come back and serve as a mentor or big brother/big sister to new students.

It was the afterschool staff's goal to incorporate the job training and career exploration components into the school culture by making it a graduation requirement. Afterschool staff are currently working with the principal to institute the *Project Mentor* program by including it in the registration packet and master curriculum.

Thanks to a strong relationship between the senior teacher and the afterschool staff, the principal agreed to host a school-wide community day for seniors to present their career plans. A video on the *Project Mentor* program was aired at this school-wide event, which increased buy-in among school administrators.

Over the school year, the principal at Ralph Bunche helped to organize field trips that allowed for bonding time among students. Afterschool staff found that these experiences created important buy-in and that even more unstructured bonding time should be incorporated into the *Project Mentor* program.

Next year, *Project Mentor* will consist of six weeks of job training and career exploration and six weeks of full-time internships. Afterschool staff also plan to partner with the Public Health Department to set up 20 internships for Ralph Bunche students.

## BEYOND LIFE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

*LIFE ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL*



Life Academy High School of Health and Bioscience is a small public high school located in Oakland, California. Established in

2001, the school serves 250 students of diverse backgrounds in grades 9 through 12. Life Academy prepares students for careers in health and biosciences by providing them with rigorous academic experiences focused on these subjects.

The afterschool program at Life Academy, *Beyond LIFE*, is sponsored by HOME Project, a youth development organization serving young people in Oakland and Alameda. Funded by the 21st CCLC ASSETs grant, *Beyond LIFE* offers enrichment and academic programs to Life Academy students. Partnering with HOME Project, Life Academy teachers, and five other youth community organizations, the program offers twelve different afterschool components.

### Long-Term Outcome

The afterschool staff at Life Academy is dedicated to developing a comprehensive, sustainable high school afterschool program. They focused their program improvement on increasing the participation and better serving the needs and interests of 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Below is a discussion offering more context, followed by a list of the steps afterschool staff took to accomplish these efforts.

### Discussion

Afterschool programming at *Beyond LIFE* is mandatory for 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Ninth graders at Life Academy are required to come to the afterschool program and participate in 45 minutes of homework help twice per week. After the homework session is finished, youth go to a club of their interest, including digital media, soccer, visual arts, and “inner strength”.

School day teachers are closely involved in the afterschool program. They email the afterschool staff homework lists every Tuesday and Thursday, dedicate portions of their weekly meetings for afterschool staff to bring up any issues, and distribute teacher meeting minutes to afterschool staff members.

The mandatory participation of 9<sup>th</sup> graders has proved highly effective. Once they entered Life Academy and participated in the mandatory afterschool program, 9<sup>th</sup> graders who were failing in 8<sup>th</sup> grade began earning higher marks and completing their homework on time. Eleventh and 12<sup>th</sup> graders also receive focused support in the form of mandatory internships through the afterschool program. Afterschool staff meet daily with school day teachers about the junior and senior internships.

Because 10<sup>th</sup> graders are not required to attend the afterschool program, very few actually do. Teachers noted that many 10<sup>th</sup> graders do not appear motivated in school and many turn in poor quality homework, or fail to turn in the assignments entirely. Afterschool staff also noticed that incoming 11<sup>th</sup> graders were often unprepared for their required internship positions.

Given the positive results of the mandatory participation in afterschool programming for 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, afterschool staff focused their efforts on programming that would increase the participation and better serve the needs and interests of 10<sup>th</sup> graders.

### *Get buy-in from school site leaders.*

Afterschool staff met with the Life Academy principal and teachers at weekly staff meetings to discuss the idea of providing mandatory afterschool programming specifically for 10<sup>th</sup> graders and what this would look like. Because the mandatory 9<sup>th</sup> grade program was so successful, afterschool staff recommended the 10<sup>th</sup> grade program be structured similarly. The teachers and principals agreed that additional afterschool support for 10<sup>th</sup> graders was a priority.

*Identify best practices from high school afterschool sites that are successfully providing programming to 10<sup>th</sup> graders.*

The afterschool staff are still working to identify high school programs that are successful in attracting and retaining the participation of 10<sup>th</sup> graders. The staff looked closely at the success of the ASSETs afterschool program at Oakland Technical Institute. However, Oakland Tech is a large, comprehensive high school. The afterschool staff at Life Academy will continue to search for and learn from successful programs that operate in small school settings and share characteristics similar to those of Life Academy High School.

*Create a 10<sup>th</sup> grade afterschool program and include it in the Life Academy 10<sup>th</sup> grade contract.*

The afterschool staff at *Beyond LIFE* created a two-year program improvement plan. Year one (2010) was dedicated to enlisting the buy-in of school site leaders and planning the 10<sup>th</sup> grade program. Year two (2011) will be the implementation phase. Afterschool staff felt that implementing a whole new program in the middle of the school year was unrealistic. Additionally, the afterschool program lacked enough staff to effectively implement the changes.

In the implementation phase of the plan, 10<sup>th</sup> graders will be required to participate in afterschool academic and homework support similar to that received by 9<sup>th</sup> graders. The 10<sup>th</sup> graders will also be engaged in character building activities.

Currently, all 10<sup>th</sup> graders at Life Academy are required to complete a final project at the end of the year that includes components from all of their school day classes – science, English, and math. Youth must present their completed projects to a panel of judges.

Next year, when the improvement plan is implemented, the afterschool program will provide a structured time and place for 10<sup>th</sup> graders to work on their final projects. Afterschool staff will also provide public speaking workshops that allow youth to prepare for their presentations to the panel.

Every year, each class takes an overnight field trip where youth participate in team building activities and strengthen friendship bonds. The afterschool staff believe that the 10<sup>th</sup> graders will bond more easily if they spend time together in the afterschool program.

The two-year improvement plan also calls for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade afterschool program to be written into the Life Academy 10<sup>th</sup> grade contract. This means that when youth register for 10<sup>th</sup> grade at the beginning of the year, they and their parents will be required to sign an agreement that explains the program and youth participation expectations. If a youth's parent doesn't sign the form, he or she will be asked to meet with the principal. The idea is to let every parent know what the afterschool program is doing to support the 10<sup>th</sup> graders.

### *Results*

The afterschool staff were successful in getting buy-in and input from school leaders. They were also successful in forging agreements of how participation of 10<sup>th</sup> graders would be incorporated within the expectations of the larger school. Together with the school staff, they designed a 10<sup>th</sup> grade program that would offer academic and homework support, preparation for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade final project, and increased opportunities for bonding among the 10<sup>th</sup> graders.

As described above, the afterschool program is still in the planning phase of program improvement. Next year, afterschool staff will gauge the results of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade afterschool program by working with teachers to assess their perception of increased motivation, the completion and quality of homework, the success of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade final projects, and the friendship bonds among the 10<sup>th</sup> grade youth.

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## ABOUT

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### *About the Partnership for Children and Youth*

The mission of the Partnership for Children and Youth (PCY) is to ensure that school-age children and youth living in low-income communities have the support and the opportunities they need and deserve to be successful in school and in life. PCY was created to connect schools and their community partners in underserved communities with available public and private resources, and to improve the effectiveness of funding streams serving poor children. PCY's primary clients are those institutions that provide critical support services to poor children - including schools and school districts, community-based agencies and local governments.

### *About Temescal Associates*

This article was authored by Sam Piha and Laura Karosic of Temescal Associates. Temescal Associates is dedicated to building the capacity of leaders and organizations in education and youth development who are serious about improving the lives of young people. Temescal Associates clients include leaders of youth serving institutions and organizations, school and youth program practitioners, public and private funders, intermediary organizations, and policy makers. Temescal's work ranges from helping clients build large-scale youth and community initiatives to supporting those who provide services to young people on a day-to-day basis. To accomplish this, Temescal Associates draws on a pool of gifted and highly experienced consultants who excel at eliciting the internal knowledge and wisdom of those we work with while introducing new knowledge and strategies that can transform the day-to-day practices that lead to improved youth outcomes.

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## CITATIONS

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<sup>1</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (April 2009). *Recruiting and Retaining Older Youth In Afterschool*, [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue\\_37\\_recruitingandretaining.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_37_recruitingandretaining.cfm)

<sup>2</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (April 2009). *Recruiting and Retaining Older Youth In Afterschool*, [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue\\_37\\_recruitingandretaining.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_37_recruitingandretaining.cfm)