Boston’s efforts to expand after-school programs and build their capacity to support the standards-based education reforms of the city’s public schools are explored.

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Schools alone are not enough: After-school programs and education reform in Boston

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Since the release of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, the public has rallied around the educational mission of imparting to the next generation of Americans the high level of skills and knowledge needed to compete in the ever-intensifying global marketplace.1 In consideration of the reality that children spend only 20 percent of their waking hours in schools (based on a 180-day school year and 6.5 hours of school of a typical day, with 14 waking hours), however, the prospects for success are uncertain at best. The standards reform movement has taken monumental, if erratic, steps in raising both the expectations for students and the schools’ capacity to reach these expectations, yet ultimately, the impact of the standards movement may be limited by the most basic of elements: time. Without adequate time within the traditional school day and year

We thank Kathleen Traphagen, executive director of the Boston 2:00-to-6:00 After-School Initiative, and Beth Langan, of Parents United for Child Care, for their valuable comments throughout the writing of this chapter.
to help all students reach these standards, the ultimate goal may prove elusive. As the Massachusetts Commission on Time and Learning averred in its 1995 report, “It has become increasingly obvious that campaigns for higher standards of learning on the one hand and for sufficient time to achieve those standards on the other are wholly interdependent. They stand or fall together.”

A growing body of research shows that participation in after-school and summer programs—whether they are activity focused, narrow tutoring sessions, or some combination—can help raise grades and scores on standardized tests and encourage positive attitudes toward school and learning. An emergent cadre of educators and policymakers has begun to beat the drums of after-school programs as integral to the success of the education reform movement. Boston is one of the places where this drumbeat is being heard, and as a result, the education establishment and the work of after-school programs are moving closer together in their goals and practices.

In order to evaluate the role of after-school programming in the context of Boston’s school reform efforts, we will describe in broad strokes the main characters of the story: the Boston Public Schools (BPS), the mayor and other key civic leaders, and the landscape of after-school programming in Boston. We will also examine more closely some of the key accomplishments of the central office charged with aligning the work of after-school programs and BPS, the Boston 2:00-to-6:00 After-School Initiative. This story highlights both the incremental nature of this undertaking on a systemic level and the wide variety of challenges that this undertaking has presented. As part of this story, we will look at two major efforts to move the after-school field closer to the schools: the Mayor’s Task Force on After-School Time and the After-School for All Partnership. Finally, we will review a pilot project that grew out of the mayor’s task force to describe how the endeavor to meld the goals of BPS reforms with after-school programs is playing out at particular Boston sites.
History and background

In 1995, based on the strong recommendation of Mayor Thomas M. Menino, the Boston School Committee hired Thomas Payzant as superintendent of schools. Payzant, the former superintendent of San Diego Unified District, brought with him a national reputation as an even-handed reformer who was more inclined to generate consensus than conflict. He had also played a national role in promoting the standards movement, and Menino thus made clear his own personal commitment to raising the academic standards of the Boston Public Schools.

Reforming the Boston Public Schools

Taking the reins in October 1995 (after a two-year stint as the assistant secretary for elementary and secondary education with the U.S. Department of Education under Richard Riley), Payzant promised to bring substantial reform to Boston’s struggling schools. Since that time, Payzant has enjoyed an effective relationship with the mayor, who has oversight responsibility for the public schools. They support each other both publicly and privately, and their positive relationship has done a great deal to tone down the political rhetoric that can often bog down big-city education reform efforts.

After less than a year as superintendent, Payzant released a forty-four-page document, *Focus on Children*, which laid out a five-year reform plan for the city’s schools. Since the plan’s release, BPS has been active in its campaign to implement the *Focus on Children* directives. Principally, the central office has developed a series of standards for all major subjects, including English and language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and even guidelines for school-to-career and the arts. BPS has also instituted benchmark exams, a system of accountability pegged to these standards.

In addition, BPS, in collaboration with the independent group Boston Plan for Excellence, has installed literacy and math coaches in many of the city’s schools. These individuals are responsible for coordinating the professional development, assessments, and other
practices deemed necessary to improve teaching and learning. BPS has also adopted a policy of requiring all principals to form an instructional leadership team in their school. In short, BPS, at the central office level, has been aggressive in developing policies and practices that will work to bring the *Focus on Children* goals to life.\(^7\)

In addition to BPS’s commitment to promoting educational achievement, part of what has driven the Boston school reform effort in the past three years is the mandate from the state to meet state-defined standards (around which the BPS standards now revolve). As of 2003, the state will require all students to have passed the tenth-grade state standards-based examination, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), to earn a high school diploma. (The first class of tenth graders required to pass the MCAS exam in order to graduate took the test in spring 2001.) Given that such a high percentage of BPS tenth graders have not passed this test (40 percent failed the English/language arts portion and 47 percent failed the math portion in 2001), the city is under enormous pressure to bring its students up to the levels of achievement demanded by the state.\(^8\)

*The mayor takes the lead*

In order to broaden community commitment, enhance student achievement, and move the reform agenda forward, Mayor Menino launched at the beginning of his second term (1998) a series of non-BPS-based initiatives that would support the schools and children’s learning.\(^9\) Perhaps the most significant venture, and the one most germane here, began with a declaration made in 1998 in his second inaugural address. In the speech, Menino announced the opening of a new office in City Hall: the Boston 2:00-to-6:00 After-School Initiative.

In many ways, the creation of this office was the culmination of years of work by grassroots organizations involved in the after-school field. One such group, Parents United for Child Care (PUCC), had been working as an advocate for the children of Boston since the 1980s by leveraging a continuum of capacity-building resources for hundreds of youth-serving programs. PUCC
took the lead on a number of initiatives during the 1990s that began the complex process of both raising the profile of after-school programs and, more important, building more comprehensive support for them. For example, Boston was one of three cities chosen in 1995 by the Wallace–Reader’s Digest Funds and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST, located at Wellesley College) for a project to improve after-school programs. Employing a community-based collaborative approach to improving the quality and quantity of out-of-school services, the project (Making the Most of Out-of-School Time, or MOST) sought to develop systematic means of coordinating the after-school activities in the city and furnishing training for after-school providers. In addition to providing technical assistance to particular programs, the project funded slots for programs through affordability grants. Mayor Menino served on the MOST advisory board, and it was this project that first garnered his serious attention to after-school programs.

Having an office in City Hall to highlight and drive an agenda to expand after-school opportunities for children was, for the whole after-school field, a significant step toward increasing the visibility of this effort and resources for it. The pressure to expand and improve the field was now elevated, in part because such change was tied to the fortunes of the mayor. More important, the office was a welcome addition because it brought with it the capacity to help leverage new funds to support programs, coordinate the opening of school facilities in which programs could operate, and work to develop citywide infrastructure to support programs over the long term.

Menino hired Jennifer Davis, a former deputy assistant secretary for the Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs under U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley (and the first author of this chapter), to head the Boston 2:00-to-6:00 After-School Initiative (also known as the 2:00-to-6:00 Office). With a small staff and limited budget, the 2:00-to-6:00 Office began its work and soon learned the difficult challenges associated with the mayor’s stated
goal “to offer a quality, affordable after-school activity in every neighborhood to every child who wants it.”

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**Early work of the 2:00-to-6:00 Office**

Early progress involved overcoming some of the chief obstacles standing in the way of developing a citywide system of delivering quality after-school programs. The first and most basic hurdle was obtaining more complete information than existed at the time about how many programs there were, where they were operating, and how many children they served. PUCC had begun the very complicated process of gathering this information from licensed after-school programs through its annual *Guide to Boston’s Before and After School Programs*. In Boston, as in most other cities, after-school programs seemed to have sprung from highly localized needs rather than from one coherent strategy, so mapping them would be a challenge. Because there was no centralized waiting list for programs, parents would need to be surveyed directly to gauge the demand in the city for after-school programs.

To assist in this project, the 2:00-to-6:00 Office secured the pro bono services of a private consulting firm and a private survey research firm. These firms brought powerful tools and talents to the task and, because of the data they produced, imparted a new legitimacy to the field of after-school programming. They completed work in March 1999, reporting that approximately sixteen thousand elementary and middle school children in Boston were enrolled in after-school programs. At least an equal number desired to be in a program, but programs were not available.

Mapping the field was an important first step toward finding ways to make programs affordable and available in every neighborhood and promote more efficient use of resources. Another significant step toward increasing the number and size of after-school programs was the mayor’s commitment to pay for additional costs to keep school buildings open until 6:00 P.M. This policy had the immediate effect of multiplying the number of programs that oper-
ated in the schools. Indeed, in his State of the City Address in January 1999, the mayor announced proudly, “In less than a year, we’ve increased the number of school-based programs by nearly 50 percent,” and the number has increased since then. As of fall 2001, sixty-nine schools (of a possible one hundred elementary and middle schools) had full-time after-school programs, most of them operated by community-based organizations such as the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Clubs, Citizen Schools, the B.E.L.L. Foundation, and New England Scores.

As impressive as this expanding connection between schools and after-school programs was (at least in terms of physical space), the mayor insisted that the 2:00-to-6:00 Office held a broader mission than just promoting the sharing of facilities. In the same State of the City Address, Menino declared, “This year after-school programs that we fund must begin to reinforce the school curriculum. And we will insist on quality control.” In addition to demonstrating the mayor’s commitment to education, this mandate also reflected parental concerns, as the survey of parents conducted on behalf of the 2:00-to-6:00 Office had revealed that parents believed that academically focused activities in after-school programs were among the most important. Given the disparate missions and activities of the over 240 programs in Boston, however, forging ahead with a centralized initiative to strengthen program quality would prove to be a complex endeavor.

**Focus on learning outcomes**

While the 2:00-to-6:00 Office brought a fresh face (and considerable leverage) to this challenge, many after-school providers, the higher education community, ReadBoston and various cultural institutions (including the Children’s Museum, the New England Aquarium, and the Boston Museum of Science) had for years been working with children during nonschool hours to provide tutoring and experiential learning. In the years immediately preceding the formation of the 2:00-to-6:00 Office, several new after-school entrepreneurs
had created programs that placed the objective of improving student learning as one of their central goals. Furthermore, there were several BPS schools that had begun to connect more closely to the after-school programs operating in their buildings.

Some model programs and schools

Three of the newer after-school programs are particularly worth mentioning. The first program to come into existence was the Steppingstone Foundation. Founded in 1990, the Steppingstone Scholars Program is a fourteen-month-long tutoring and support program for students from disadvantaged neighborhoods in Boston. The goal of the program is to help the students gain admission to premier public high schools like Boston Latin and Latin Academy or an independent school by teaching them the skills that they need to succeed. The tutoring takes place during two intensive summers and two afternoons per week and Saturdays throughout the year. While public school students spend 1,080 hours per year in class, Scholars have an additional 540 hours of class time.

The second program, the B.E.L.L. Foundation, was founded by a group of Harvard Law School students in 1992. The current mission is “to increase the academic achievements, self-esteem and life opportunities of elementary school children living in historically underserved communities.” Its participants spend many hours in extra tutoring in math and reading in order to supplement the learning in the BPS.

Finally, Citizen Schools began in 1995 as an after-school program model that links experiential education with academic outcomes for participants, with a specific focus on developing students’ math, writing, and oral presentation skills. It operates on an apprenticeship model, bringing in community volunteers who contribute their professional and life experience to the teaching that takes place.

Yet even programs that attempted to align their activities with BPS’s learning goals often found it difficult to get clear feedback
from teachers and school staff around how to structure this alignment. This reaction from BPS was not universal, however; a number of BPS schools were pioneers in connecting their work more closely to after-school programs. One of the most advanced is the Gardner Elementary School, located in the Allston section of Boston. Headed by an activist principal with a clear vision of how her school could become a full-service institution for the neighborhood, Gardner worked in partnership with Boston College and the YMCA to bring this vision to life. The school offers children after-school opportunities in many areas, from painting to homework assistance to karate. Although only a third of students now participate in these programs (due mostly to funding and transportation limitations), the principal’s goal remains that of having every child enrolled in these programs, for she recognizes that the more time children spend in productive activities, the more likely they are to succeed academically. Not coincidentally, the Gardner’s MCAS scores have seen one of the highest improvement rates in the state.

But a model like the Gardner was not the norm. Traditionally, most out-of-school programs incorporated homework help and literacy support into the programs, but reinforcing specific curricular features of school, like mathematics, or connecting closely to the activities of the school day seemed beyond the scope of what after-school programs could do. Also, schools usually perceived the after-school field as a wonderful support system that was distinct from schools in its relaxed settings and its deliberate lack of formal methods (such as tests and grades) to measure achievement. Most educators believed that without the more prescribed elements of learning that characterized school, after-school programs could not help promote the kinds of academic success that formal schooling was being held accountable for.

**Expanding Youth Horizons Initiative**

To support the efforts of after-school programs to strengthen learning, the 2:00-to-6:00 Office launched the Expanding Youth Horizons Initiative in 1999. Its first undertaking was a conference co-organized
with the Boston Children’s Museum and supported by a wide range of partners, including individuals from a number of after-school providers (like the Boys and Girls Clubs and the YMCA), researchers, and representatives from BPS. Over three hundred after-school providers attended. The mayor and Superintendent Payzant each delivered keynote addresses making the case for the importance of after-school programs in reaching their overarching goal of advancing the learning and development of children in the city. The event’s workshops were designed to equip providers with information, skills, and materials needed to help them support children’s learning in fun and creative ways, focusing on literacy, math, and science.

The central document distributed at the conference detailed materials summarizing the key concepts of the BPS and state standards in literacy, mathematics, and science according to grade level. Written with the help of a BPS teacher and the curriculum directors for literacy, math, and science, the document juxtaposed those standards with activities characteristic of after-school programs that would act to reinforce and deepen these concepts. As the book explained in the introduction, “While school teachers have the primary responsibility for helping children succeed academically, after-school time offers a unique opportunity to focus on creative learning activities that can help children build skills in an environment that supports overall healthy social development.”

**Other learning-focused initiatives**

Other initiatives taking place in Boston helped to reinforce and build on the 2:00-to-6:00 project. The 4 Quality Initiative—a collaboration of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston, NIOST, PUCC, and the YMCA of Greater Boston—is one such program that brings training, technical assistance, and system building to the field, so that it will be better equipped to serve as a partner with schools in promoting learning. The 4 Quality Initiative is grounded in research that establishes the valuable contribution of after-school programs to the healthy development of children and youth and identifies the link between staff training and program quality. For
example, the initiative furnished staff and administrators at the YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs with four-day training session workshops on balanced programming, standards for learning, developmental needs of children and youth, and thematic curriculum development. Participants develop their knowledge in these areas in training focused thus far on homework assistance, science, literacy development, the arts, and numeracy and math. The project intends to transfer its practices and lessons learned to the larger field to assist a much wider range of programs.

Another initiative is a model of providing after-school education from a youth development perspective. Responsive Advocacy for Life and Learning in Youth (RALLY) is an in-school and after-school program that operates as a partnership between the host schools (two are in Boston, a third is in the planning stage in Boston, and the program is replicated in other cities as well), the Harvard Graduate School of Education, McLean Hospital/Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School, and a network of community organizations, such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs. Essential to this model is that after-school staff serve additional functions: several times a week, they work in children’s classrooms for part of the regular school day, and they are trained and supervised by clinicians to develop supportive relationships to enhance the resilience of at-risk youth. Out of this work, a mental health training and learning initiative has emerged, supported by the Harvard After-School Initiative and the Harvard Program in Afterschool Education and Research. Thus, some after-school staff serve as “prevention practitioners,” pulling supports into the school and after-school classroom rather than pulling children out for specialized services. Practitioners work with teachers and administrators in middle schools to become integrated into the school environment and coordinate their students’ school experience with their after-school experience. They help students build strong relationships with adults and peers and get the academic support they need, targeting the most intensive services for those most in need. They also provide after-school programming and facilitate collaboration among schools, families, after-school and
community programs, and social service agencies to help ensure that children are ready to learn. This program has shown strong outcomes for participating children.

**Boston Community Learning Centers**

The federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (known in Boston as the Boston Community Learning Centers, BCLCs) also played a significant role in the expansion of educationally oriented after-school programs in Boston. Since the original grant in 1998 and a state grant to support the BCLC model, two more rounds of CLC grants have brought the total number of sites operating in the city to thirty, serving an estimated twenty-five hundred children. The BCLCs are managed through the city’s Office of Community Partnerships, which has been thoroughly committed to the goal of connecting after-school to the school day.

One way the BCLCs have focused their work on promoting academic achievement was to participate in a state-designed pilot project with the specific purpose of inducing or improving communication and collaboration between the school-day teacher and after-school staff. Known as the cross-fertilization project, this initiative paid teachers a stipend to spend time in after-school programs and after-school staff to spend time in school classrooms. Over the spring, the teams of teachers and teams of after-school staff met to develop a summer curriculum for the after-school program that integrated the BPS learning standards into the activities of the after-school program.¹⁸

The BCLCs have also helped to strengthen the commitment of BPS to building its infrastructure to support after-school programs. An important practical and symbolic step forward is paying for two staff people to work directly in the BPS central office (in the office of the assistant director of curriculum and instruction) on BCLC projects. One of these projects is a series of free citywide trainings for after-school staff (of any programs, not just those operating in BCLC sites) that explain how after-school programs specifically might structure their activities to support the BPS learning goals.
These trainings, called “Bridging the Gap,” are in strong demand; several sessions have been conducted multiple times in order to accommodate program provider interest.

These various initiatives indicate the creativity of Boston programming but also the complex challenge of creating an integrated structure.

Two civic initiatives

On the macro level, two significant advances that helped to shift perceptions about the role of after-school programs came through some unique partnerships and commitments on the part of Boston’s civic leaders. Although challenges were associated with both initiatives, they ultimately played a substantial role in moving Boston toward its goals.

Mayor’s Task Force on After-School Time

After the consulting firm completed its report on the status of the after-school field in Boston, Mayor Menino sought to bring together civic leaders from various constituencies to design a vision for the future of after-school programming in Boston. He and the 2:00-to-6:00 Office also believed that they would not be able to advance the goals of the field without first forming a consensus around a ten-year vision for building an after-school system in Boston, designing a specific set of recommendations on how to get there, and bringing a broader group of stakeholders to the table.

The mayor appointed Chris Gabrieli to head the Mayor’s Task Force on After-School Time. Gabrieli, a Boston businessman, had strong roots in the philanthropic community and a keen interest in education. The mayor knew that his commitment to civic life and his leadership skills could help create a new civic commitment to the mission of the 2:00-to-6:00 After-School Initiative. Mayor Menino convened the task force made up of leaders from business, K–12 education, higher education, after-school providers, child

The task force deliberations were at times acrimonious as members came to the table with divergent perspectives on the purpose of after-school programming. Debates on the issue resulted in two very important agreements. First, the members developed a shared ten-year vision for after-school programming in Boston. This vision was approved very early in the life of the task force and provided the foundation for all its future work. The second agreement was the adoption of an outcomes model based on the framework developed by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development in 1989. This framework, which classified the five developmental needs of children (cognitive, social, physical, spiritual and moral, and emotional), demonstrated how after-school programs can and do help address these needs.19 With all members embracing this framework, the task force ensured that it would deliver its report to the mayor as a unified group.

In May 2000, the task force released its report, entitled Schools Alone Are Not Enough: Why Out-of-School Time Is Crucial to the Success of Our Children, which argued forcefully that “academic support during out-of-school time will be a critical factor determining whether Boston rises to this challenge [of meeting the state standards]. . . . Out-of-school time must be elevated to true peer status with school hours.”20 Its list of over twenty recommendations integrated a wide variety of ideas and called on a number of key municipal and community-based institutions to lend their expertise and resources to the effort. The recommendations included appealing to the city, state, and federal government to increase funding directed to after-school programs; asking civic leaders to launch a statewide publicity campaign to promote the need for high-quality after-school programming; and developing a pilot project to implement an outcomes-based system of program implementation in order to measure more directly the impacts of after-school programs on children and their families.21

This report instantly became a blueprint for how the after-school community in Boston would move forward in the effort
to coordinate its diverse activities. In addition to energizing the field, its most immediate contribution was to prompt the second major civic action to cast the learning aspect of after-school programs in the spotlight. This initiative took the learning goals agenda to the next level by institutionalizing it within the funding community.

**After-School for All Partnership**

After his work on the task force, Gabrieli devoted nearly all of his time to the after-school issue. Together with the original director of the 2:00-to-6:00 Office, he founded a nonprofit organization, Massachusetts 2020, in October 2000. The former director of the 2:00-to-6:00 Office became the organization’s president; Gabrieli served as chairman. This group’s mission was to serve as a catalyst organization for increasing after-school programming in Boston and around the state and raising the profile of the issue of using nonschool hours as a prime learning opportunity. Following up on one of the major recommendations of the task force report, Gabrieli secured the formation of a partnership of Boston-based funders “to develop and implement a coordinated strategy to support after-school programming.”

In March 2001, ten months after the release of *Schools Alone Are Not Enough*, Mayor Menino and Gabrieli announced the formation of the Boston After-School for All Partnership (ASAP), the largest public-private partnership devoted to children in Boston’s history. The partnership took shape around three goals: expanding the number of children served by five thousand slots in five years, raising the learning outcomes of Boston’s students and developing more sustainable sources of funding. Included in the fourteen-member partnership are such major organizations as the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, Harvard University, FleetBoston Financial Foundation, and the United Way. With the weight of over $24 million over five years (including $5 million in City of Boston funds) committed to the three specific goals, the partnership helped to crystallize the
vision of a strong collaboration between after-school programs and schools.

Even with the significant funding and influential players now involved in the effort to develop a systemic approach to after-school programming, however, the partnership still faces monumental challenges. How will the field become coordinated to meet the demand better? How will the partnership bring its collective resources to leverage a much larger financial commitment from public sources? Some basic organizational questions that underlie these grand questions also linger. How will program providers be encouraged to focus on explicit learning goals? How will the partnership work with after-school providers, city staff, and the BPS to encourage policies and practices to connect the aims of after-school programs more closely with those of the public schools? Still in its infancy, the partnership has begun the hard work of addressing these and other matters.

**Transition to Success pilot project**

By looking closely at one learning-oriented program, the challenges and successes of connecting after-school programs more closely to the schools becomes evident. In spring 2000, using city funds, monies from the Massachusetts Department of Education specifically targeted to after-school programs, and funding from Massachusetts 2020, the Boston 2:00-to-6:00 After-School Initiative launched the Transition to Success (TTS) pilot project.23

**Pilot project beginnings**

The primary purpose of the TTS pilot is to connect a particular group of BPS students to high-quality after-school programs and also provide them with outreach and support geared to increase family and parent involvement and the students’ overall academic and social success. Three essential project elements are worth noting. First, its target population is the most academically at-risk stu-
dents (as identified by BPS). This focus has strong implications for its potential success as a model: that the central goal of the participating after-school programs is wholly aligned with that of BPS, that is, raising the benchmark scores of the most academically at-risk children. Even more important, almost universally, these children had not participated in any after-school programming at all prior to their involvement in the pilot. Now these children would have a quality place to go after school.

Second, the TTS pilot pays for a coordinator at each of the participating sites. This coordinator is responsible for monitoring the services received by the students and serves as the main line of communication between the program, the school, and parents regarding students’ learning and overall development. Ultimately, then, the coordinator must address students’ nonacademic barriers to success in order to help students achieve academically. Finally, in the true spirit of public-private partnerships, the 2:00-to-6:00 Office has partnered with Massachusetts 2020 to operate the pilot.

After identifying six participating sites through a competitive request for proposals process, the project began in January 2001 with 105 students and ran through the end of the school year. One notable success of this half-year speaks to the effort of the pilot to put mechanisms and a strategy in place that would guide the participating programs toward practices that would enhance children’s learning outcomes. For three months, under the guidance of an evaluation and consulting team, the sites worked together to develop a logic model (see Figure 4.1). The model captured the coherent flow of particular program activities into inducing certain specified outcomes identified by program staff as key to program success. The intent of the model was to enable program staff to focus on how their daily activities produce particular outcomes and converge to lead to improved student achievement. With this logic model in place, the six programs could, as the year progressed, design activities that would deliberately produce particular outcomes and more effectively integrate the goal of improved student learning into the daily operations of the program.
Figure 4.1. Transition to Success logic model

**ACTIVITIES**
- Students receive tutoring from BPS teachers
- Students receive tutoring from after-school program staff/volunteers
- Students receive homework help
- Students are engaged in academic, enrichment activities
- Students participate in recreational, cultural, and community service activities
- Program staff will engage parents in workshops and skill-building activities
- Case manager will coordinate intervention services support

**OUTPUTS**
- Student’s academic skills in language arts and math will improve
- Completion of and turning in homework will improve
- Student’s sense of responsibility toward academic work will improve
- Student’s attitude and effort toward learning will improve
- Student is exposed to new experiences, develops positive self-image
- Parent’s awareness and skills will increase
- Coordination and referral of intervention services will improve

**OUTCOMES**
- Student’s benchmark scores are at grade level
- Student’s understanding and ability to do school work are increased
- Academic effort and commitment to learning are increased
- Student’s self-esteem is improved, and motivation to learn increases
- Student’s social skills and behavior are improved
- Parent’s interaction with teacher and school is increased
- Parent’s involvement in child’s learning is improved
- Student’s success in academic setting is improved

**INDICATORS**
- Standardized test scores and other assessment tools
- School record
- Teacher appraisal if available through regular school administration
- Need to analyze data with understanding of differences in delivery methods and population served
- Promotion to next grade

**SYSTEMS INTEGRATION**
- Management oversight
- Evaluation
- Resource development

**INPUTS**
- TTS leadership team
- TTS Advisory
- After-school program
- Schools

**OUTREACH AND RECRUIT STUDENTS AND PARENTS**
The pilot project: The first full year

The first full year of the TTS pilot project has revealed both the great promise of this outcome-focused program improvement plan but also the substantial obstacles to success. On the positive side, the most significant contribution has been to involve those academically at-risk children in quality after-school programs at all.

In addition, the focus on increasing parental involvement has had largely positive outcomes. Preliminary surveys show that 98 percent of parents are satisfied with their child’s after-school program. Perhaps even more important, 88 percent of parents agree that the after-school program helps them to connect with their child’s teachers.

Programs have found that for a variety of reasons, parents of BPS Transition students seem to be more detached than other parents from their children’s schools, so such a strong indication of involvement with children’s formal education is a considerable victory.

A second achievement is illustrated by the meaningful steps that programs have taken to help programs address more fully the academic needs of participants. One program instituted a homework journal, for example, where students, tutors, and staff could chart progress and setbacks on various subjects. This practice has had two important effects. First, the time dedicated to homework completion was enhanced as a learning opportunity rather than just an activity that took place before the “real program” began. Second, these journals have become a vehicle through which to communicate with the students’ teachers directly. In turn, through the homework journal, teachers identify key areas where students need extra attention; thus, students’ particular learning needs are addressed, and school professionals are included in the after-school program.

In fact, the program that initiated the homework journal reported such strong outcomes that other TTS pilot sites will begin to institute this practice as well.

The TTS pilot has also had its share of obstacles. The most frustrating has been the fact that communication between teachers and after-school staff, the linchpin in connecting the work of each, has been erratic. Deeper communication between teachers and
after-school staff around teaching strategies and curriculum coordination has yet to take place across all sites. Teachers must sacrifice their few moments of free time during the day in order to make coordination happen, and only a few teachers have been persuaded that this sacrifice will pay off. Most do not yet believe that time spent communicating with after-school personnel will necessarily facilitate progress toward their own student learning objectives.\footnote{27} What may be needed is a kind of cultural shift within the educational establishment that incorporates the idea that time spent in after-school programs is not superfluous, but rather can have a direct impact on academic achievement. If teachers were provided financial incentives to engage in this kind of collaboration, they would also be more inclined to value it.

Whether programs meet the expectations of the logic model, whether the programs improve qualitatively as a result of the pilot, and whether the model of having a staff person devoted to the needs of particular students can be deemed successful is still largely undetermined midway through the pilot. The hope is that the evaluation of the pilot (slated to be complete by midsummer 2002) will demonstrate the broader impacts that these after-school programs can have.\footnote{28}

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**Conclusion**

For a number of reasons, the future prospects for systemically joining after-school programs into a true partnership with BPS schools to enhance children’s learning and overall development are bright. The mayor and philanthropic and other civic leaders are firmly committed to this goal and are investing new financial and leadership resources to attain it. Those working directly with children must surely be boosted by the fact that their work is encouraged by many of the city’s most powerful people. Second, many programs and schools have taken great strides toward working together. The time seems not far off when these models become the norm, and the message that after-school programs are integral to education reform will at last penetrate completely. The fundamental challenge
SCHOOLS ALONE ARE NOT ENOUGH

ahead is for the BPS, civic and private sector leaders, and key stakeholders from the after-school sector to develop and implement a specific and intelligent plan that can realize the vision articulated in the task force report. “In 2010,” the members declared, “after-school programming in Boston [will be] recognized as a ‘system’ in the best sense of the word—one that is flexible and entrepreneurial, responsive to families and communities, and integrated, efficient, and accountable.”29 With all that has happened so far and all that is poised to begin, their vision seems entirely possible.

Notes


4. The plan set as its primary goal “to improve teaching and learning in all of our schools” and identified three “ancillary goals” intended to support the realization of the primary goal: changing the structure of the schools to focus on student performance, providing safe and nurturing schools, and engaging parents and the community in school reform. Boston Public Schools. (1996, Aug.). Focus on children: A comprehensive reform plan for the Boston Public Schools. Boston: Author. p. 12.

5. These standards have been widely lauded as being both high and attainable. They predate the content standards set forth by the state—the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks—and essentially embody the content covered by the state assessment exams.

6. The Boston Plan for Excellence is an independent nonprofit organization founded in 1984 to support the city’s education reform efforts. It is funded by local corporations and foundations. For more information, visit the group’s Web site: http://www.bpe.org/.

7. This instructional leadership team is to be composed of all the department heads—or veteran teachers, in the case of elementary schools—and is charged
with leading the school’s effort to implement the “whole school improvement plan” that each school must adopt. For a full description of the various practices and standards the BPS has adopted, visit the BPS Web site, especially, the “Teaching and Learning” section: http://www.boston.k12.ma.us/teach/.

8. As of this writing, the results from the MCAS retest in fall 2001, given to those who failed the spring test, have not yet been released for Boston.


12. The Boston Latin School is the oldest public high school in America, founded in 1634. In the most recent MCAS exams, the scores of its tenth graders ranked first among all public high schools in the state. The Latin Academy ranked high also, at nineteenth (out of 320).


23. The state monies were part of the After-School/Out-of-School Time program run out of the Massachusetts Department of Education. The grants were disbursed on a competitive basis and funded programs in over eighty communities across the state. The legislation providing for this program (and earmarking approximately $5 million) included the following language: “Said grants shall fund a variety of activities, including but not limited to, academic tutoring and homework centers, athletic programs, health services, arts programs and community service programs.” Massachusetts FY 2001 Budget, line item 7061–9611.

24. The students in the pilot are those identified by BPS as at risk: those who failed at least one of the city’s benchmark exams in grades 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, or 8. The so-called transition program (from which the pilot gets its name) deliv-
ers after-school tutoring and in-school assistance to these students with the primary aim of helping them to pass the next round of benchmark exams.

25. Massachusetts 2020 is paying for the evaluation of the students participating in order to track the program impact. In addition, Massachusetts 2020, with a seat on the project’s leadership team, shares a role in setting policy for the pilot project and overseeing its implementation.

26. Each after-school program is run by a community-based organization that partnered with its host school to apply for inclusion in the transition pilot. The sites are Hamilton Elementary School–Jackson Mann Community Center (Brighton); Hurley Elementary School–Boston Excels/Home for Little Wanderers and YMCA of Greater Boston (South End); Mattahunt Elementary School–B.E.L.L. Foundation (Mattapan); Josiah Quincy Elementary School–Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Service Center (Chinatown); and Quincy Upper School–Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Service Center (Chinatown).

27. The site using the written reports, for example, admits that the system, which began before the start of the pilot project, was in place nearly two years before most teachers would fill out the form regularly. By all accounts, these teachers have seen this impact through increased homework completion, better class participation, and better attitudes toward learning.

28. The evaluation will look at both quantitative BPS data (test scores and grades) and more qualitative, personality-based issues like self-esteem, leadership skills, general behavior, and motivation for learning. When combining the student’s self-evaluation with the evaluation of both parents and that of the after-school staff, evaluators expect to be able to produce a fairly detailed portrait of each student’s psychological and learning profile. Furthermore, evaluators will have access to two comparison groups through which to analyze the impact of the after-school program. The first group is the participants themselves, as students, parents, and staff will complete two sets of surveys: one near the outset of the program and one at the conclusion. By comparing the profiles rendered at the beginning of participation to those rendered at the conclusion, evaluators will have a direct line to judge how involvement in the program affected change in individual students. Second, evaluators will have access to quantitative data for all transition students throughout BPS, and so will be able to hold the larger sample, without guaranteed participation in after-school programs, up against the TTS pilot group, which was able to participate in these high-quality programs.


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