

# AFTERSCHOOL LEARNING:

A STUDY OF ACADEMICALLY FOCUSED AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE



A Report of the New Hampshire State Afterschool Task Force



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Afterschool Learning: A Study of Academically Focused Afterschool Programs in New Hampshire* presents the first statewide description of academically focused programs. The report is written to describe the effects of afterschool programs on students and to serve as a resource for local communities, legislators, and policy-makers.

The evidence in this reports shows positive effects on New Hampshire students who participate in academically focused afterschool programs, especially middle school students. More than half the students who attended regularly improved both academically and behaviorally. Consistent with national findings on the benefits of afterschool programs for student success, the findings in New Hampshire highlight four key factors.

**Afterschool programs improve students' learning skills.** Classroom teachers reported that students made the most progress in turning in homework on time, completing homework to teachers' satisfaction, and participating in class. All of these skills have strong links to academic performance. Furthermore, students' perceptions confirm teachers' perceptions.

**Regular attendance seems to contribute to student success.** Half of the elementary and a third of the middle school students in academically focused programs attended regularly. At the middle school level, where data were richer, more students who attended regularly showed academic improvement than students who attended less frequently. However, even students who attended sporadically showed improvement

**High quality afterschool staff makes a difference.** The academically focused programs in New Hampshire employed staff with high levels of education. All programs had at least one core staff member with a bachelor's degree, and three-quarters of all programs had at least one core staff member with a graduate degree. The staff turnover rate is relatively low. Most programs also were assisted by regular volunteers.

**Ongoing data collection will allow policymakers and program staff to understand the benefits of high quality academically focused afterschool programs for student success.** *Afterschool Learning: A Study of Academically Focused Afterschool Programs in New Hampshire* establishes a baseline of findings on academically focused afterschool programs. The State Task Force on Afterschool Programs intends to produce a new report every two years on the state of afterschool programs in New Hampshire. The cumulative findings will contribute to our understanding of the benefits of high quality afterschool programs for student success.

The findings in this report are based on data from 29 afterschool programs – 16 elementary and 13 middle schools – which served almost 3000 students. These programs receive operating support from the two largest statewide funding streams for academically focused programs in the state, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Out-of-School Matters! New Hampshire.



# AFTERSCHOOL LEARNING:

A VIEW OF ACADEMICALLY FOCUSED AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

## BACKGROUND

In 2002, Governor Jeanne Shaheen created a New Hampshire State Task Force composed of senior staff representing New Hampshire public and private agencies committed to afterschool programs. Task Force members were asked to develop a common reporting plan that would over time provide relevant data on the state's afterschool programs. (See Appendix A for list of members.)

The Task Force was co-chaired by then Commissioner of Education, Nicholas Donohue, and Cynthia Billings, CEO of PlusTime NH. PlusTime NH is a statewide provider of direct support, training, information, and advocacy for afterschool programs. RMC Research Corporation, a national leader in program research and evaluation headquartered in Portsmouth, NH, convened, organized, and synthesized the work of the Task Force.

## INTRODUCTION

*Afterschool Learning: A Study of Academically Focused Afterschool Programs in New Hampshire* presents the first statewide description of academically focused afterschool programs. The report is written to describe the effects of afterschool programs on students and to serve as a resource for local communities, legislators, and policy-makers.

The findings presented in this report are based on data from 29 afterschool programs – 16 elementary and 13 middle schools – which served almost 3000 students.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The map in Appendix B shows the locations of the programs.



**Federally funded and state-administered, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers provide a wide range of afterschool academic enrichment opportunities to help students in high-poverty schools meet state and local academic standards in the core areas of reading and math. The 21st CCLC's goal is to raise student academic achievement through community learning centers that provide students with academic enrichment as well as activities that complement their regular academic program. Centers are located in elementary, middle, or secondary schools or similarly accessible facilities. Programs serve students and their families during the out-of-school hours, which include before school, weekends, vacations, and afterschool. They provide a range of high quality services to support student learning and development, including tutoring and mentoring, homework help, academic enrichment, and community service opportunities, and music, arts, sports, and cultural activities.**

## FINDINGS

All of the programs included seek to improve students' academic achievement and performance by augmenting the school day with activities that promote student success. The programs derive significant operating support from the two largest statewide funding streams for academically focused afterschool programs in New Hampshire, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) and Out-of-School Matters! New Hampshire (OSM! NH).

Although the content differs due to diverse approaches to increase students' school engagement and achievement, the afterschool programs are consistent in offering three main components: (1) homework help and tutoring; (2) hands-on projects, service learning, and other enrichment activities to develop skills that support and deepen in-school learning; and (3) non-academic activities, from sports to dance to drama club, that build positive relationships and improve critical thinking skills, motivation, and self-confidence.

**The Out-of-School Matters! New Hampshire Initiative (OSM! NH), funded by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation and managed by PlusTime NH, builds on the principles that student academic preparedness and achievement are enhanced when afterschool programs have strong links to in-school learning, and when students participate in self-selected, academically rich activities. This partnership offers low-income middle school students programs that are explicitly tied to school subject areas and/or curriculum standards. The OSM! model supports a full-time director, offers both homework support and enrichment activities, and establishes regular communication with school-based staff.**

The evidence in this report shows positive effects on New Hampshire students who participate in academically focused afterschool programs. More than half the students who attended regularly improved both academically and behaviorally. The more a student participates, the more likely he or she is to improve, but even students who attend sporadically make some improvement. Further, academically focused afterschool programs attract students who, in the view of their classroom teachers, need to improve—and fully two-thirds of them made academic and behavioral improvements. (See Appendix C for description of data collection methods and Appendix D for technical notes.)

These New Hampshire findings are in keeping with a growing body of national evidence suggesting that participation in high quality afterschool programs benefits young people who are struggling academically. Researchers have linked participation in afterschool programs to improvement in academic performance, stronger problem-solving and critical thinking skills, positive social development, and decreased involvement in delinquent activities.<sup>2</sup>



## PROFILE OF ELEMENTARY AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

- 16 programs served 2,886 students in grades pre-kindergarten through six. These programs served 44% of their overall student population.
- 10 programs ran summer activities in addition to their school year programs. These programs operated between 39 and 52 weeks during the year, averaging 40 weeks.
- Programs operated only during the school year ran between 26 and 36 weeks, averaging 32 weeks.
- Almost all of the programs (87%) offered activities five days a week.
- Aside from grant income, fees were the most typical source of income. However, the fees charged represent a small fraction of the overall programming costs.

## A SAMPLE ELEMENTARY AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

Instead of going home alone or to an afternoon of TV and video games, 60 children file into the cafeteria at the end of their school day for their afterschool program. They are greeted by friends and staff, and eat a healthy snack subsidized by the USDA. The site director takes attendance while leaders and students

share some down-time. The atmosphere is lively with conversations about the school day and the planned afterschool activities.

After snack, students play outdoor games like 4-Square, basketball, tag, and jump rope. This time is important for students and staff to socialize and exercise. At 3:30 the students come in ready to attend their first activity block for the afternoon; for most this is Homework Club. Grouped by age, the students go into the library and classrooms where certified teachers from the school day and afterschool staff are ready to assist them in completing their homework. Usually there is one teacher for every six students. At the beginning of the week afterschool staff communicate with classroom teachers to find out the week's assignments.

After the first activity, around 4:30, they get ready for the second activity block, academic enrichment. Students sign up for eight-week sessions based on their age, content, and interest. Sessions are designed to be fun, engaging, and linked to learning. Examples of sessions offered include: Pop Bottle Science; Creative Movement; Pharaohs, Pyramids and Mummies; Film Making; and Cooking. The Computer Lab is open every day for all to attend. Typically, each session has one staff member for every 12 students. Sessions are staffed by community members and school day staff.

At 5:30, after the enrichment sessions are over, students ride home with family members or ride a bus home.

## PROFILE OF MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- The 13 programs served 1,256 students in grades five through ten.<sup>3</sup> This represented 25% of the overall student population in these schools.
- 11 of the 13 middle school programs operated only during the school year. Afterschool programs ran between 24 and 40 weeks, with an average of 35 weeks.
- During a typical week, 36% of the programs operated four days, and 64% were available five days.
- Aside from grant income, fees were the most typical income source for middle school level afterschool programs. However, fees cannot cover all of the program costs.<sup>4</sup>

## A SAMPLE MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

It is 2:30 ... in the next 45 minutes, middle school students will leave their classrooms for the afterschool program, bringing with them the successes and challenges of the day and their hopes for the afterschool program activities.

Already, site directors have been working for 3-4 hours, talking with classroom teachers and school staff members about students they share between the school day and the program. The site directors have collected homework and missing assignments and spoken to a number of kids between classes about how the day is going.

Program staff members have either been teaching class all day and join the program to help with homework or have been doing their “other” jobs and enter the program today to teach an enrichment activity.

The homework center sees on average 40 students a day, with slightly more boys than girls. Students come in with books, projects, test study questions, and computer work and will complete the homework they need to turn in tomorrow. Staff members help youth get settled, check in with them about their day and make sure they get food if they want it. This is a time for focus but also a time for building relationships between students and staff.



<sup>3</sup> One middle school program is located within a junior and senior high school and serves several ninth and tenth graders.

<sup>4</sup> In most cases the fees charged represent a small fraction of programming costs.

# ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

**Within an hour, many students will have finished their snacks and the day's homework and will be ready to move on to an enrichment activity. They may work on the program newsletter that goes to staff, parents, and community members about the great things youth are doing in the program. Some may go to the TV or radio station to work on a program PSA. Still others will choose from rock climbing, cooking, meteorology, drama, film-making, quilting, knitting, working with the elderly at the senior center, or woodworking.**

**Many will build self-esteem, confidence, leadership skills, critical thinking skills, team building skills, and communication skills even if they aren't explicitly aware of them. They might remember the smile they saw on an older woman's face when they finished painting her a bird house or the laugh of an eight-year old as they read a story. What stays with them might be the look on a friend's face when fresh-baked cookies came out of the oven or the feeling of success when someone complimented them on a job they did that day.**

**Between 5:00 and 5:30, a bus will pull up, students will say their goodbyes and pile into the bus, to be driven home or to where a parent is waiting. Staff members will sit down, discuss the day, and plan for another day of afterschool programming.**

**More than half of all students who regularly attended academically focused afterschool programs in New Hampshire improved their overall academic performance, making the greatest progress in class participation and homework quality and completion. The programs attracted students who, in their classroom teachers' view, needed to improve in school; two-thirds of all students who needed to improve did so.**

Policy-makers, funders, practitioners, and community members all have an interest in understanding the benefits of afterschool programs. Practitioners can strengthen their programs to meet the academic needs of students. Funders and policy-makers can use the evidence of results from their investments in deciding to support or sustain programs. Community members, who include parents, have a stake in helping create safe environments and opportunities for positive social development.

Academic benefits of afterschool programs in New Hampshire were assessed from the perspective of participants' Math or English Language Arts teachers. Teachers rated student progress in overall academic performance as well as improvement over the course of the school year in: homework (both completion and quality); classroom participation; classroom behavior; interactions with other students; and classroom attendance. (See Appendix E for the *Classroom Teacher Survey*.)

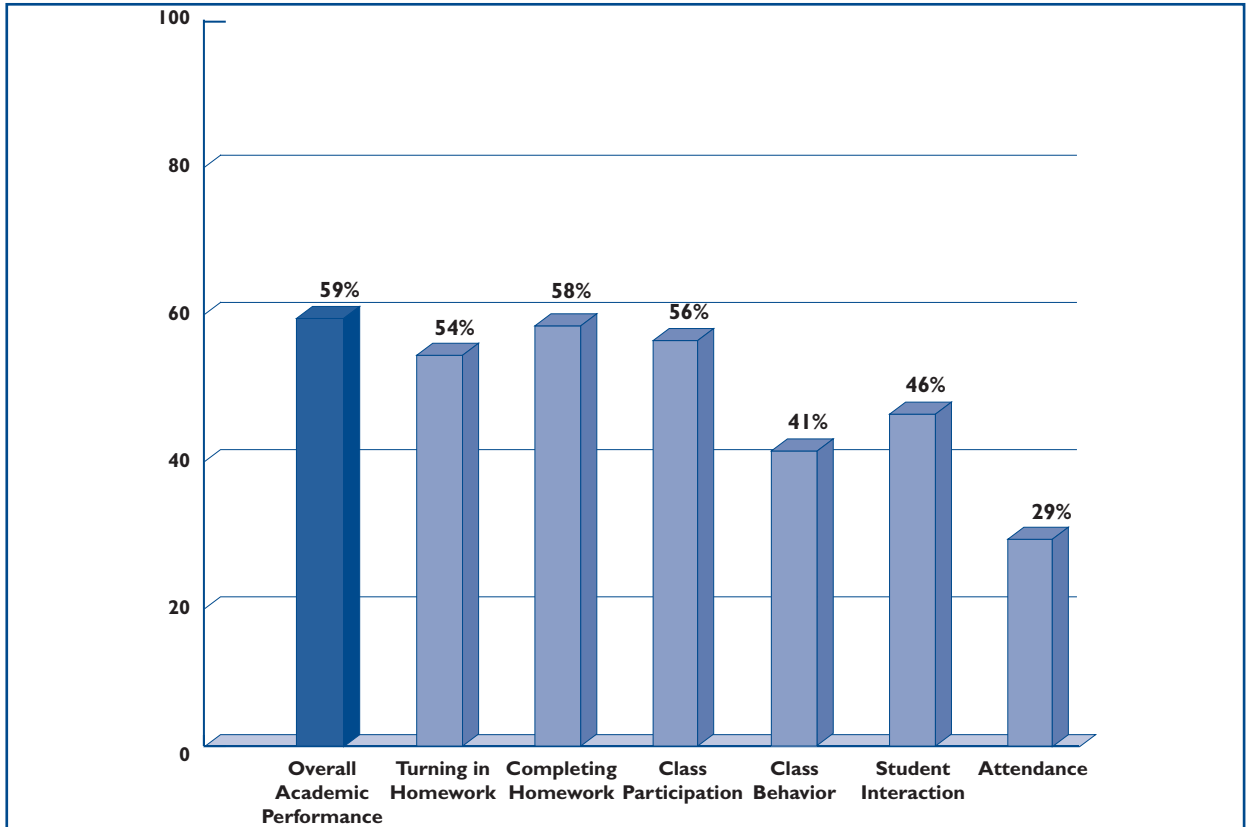
In both elementary and middle school programs, classroom teachers saw the greatest student progress in homework completion, quality of homework, and classroom participation. Findings from national evaluations showed similar results.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Kane, T. (2004). *The impact of afterschool programs: Interpreting the results of four recent evaluations*. Working paper of the William T. Grant Foundation.

**NH AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS MAKE A DIFFERENCE ACADEMICALLY**

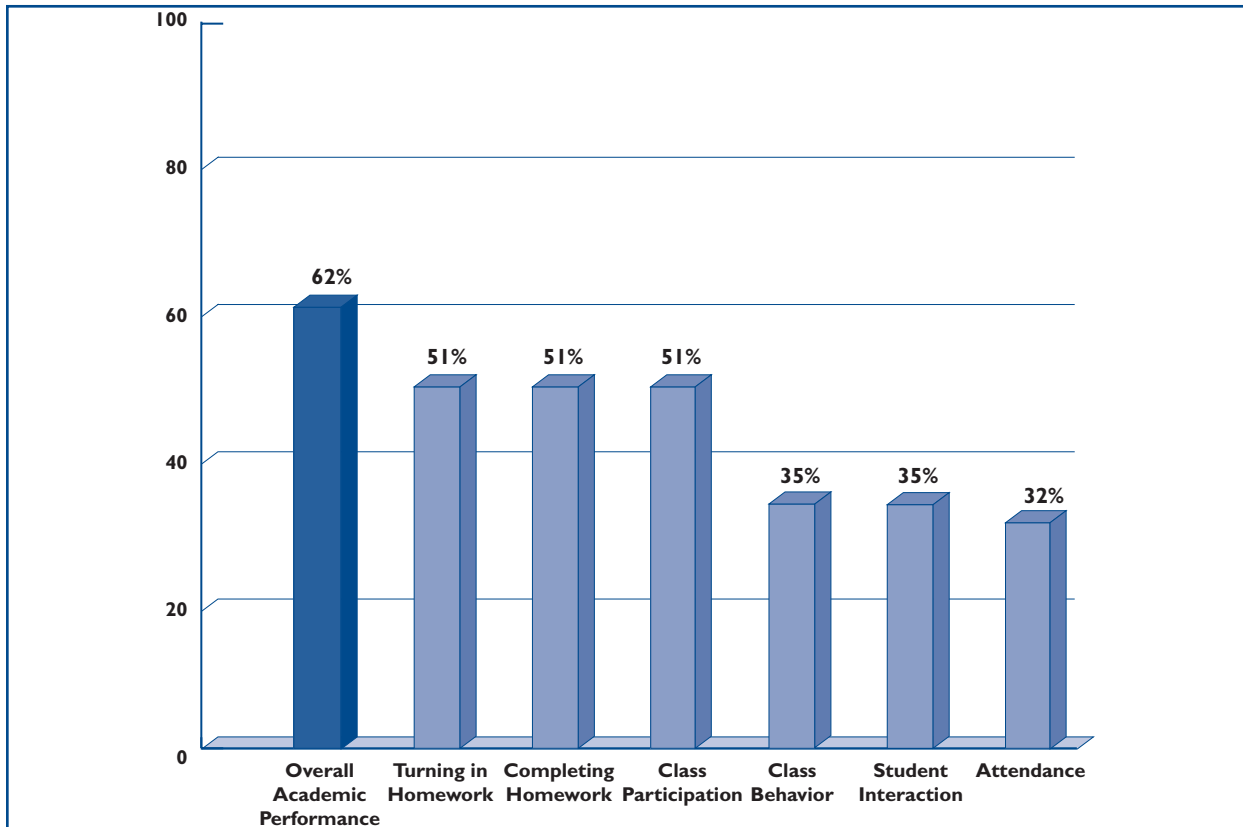
**59% of elementary school students and 62% of middle school students who attended regularly showed progress in overall academic performance as reported by their classroom teachers.**

**Chart I: Percent of Elementary School Regular Attendees Who Showed Improvement in Academic Outcomes**



■ The findings show teachers' perceptions of progress for elementary school students who attended afterschool programs regularly (at least 30 days). Students who did not improve either did not change or declined.

**Chart 2: Percent of Middle School Regular Attendees Who Showed Improvement in Academic Outcomes**

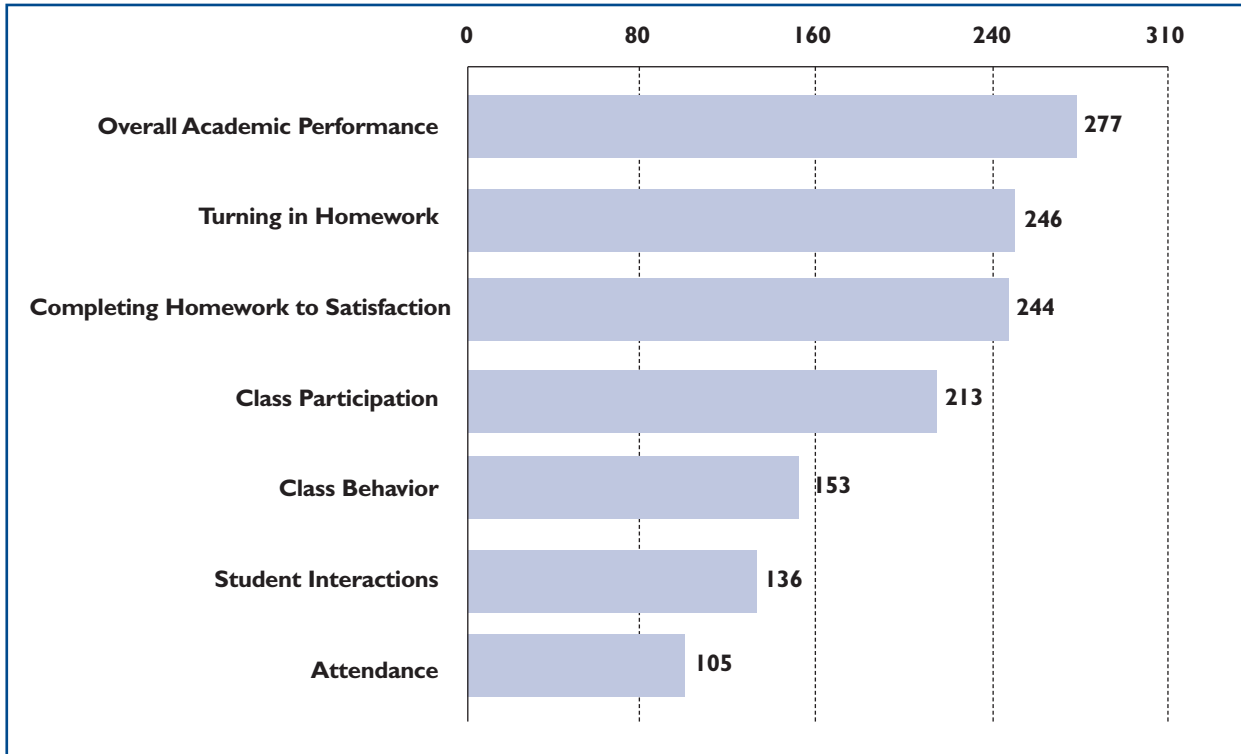


■ The findings show teachers' perceptions of progress for middle school students who attended afterschool programs regularly, at least 30 days or 60 hours during the school year. Students who did not improve either did not need to improve, did not change, or declined.

## NH AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS REACH STUDENTS WHO NEED TO IMPROVE

- 90% of participating middle school students had been identified by their classroom teachers as needing to improve academically.
- 66% of middle school students who needed to improve in overall academic performance improved.

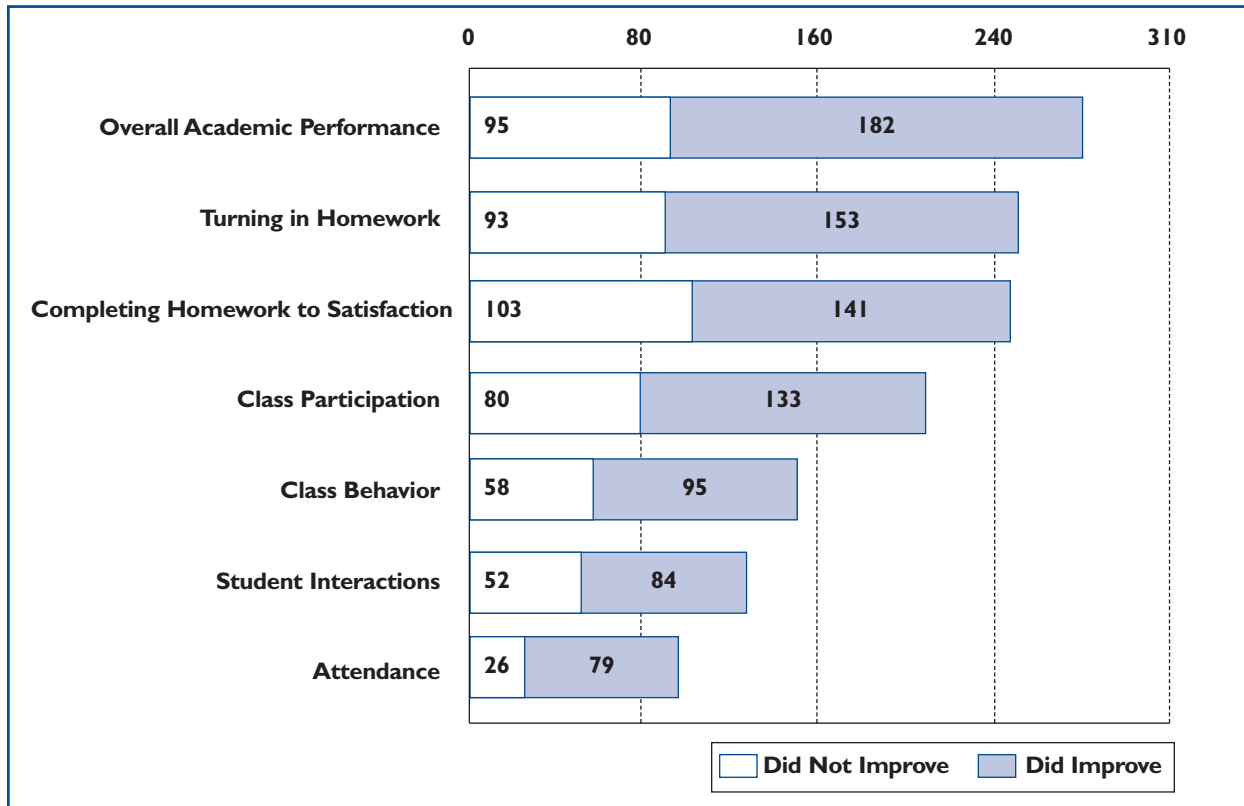
Chart 3: Number of Middle School Students Whose Teachers Indicated They Needed to Improve



- From a subset of middle school students, Chart 3 presents the number of students whose classroom teachers indicated they needed to improve in classroom behaviors and efforts. For example, classroom teachers indicated that 277 of the 310 students in afterschool programs needed to improve in overall academic performance.<sup>6</sup>
- The findings show classroom teachers reported that most students needed to improve in the same areas where a high percentage showed positive progress—overall academic performance, homework completion, homework quality, and class participation.
- Classroom teachers reported that fewer than half the students in the afterschool programs needed to improve in classroom behaviors and interactions with other students, and only a third needed to improve in classroom attendance.
- Additional analysis showed that 82% of students needed to improve in either turning in homework or completing it to their classroom teacher’s satisfaction, and 21% of students needed to improve in all seven items. More than half needed to improve on five items or more.

<sup>6</sup> See the technical notes (Appendix D) for information on number of students served.

**Chart 4: Of Those Students Who Needed to Improve, the Number Who Did and Did Not Improve**



■ Chart 4 shows of those students who needed to improve, the number who did and did not improve. Of the 277 (182 + 95) students whose classroom teachers indicated they needed to improve in their overall academic performance, 182 (66%) did improve and 95 (33%) did not improve.

■ The results in Chart 4 show that the students in afterschool programs who needed help received it. Classroom teachers reported that nearly 60% of students who needed to improve made progress in all academic areas.<sup>7</sup> Even in such areas as attendance, in which a relatively small number of students needed to improve, most showed progress – 75% (79/105 x 100).

■ Additional analysis showed that on average, students who needed to improve showed progress on three items as reported by classroom teachers. Still, 73% of students improved on at least one measure of behavior (class participation, behaving well, getting along with others, or attendance).

<sup>7</sup> See technical notes (Appendix D) for calculations.

- Furthermore, classroom teachers' reports are supported by students' perceptions of their own school performance since attending their afterschool program.<sup>8</sup>
  - Of students who never passed in their homework on time, half reported that they had begun to pass it in on time.
  - Of students who needed to improve the quality of their homework, more than half describe their homework quality as "good" or "fair."
  - Of students who did not have enough time at home to complete their homework, three-fifths completed their homework in the afterschool program.



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<sup>8</sup> Findings from the *Student Participation Survey*. See Appendix F.

# ATTENDANCE

**Half of the elementary school and a third of the middle school students in academically focused afterschool programs in New Hampshire attended regularly, that is, attended 30 days or more during the course of the program. Slightly more boys than girls attended the elementary and middle school afterschool programs. Within the subset of middle school students, nearly three-quarters attended two or more terms sequentially. The longer students attended, the more likely they were to make progress, although even students who attended unevenly showed some improvement. Middle school students reported that they valued their friendships made through the program, which is a reason they attend.**



In addition to identifying whom the afterschool programs serve, knowing when participants attend and for how long has several implications. Most of New Hampshire's academically focused afterschool programs run on a term basis, structured within the school's marking periods. Students sign up for the program one term at a time. With this in mind, tracking attendance patterns can become a source of information for program improvement. Attendance findings can provide insights into strategies for program planning, recruitment of students, and retention in the program. Duration of attendance or attendance history can also be an indication of participants' satisfaction with the program. If a student perceives benefits to attending he or she will be more likely to enroll again.

A growing number of research findings suggest that the amount of program attendance (dosage) is associated with positive outcomes for participants. What is the dosage a student needs to make academic or social development gains? How do the outcomes compare for a student who attends an afterschool program everyday for nine weeks to that of a student who attends twice a week for twenty weeks? Researchers define attendance by four indicators: 1) participating any time in a program; 2) amount of time spent in the program (intensity); 3) length of time spent in the program (duration); and 4) number of program activities engaged in (breadth).<sup>9</sup>

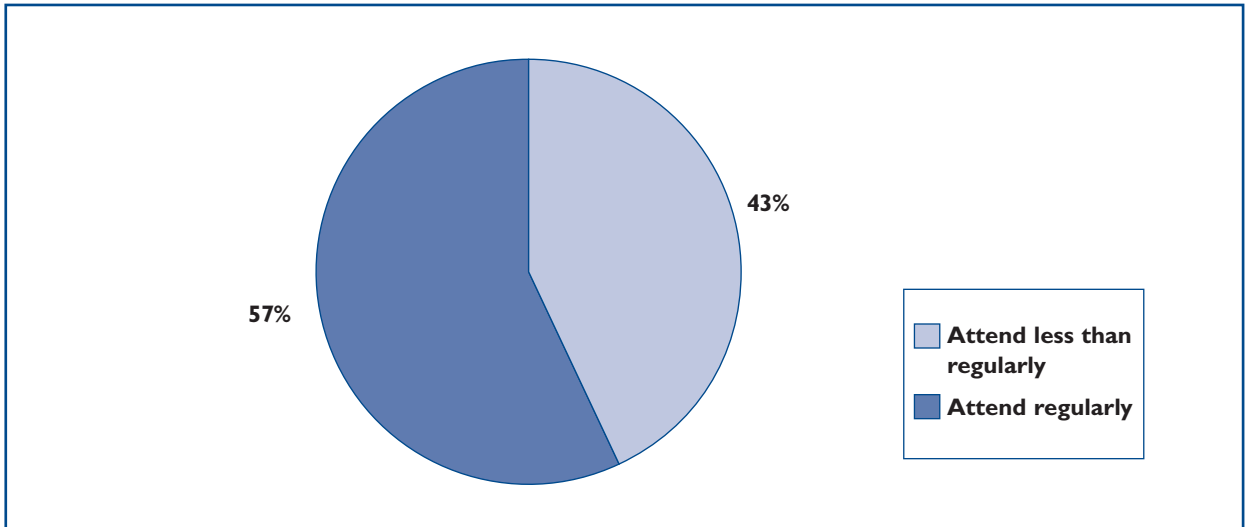
This report presents summary attendance data on intensity for elementary school programs and middle school programs and more detailed duration data for the subset of middle school programs.

<sup>9</sup> Weiss, H., Little, P., & Chaput, S. (2004, August). Understanding and measuring attendance in out-of-school time programs. *Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluations, #7*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE  
AFTERSCHOOL  
ATTENDANCE IS  
MODERATE**

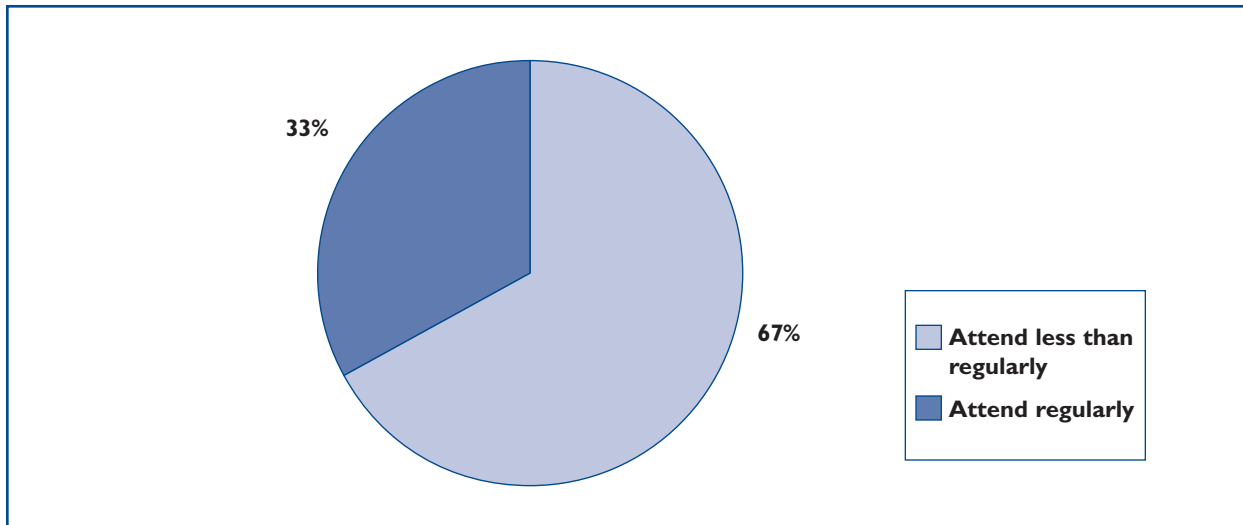
**57% of elementary students and 33% of middle school students attended afterschool programs regularly.**

**Chart 5: Percent of Students by Attendance for Elementary School Programs**



- **More than half of the students were considered “regular attendees.” A regular attendee went to the program 30 days or more during the course of the program.**
- **52% of all attendees were boys and 48% were girls. The same proportion of boys and girls attended regularly.**

**Chart 6: Percent of Students by Attendance for Middle School Programs**



- **One in three students was considered a “regular attendee.” A regular attendee went to the program at least 30 days, or 60 hours, during the course of the program. Afterschool programs for middle school students often compete with other extra-curricular activities, which may explain the low percentage of regular attendees.**
- **53% of all attendees were boys and 47% were girls. The same proportion of boys and girls attended regularly.**

Data from a subset of middle school students show that almost half consistently attended afterschool programs.

**Table 1: Attendance Patterns for Middle School Programs**

Number of Terms Attended:	Percent of Students
3 sequential terms	49%
2 sequential terms	24%
1 term only	25%
2 or more terms attended, not sequentially	2%

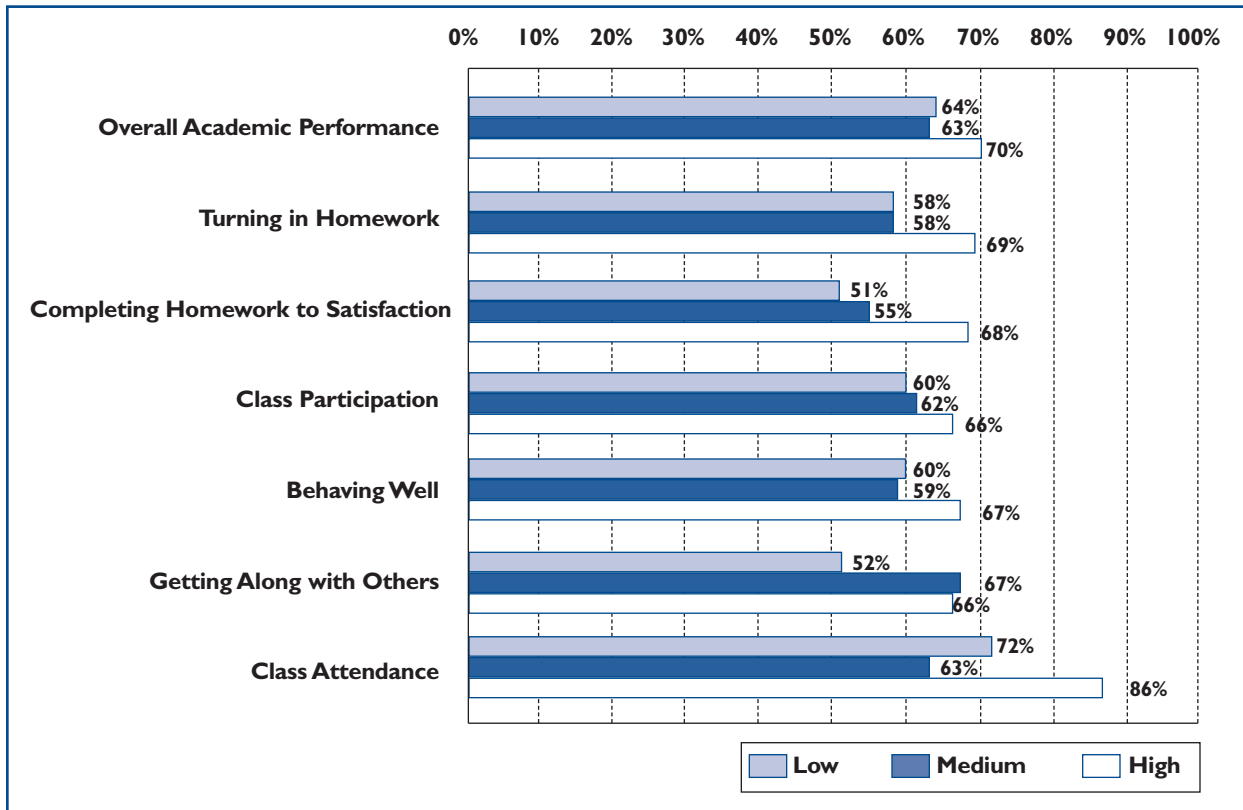
- From a subset of middle school students, Table 1 displays the number of terms students attended. Programs varied in the number of terms offered, ranging from three to six terms. Table 1 shows that 73% of students continued to attend the program after the first term they attended.
- One in four participants attended only one term. Of those students only attending one term, almost 50% attended the first term only.
- Additional analysis showed that on average, middle school students attended 14 out of 35 or 40% of the available weeks that a program operates.
- Programs typically operated between 2 – 3.5 hours each day. On average, students attended 4.6 hours per week, for an estimated average of 1.7 days a week. This is higher than the findings from national evaluations. The U.S. Department of Education’s 21st CCLC evaluation reported an average one day a week, and the Extended Services Schools Initiative reported an average of 1.2 days a week.<sup>10</sup>
- Data from the Student Participant Survey showed that overall, students like the program staff, other students, and what the afterschool programs offers.
  - More than half the participants said the program was “fun” and/or “cool” and/or saw the staff as “helpful, friendly, fun,” and/or “cool.”
  - 71% of the students who did not have friends in the program when they started attending reported they had made friends with some or almost all of the kids by the end of the program year.
  - A common theme among students was how highly they valued the friendships formed through the program. This is what some students liked best about the program.

<sup>10</sup> Kane, T. (2004).

**EVEN STUDENTS WHOSE ATTENDANCE WAS LESS CONSISTENT SHOWED SOME ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT**

- The longer a student participated in an afterschool program, the more likely he or she was to make progress academically.
- Even students with a low attendance level showed improvement.

**Chart 7: Teacher Reports of Students Who Improved, by Participation Levels**



- Students were grouped according to their attendance levels. “Low” signifies students who attended less than 40% of the available weeks, “medium” describes those who attended between 40% and 70% of the time, and “high” indicates students who attended more than 70%.
- Although the pattern of findings favor ongoing attendance for student success, the differences among attendance levels were not significant. In all measures of academic performance, the results show that even students with low levels of attendance showed improvement. Students vary in their participation for many reasons. Program staff may want to consider students’ academic needs and their level of attendance.

# STAFFING

**Staff qualifications are key to afterschool program quality. In both elementary and middle school, academically focused afterschool programs in New Hampshire's staff have high levels of education and turnover is relatively low. Every academically focused afterschool program in the state had at least one core staff member in possession of a BA degree. Most programs were also assisted by regular volunteers.**

Many researchers and practitioners have attributed afterschool program success to the skills and experiences of staff members.<sup>11</sup> A RAND study found that management practices of hiring, training, and retaining educated staff members are associated with high quality afterschool programs.<sup>12</sup> Staff members with higher levels of education may be assumed to bring more knowledge and understanding of youth development to their jobs than less well educated staff members do. Experienced staff may also be assumed to bring interpersonal skills that allow them to establish good relationships with young students. A national study found that more than half of all afterschool program directors, and about a third of senior staff members, had at least a bachelor's degree.<sup>13</sup>

Research also has shown that building trusting relationships with adults is especially important for middle school aged students, for whom a sense of belonging and their own identity are central concerns. Staff continuity is critical to building and maintaining program quality.



<sup>11</sup> Bouffard, S., & Little, P. (2004, August). Promoting quality development through professional development. *Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation*, #8. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project

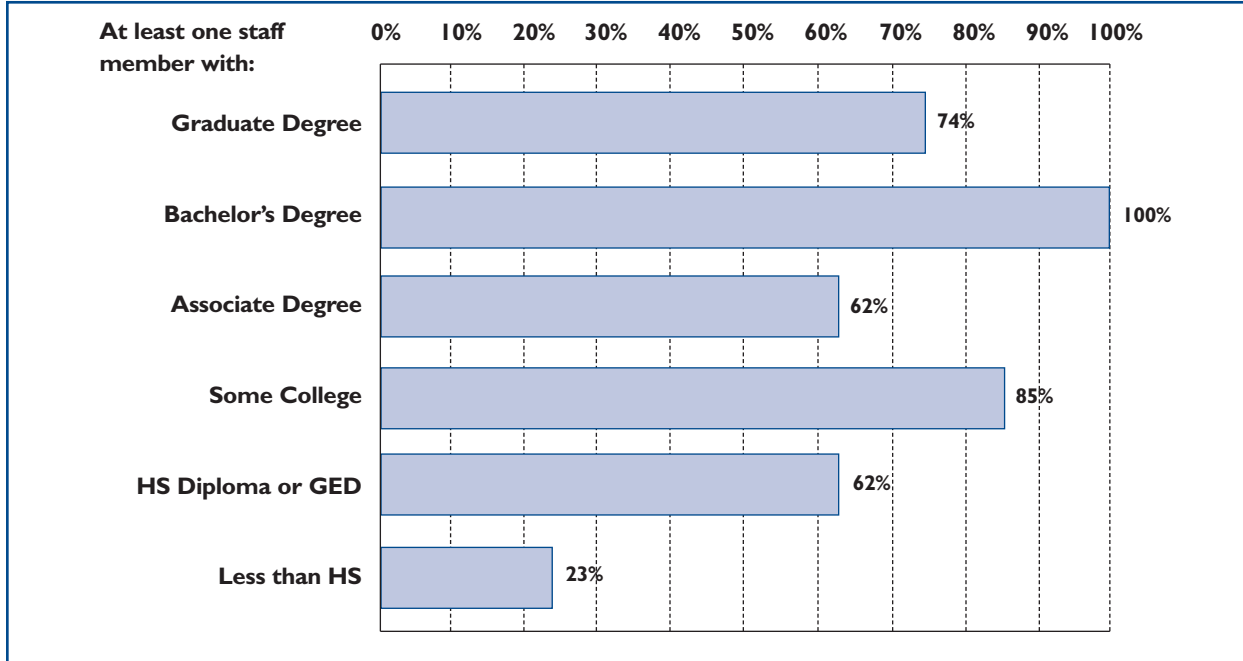
<sup>12</sup> Beckett, M., Hawken, A., & Jacknowitz, A. (2001). *Accountability for after-school care: devising standards and measuring adherence to them*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Distribution Services.

<sup>13</sup> Seppanen, P., Love, J., deVries, D. K., Bernstein, L., Seligson, M., Marx, F., & Kisker, E. E. (1993). *National study of before- and afterschool programs*. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation.

**NH AFTERSCHOOL  
WORKFORCE IS WELL  
EDUCATED**

- 100% of academically focused elementary afterschool programs have at least one teacher with a BA degree.
- 75% have at least one teacher with a graduate degree.

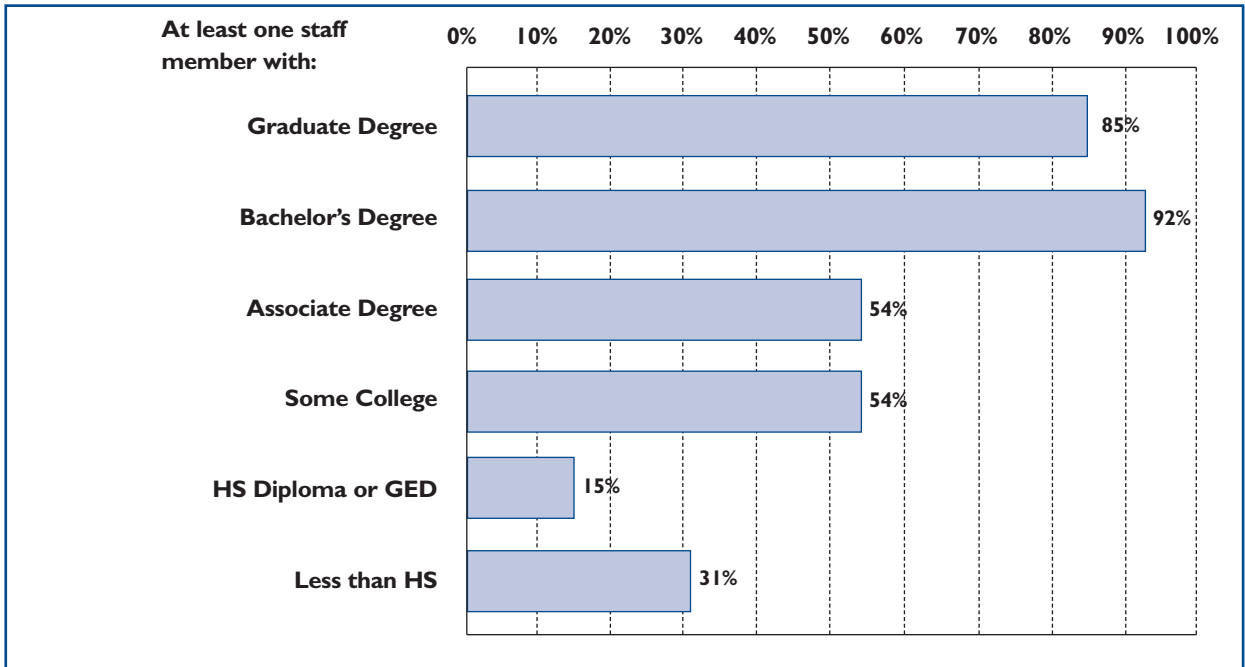
**Chart 8: Percent of Elementary School Programs by Staff Education Level**



- All academically focused afterschool programs have at least one core staff member who has a bachelor's degree. Three-quarters of programs employ at least one core staff member with a graduate degree.
- Further analysis showed that 81% of programs include at least two core staff members with college or graduate degrees.

- 92% of academically focused middle school programs have at least one teacher with a BA degree.
- 85% have at least one teacher with a graduate degree.

**Chart 9: Percent of Middle School Programs by Staff Education Level**



- More than half of all programs employed at least one core staff member with some college experience or an associate degree.

**AVERAGE STAFF  
TURNOVER IN NH  
AFTERSCHOOL  
PROGRAMS IS LESS  
THAN THE NATIONAL  
AVERAGE**

The average staff turnover rate was 16% within elementary school programs and 35% within middle school programs.

**Table 2: Turnover of Core Paid Staff in Elementary and Middle School Programs**

	<b>Elementary School Programs (n=16)</b>	<b>Middle School Programs (n=13)</b>
Percent of programs that experienced staff turnover	88%	38%
Average turnover of staff in programs with turnover	16%	35%
Percent of programs with unfilled positions	<19%	<1%

- **All but two elementary school programs reported staff leaving the program; that is, 88% of programs lost staff.**
- **Although most of these programs lost at least one staff member, the number of staff who left was low. On average, two core staff members left – an average turnover rate of 16%.**
- **Five of the 13 (35%) middle school programs reported staff leaving the program. On average, these middle school programs lost four staff members, or about one-third of their staff.**
- **However, the average rate of staff turnover within elementary (16%) and middle school (35%) programs that experience turnover is considerably lower than the national average (60%).<sup>14</sup>**
- **The turnover of staff within programs has several implications. One is the potential disruption to the program. Research shows that continuity of staff is important for building quality afterschool programs and establishing trusting relationships with students, especially in the middle school years. Another implication is the ongoing need for staff development and training.**
- **Of the elementary programs that lost staff, 13 out of the 16 programs replaced their staff. Of the middle school programs that lost staff, all but one replaced staff. No information was collected about the qualifications of staff who left or staff who were hired to fill positions.**

<sup>14</sup> Seppanen, et al., 1993.

**NH AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS**

- **75% of elementary and 46% of middle school programs hired high school and/or college students as core staff members to work with students.**
- **81% of elementary and 92% of middle school afterschool programs in New Hampshire had a regular cadre of volunteers.**

**Table 3: Staffing Arrangements in Elementary and Middle School Programs**

	<b>Elementary School Programs (n=16)</b>	<b>Middle School Programs (n=13)</b>
Average number of core paid staff employed	16	9
Percent of programs with high school or college students as core staff working with participants	75%	46%
Average number of high school/college students working directly with participants	4	3-4
Percent of programs with regular volunteers	81%	92%
Average number of volunteers	11	8
Average number of volunteers who work with participants	3	4

- **On average, New Hampshire programs hired four high school or college students as core staff members working with participants.**
- **In elementary school programs, a total of 141 volunteers worked in 13 programs, with an average of 11 per program. About a quarter worked directly with students.**
- **All but one middle school program had a group of regular volunteers. A total of 95 volunteers worked in 12 programs, with an average of eight per program. Slightly more than half of the volunteers worked directly with student participants.**
- **In addition to their work with students, volunteers typically served on program advisory boards, helped with fund raising, and provided administrative services.**
- **Additional analysis showed no relationship between the number of core paid staff and the number of regular volunteers. Programs with small operating budgets did not necessarily depend on volunteers to fill core staff positions.**

# SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings from this first year of data collection show that academically focused afterschool programs contribute to student success in school, especially for middle school students. More than half of all New Hampshire elementary and middle school students who regularly attended academically focused afterschool programs improved on several academic measures, according to classroom teachers. Consistent with national findings on the benefits of afterschool programs for student achievement, the findings in New Hampshire highlight four key factors.

**Afterschool programs improve students' learning skills.** One benefit of academically focused afterschool programs for students is improved learning skills. Classroom teachers reported that students made most progress in turning in homework on time, completing homework to teachers' satisfaction, and participating in class. All of these skills have strong links to academic performance. Furthermore, students' perceptions confirm teachers' perceptions. A subset of middle school students report that they now pass in their homework on time, describe the quality of their homework as good, and state that they are able to complete their homework in the afterschool program. Students who believe they are making progress in school are more likely to stay engaged in learning.

**Regular attendance seems to contribute to school success.** Although the differences among amounts of attendance were not statistically significant, the pattern favors regular, ongoing attendance for student success. Half of the elementary school and a third of the middle school students in academically focused programs attended regularly. At the middle

school level where data were richer, more students who attended regularly showed academic improvement than students who attended less frequently. However, improvements were also found even among students who attended sporadically.

It may be that students who attend sporadically are involved in other afterschool time activities, such as sports, drama clubs, music lessons, etc., or have outside school commitments. On the other hand, one benefit to students attending afterschool programs is in developing friendships and connections with peers. Research shows that a sense of belonging is associated with student success. The value of friendships in the program, regardless of the amount of attendance, may have added benefits in classroom learning. Further study of attendance patterns that include students' competing interests and activities would allow a clearer understanding of the benefits of regular attendance.

**High quality afterschool staff makes a difference.** The academically focused programs in New Hampshire employed staff with high levels of education. All programs had at least one core staff member with a bachelor's degree, and three-quarters of all programs had at least one core staff member with a graduate degree. In addition, the turnover rate in programs is relatively low. Research shows that staff qualifications are key ingredients in afterschool program quality. Given the quality and success of these programs, it may be beneficial for policymakers and school leaders to consider academically focused afterschool programs as a targeted strategy for improving in-school performance. The findings in this report also position afterschool leaders to think about academically focused afterschool programs as a

provider of supplemental education services (SES) for schools identified for improvement under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

**Ongoing data collection will allow policymakers and program staff to track**

**success.** *Afterschool Learning: A Study of Academically Focused Afterschool Programs in New Hampshire*, the state's first report on academically focused afterschool programs, establishes a baseline of information for tracking the success of academically focused afterschool programs. This report is the culmination of a two-year effort to establish effective data collection and buy-in from a range of New Hampshire public and private agencies committed to afterschool programs. The State Task Force intends to expand its data collection activities and produce a similar report every two years on the state of afterschool programs in New Hampshire. The findings will contribute to understanding the benefits of high quality academically focused afterschool programs for student success.



# APPENDICES

**New Hampshire State Afterschool Task Force Members**

**Map of Program Locations**

**Data Collection Methods**

**Technical Notes**

**Classroom Teacher Survey**

**Student Participation Survey**

**Staffing Survey**



# APPENDIX A

## NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE AFTERSCHOOL TASK FORCE MEMBERS

### Co-Chairs

Commissioner Nick Donohue  
NH Department of Education

Cynthia Billings  
CEO PlusTime NH

### Members

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Drug Demand Reduction Administrator  
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Christina Emery  
Office of Information Technology  
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Karen Dewey  
21st CCLC Coordinator  
Claremont Schools

Lynn D'Ambrose  
Nellie Mae Education Foundation



# APPENDIX B

## MAP OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM LOCATIONS

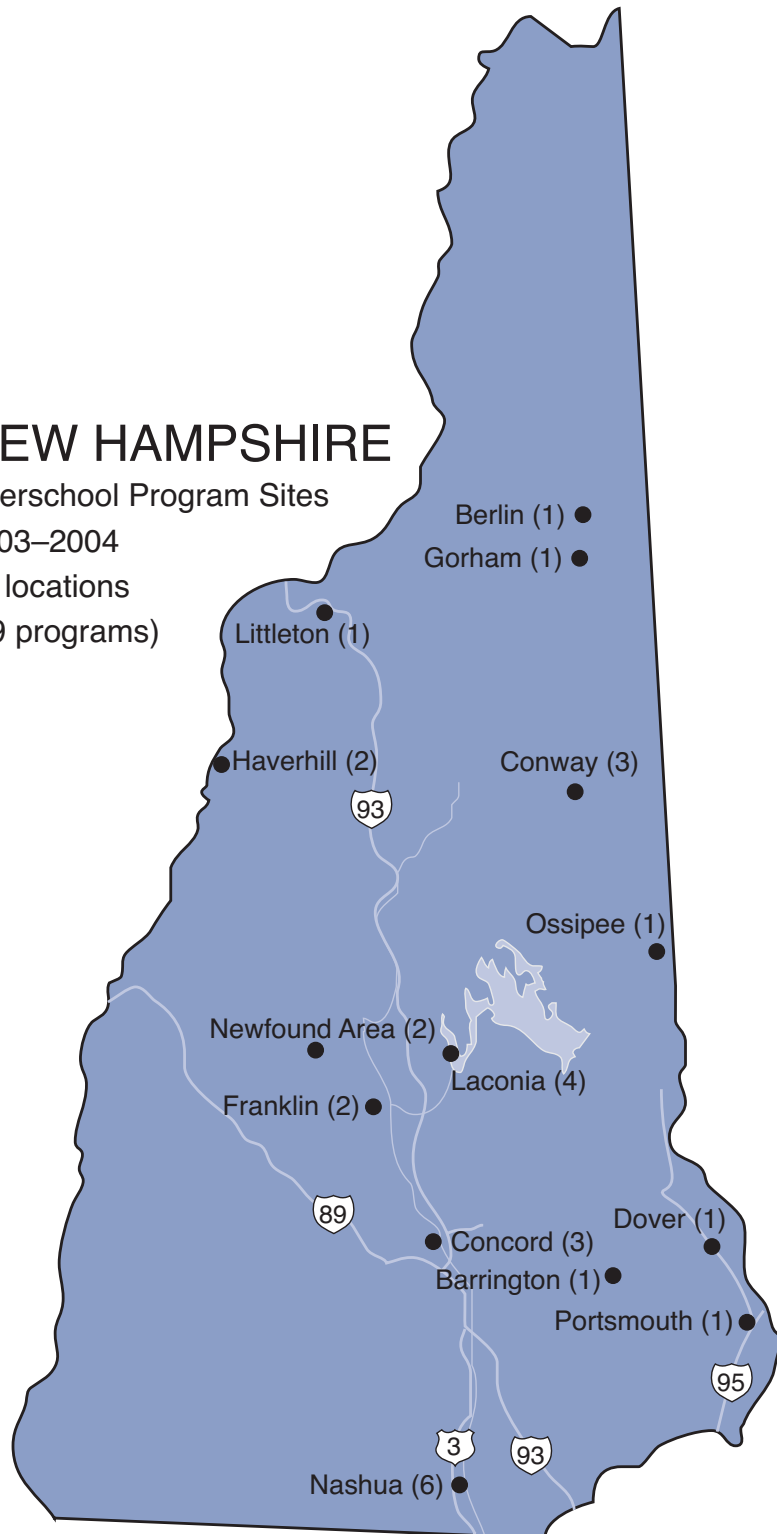
### NEW HAMPSHIRE

Afterschool Program Sites

2003–2004

14 locations

(29 programs)





# APPENDIX C

## DATA COLLECTION METHODS

For this report, the Task Force collected basic demographic information about afterschool students (grade, gender; hours of participation), program operations (days and weeks of operation, funding sources), levels of staff education, staff turnover; and teacher perceptions of student behavior and effort in the classroom. This report focuses on **academic outcomes, attendance patterns,** and **staffing.** Methods of collecting data included a survey of program characteristics (completed by program directors), attendance records, and a survey of classroom teachers' perceptions of their students' subsequent in-class efforts and behaviors.

Information was gathered from 34 afterschool programs that served approximately 4,875 youth. Twenty-five programs received funding from the 21st Century Community Learning Centers and nine from the OSM! NH Initiative.<sup>1</sup> Although every effort was made to obtain comparable data across programs, the challenges were many. This report presents summary level findings from 16 elementary and 13 middle school programs.<sup>2</sup> As part of an ongoing evaluation of the OSM! NH initiative, additional data were gathered from a subset of the middle school programs. These additional findings are incorporated in the report and enhance the picture of afterschool programs for middle school students. A list of each program and its data contributions are at the end of this Appendix.

### **Data on Academic Performance Outcomes.**

Academically focused afterschool programs are designed to help improve students' academic outcomes. Given the limited time students participate in afterschool programs, academic success and outcomes were measured in terms of classroom behaviors and efforts, particularly those linked to academic achievement. A classroom Teacher Survey gathered information about student academic performance. It asked classroom teachers for their perceptions of changes in students' classroom behaviors and efforts, including homework completion, classroom participation, and student interactions. Program directors distributed the survey to participating students' Math or English Language Arts teachers. (See Appendix E for the Teacher Survey.) To reduce their end-of-year burden, classroom teachers completed the Teacher Surveys at the end of the next to last academic marking period. For example, if a school has four marking periods, classroom teachers of students in the afterschool program completed the survey at the end of the third marking period.

In 21st CCLC programs, classroom teachers completed Teacher Surveys for students who attended the program 30 days or more during the school year. In OSM! NH programs (the subset of middle school programs), classroom teachers completed surveys for all students who attended the program. Findings for 21st CCLC

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<sup>1</sup> The OSM! NH Initiative awarded eight grants. One grantee, the Family Resource Center in Gorham, NH, wanted their Gorham-site afterschool program to contribute to the data collection system. However, only their program in Berlin was supported by the Initiative during 2003-2004.

<sup>2</sup> Although data were collected from 34 programs, two programs served high school students and three programs served multi-grade levels (i.e., elementary and middle school). The data were reported in the aggregate, which made it impossible to interpret the data by grade level. High school programs are not the focus of this report.

funded elementary school programs are reported on a sample of 1,196 students who attended 30 days or more. Findings for middle school programs reflect a sample of 417 students who attended 30 days or more or 60 hours or more throughout the school year. In addition, students in the subset of middle school programs completed a survey on their perceptions of the program and their own academic performance. Twenty-three percent of these students (n=162) completed the survey at the end of April 2004. (See Appendix F for the Student Participation Survey.)

**Data on Attendance Patterns.** Tracking attendance helps program directors understand what's working, and for whom, in their program offerings. Attendance data were obtained from program records. Data from each 21st CCLC program were summarized across individuals and reported as the total number of students by gender, grade, and regular attendance during the reporting period. For the OSM! NH programs, attendance data were reported individually by weekly hours of participation and by school term. Findings on regular attendance report on 2,886 students attending elementary school afterschool programs and 1,256 students in middle school programs. Individual level data (n=658) from the subset of middle school programs permit a more detailed look at the levels of duration and frequency of attendance. In addition, the relationship between the amount of participation and academic outcomes can be examined.

**Data on Staffing Patterns.** The quality and consistency of afterschool program staff members are critical to program success. At the end of the 2003-2004 school year, program directors completed a brief survey about their program, including its operating schedule, funding sources, level of staff education, and staff turnover. (See Appendix G for the Staffing Survey.) Staffing questions focused on core paid employees (staff who worked 30% of weekly program hours or more throughout the 2003-2004 school year) and regular volunteers (those committed to working with the program at least three times during the school year).

## DATA CONTRIBUTIONS

Program Name	Site	Location	Grade Level Served	Staffing Patterns	Attendance Patterns	Outcomes for Programs' Regular Attendees	Outcomes for Attendees by Participation Level	Student Perceptions
Great Expectations	Dame School	Concord	Elem	X	X	X		
Concord Boys and Girls Club	Walker School	Concord	Elem	X	X	X		
Project SUCCEED	Conway Elementary School	Conway	Elem	X	X	X		
Project SUCCEED	John Fuller School	Conway	Elem	X	X	X		
Homework Enrichment and Achievement Lab	Seymour Osman Community Center	Dover	Elem	X	X	X		
Franklin Celebrates	Paul Smith Elementary School	Franklin	Elem	X	X	X		
Mt. Pleasant School	Mt. Pleasant School	Nashua	Elem	X	X	X		
Project Extra	Pleasant Street School	Laconia	Elem	X	X	X		
Project Extra	Woodland Heights School	Laconia	Elem	X	X	X		
Project Extra	Elm Street School	Laconia	Elem	X	X	X		
Amherst Street School	Amherst Street School	Nashua	Elem	X	X	X		
Dr. Crisp School	Dr. Crisp School	Nashua	Elem	X	X	X		
Fairgrounds Elementary School	Fairgrounds Elementary School	Nashua	Elem	X	X	X		
Ledge Street School	Ledge Street School	Nashua	Elem	X	X	X		
Tajaki Afterschool/Project Promise Tajaki	Bristol Elementary School	Newfound	Elem	X	X	X		
School's Out	Ossipee Central School	Ossipee	Elem	X	X	X		
Franklin Celebrates	Franklin Middle School	Franklin	MS	X	X	X		
Haverhill Coop. Middle School Afterschool Program	Haverhill Coop. Middle School	Haverhill	MS	X	X	X		
Project Extra	Memorial Middle School	Laconia	MS	X	X	X		
Academy of Learning and Technology	Academy of Learning and Technology	Nashua	MS	X	X	X		
Barrington Middle School	Barrington Middle School	Barrington	MS	X	X	X	X	X
Berlin Afterschool Program	Berlin Junior High School	Berlin	MS	X	X	X	X	X
All Star Program	Rundlett Middle School	Concord	MS	X	X	X	X	X
Project SUCCEED	Kennett Junior/Senior High School	Conway	MS	X	X	X	X	X
Haverhill Afterschool Program	Haverhill Cooperative Middle School	Haverhill	MS	X	X	X	X	X
Project REACH	Daisy Bronson Middle School	Littleton	MS	X	X	X	X	X
Tajaki Afterschool	Newfound Middle School	Newfound	MS	X		X		X
Portsmouth PLUS!	Portsmouth Middle School	Portsmouth	MS	X	X	X	X	X
Project Youth	Gorham Middle School	Gorham	MS	X	X	X		



# APPENDIX D

## TECHNICAL NOTES

### Determining Need for Afterschool Programs in New Hampshire Communities

The Childcare Study,<sup>1</sup> reported that **50%** of children ages 7-10 years old and **22%** of 7-14 years olds are in child care during the regular school year. These percentages were used to estimate the number of children in child care:

### Determining the Number of Children in Need

	Total number of children <sup>2</sup>	Number of children in child care	Number of children unsupervised <sup>3</sup>	Number of children in need of after school care
7 – 10 year olds	<b>74,010</b>	37,005 (74,010 * 50%)	2,197	<b>39,202</b> (37,005 + 2,197)
11 – 14 year olds	<b>74,153</b>	16,312 (74,153 * 22%)	14,543	<b>30,855</b> (16,312 + 14,543)

Estimations of need can be based on the proportion of children in each age group who are in need of afterschool care:

$$7-10 \text{ year olds: } (39,202/74,010) * 100 = \mathbf{53\%}$$

$$11-14 \text{ year olds: } (30,855/74,153) * 100 = \mathbf{42\%}$$

Thus, we can estimate that between **42%** and **53%** of youth aged 7-14 years old need afterschool care. To determine need in New Hampshire communities, this range is applied to the number of children in each community.

<sup>1</sup> *The Childcare Study* was commissioned by Providian and conducted by Helms and Company, RKM Research and Mary Jane Wallner, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Population figures from the 2000 U.S. Census.

<sup>3</sup> Figures from *The Childcare Study*.

## Academic Outcomes

Chart 1: *Percent of Elementary School Regular Attendees Who Showed Improvement in Academic Outcomes*  
n=1,196 students

Chart 2: *Percent of Middle School Regular Attendees Who Showed Improvement in Academic Outcomes*  
n=417 students

Chart 3: *Number of Middle School Students Whose Teachers Indicated They Needed to Improve*  
n=310 students for overall academic performance  
n=318 students for turning in homework, completing homework to satisfaction, class participation, class behavior; student interactions, and attendance

Chart 4: *Of Those Students Who Needed to Improve, The Number Who Did and Did Not Improve*  
n=277 students for overall academic performance, 66% improved  
n=246 for turning in homework, 62% improved;  
n=244 for completing homework to satisfaction, 58% improved  
n=213 for class participation, 62% improved  
n=153 for class behavior; 62% improved  
n=136 for student interactions, 62% improved; and  
n=105 for attendance, 75% improved

## Attendance

Chart 5: *Percent of Students by Attendance for Elementary School Programs*  
n=16 programs, 2,886 students; regular attendance is defined as attending 30 days or more

Chart 6: *Percent of Students by Attendance for Middle School Programs*  
n=12 programs, 1,215 students; regular attendance is defined as 30 days or more for 21st Century Community Learning Centers and 60 or more hours for OSM! NH programs

Table 1: *Attendance Patterns for Middle School Programs*  
n=8 programs, 658 students

Chart 7: Teacher Reports of Students Needing to Improve by Participation Levels

Definition of participation levels:

**Participation Levels By Weeks Attended**

	Low	Medium	High
Percent of Program Weeks Attended	<40%	40-70%	>70%
Range of Weeks Attended	1-12	9-21	15-30
Median of Weeks Attended	6	16	24
Percent of Participants	25%	29%	36%

Overall Academic Achievement:

Low: n=102 students

Medium: n=81 students

High: n=94 students

Behaving Well:

Low: n=47 students

Medium: n=46 students

High: n=60 students

Turning in Homework:

Low: n=86 students

Medium: n=72 students

High: n=88 students

Getting Along with Others:

Low: n=44 students

Medium: n=36 students

High: n=56 students

Completing Homework to Satisfaction:

Low: n=85 students

Medium: n=75 students

High: n=84 students

Class Attendance:

Low: n=36 students

Medium: n=27 students

High: n=42 students

Class Participation:

Low: n=76 students

Medium: n=66 students

High: n=71 students

## Staffing

Chart 8: *Percent of Elementary School Programs by Highest Education Level*

n=16 programs

Chart 9: *Percent of Middle School Programs by Highest Education Level*

n=13 programs

Table 2: *Turnover of Core Paid Staff in Elementary and Middle School Programs*

n=16 elementary programs

n=13 middle school programs

Table 3: *Staffing Arrangements in Elementary and Middle School Programs*

n=16 elementary programs

n=13 middle school programs

# APPENDIX E

## CLASSROOM TEACHER SURVEY

**Instructions:** Give this survey to each attendee's ELA or Math teacher at the end of the second to last marking period.

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

*During the past school year, has this student shown improvement in*

	Yes, Improved	No, Did Not Improve	No Need to Improve
Turning in his/her homework.			
Completing homework to your satisfaction.			
Participating in class.			
Attending class regularly.			
Behaving well in class.			
Getting along well with other students.			
Overall, has the academic performance of this student improved over the school year?			



# APPENDIX F

## STUDENT PARTICIPATION SURVEY

Site # \_\_\_\_\_

### OSM! NH Afterschool Program

#### Student Participation Survey

- Your participation in filling out the survey is voluntary.
- All of your answers are confidential and they will not be shared with anyone.
- We do not need to know your name.
- All your answers will be entered into a data file at RMC Research and added together with other student's responses from this program and the other seven programs.
- Please be honest in your responses. There are no right or wrong answers.

When you are done, hand in the survey to the person with the RMC envelope. The envelope will be sealed and immediately sent to RMC Research in Portsmouth, NH.

1. Your Age: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Your Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Your Gender: 1. Male 2. Female

4. In general, how often do you attend the afterschool program?

**Circle one answer**

1. I drop in a couple times a month
2. I go 1 afternoon a week
3. I go 2-3 afternoons a week
4. I go 4-5 afternoons a week

5. Which activities of the afterschool program do you usually go to?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. During which marking periods (terms or quarters) did you attend the afterschool program?

**Circle each one you attended**

- a. This school year: 1 2 3 4
- b. Last school year: 1 2 3 4

**Continue on the back**

7. Think about the time before you started going to the afterschool program. It could be the beginning of the school year, or the middle, or even last year. The next set of questions asks you about school, school work, and friends during that time. Complete each statement to make it true for you.

	<b>Circle one choice to make the statement true for you.</b>			
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	
At that time, my grades	needed	did not need		to improve.
At that time, my homework	was always	not always	never	passed in on time.
At that time, the quality of my homework was	good.	fair.	not good.	
At that time, I	had	did not have		enough time at home to do my homework.
At that time, I	liked	sometimes liked	never liked	going to school.
At that time, I had	many	some	very few	friends at school.

Now, think about the time you have spent attending the afterschool program.

**Complete each statement to make it true for you.**

	<b>Circle one choice to make the statement true for you.</b>			
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	
When I first started going to the afterschool program, I was friends with	all or almost all	some	none	of the kids in the program.
Since going to the afterschool program, my grades are	better.	the same.	worse .	
During this marking period, my homework is	always	not always	never	passed in on time.
During this marking period, the quality of my homework is	good.	fair.	not good.	
My homework is usually	done	almost done.	not done	by the time I leave the afterschool program.
I learned	many	some	no	new study skills or homework tips from the homework club.
I learned	many	some	no	new skills from the afterschool activities.
I consider myself friends with	all or almost all	some	none	of the kids in the program.
During this marking period, I have	liked	sometimes liked	never liked	going to school.

**Circle all the descriptions that are true for you.**

8. I think the afterschool program is:

cool                      boring                      fun                      relaxing                      exciting  
 productive                      interesting                      others: \_\_\_\_\_

9. I think **the staff** are generally:

cool                      fun                      helpful                      friendly  
 rude to students                      respectful to students  
 respectful to each other                      rude to each other                      others: \_\_\_\_\_

10. I think the **kids in the program** are generally:

cool	fun	helpful	friendly
rude to each other		respectful to each other	
respectful to the staff		rude to the staff	others:_____

Thank you for taking the time to fill this survey out. The information will help improve New Hampshire afterschool programs. Please hand this in to the person in charge of the RMC Research envelope.



**Afterschool Programs**

**Data Collection Instrument**

Program Staff <i>turnover</i>	<p>During the program year how many core paid staff were employed in your program?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>During the program year how many core paid staff left the program?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>During the program year how many new core paid staff did you hire?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>During the program year how many unfilled positions for core paid staff did you have?</p> <p>_____</p>	Program Records  Program Records  Program Records  Program Records
----------------------------------	---	--



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